

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 7 December 2017  
Executive – 13 December 2017

**Subject:** Manchester Playing Pitch Strategy

**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods)

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**Summary**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee and Executive on the vision and strategy for Manchester's playing pitches. The Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) will form part of the Council's evidence base for sport and leisure.

The PPS will frame the priorities for future investment and the continued development of the playing pitch and associated facility infrastructure across Manchester. The evidence base created will be utilised by the Local Planning Authority when considering planning applications in consultation with Sport England as a statutory consultee, who in turn will consult with National Governing Bodies of Sport as appropriate.

Whilst the analysis within the PPS will assist in determining the priorities for investment, any playing pitch or associated infrastructure improvement and / or new development will be subject to sources of funding (primarily from external sources) being made available. Any development or disposal will also be subject to the development of a clear business case, impact assessment and where appropriate a funding application.

**Recommendations**

1. Note the analysis undertaken, to agree the vision and strategic aims as described in section 4, and agree the recommendations, actions and strategic priorities listed in appendix 1, 2, and 3.
2. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods Directorate) and the Director of Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Executive member for Schools, Culture and Leisure, to agree a playing pitch strategy action plan in consultation with Sport England and National Governing Bodies of Sport, which together with this recommendation 2 and recommendation 1 above forms the adoption of the Manchester PPS.

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**Wards Affected:** All

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of the contribution to the strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Sport and Leisure is a key economic driver within the city not only as an employer, but also in attracting inward investment to underpin a wide range of key sectors in the city.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	The Sport and Leisure sector provides significant opportunities for training, development, apprenticeship programmes and volunteering. This contributes meaningfully to employment within the Manchester economy.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Playing Pitches and associated facilities are at the core of neighbourhoods and they create significant opportunities for all communities within the city to engage actively and energetically.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Sport and Leisure provision has made a strong commitment to environmental sustainability through investment to modernise the estate. This is embedded within the management of the existing estate and the plans for the improvement of the playing pitches and changing rooms over the next five years.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	The Sport and Leisure sector over the last twenty years has already invested significantly in new assets that have helped drive the city's growth agenda. The new Strategy seeks to deliver new high quality assets across the city that will continue to support our growth ambitions over the next decade.

**Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for**

- Equal Opportunities Policy – Where appropriate Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken.
- Risk Management – Where appropriate a risk management approach will be undertaken.
- Legal Considerations – There are no legal considerations arising from this strategies.

**Financial Consequences – Revenue**

There are no revenue consequences arising from the development of this strategy. Any future investment decisions for playing pitches will be subject to an agreed business case and funding.

**Financial Consequences – Capital**

There are no capital consequences arising from the development of this strategy.

Any future investment decisions for playing pitches will be subject to an agreed business case and funding.

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

- 2015 – 2016 Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report
- 2015 – 2016 Playing Pitch Vision, Strategy and Action Plan
- 2017 Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an update on Manchester's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS), specifically regarding sports specific playing pitches / courts. A PPS is used by the authority and stakeholders as a strategic document to support the determination of relevant planning applications through the associated consultation process. A PPS also provides a clear strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities between the strategy period 2017 - 2021. As such formal adoption of the strategy is required by the Council. The strategy is seeking to do the following:
- Provide a clear framework for all playing pitch providers, including the public, private and third sectors;
  - Clearly address the needs of all identified sports within the local area, picking up particular local demand issues;
  - Address issues of population growth, and or major growth/regeneration areas;
  - Address issues of cross boundary facility provision;
  - Address issues of accessibility, quality and management with regard to facility provision;
  - Stand up to scrutiny at an planning inquiry as a robust study;
  - Provide realistic aspirations which are implementable within the local authority's budgetary position and procurement regime.
- 1.2 The Manchester PPS frames the priorities for future investment and the continued development of the playing pitch and associated infrastructure across Manchester. Whilst the analysis within the PPS will assist in determining the priorities for investment, any playing pitch or changing room improvement or development will be subject to sources of funding (primarily from external sources) being made available. Furthermore, in addition to external sources of funding being identified to bring forward improvements, the ability to deliver the sports specific recommendations made (see appendix 1) are in the main largely subject to sports clubs bringing forward relevant development plans, agreed in consultation with National Governing Bodies of sport and supported as appropriate by the Council.
- 1.3 The PPS covers both playing pitches (Football, Cricket, Rugby league, Rugby Union, Hockey, third generation turf pitches (3G), other pitch sports i.e. Softball/Baseball, Gaelic football, American football, Lacrosse) and three priority outdoor sports (Tennis, Athletics, Bowls):
- 1.4 Pitch sports have been assessed using the guidance set out in Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance: An approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy.
- 1.5 Outdoor sports have been assessed using Sport England's Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance (2014). Non-pitch outdoor sports require a different methodology to assess demand and supply to that used for pitch sports.

