

Playing Pitch Strategy

2025 – 2041



Brighton & Hove
City Council

Contents

	Page
Abbreviations	3
Section 1 – Introduction and Background	4
Section 2 – The Study Area	10
Section 3 – Findings	19
Section 4 – Meeting the Needs (<i>‘How to’ Scenarios</i>)	35
Section 5 – Strategic Recommendations	41
Section 6 – Recommendations by Pitch Sport	45
Section 7 – Action Plan	48
Section 8 – Summary	55
<i>Appendices:</i>	
Appendix A – Assessment of Needs Report Cricket	
Appendix B – Assessment of Needs Report Football	
Appendix C – Assessment of Needs Report Hockey	
Appendix D – Assessment of Needs Report Rugby	
Appendix E – Club Consultation and Aspirations	
Appendix F – Existing Planning Policies	

Abbreviations

3G	Third Generation (artificial grass pitch)
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
ALS	Active Lives Survey
B&HCC	Brighton & Hove City Council
BACA	Brighton Aldridge Community Academy
BC	Borough Council
BME	British Minority Ethnic
CC	Cricket Club
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
COE	Church of England
CUA	Community Use Agreement
DC	District Council
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
FA	Football Association
FC	Football Club
FL	Football League
FTP	Fine Turf Pitch (Cricket)
HC	Hockey Club
IMD	Indices of Multiple Deprivation
LA	Local Authority
LED	Light Emitting Diode
LFFP	Local Football Facility Plan
LSOAs	Lower Layer Super Output Areas
LPA	Local Planning Agency
MES	Match Equivalent Sessions
MUGAs	Multi Use Games Areas
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NTP	Non Turf Pitch (Cricket)
OHID	Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
ONS	Office of National Statistics
PQS	Performance Quality Standard
PP	PitchPower
PPC	Playing Pitch Calculator
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
RAG	Red Amber Green
RC	Roman Catholic
RFL	Rugby Football League
RFU	Rugby Football Union
RFC	Rugby Football Club
SCF	Sussex Cricket Foundation
SD	Sand Dressed (Hockey)
SE	South East
S106	Section 106
U	Under
WRC	World Rugby Compliant

1. Introduction – Brief, Scope, Vision and Aims

1.1 Background

- a. Brighton & Hove City Council are committed to ensuring residents have sufficient access to high quality sport and leisure facilities. As part of the council's overall strategic planning for sport they commissioned Continuum Sport and Leisure to lead on the production of a new Playing Pitch Strategy 2025 – 2041 (PPS), replacing the previous 2016 PPS. Consistent with the previous strategy this PPS includes analysis and review of facility supply, demands, accessibility and availability for the four primary playing pitch sports of Cricket, Football, Hockey and Rugby.
- b. The leading priorities set out in this study aim to complement the findings of the 2021 Sports Facilities Investment Plan and the 2024 'Let's Get Moving' physical activity and sport strategy provide a clear direction for improvements to the sport and physical activity infrastructure throughout the City.
- c. This strategy has been agreed by all the key playing pitch strategy National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of sport in partnership with Sport England. Each local authority in the country is encouraged to produce this evidence base to inform future decisions regarding the demand and supply of existing and new playing pitches in a given area. The strategy document informs an action plan which details potential facility developments based on the demand and supply analysis. This action plan will be reviewed and amended, in partnership with stakeholders and the Strategy Steering Group where necessary on an annual basis.
- d. The supply side information contained in the strategy is generated through standard facility audits used for all levels of facility from parks to elite sport, with findings then validated by the relevant NGB of that sport. The demand side information is generated from surveys of current and potential users including local sports clubs as well as club and team data provided by the relevant governing bodies of sport and facility booking records where available. The council's Planning Policy, Healthy Lifestyles team, City Parks, and Leisure Contracts Service have provided context and a local perspective on the overarching vision and principles driving the strategy and the outcome objectives.
- e. The resulting action plan is a guide on how enhanced and new facilities might be developed, pending viability testing, funding confirmation and planning permission where necessary, where they might be developed and the lead organisation to meet identified demand, address opportunities that may arise and provide sustainable management and operational models. Often projects are delivered through the council or the sport's governing body engaging with voluntary, education or commercial partners. Each potential project identified in the action plan will be reviewed and re-evaluated considering the situation at the time. The strategy and action plan provide a 'snapshot' of the position at the time of writing. Factors on both the demand and supply side may have changed as well as the cost and viability of the project at the point when an individual project is being considered during the life of the strategy.
- f. When applying for funding to develop new facilities or improve current facilities, Sport England, NGBs, and most other funding organisations, require evidence of the current demand and supply of facilities in an area to justify the proposed project. This strategy- developed and agreed in partnership with these same organisations- is the document that provides this information on playing pitches and ancillary facilities and is vital to the success of any funding bid.
- g. Through the implementation of this strategy, the council has a leading role to play in enabling access to sporting opportunities at a cost that is acceptable to the wider community. Rottingdean Parish Council, the only parish Council in the City, has a supporting role to play in the provision of casual

football pitches and community access park tennis courts. Although they are not directly responsible for the provision and maintenance of the pitches in their Parish Council, they provide support to the clubs in the area.

- h. The council play a leading role in developing better quality facilities by engaging and empowering community organisations through the asset transfer process to independently manage and operate existing and new facilities.

1.2 Why the strategy has been developed

- a. Alongside the need for the council to ensure an up-to-date evidence base and need within the local plan, the purpose of the strategy is to support the council's overarching principles of positively shaping the future of Brighton & Hove. A key part of the future provision is the council's important direct and indirect contribution to improving health and increased physical activity levels of Brighton & Hove residents. The strategy will assist in establishing how to best meet the current and future health and wellbeing needs of Brighton & Hove's community clubs, organisations, and residents, contributing to the priority of making the City of Brighton & Hove a better place to live and work.
- b. The council's main rationales for producing this updated strategy and associated action plan are detailed below:
 - To evaluate the current quantity, quality and accessibility (including disability, gender, youth etc) of playing pitches in Brighton & Hove
 - To assess the future needs of playing pitches over the plan period.
 - To provide a robust and up to date assessment of sports pitch provision in the City to assist with future City-wide development plans
 - To provide up to date strategic evidence of need in the prioritisation and implementation of playing pitch development projects.

1.3 Vision and key deliverables

- a. The vision for the Brighton & Hove Playing Pitch Strategy is to provide an assessment of the needs for playing pitches, management of public parks, and opportunities for new provision. The assessment should identify specific needs and quantitative and/ or qualitative deficits or surpluses of playing pitches across Brighton & Hove.
- b. The key deliverables of the Brighton & Hove Playing Pitch Strategy are as follows:
 - Assess current sport pitch provision by reviewing existing supply and demand through site audits and stakeholder consultation.
 - Identify future demands aligned to population growth, housing projections and strategic needs of sport, health and wellbeing outlined in the Local Development Plan.
 - Provide strategic sport by sport recommendations for improvements, maintenance, and development (Protect/ Enhance/ Provide).
 - Provide strategy recommendations with site specific action plans addressing key issues.
 - Identify supply and demand for facility type either changing rooms, toilets or clubhouse/ café.
 - Note specific locations for accessible, women and girls or youth demand for facilities.
 - Provide site prioritisation list for future enhancements or additional provisions required for BHCC community use pavilions.