- 1.6 A Steering Group has led and will continue to lead the PPS to ensure the delivery and implementation of its recommendations and actions. It is made up of representatives from the Council, Sport England, Greater Sport, pitch sport National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs), namely the Football Association (FA), Manchester County Football Association (MFA), England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), Lancashire County Cricket Board (LCCB), the Rugby Football League (RFL), the Rugby Football Union (RFU) and England Hockey (EH), English Lacrosse, and the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) plus the University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 This strategy follows on from the 2015 – 2016 interim strategy adopted by the Council at the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015 Executive meeting. The 2015 / 2016 PSS set the framework for investment into pitch developments into Belle Vue Sports Village and Armitage Sports Centre. Previous strategies set the investment framework for improvements which were delivered at Ronald Johnson Playing Fields, Didsbury Sports Ground, Hollyhedge Park and city wide pitch improvement works at major multi pitch sites including Hough End Playing Fields, Broadhurst Park and Cringle Fields.
- 2.2 The 2017 – 2021 strategy will provide the strategic rationale for future investment into a range of playing pitches and associated facilities across the city. The PPS will also be used to compliment the adopted Indoor Facilities Strategy (September 2015) and other corporate strategies i.e. Schools Capital Programme and Housing Growth Strategy:

## **3. Strategic Context**

- 3.1 **The Our Manchester Strategy** sets out a vision for 2025 of Manchester as a world class City that is:
- Thriving and Sustainable – with great jobs and the businesses to create them.
  - Highly Skilled – full of talent both home grown and from around the world.
  - Progressive and equitable – a fair city where everyone has an equal chance to contribute and to benefit.
  - Liveable and low carbon – a great place to live with a good quality of life: a clean, green and safe city.
  - Connected - both physically, with world class transport, and digitally, with brilliant broadband.
- 3.2 An overarching strategic objective is to ensure that the Directorate's activity is aligned to the Our Manchester Strategy and that the Our Manchester approach is embedded throughout the Directorate. The Our Manchester Strategy provides the overarching framework and priorities for action by the Council and partners from all sectors over the next 10 years. These priorities are known as the 64 'We Wills' and in order to be able to achieve these high

level goals there must be a radical change in the way that the Council and other organisations across the city operate. This radical change is the Our Manchester approach.

- 3.3 The Our Manchester approach will require the Council, our partners and contractors to work in a very different way. We will need to put people at the centre of everything we do, recognising that people are more important than processes, procedures or organisational boundaries. Our future approach to the use of, management and maintenance of our playing fields and outdoor sport and leisure provision will need to reflect this new approach, and is likely to result in different arrangements in place than we do today. Meaningful, on-going engagement with residents and community groups will be required to ensure we have the most effective engagement arrangements in place going forward.
- 3.4 Playing Pitches and their associated facilities, including changing rooms, play a significant role in delivering on a range of Our Manchester priorities. These facilities for example contribute to tackling inactivity and increasing participation in sport and physical activity. They are a resource required by community groups and individuals to enable their activity, either informally / socially – going for a jog with a group of friends, or more formally activity such as playing a football match in a structured league. They are often facilities that support a group's identity, a base of young people coming together and a focal point for volunteering. The work associated to the playing pitch strategy supports a range of priorities focused on building community strength and the associated action plan will be developed and informed by a strategic evidence base and the Our Manchester principles of: Better Lives, Listening, Recognising strengths of Individuals and communities and Working Together.
- 3.5 The Manchester PPS evidence base has not only been developed through a city wide pitch audit and assessment (both qualitative and quantitative), but also through detailed consultation with site users (sports clubs) and the stakeholders via the steering group. Furthermore, the evidence base has taken account of forecast analysis in the following areas: Population growth, Housing growth and Higher Education and Schools growth as set out below. This detailed analysis has been used to develop the detailed assessment report, vision and strategy and will be relied upon to inform the associated action plan.
- 3.6 Through the summer of 2017, the Council led a consultation in Manchester, to provide a new evidence base upon which a new Sport and Physical Activity Strategy would be based. This work engaged over 2,266 people and informed us that two out of three respondents wanted to be more physically active than they are currently. So we know that people's health does matter to them. We were also advised that there is a desire to improve lifestyles and we have a nuanced understanding of different personas and the challenges they identify.
- 3.7 When asked about participation in sport and physical activity our residents have told us the following:

- Provision needs to be local.
- Activities need to be accessible and easy to find out about.
- People would prefer to find out about Sport and Physical Activity through social media and internet searching / apps.
- Most popular activities are Walking, Fitness and Gym, Swimming, Running, Cycling and Football.
- Most common request for a specific activity was more running opportunities in parks.
- Lack of time, lack of money and availability / timing of sessions are the biggest barriers to being active.
- Both the active and inactive want to get active and or be more active.

3.8 It is in this context that the importance of playing pitches and associated becomes clear, especially their local ability to facilitate participation and provide a framework for future investment.

### **3.9 Population growth**

3.9.1 The latest figures from Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimate a population in Manchester for mid-2015 of 530,292<sup>1</sup>. By 2021 (to reflect the Strategy timeframe) ONS figures project that this will increase to 558,510 representing an increase of 28,218 (or equivalent to a percentage increase of 5.3%).<sup>2</sup>

3.9.2 The analysis set out in section 5 is based upon the projected population growth up until 2035. Team generation rates have been used to provide an indication of how many people it may take to generate a team (by gender and age group), in order to help estimate the change in demand for pitch sports that may arise from any population change in the study area and are set out in the Assessment Report (this is available as a background document).

### **3.10 Housing growth**

3.10.1 In March 2016 Manchester published a refreshed Residential Growth Strategy<sup>3</sup>, setting out the City's aim to deliver a minimum 25,000 new homes by 2025. The Residential Growth Strategy proposes a set of priorities for action to support the City's sustained growth and ensure there are affordably priced houses and apartments for sale and rent.

3.10.2 In order to deliver a minimum of 25,000 units over the next ten years, the Strategy sets a target of 2,500 units per annum over the ten year delivery period (2016-2025). This PPS includes a range of Housing Growth Scenario's based on the Core Strategy and GMSF housing requirements that estimates

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<sup>1</sup> Source: ONS Mid-2015 Population Estimates for Lower Layer Super Output Areas in England and Wales by Single Year of Age and Sex. Updated ONS data source as opposed to mid-2014 estimates applied to the preceding assessment.

<sup>2</sup> The strategy covers the period to 2021 to align with other Council planning documents, particularly the culmination of the Capital Schools Programme 2015-2020, as well the five year recommended lifespan of a PPS (subject to concurrent updating) from 2016 when data informing this document was recorded.

<sup>3</sup>[http://www.manchester.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/20594/item\\_8\\_manchester\\_residential\\_growth\\_strategy\\_201617\\_action\\_plan.pdf](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/20594/item_8_manchester_residential_growth_strategy_201617_action_plan.pdf)

the amount of additional demand for pitch sports generated by the new housing developments.

### 3.11 Higher Education and Schools growth

3.11.1 Subsequent to the closure of its Alsager campus in 2010, Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) has recently announced plans to close its Crewe sports campus (Cheshire East). The site presently accommodates the majority of sports science and sports based courses and students. MMU are exploring plans to establish further sports provision in Manchester. If approved this could create new demand for access to sports facilities in the future.

3.11.2 In addition to the Higher Education needs, the Council is also working with the Department for Education (DFE) and Education Funding Agency (EFA) to bring forward plans to meet the demand for school places in the city over the next five years. This plan brings with it both pressure for land availability and opportunity in the provision of new playing fields, both natural turf and artificial turf.

3.11.3 Given the strategic context of playing fields provision, population growth, housing growth, and education Growth, the Council is working in a strategic way with Sport England to ensure that this strategic context is considered and that the optimum balance of meeting the needs of communities is achieved. The Playing Pitch Strategy, relationship with Sport England and the planning process provides the mechanism to this approach going forward.

## 4.0 Vision and Strategic Aims

### Vision

4.1 The proposed vision has been developed following engagement with stakeholders and describes what we are seeking to achieve through the PPS:

***“Manchester will provide a network of high quality outdoor sports facilities that are conducive to increasing and sustaining participation in sport and consequently contributing to making sport a habit for life”.***

### Strategy Aims and Recommendations

4.2 It is recommended that the following are adopted by the Council and its partners to enable it to achieve the overall vision of the Playing Pitch Strategy and Sport England’s requirements.

AIM	Recommendations
<b>Aim 1</b> -To protect the existing supply of playing pitch facilities where it is needed for meeting current or future needs	a) Protect playing field sites through local planning policy. b) Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs, through a range of solutions and partnership agreements.



	c) Maximise community use of education facilities where there is a need to do so.
<b>Aim 2 - To enhance</b> playing fields, pitches and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites	d) Improve quality. e) Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) for the management and improvement of sites. f) Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding.
<b>Aim 3 - To provide</b> new outdoor sports facilities where there is current or future demand to do so	g) Rectify quantitative shortfalls in the current pitch stock. h) Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand.