1.4 The approach to developing the strategy

- a. The strategy aims to be robust, based on local needs (currently and projections to 2041), and deliverable. This objective is assured by adhering to the 'ten steps' advocated in the current Sport

England’s ‘Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance’ and the ‘Assessing needs and opportunities guide for indoor and outdoor sports facilities’. This guidance is detailed below.

Figure 1.1 - Ten stage approach to a PPS



- Stage A** - Step 1: Prepare and tailor the approach.
- Stage B** - Step 2: Gather supply information and views.
- Stage C** - Step 3: Gather demand information and views.
- Stage D** - Step 4: Understand the situation at individual sites.
- Step 5: Develop the current and future pictures of provision.
- Step 6: Identify the key findings and issues.
- Stage E** - Step 7: Develop the recommendations and action plan.
- Step 8: Write and adopt the strategy.
- Step 9: Apply and deliver the strategy.
- Step 10: Keep the strategy robust and up to date.

- b. This 10 step approach is split into 5 key stages of the strategy process. This report covers stages A – D, with Stage E, the application, delivery, and renewal of the strategy, being the responsibility of the council, with support from the playing pitch NGBs, Sport England, and wider funding partners.
- c. In accordance with the national guidance for the development of playing pitch strategies, section 3 of the Brighton & Hove PPS sets out the findings of the assessment of needs for playing pitch facilities in the study area, both currently and in the future.
- d. The findings are presented in summary format and should be read in conjunction with separate appendices for each playing pitch sport (Appendices A – D). These documents provide the findings of the detailed research and consultation undertaken to ensure that the facility needs findings summarised in section 3 are fully robust.
- e. Section 4 of this PPS sets a range of potential future change scenarios (e.g., loss of key playing pitch sites, new provision, substantial population growth in a particular area) and strategic scenarios for

addressing identified needs (e.g., change of use from one pitch sport or pitch surface to another, greater community use of education playing pitches).

- f. The PPS scenarios considered have emerged from discussion with the members of the Brighton & Hove Playing Pitch Strategy Steering Group and inform the policy recommendations (section 5) and action plan that follows in section 7.
- g. Strategy concludes with recommendations for the protection and enhancement of existing facilities and for the provision of new facilities, where considered necessary, to address identified current or future needs to 2041.

National policy adherence

- h. There is also a need to adhere to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Para 103 of the NPPF 2024 states: *“Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate”*.
- i. Sport England’s guidance highlights the importance of undertaking detailed assessments of sports facility needs and the benefits of sports and physical activity within local authority areas (as well as considering the range of possible options and scenarios for meeting priority needs and achieving positive outcomes identified through this process), before making recommendations for future action. Specifically, the guidance recommends that local authorities:
 - 1. *Recognise and give significant weight to the benefits of sport and physical activity.*
 - 2. *Undertake, maintain and apply robust and up-to-date assessments of need and strategies for sport and physical activity provision, and base policies, decisions and guidance upon them.*
 - 3. *Plan, design and maintain buildings, developments, facilities, land and environments that enable people to lead active lifestyles.*
- j. The guidance published by Sport England also advocates that strategic recommendations and action planning consider the following hierarchy of needs:
 - 1. **Protect** existing sports facilities where these are sustainable and continue to perform a valuable role in meeting community needs.
 - 2. **Enhance** existing facilities that meet these criteria but need improvement to continue to be of value; and, lastly,
 - 3. **Provide** new or extended facilities where there is found to be substantial unmet needs currently or predicted for the future.

1.5 Tailoring the approach- Which sports to include?

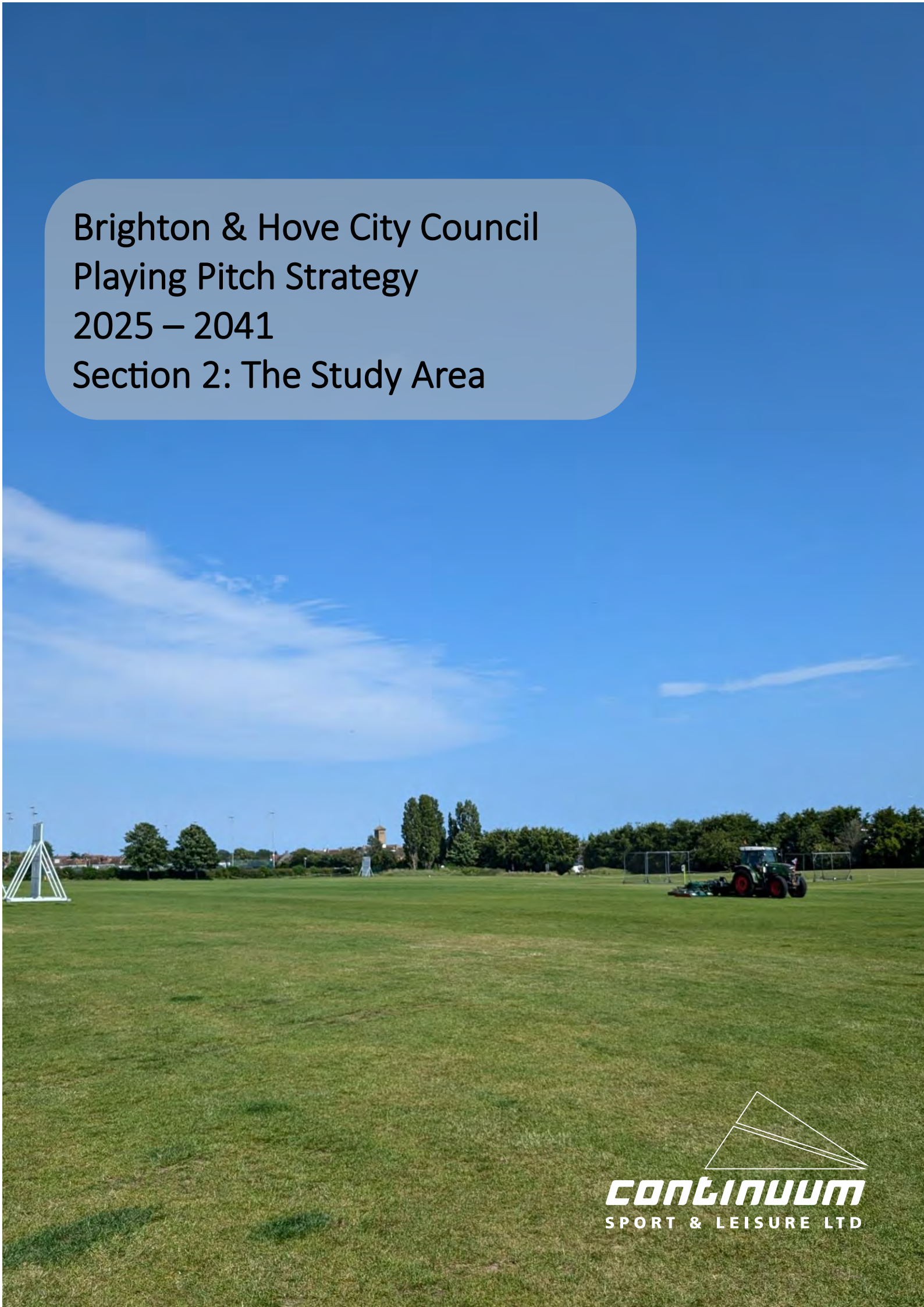
- a. The council agreed that the playing pitch sports facilities to be included in the strategy are:
 - Football
 - Rugby (Union & League)
 - Cricket
 - Hockey
 - Other playing pitch sports
- b. Within these sports and facilities, the strategy seeks as far as is practicable, to include consideration of all forms of play, whether:

- Club and league based (formal) play and training (including reference to indoor nets for cricket),
- Less formal programmed forms of the respective sports (e.g., friendly and recreational game formats outside the sport’s governing bodies affiliated structures), and
- Un-programmed play by groups of residents, workers, students out of school.