## 5.0 Analysis of current provision

5.1 The headline summary from the PPS Assessment Report is as follows:

- There are 29 (3G) pitches, 26 are available for community use and 13 are licensed by FA / FIFA for competitive adult play.
- When applying our population growth to 2035 within the supply and demand model, (135,000 more residents) the modelling indicates a requirement for a total of 19 3G pitches. Therefore today, Manchester already has an over-supply of 7 3G pitches. For the most part, this impacts on football provision with usage dispersed across the city and in many cases venues operating at below maximum capacity levels. Given this, in purely numerical terms, it is unlikely that using 3G pitches as mitigation to the loss of some playing fields would be supported unless new demand could be evidenced. A more detailed mitigation and exemption evidence base would be required.
- 25% of grass pitches are rated as poor quality and a number of sites also have poor quality changing provision which when these factors are combined have a detrimental impact to sports participation.
- Generally in quantity terms Manchester has enough facilities to serve current demand, however, for most sports the future demand for provision identified in Manchester can be overcome through maximising use of existing pitches through a combination of:
  - Improving pitch quality in order to improve the capacity of pitches to accommodate more matches.
  - Securing long term community use at school sites
- Only Rugby Union indicates a need for additional pitches (grass) to meet current demand, so where possible we should to develop new grass Rugby Union pitches.
- The PPS indicates we should protect, provide and enhance all facilities we current have and any loss of playing field land should be considered in the context of this Strategy, working closely with Sport England and meeting some of the recommendations of the PPS.

## **5.2 Sports Specific Analysis**

The Sports Specific summary from the PPS Assessment Report is as follows:

### **5.2.1 Football pitches**

- Currently there is minimal spare capacity across all football pitch types except adult football where spare capacity is more significant.
- When considering future demand, there will be shortfalls for all pitch types except adult pitches which evidence limited capacity to be retained in reserve.
- However, given the nature of mini and junior leagues in the area some of this future demand may be able to be accommodated on 3G pitches.

#### ***3G pitches***

- Supply and demand analysis highlights that Manchester is quantitatively appropriately served with regards to full sized 3G pitches for affiliated football team training. However, there is demand for greater use by rugby union teams, particularly for training.
- Use of 3G pitches for competitive matches which are not FA/FIFA certified is a key issue.
- It is recommended that greater certification of pitches be sought, both those which are presently used and those which are not but meet dimension criteria of the performance standard test, in order to increase available capacity for match play.
- Note: Further work is being undertaken as part of the Manchester Football Facility Plan to assess the need for 3G pitch provision including small sided and recreational forms of football participation. Housing growth scenarios is based solely on current and future 3G pitch requirements for affiliated football.

### **5.2.2 Cricket pitches**

- Overall there is sufficient supply of cricket pitches at present to cater for demand from clubs within Manchester at both senior and junior peak times.
- Future population increases and reported club demand indicate the need to accommodate an additional match equivalent session at senior peak time (12 matches per season). This is able to be accommodated within existing supply overall, however although there is availability on Sundays to accommodate planned increases in demand for the 2017, there is a need for access to additional capacity overall at both Alexandra Park and Didsbury Sports Ground.
- There is also considerable demand reported by LCB for increased provision for social, recreational and short format play. This includes demand from teams playing outside of the City but which are reported would return given the opportunity.

### **5.2.3 Rugby Union pitches**

- Current supply is not sufficient to cater for the level of demand expressed in Manchester at present, totalling a need for a further 9.75 match equivalent sessions on senior pitches. This is further exacerbated to create a future requirement for 20.25 match equivalent sessions.

#### **5.2.4 Rugby League**

- Overall, current demand for rugby league provision in Manchester can sufficiently be met by existing facilities, either grass or 3G pitches.
- Increased future demand can be accommodated on existing 3G pitches, based on a continuation of preference for play on 3G pitches amongst the majority of teams in Manchester.

#### **5.2.5 Hockey pitches (AGPs)**

- There is a need to retain all full sized hockey AGPs suitable for match play (regardless of availability) with maintained level of access due to pressures on capacity available to accommodate midweek training and recreational hockey, both at present and in light of future demand.

#### **5.2.6 Bowling greens**

- Whilst there is currently sufficient supply of outdoor bowling greens to accommodate current demand across Manchester, spare capacity exists within the existing supply of facilities. Given this the existing quantity of bowling greens to be reviewed in line with the demand analysis and the requirement to alleviate budgetary pressures. This is subject to consultation.

#### **5.2.7 Tennis courts**

- Based on LTA modelling and targets to reduce population to court ratios, there is insufficient supply of available outdoor floodlit courts both at present and in light of future population increases.

#### **5.2.8 Athletics**

- Existing supply of athletics tracks is sufficient to meet current demand for club use. Increases in future demand are likely due to population growth in the City and a growing market for running and fitness. Potential demand for track use is dependent on the nature of activity amongst new participants, whether club, group or recreationally based.

#### **5.2.9 Other sports**

##### **5.2.9.1 Lacrosse**

- Manchester Waconians is the only lacrosse club in the City, whilst both universities and Withington Girls School also play. Current demand is able to be catered for by existing provision, including access for English Lacrosse representative squads.

#### 5.2.9.2 Gaelic sports

- Regular season demand for Gaelic sports is able to be accommodated by existing supply of pitches; however, there is a requirement for greater access to suitable accompanying ancillary facilities. The Lancashire County Board highlights the key facility need for Gaelic sports to be a championship standard pitch on which representative fixtures are permitted to be played.

#### 5.2.9.3 Baseball / Softball

- Demand for softball can sufficiently be accommodated at present, though the league is growing and access to either increased provision or additional capacity per week at existing sites is likely to be required to facilitate continued growth.
- Demand for baseball is also able to be catered for, though the NGB is keen to increase participation and create a new club to generate increased and more localised competition.
- BaseballSoftballUK (BSUK) identifies Manchester to be of strategic significance and is keen to explore opportunities to develop a specialised softball/baseball facility in the City.
- BSUK identifies Manchester as of strategic importance nationally and has aspirations to both develop facilities and participation within the City. It identifies Hough End Playing Fields as potentially suitable site of sufficient size from which to grow both Softball and Baseball participation and would like to be involved as part of any future discussions which may take place regarding creation of a multi-sport hub.

#### 5.2.9.4 American football

- Manchester Titans American Football Club is seeking to identify facilities so it may relocate back to Manchester from Salford. The Club requires access to both grass and 3G pitch provision to accommodate training and match play.

### 6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The PPS currently evidences that for all pitch sports (as defined by the scope of this strategy) **current demand for pitch use is currently being met or there is a shortfall in pitch availability, except for Rugby Union which requires more pitches to meet playing needs.** In addition, some sports and some areas where demand for pitches is currently being met, in the future will require access to more pitches.
- 6.2 As such, there is a **need to protect all existing playing pitch provision until demand is met.** Some shortfalls can be reduced through increased access to existing provision, for example increased certification of 3G pitches for competitive football match play would create new capacity to reduce future grass pitch shortfalls currently unavailable due to compliancy.

6.3 For most sports the future demand for provision identified in Manchester can be overcome through maximising use of existing pitches through a combination of:

- Improving pitch quality in order to improve the capacity of pitches to accommodate more matches.
- The re-designation of pitches for which there is an oversupply.
- Securing long term community use at school sites.
- Working with commercial and private providers to increase usage.

6.4 Given the need to protect all existing playing fields until demand can be met, Manchester's population growth, housing growth, and education Growth, the Council is already working closely with Sport England to ensure that this strategic context is considered and that the optimum balance of meeting the needs of communities is achieved. The Playing Pitch Strategy, relationship with Sport England and the planning process provides the mechanism to this approach going forward.

6.5 Adopting the PPS will enable the Council to cement the framework for investment with stakeholders and enable the continued development of our playing field infrastructure.

## **7.0 Actions and Recommendations**

7.1 Following the detailed assessment undertaken and the development of a new vision and strategy for Manchester's playing pitches, the Council will work with National Governing Bodies of Sport and Sport England, over the next six months, through the vehicle of the Manchester Playing Pitch Strategy Steering Group, to develop a city wide site specific action plan. Once developed, it is recommended that the adoption of this action plan is delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) and the Director of Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure.

7.2 Based on the assessment of supply and demand, a number of sports specific recommendations have been made that can be found in appendix 1. Furthermore, a series of short term actions have been recommended that will make the biggest difference in playing pitch provision. These can be found in appendix 2. In addition the priorities for the Universities are set out in appendix 3.

## **8.0 Contributing to the Manchester Strategy**

### **(a) A thriving and sustainable city**

8.1 Sport and Leisure is a key economic driver within the city not only as an employer, but also in attracting inward investment to underpin a wide range of key sectors in the city.

### **(b) A highly skilled city**

- 8.2 The Sport and Leisure sector provides significant opportunities for training, development, apprenticeship programmes and volunteering. This contributes meaningfully to employment within the Manchester economy.

**(c) A progressive and equitable city**

- 8.3 Sport and Leisure services are at the core of neighbourhoods and they create significant opportunities for all communities within the city to engage actively and energetically.

**(d) A liveable and low carbon city**

- 8.4 Sport and Leisure provision has made a strong commitment to environmental sustainability through investment to modernise the estate. This is embedded within the management of the existing estate and the plans for the improvement of the playing pitches and changing rooms over the next five years.

**(e) A connected city**

- 8.5 The Sport and Leisure sector over the last twenty years has already invested significantly in new assets that have helped drive the city's growth agenda. The new Strategy seeks to deliver new high quality assets across the city that will continue to support our growth ambitions over the next decade.

**9.0 Key Policies and Considerations**

**(a) Equal Opportunities**

- 9.1 Where appropriate Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken.

**(b) Risk Management**

- 9.2 Where appropriate a risk management approach will be undertaken.

**(c) Legal Considerations**

- 9.3 There are no legal considerations arising from this strategy.