1.6 Management and delivery

- a. The development of the strategy has been managed by the Brighton & Hove Playing Pitch Strategy Steering Group. Internal stakeholders within the steering group include representatives from Brighton & Hove Council’s Sport and Leisure, Parks, Sports Facilities, Public Health and Planning teams.
- b. The external stakeholders included in the Steering Group are made up of representatives from Sport England, Football Foundation, Sussex Football Association, England Rugby, England Hockey, Sussex Cricket Foundation, England & Wales Cricket Board, and Continuum Sport & Leisure Ltd, the consultants appointed to co-ordinate the strategy development to the point of the recommendations and action plan.
- c. As part of the process the consultant team also consulted with the following other National Governing Bodies: Rugby Football League, and American Football.

Brighton & Hove City Council
Playing Pitch Strategy
2025 – 2041
Section 2: The Study Area

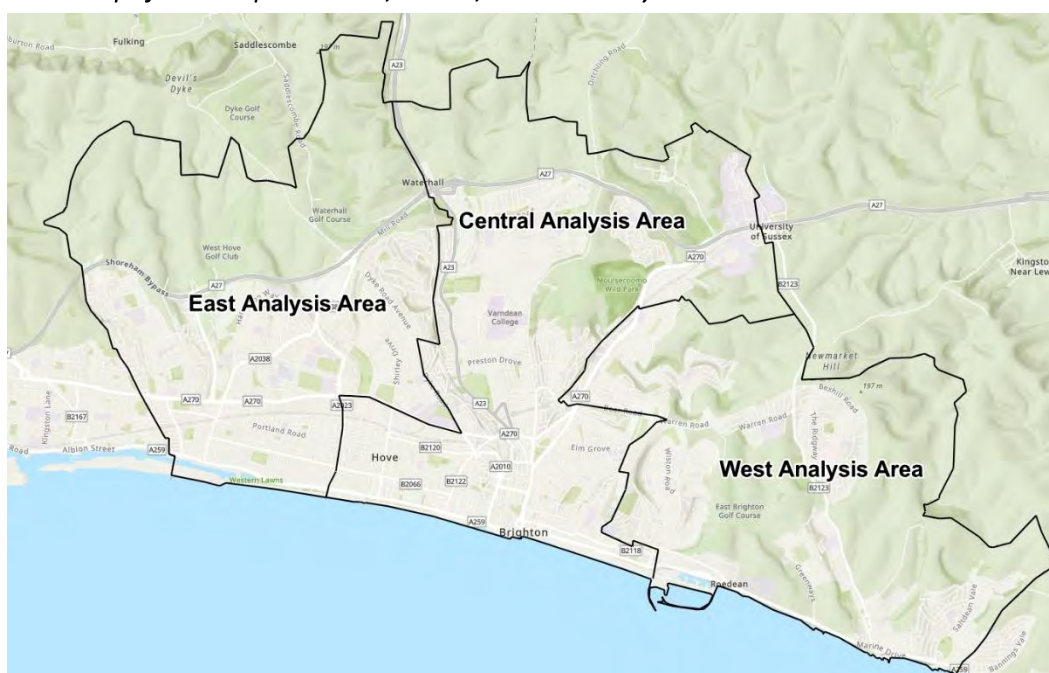


2. The Study Area

2.1 The extent of the study area

- a. The study area will cover the entirety of Brighton & Hove, as well as the University of Brighton and University of Sussex sport campuses which are located just outside of the city boundaries but are used by clubs and residents in the city. As an important part of the Strategy will be to identify future need for pitch provisions based on population growth and areas of housing growth as identified in the ongoing development of the new Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Throughout the strategy, the study area is split into East, Central, and West analysis areas to match with the split of the City in the previous 2016 Local Plan.

Figure 2.1 – Map of B&HCC split into East, Central, and West analysis sub-area



- b. There are also sports teams from inside Brighton & Hove that use facilities outside the City boundary as well as teams from neighbouring local authority areas that use facilities in Brighton & Hove. This cross-boundary movement has been taken into consideration when considering future needs for each particular sport both in terms of specialist and strategic facilities that serve a sub-regional catchment area, and the local community sporting needs for Brighton & Hove residents

2.2 Tailoring the approach- What makes the study area different?

- a. In tailoring the approach, it is important to understand the following unique aspects of the area.
 - Brighton & Hove is largely urban in character, with a built-up seafront and City centre, but does include some areas of rural land, particularly in the north and east of the City.
 - 44% of the City is part of the South Downs National Park and is protected.
 - Brighton & Hove were reported to have the highest proportion of physically active residents of any local authority in the country¹.
 - The council is committed to helping to improve welfare and wellbeing, as demonstrated in the council's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2019-2030). Sport has an important part to play in welfare and wellbeing, with access to sport facilities, and suitability of sports facilities for all

¹ Sport England Active Lives Adult Survey, November 22-23

is an important consideration, including minority groups, those with disabilities, females and the older generation.

- Brighton & Hove City Council, Healthy Lifestyles team have set up a Club Development Network to ensure clubs have a direct line of contact with the Council, and vice versa. Other subgroups formed as part of 'Let's Get Moving' are: Children and Young People's Alliance, Active Ageing Alliance and Active Environments.

Population profile and growth

- b. Any playing pitches or ancillary facilities which are developed from the study will need to meet the needs of Brighton & Hove's future populations as well as its current population. Figure 2.2 summarises the most up to date population projections which are available for Brighton & Hove. These projections are from 2022 to 2041 and demonstrates that Brighton & Hove's population is projected to grow by 4.5% from 2022 to 2041, this is lower than the national average of 7.1%. Although the projected population increase is lower than the national average, an increase of over 12,000 residents will greatly increase the demand for sport and recreation pitches in the City.

Figure 2.2 Population projection for Brighton & Hove 2022 – 2041 (B&HCC strategic housing market assessment)

	2022 Population	2041 Population	% increase
Brighton & Hove	280,187	292,683	4.5%
England*	57,282,105	61,353,965	7.1%

* ONS population projections

Health

- c. It is useful to understand the health profile of Brighton & Hove both in regard to identifying health issues which new or improved facilities can contribute to addressing and with regards to understanding the propensity of a local population to be active. Brighton & Hove's Local Authority Health Profile (statistics ranging from 2019 to 2022) states that the health of residents is comparable to the national average.
- d. Figure 2.3 provides an overview of the performance of Brighton & Hove across several Department of Health key health indicators in comparison with regional and national averages. Where figures for Brighton & Hove are highlighted in red, they are worse than the national average, where they are highlighted green, they are better, and where they are orange, they are comparable. This shows that Brighton & Hove performs well in comparison to the national averages for both childhood and adult obesity rates and comparably for life expectancy.

Figure 2.3 Table of health indicators in Brighton & Hove, East Sussex, and England (OHID LA health profiles)

	Brighton & Hove	East Sussex	England
% Obese children (Year 6) (2023/24)	15.2	18.1	23.4
% Obese or Overweight adults (2022/23)	57.3	62.7	63.8
Life expectancy: male (2022)	79.2	79.1	79.3
Life expectancy: female (2022)	83.0	82.9	83.2
Under 75 mortality: all causes (2023)	347.1	342.7	341.6
Under 75 mortality: cardiovascular (2023)	60.5	65.6	77.4
Under 75 mortality: cancer (2023)	128.2	118.4	120.8

- e. It is vital that there is a sufficient supply of good quality community playing pitches so they can help contribute to maintaining the positive indicators reported and improving poor health indicators. Sport England research has found that increased physical activity can help reduce the risk of developing a range of negative health risks, therefore providing ample supply of accessible, high-quality sports pitches is essential to protecting the health of Brighton & Hove residents.

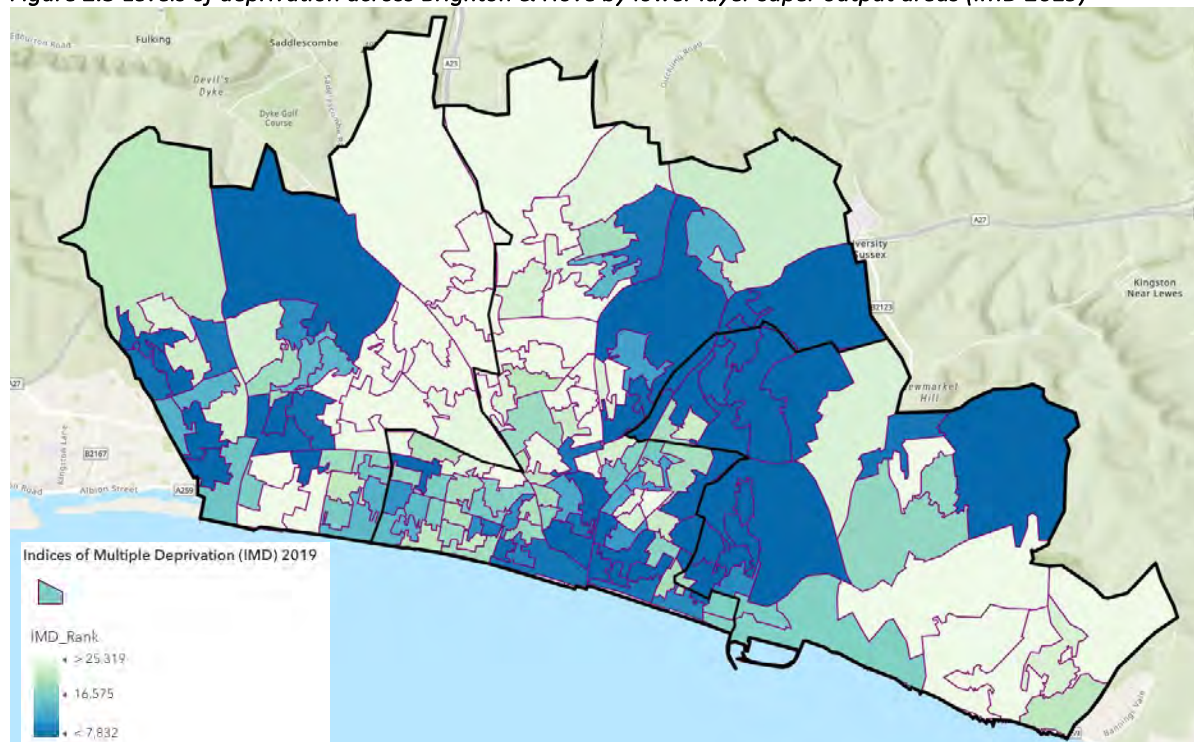
Deprivation

- f. Deprivation and the social and economic factors behind the figures directly affect the propensity and ability of the catchment population to access and use facilities and be active. Investment into community sports facilities can also form an important element of the regeneration of deprived areas and provide more accessible opportunities for movement and physical activity. An awareness of how deprivation affects a local population can also influence how activities are delivered and what type of initiatives are launched to increase participation.
- g. Figure 2.4 illustrates Brighton & Hove’s deprivation rank against other areas within the region for the years 2015 and 2019. As shown on the table, Brighton & Hove’s deprivation rank has improved from 2015 to 2019 (where rank 1 is most deprived), signalling an improved state of deprivation in the area over the past 4 years. That being said, Brighton & Hove is the most deprived local authority of all surrounding local authorities.

Figure 2.4 Brighton & Hove and neighbouring areas deprivation rank (ONS English indices of deprivation 2019, ONS English indices of deprivation 2015)

	IMD 2015	IMD 2019
Brighton & Hove	109	140
Lewes	201	194
Mid Sussex	321	311
Adur	150	164
Worthing	172	174

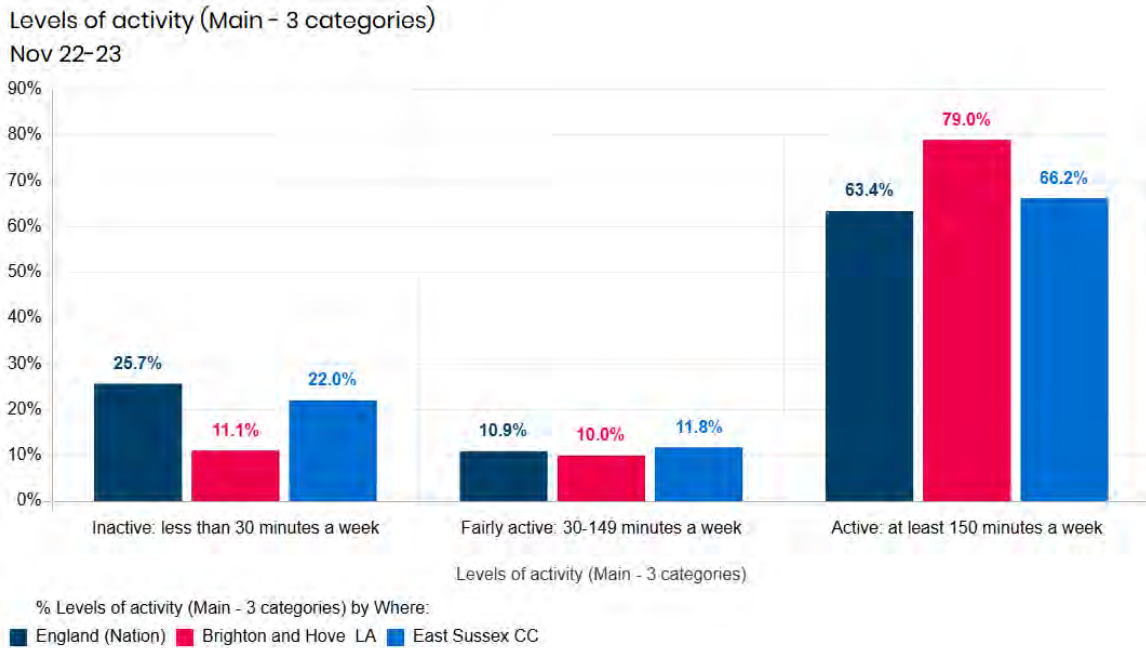
- h. Figure 2.5 shows a map of Brighton & Hove split up into analysis sub areas and Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) with different colours outlining their relative Index of Multiple Deprivation (The darker blue areas are the most deprived Local Super Output Areas, whilst light green are the least deprived). Understanding the most deprived areas of Brighton & Hove is helpful in knowing the neighbourhoods which may have the most difficulties accessing sport and leisure facilities due to their lack of resources. The most deprived areas on the map are within Hangleton and Knoll, Whitehawk, and Moulsecoomb. These are neighbourhoods to consider when looking at the development of sports facilities and initiatives to increase participation and accessibility.