## APPENDIX 1

### SPORTS SPECIFIC RECCOMENDATIONS

#### Football - Recommendations – grass

- Existing quantity of football pitches to be protected, except for where low value/single pitch sites are considered suitable and feasible to be lost for development on the condition that re-provision of playing field land elsewhere represents a preferable and greater benefit to sport.
- Where pitches are overplayed and rated as standard or poor quality, prioritise investment and review maintenance regimes to ensure it is of an appropriate standard to sustain/improve pitch quality.
- Look to utilise actual spare capacity expressed on sites in order to cater for existing and future demand including overplay. This may require improvements to pitch quality and is explored on a site by site basis within the accompanying action plan.
- Consider potential for asset transfer or long term leasehold to clubs which are considered realistically able to sustain and maintain sporting provision as required, allowing for greater opportunities to access external funding streams for facility development.
- Seek to increase use of 3G pitches in order to increase capacity available to address future shortfalls and review impact on grass pitches as part of the PPS Annual Review.
- Determine sites with key qualitative issues which may benefit most from technical assessment and a composed bespoke programme of works through the FA Pitch Improvement Programme.
- Improve, provide and increase access to changing facilities which serve grass football pitches. Ensure any works ensure suitability for female and disability access to facilitate increased formats of football.
- Through the Capital Schools Programme, seek to secure community use through formal agreements should any new grass pitches be created at school sites.
- Ensure adequate provision for increased demand generated by housing developments, secured through appropriately calculated developer contributions.

#### Recommendations – 3G pitches

- Ensure current supply is maintained regularly and rigorously as required to ensure continued quality for use.
- Seek increased performance standard testing and certification of pitches which are not presently certified but which meet dimension criteria. Quantitatively, current supply of 3G pitches can sufficiently cater for affiliated football demand though increased certification of existing pitches is required in order to maximise availability of existing supply for competitive football. As a priority, this should include non-certified pitches presently used for match play such as Wright Robinson Sports College.
- Review quality of pitches and ensure they are of sufficient quality to pass testing or certification renewal.

- Should any new 3G pitches be built, seek to secure access through usage agreements where possible as a condition of partnership investment or planning conditions.
- Should any new 3G pitches be built, ensure they are constructed to required specifications and to meet FA recommended rather than minimum dimensions where land footprint allows, so to maximise opportunities for use for all formats of competitive play.
- Encourage providers to have a mechanism in place which ensures the long term sustainability of provision, such as sinking fund for repairs or resurfacing formed over time.
- Through the Capital Schools Programme, consider where any new 3G pitches which may be created in the primacy to cater for school use are able to also service community demand in the area.
- Consider possibilities to create multi-pitch (potentially multi-sport) hub sites where 3G provision is able to support grass pitches as a broader, sustainable, all-in-one community offer.
- Secure sufficient access to capacity to deliver non-formalised football participation, including for small sided football, walking football and partnership delivery through the likes of Council, Trust, Premier League and Community Foundation programmes.
- Secure increased capacity to allow for the establishment of new formats of competitive football, such as central venue midweek flexi and Vets leagues.
- Should any new 3G pitches be built, consider potential to certify for competitive use by sports additional to football as part of a shared scheme.
- Maximise use of existing and planned World Rugby compliant provision, both for training to reduce current levels of overplay and for matches to protect pitch quality, particularly through periods of notably poor weather.
- Ensure continued access to 3G provision for matches and training to facilitate the continued growth of rugby league, given the preference in the City for use of 3G surfaces.

### **Cricket - Recommendations**

- Existing quantity of cricket pitches to be protected.
- Deliver the new All Stars Cricket programme and seek to increase junior participation as a result. All but one club have registered to deliver the scheme in 2017.
- Seek to increase NTP provision in parks and public spaces to cater for the high level of recreational and short format demand, often expressed at non-peak times.
- Establish feasibility of creating additional capacity at Alexandra Park given existing overplay and demand for use of the site, including possible creation of new pitch provision and/or net training facilities.
- Drive delivery of the Street initiative to grow informal recreational participation and ensure access to appropriate facilities.
- Continue to deliver and develop talent development pathways, particularly including from South Asian communities



## Rugby Union - Recommendations

- Existing quantity of rugby pitches to be protected.
- As a priority, seek to test/register existing 3G pitches built to World Rugby compliant specifications as none presently feature on the RFU World Rugby certified pitch register<sup>4</sup>. Only where viable and demand is evidenced from clubs stating that they will pay and use these pitches should this be undertaken.
- Also as priority, renegotiate the current lease agreement at North Manchester RUFC due to expire in 2020 to secure long-term tenure for the Club, with a view to in turn making improvements to pitch quality and exploring feasibility to install pitch floodlighting.
- Seek to reduce overplay at Broughton Park RFC. This would be best achieved through a combination of qualitative improvements across all pitches as well additional floodlighting to grass pitches and transfer of some use to the small sized World Rugby compliant 3G pitch onsite (subject to recertification).
- Deliver the proposed new 3G pitch at Manchester Enterprise Academy to be World Rugby compliant. Secure access for Wythenshawe RUFC and develop club participation through links to the Academy.
- Renegotiate the lease at Didsbury Sports Ground to include the pitches at Brooms Edge and Fletcher Moss Gardens. In turn, remove the grid at Brooms Edge so the pitch can safely be used, whilst making qualitative improvements to both and exploring feasibility to install floodlighting.
- Seek to improve ancillary provision at Old Bedians Sports Club and explore potential to in future install additional floodlighting.
- Where any new 3G pitches may be built to World Rugby compliancy at school/Academy sites or through the Capital Schools Programme, consider use by clubs where required in order to manage usage levels of provision at club sites.
- The RFU highlights its following priorities for Manchester over the next 12 months:
  - Two new Casual/Vets teams
  - Two new Colts Teams
  - Establish intra-mural Sevens competition at MMU
  - Two teams from MMU entered into BUCS leagues whilst maintaining the development teams
  - Two new Campus League teams at The University of Manchester
  - Three new girls' teams
  - Creation of a new junior club to be formed in partnership with MMU
  - Establish inter-club Sevens and Touch events across clubs
  - Establish three new O2 Touch centres

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.englandrugby.com/governance/club-support/facilities-kit-and-equipment/artificial-surfaces/artificial-grass-pitches>

## **Rugby League - Recommendations**

- Ensure continued and increased access to 3G provision to facilitate the growth of rugby league in Manchester as one of the RFL's 'emerging affinity areas'.
- Support the development of rugby league at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) as one of its 'spotlight sports' and seek to create a second senior men's team.
- Seek RFL Community Standard performance standard testing of the already World Rugby compliant 3G pitch at Platt Lane Complex to ensure its suitability and regulation for contact rugby league practice/play.
- Address overplay at The Hough End Centre through increased access to additional capacity at alternative sites for Mancunians RL. This could include transfer of play and training to Platt Lane Complex (should it achieve RFL Community Standard certification) where the dual-code club now has rugby union use.
- Establish rugby league use of the RFL Community Standard 3G pitch at Broadhurst Park to develop participation and as possible additional capacity for Mancunians RL

## **Hockey - Recommendations**

- Retain all hockey suitable AGPs as hockey suitable surfaces.
- Establish opportunities to access additional capacity for hockey through hockey suitable AGPs which may be created as part of the Council's Capital Schools Programme. Should this happen, seek to secure community use for hockey through formal usage agreements.
- Increase participation driven through community clubs and schools (including new schools planned).
- Secure increased access to midweek and non-peak time capacity to allow for both growth in training demand and development and delivery of alternative hockey formats, such as short format matches/leagues and less formal participation based sessions.
- Maintain AGPs regularly and to the standard required to preserve quality for performance. Monitor quality and rate of natural deterioration and seek resurfacing when required so not to impact on hockey use, for example at Parrs Wood High School where the surface is in excess of the recommended lifespan and used for club/central venue league hockey.
- Encourage providers to put sinking funds (formed by periodically setting aside money over time ready for surface replacement when required) in place to maintain AGP pitch quality in the long term

## **Bowling - Recommendations**

- Existing quantity of bowling greens to be reviewed in line with the demand analysis and the requirement to alleviate budgetary pressures. This is subject to consultation.

- Seek to reduce levels of overplay on an individual site by site basis, considering potential for clubs to access secondary greens to alleviate overuse.
- Explore opportunities for asset transfer on a club by club basis where such club or organisation is seeking increased management responsibility, has sufficient resources and infrastructure and is realistically able to sustain the asset.
- Ensure continued rigorous maintenance of greens as required in order to sustain and improve quality.
- Maximise capacity available to provide sport and exercise opportunities for older residents particularly given the aging population.

### **Tennis - Recommendations**

- Retain existing court provision and ensure sustainability of sites through improving quality and maximising use through delivery of LTA initiatives and encouraging providers to make use of technology solutions.
- Continue to develop a strategic plan for short and long term facility investment into tennis in Manchester with the goal to transform the amount of floodlit and covered provision across a whole network of tennis delivery partners to ensure a coverage across the City according to demand and to plug gaps in provision.
- Develop Heaton Park as flagship hub park with floodlighting and covered canopy solution.
- Consider development of additional hub site at Debdale Park in partnership with the friends of group.
- Use Fletcher Moss as case study model to understand learnings and income levels from using an online managed access system with a mixture of free to use access alongside pay and play, membership and coaching. Take learnings to implement similar models across other parks to ensure financial sustainability into the future.
- Retain current hub parks by ensuring the sustainability of sites with appropriate maintenance of courts and sinking funds allocated for the long term. Enhance current hub parks to monitor utilisation levels through the Clubspark system whilst developing cost effective coaching delivery models to develop further demand and community use.
- Drive University participation in the City with a focus on strengthening income at Fallowfield Bowling & Lawn Tennis Club from university use by promoting a new online access system for student and community pay and play as a hybrid hub community offer.
- Look at ways to utilise and access courts at education venues to achieve access to tennis across the city to plug gaps in provision. Determine opportunities to access to secondary sites to support community tennis hub model with floodlit provision

### **Athletics - Recommendations**

- Improve track quality at both Wythenshawe Park and Boggart Hole Clough to improve performance for use as training venues, signposting to

Manchester Regional Arena as the central competition venue for athletics in Manchester.