Figure 2.5 Levels of deprivation across Brighton & Hove by lower layer super output areas (IMD 2019)

How does the population participate?

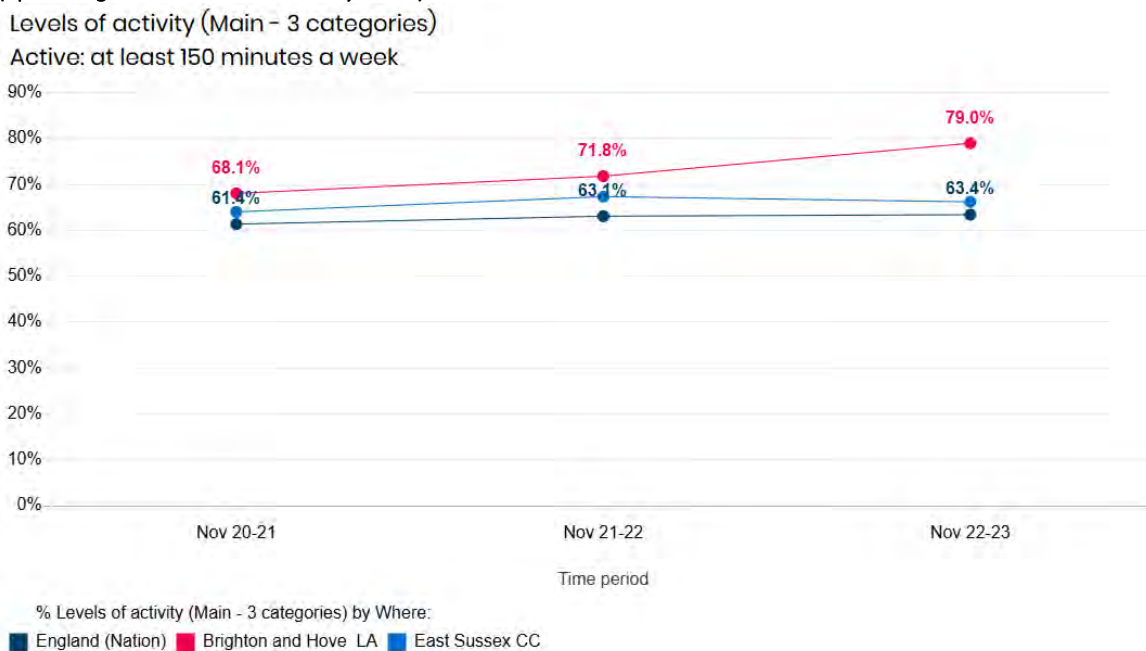
- i. Sport England's Active Lives Survey provides a comprehensive assessment of physical activity and sports participation at a local authority, county, regional and national level. Active Lives measures a range of performance indicators including activity rates, indoor and outdoor activity, and satisfaction with local sports provision. Active Lives also provides analysis of activity across a range of demographics including, gender, deprivation levels and age.
- j. Figure 2.6 outlines the percentage of the population of Brighton & Hove, East Sussex, and Nationally who are physically active (150+ minutes per week), fairly active (30-149 minutes per week), and inactive (less than 30 minutes per week). The graph shows that Brighton & Hove reports significantly more active residents (79.0%) than the county average (66.2%) and national average (63.4%). An activity rate of 79.0% makes Brighton & Hove, the most active Local Authority in the country, suggests that residents in Brighton & Hove have a very high propensity for physical activity and are more active than all other local authorities in the region. Physical activity rates may increase following the development of new or improved playing pitches.

Figure 2.6 Activity levels in Brighton & Hove, East Sussex County Council and England 2022-23
(Sport England Active Lives survey 2023)



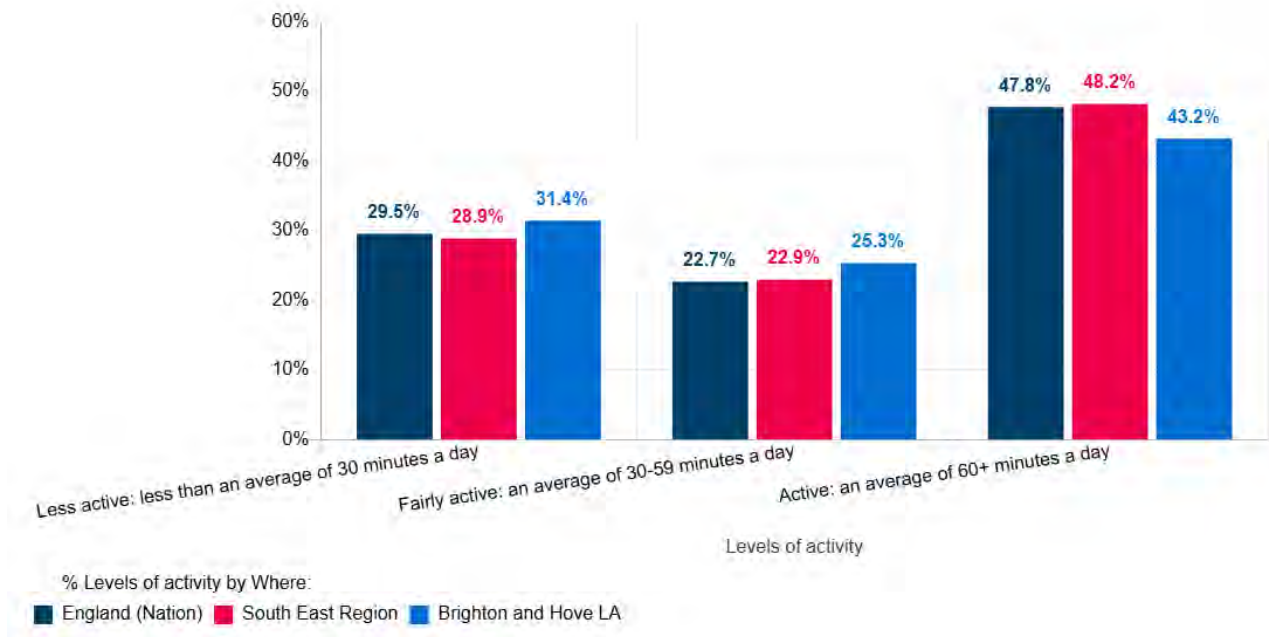
- k. Figure 2.7 shows that Brighton & Hove reported a significant increase in physically active residents from November 2020-21 to 2022-23, recording a 10.9% increase in active adults, which is significantly greater than both county and national average. This suggests that there is an increased propensity to exercise and remain physically active in Brighton & Hove, which should be capitalised on in the Playing Pitch Strategy.

Figure 2.7 Activity Levels in Brighton & Hove, East Sussex County Council and England between 2020 - 2023
(Sport England Active Lives survey 2023)



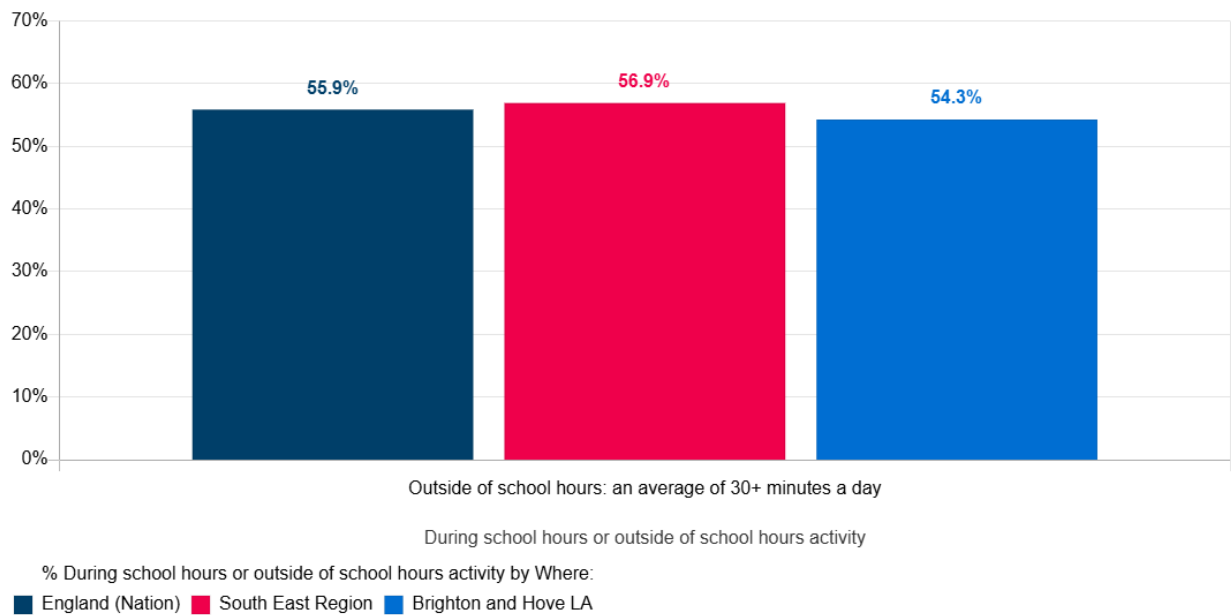
- l. Children’s physical activity rates in Brighton & Hove have dropped below the regional and national average in the last year with the proportion of physically active children in area (43.2%) lower than the regional (48.2%) and national (47.8%) rates (figure 2.8).

Figure 2.8 Levels of children’s physical activity (Sport England Active Lives survey Academic Year 23-24)



m. The majority of children’s physical activity outside of school hours in Brighton & Hove takes place outdoors at 54.3% (figure 2.9). This proportion is just below the rates in the South East Region (56.9%) and the national average (55.9%). This highlights the importance of providing and maintaining high quality community outdoor sports facilities, including playing pitches, in ensuring children can be physically active.

Figure 2.9 Children’s physical activity outdoor out of school hours (Sport England Active Lives survey Academic Year 23-24)



2.3 Trends in participation in pitch sports

- a. Nationally, Sport England's latest Active Lives Survey (ALS) data report published in April 2024 and covering the 12 months from November 2022 to November 2023 shows that self-reported regular participation (i.e., taking part at least twice in the last 28 days) in the leading playing pitch sports in England by adults (aged 16+) has recovered to pre covid levels and in some sports continuing to grow.
- b. **Football** – recovered to pre covid levels of 4.4% in 2021/22 and has continued to grow to 4.6% in 2022/23, which is higher than levels previously recorded in 2017/18 at 4.5%. The highest level of participation recorded was in 2015/16 at 5.2% and 2016/17 at 5.0%. The FA's insight shows that youth football is growing at an average of 3.09% per annum. Section 4 looks at a number of scenarios including (4.6) a significant increase in demand by an age group or sport.
- c. **Cricket** – has declined slightly in the last year from 0.8% in 2022/23, its highest level of participation, to pre covid levels of 0.7%. Generally excluding 2019/20 and 2020/21 due to Covid, regular adult cricket participation has been consistent at 0.7%.
- d. **Rugby Union** – has recovered to pre covid levels of 0.5% in 2022/2023 an increase from 0.4% in 2021/22. The highest level of participation recorded was in 2015/16 and 2016/17 at 0.6%.
- e. **Hockey** – returned to pre covid levels of 0.3% in 2020/21 and has continued to grow to 0.4% in 2022/23, matching its highest level of participation previously recorded in 2015/16.
- f. In the eight years since the last update of the playing pitch strategy in Brighton & Hove, there has been significant changes in the local picture of both pitch supply and pitch demand including the successful delivery of a number of playing pitch project priorities identified.
- g. On the supply side, for **cricket** the level of fine turf provision remains the same, but there has been a reduction in the number of NTP's available for community use in the area. There are plans in place with Sussex cricket for the provision of 3 new NTP's to be provided for the City.
- h. For **football** there has been significant additional provision across the area with new full sized 3G AGPs at Hove Park School (2021), Patcham High School (2021), the University of Sussex (2019) and Portslade Sports Centre as well as a 70x31m 3G AGP at Hove Park (2018) with LED sports lighting installed in 2021. In addition, the AGPs at Stanley Deason Leisure Centre, and the 60x40m 3G AGP at the University of Sussex have all been resurfaced. There are also 4 new small-sided 3G AGP's at Withdean Sports Complex and a full-size pitch at Cardinal Newman School being completed ready for the 24/25 season.
- i. There has been some change to grass **football** pitch provision with new youth grass pitches developed at Happy Valley Rec. ground, improvements to pitch maintenance at Aldrington Rec ground (Wish Park), Greenleas Rec ground, Happy Valley Rec ground and Nevill Playing Fields and at the time of reporting the youth pitches at Mile Oak Rec ground and one of the adult pitches at Nevill Playing Fields were being renovated.
- j. For the sport of **hockey**, the sports lighting at Stanley Deason Leisure Centre and both hockey pitches at Blatchington Mill School were upgraded in 2023 and 2024 respectively but there has been a loss of one full sized pitch in the area.
- k. For **rugby union** there are fewer senior grass pitches available across the area but improvements have been made to the two senior pitches at Hove Rugby Club to increase the carrying capacity of

the pitches. The 3G pitch at Brighton Rugby Club is no longer World Rugby Compliant (WRC), meaning no contact rugby can take place.