- Undertake repair work to the track and floodlighting at Wythenshawe Park within the next 12 months, with a view to full resurfacing in future as part of a proposed whole site development which takes in other sports, cultural and open space provision.
- Similarly, as a priority improve quality and provision of changing facilities at Wythenshawe Park. In light of future proposals for redevelopment of the site, this could be through a new temporary facility in the short term or a new permanent structure as part of a proposed wider site development.
- Resurface the Manchester Regional Arena track by 2018 as planned in order to improve quality suitable for elite competition. Seek to subsequently host high profile events and capitalise on the raised interest in athletics associated.
- Explore opportunities for innovation through creation of non-traditional athletics provision, for example compact tracks or throwing walls. These may help to serve a school purpose and could potentially act as secondary provision for athletics clubs not able to access some field practice facilities at either Wythenshawe Park or Boggart Hole Clough

**Other Sports Recommendations - (Lacrosse, Baseball / Softball, Gaelic Sports, American Football)**

- Existing quantity of sport provision to be protected.

## Appendix 2

### Recommended Actions over the next 18 months

Based on the assessment of supply and demand, the following identifies a series of short term actions that will make the biggest difference in playing pitch provision. Many of these actions are subject to investment being obtained, largely through external funding being made available and relevant proposals being developed on a case by case basis. This will involve a number of sports clubs agreeing development plans with national governing bodies of sport.

- **Various** - Seek FA/FIFA certification of full sized pitches to increase capacity available for match play at peak time – may include need to improve quality to pass testing
  - **School Builds** - Determine mix of new sporting provision and secure access through Community Use Agreements (CUA) for community use.
  - **Wythenshawe Park** - Repair and then resurface track, improve ancillary and floodlighting quality.
  - **Hough End** - Progress discussions about developing the site as a hub, potentially linked to the Parklife scheme.
  - **Manchester Regional Arena** - Resurface both indoor and outdoor tracks as planned and seek to host more high profile elite events.
  - **Manchester Enterprise Academy** - Deliver new 3G pitch with WR compliancy and secure community use – maximising it for rugby to serve current shortfalls.
  - **Alexandra Park** - Seek to increase capacity through installation of a second Natural Turf Pitches (NTP) is feasible. Consider options to also create net training provision.
  - **Armitage Centre** - Replace the Firs Pavilion with new better quality, flexible function ancillary/changing provision – seek to secure internal funding.
  - **Merseybank Playing Fields** - Seek to develop a sustainable model for asset transfer with Fletcher Moss Rangers FC. Key need to improve changing provision though options to develop the site as a multi-sport hub should also be considered and the potential need to provide changing facilities for more than one sport.
  - **North Manchester Rugby Club** - As a matter of high priority, renegotiate the current lease agreement due to expire in 2020. The site is leased by the Council to the Co-Operative, then in turn sub-leased to north Manchester RUFC.
  - **Broughton Park Rugby Club** - Seek to improve pitch quality of the training pitch and reduce impact through increased access to World Rugby compliant 3G provision.
  - **Didsbury Sports Ground** - Renegotiate the lease with the Council to include pitches at Fletcher Moss Gardens and Brooms Edge
  - **Fletcher Moss Gardens** - Deliver installation of floodlighting to deliver the community tennis park hub model with digital access gate.
- MMU** - Determine potential strategic plans for increase in student demand and provision of required sports facilities – including potential creation of new or development of existing.

## APPENDIX 3

### University Key Strategic Priorities

#### University of Manchester

- Replace the dated, poor quality Firs Pavilion building with a modern facility which meets NGB specifications. To consider potential to include site staff offices, social space and opportunities for provision of food and beverages to community users.
- Deliver new student accommodation at the Armitage Centre site phased over a five year period which will increase footfall and potential for increased sport and exercise participation.
- Protect budget available for sport and facilities operation given other university investment priorities such as research development and student accommodation.
- Seek to increase summertime/post-season use of the Armitage Centre linked to planned development of new accommodation, such as for summer camps and coach education.
- Grow non-Athletic Union student participation as part of the university Sportivate programme, including innovative and flexible use of facilities to provide for varying demand and requirements.

#### Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU)

- Develop rugby league as one of five identified 'spotlight' sports, the only outdoor sport of the five. This includes creating a second Athletic Union rugby league team as well as developing partnership activity.
- Relocate education offer from Crewe to Manchester and provide sufficient access to sports provision for increased student demand.
- Investigate potential partnership opportunities in the Eastlands area and across the City further to the partnership with the Council which exists at Platt Lane. This should include opportunities to create new provision or identify sites to develop or extend existing facilities to accommodate increased demand.
- Following relocation, re-establish levels of Athletic Union demand to existing levels and grow in excess where possible.
- Ensure access to provision to accommodate not only Athletic Union demand but also for recreational and participation based student sport which is also likely to increase.