- l. With regard to demand for playing pitches, in the case of **cricket**, whilst there has been a decrease in the number of clubs in the area the number of teams have increased from 92 to 149 teams. The number of adult male teams have increased by 23 teams (a 52% increase), there are an additional 5 women's teams (+250%) and 7 mixed teams, a category not previously recorded in the last Playing Pitch Strategy. The number of youth teams has also grown with an additional 16 boy's teams (+40%) and 6 girl's teams (+100%).
- m. **Football** demand in the City has increased to 326 teams since the previous audit in 2016 when 260 affiliated teams were registered in the City, an increase of 66 teams. There has been a reduction in adult male teams (-12) and an increase in adult female teams (+19 teams, including small sided), youth football (+22) and mini soccer (+37) teams.
- n. With regard to **hockey**, Brighton & Hove HC is a large well established community club and they report a growth in playing membership.
- o. The community **rugby union** clubs in Brighton & Hove are well established and support large playing memberships and multiple teams. There has been a reduction in the number of adult male teams since 2016 but a large increase in the number of age grade teams (+ 11) and mixed mini squads (+12).

Brighton & Hove City Council
Playing Pitch Strategy
2025 – 2041
Section 3: Findings and Facility Needs



3 Findings and Facility Needs

- a. Detailed Assessment of Needs reports were undertaken for each of the 4 key playing pitch sports, which assessed the current supply, demand, and future needs for facilities across the City. These reports are summarised in this section, leading to conclusions on playing pitch needs. These reports (covering Stages B and C of Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance) and supporting site-specific audit reports have been checked and challenged by representatives of the relevant sport's governing bodies and are appended as follows:
 - Appendix A: Cricket- Assessment of Need Report
 - Appendix B: Football- Assessment of Need Report
 - Appendix C: Hockey- Assessment of Need Report
 - Appendix D: Rugby- Assessment of Need Report
- b. This chapter provides an overall summary of supply, planned and proposed changes to supply, current and latent demand, covering the following leading questions as part of the Playing Pitch Strategy methodology.
 - What are the main characteristics of the **current** supply of and demand for provision?
 - Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet **current** demand?
 - Is the provision that is accessible of sufficient quality and appropriately maintained?
 - What are the main characteristics of the **future** supply and demand for provision?
 - Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet **future** demand?

3.1 Club consultation

- a. To understand the current landscape of clubs in Brighton & Hove, the demand and issues facing each specific sport covered within the strategy, data was collected from a survey which was distributed to the playing pitch sports clubs in the City. By analysing the data, it provides insight into whether the current level of provision for sport and physical activity is meeting the demands of these sports, the existing and latent demand for growth as well as potential priority project developments. A summary of the results of the club survey is provided below. 51 individual sports clubs responded to the invitation to complete the survey. Figure 3.1 below shows the team response rate for affiliated clubs of each key playing pitch sport identified in the strategy brief.

Figure 3.1 Team response rate for affiliated clubs of each steering group sport

Sport	Response rate
Football	83%
Rugby Union	100%
Hockey	100%
Cricket	95%

- b. The club survey also received responses from wider playing pitch sports clubs, including:
 - American Football
 - Australian Rules Football
 - Baseball
 - Outdoor Fitness and Training
 - Gaelic Football
 - Rugby League
 - Softball
- c. A summary of findings from the club consultation process is provided in figure 3.2 below.

Figure 3.2 Summary of the club survey findings

Statement	% of total club responses	Impact and considerations
The club has more teams or active members than 3 years / seasons ago	62.75%	Two thirds of clubs report an increase in active members, suggesting a significant increase in demand for pitches and ancillary facilities over the last 3 years.
The club have plans to grow in the next 3 seasons	86.00%	Nearly all of the clubs surveyed have plans to increase their number of teams or members over the next 3 years, which could further increase demand for pitches and ancillary facilities.
The current facilities are not sufficient to meet demand for the club's training	61.22%	There is a need for further facilities to support club training. This may include additional floodlit pitch provision, AGP availability, or practice facilities such as cricket nets.
The current facilities are not sufficient to meet demand for the club's match play	54.90%	More than half the surveyed clubs do not have sufficient access to pitches to meet their demand for matches.
There is a need to change or improve the playing pitch facilities used by the club to sustain or grow the club	89.90%	Almost 90% of clubs feel they need to improve or change their playing pitches to sustain or grow their club, suggesting the growth of community sport in Brighton & Hove may be stunted if playing pitch facilities aren't supported.
There is a need to change or improve the clubhouse and/or changing room facilities used by the club to sustain or grow the club	75.00%	Three quarters of clubs feel that their supporting facilities aren't suitable to sustain or grow the club. These ancillary facilities are important for providing inclusive, safe, sports facilities for all.
The club rate the playing pitch facilities as 'average' quality or worse	67.35%	Over two thirds of clubs believe the quality of playing pitch facilities are either 'average' or worse quality, suggesting that improvements to maintenance and programming may be needed.

3.2 Changes since the last strategy

Clubs and teams

- a. In terms of expressed demand, the main changes since the last assessment is the continued growth in playing pitch sports at community sports clubs by children (including girls, most particularly in the younger age groups) at the City’s leading cricket, football, hockey and rugby clubs. There has also been an increase in demand among adults for opportunities to play pitch sports recreationally outside the traditional sports club model, including participation in less formal small-sided games and shorter formats.
- b. In terms of sports clubs and teams, the current picture of demand in the City in comparison with the position in 2016 is shown in figure 3.4 below. All the pitch sports have seen growth in overall numbers and diversity of teams although several of the smaller football and cricket clubs have folded (some due to the pandemic) and there has been a fall in the number of adult men’s teams in football and rugby. Cricket has seen a growth across all formats of the game and hockey has seen growth in adult and youth girls teams. The fall in adult men’s teams is outstripped by growth in women and girls and mixed provision in football and rugby.

Figure 3.4 – Community demand for pitches and sites

	Teams					Clubs			
		2016	2024	Change		2016	2024	Change	
Cricket	Mens / Mixed	44	74	+30	Cricket	25	17	-8	
	Womens	2	7	+5		Football	83	65	-18
	Youth Boys / Mixed	40	56	+16		Hockey	3	3	0
	Youth Girls	6	12	+6		Rugby	2	2	0
Football	Mens / Mixed	83	71	-12					
	Womens	5	24	+19					
	Youth Boys / Mixed	108	104	-4					
	Youth Girls	13	39	+26					
Hockey*	Mens / Mixed	8	13	+5					
	Womens	6	13	+7					
	Youth Boys / Mixed**	5	5	0					
	Youth Girls**	4	5	+1					
Rugby	Mens / Mixed	12	7	-5					
	Womens	1	2	+1					
	Youth Boys / Mixed	11	20	+9					
	Youth Girls	1	3	+2					

* 310 junior members

** Based on club survey responses

Playing pitches

- c. The number of playing pitch sites and playing pitches in Brighton & Hove available for community use- both in 2024 and in 2016 (the season the needs assessment was carried out for the previous PPS)- are set out in figure 3.5 below for each pitch type (natural turf and artificial turf) and for each of the major playing pitch sports for which there is a current demand in the City.

Figure 3.5 – Supply of community pitches and sites

	No. of sites		No. of pitches	
	2024	2016	2024	2016
Cricket fine turf	12	12	14	14
Cricket NTP	9	14	10	17
Football grass	42	63	101	106
Football AGP*	16	8	21	8
Hockey AGP **	3	4	4	5
Rugby grass	7	12	11	17
Rugby AGP	1	1	1	1

*includes small sided provision including new pitches at Withdean Sports Complex (4x small sided).

**only pitches large enough for match play counted.

- d. The most significant changes in playing pitch supply in the City over the last eight years include the significant additional provision across the area of new full sized 3G AGPs at Hove Park School (2021), Patcham High School (2021), University of Sussex (2019), Portslade Sports Centre (2019), a 70x31m 3G AGP at Hove Park (2018) as well as 4 new small-sided 3G AGP's at Withdean Sports Complex and a full-size pitch at Cardinal Newman School being completed ready for the 24/25 season.
- e. There has been grass pitch improvements made to a number of football sites (Aldrington Rec ground (Wish Park), Greenleas Rec ground, Happy Valley Rec ground, Nevill Playing Fields, Mile Oak Rec ground) and the two senior pitches at Hove Rugby Club which will help to increase the carrying capacity of the pitches.
- f. The 3G pitch at Brighton Rugby Club is no longer World Rugby Compliant, meaning no contact rugby can take place and there has been a reduction in the number of rugby grass pitches available for community use.

3.3 Current supply

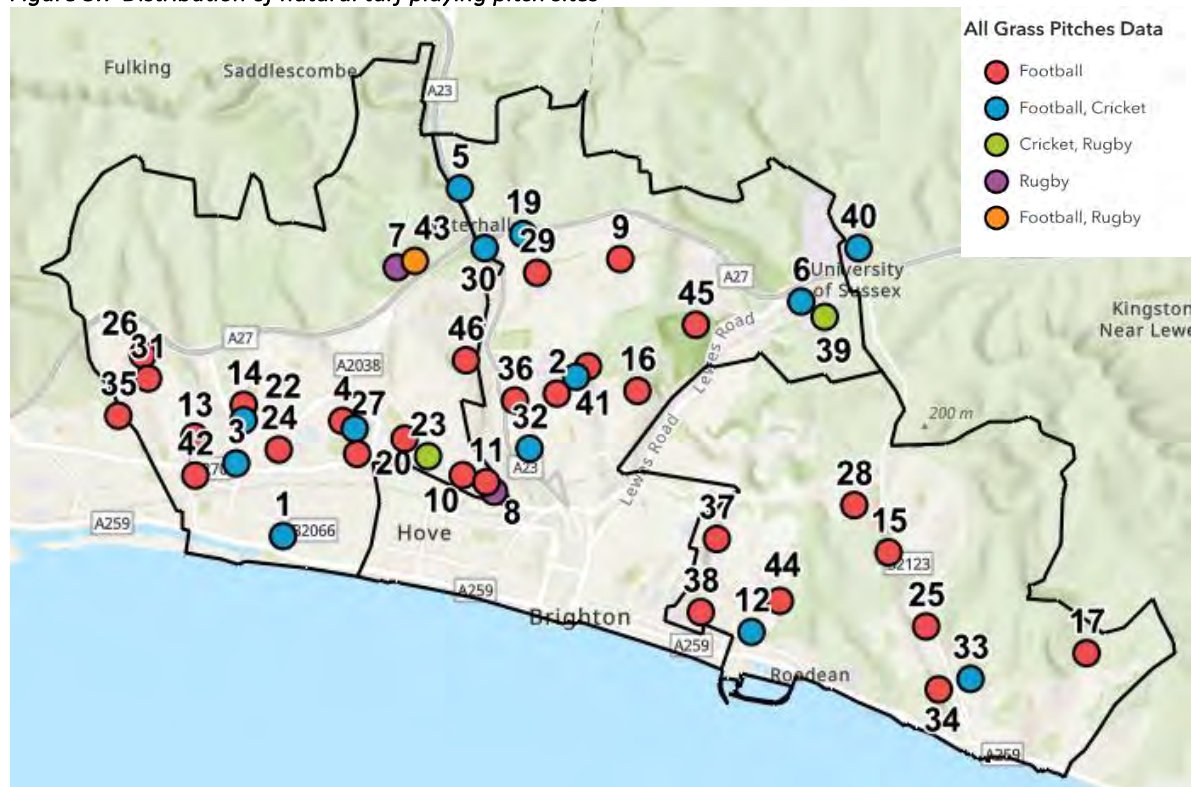
Natural turf pitches

- a. The sites with natural turf playing pitches in Brighton & Hove are listed in figure 3.6 and figure 3.7 and shows the distribution of natural turf playing pitch sites across the City.

Figure 3.6 Natural turf playing pitches with community use in Brighton & Hove.

No	Site name	Postcode	Sport(s)
1	ALDRINGTON RECREATION GROUND (WISH PARK)	BN3 4LN	Football, Cricket
2	BALFOUR JUNIOR SCHOOL	BN1 6NE	Football
3	BENFIELD VALLEY RECREATION GROUND	BN3 7GE	Football, Cricket
4	BLATCHINGTON MILL SCHOOL	BN3 7BW	Football
5	BRAYPOOL RECREATION GROUND	BN1 8ZH	Football, Cricket
6	BRIGHTON ALDRIDGE COMMUNITY ACADEMY	BN1 9PW	Football, Cricket
7	BRIGHTON FOOTBALL RUGBY CLUB	BN1 8YR	Rugby
8	BRIGHTON HOVE & SUSSEX SIXTH FORM COLLEGE SPORTS CENTRE	BN2 5UA	Rugby
9	CARDEN PARK	BN3 6EG	Football
10	COTTESMORE ST. MARY'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL	BN3 6ND	Football
11	DYKE ROAD PARK	BN1 5AS	Football
12	EAST BRIGHTON PARK	BN2 5TS	Football, Cricket
13	EASTHILL PARK	BN41 2FA	Football
14	GREENLEAS	BN3 8AN	Football
15	HAPPY VALLEY RECREATION GROUND	BN2 6LA	Football
16	HERTFORD JUNIOR SCHOOL	BN1 7FP	Football
17	HILL PARK	BN2 8HJ	Football
18	HOLLINGBURY PARK (BRENTWOOD ROAD)	BN1 7EX	Football
19	HORSDEAN RECREATION GROUND	BN1 8UA	Football, Cricket
20	HOVE PARK	BN3 6BG	Football
21	HOVE PARK SCHOOL- NEVILL CAMPUS	BN3 7BN	Football
22	HOVE PARK SCHOOL- VALLEY CAMPUS	BN3 8AD	Football, Cricket
23	HOVE RECREATION GROUND	BN3 6LL	Cricket, Rugby
24	KNOLL PARK	BN3 7JG	Football
25	LONGHILL SPORTS CENTRE	BN2 7FR	Football
26	MILE OAK RECREATION GROUND	BN41 2WF	Football
27	NEVILL PLAYING FIELDS	BN3 7QD	Football, Cricket
28	NUFFIELD PLAYING FIELDS	BN2 6DX	Football
29	PATCHAM JUNIOR SCHOOL	BN1 8PB	Football
30	PATCHAM PLACE RECREATION GROUND	BN1 8ZF	Football, Cricket
31	PORTSLADE ALDRIDGE COMMUNITY ACADEMY	BN41 2WS	Football
32	PRESTON PARK	BN1 6SD	Football, Cricket
33	ROTTINGDEAN CRICKET & FOOTBALL CLUB	BN2 7DA	Football, Cricket
34	ROTTINGDEAN RECREATION GROUND	BN2 7DA	Football
35	SOUTHWICK HILL REC GROUND	BN42 4QU	Football
36	ST BERNADETTE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL	BN1 6UT	Football
37	THE CREW CLUB	BN2 5QW	Football
38	THE MANOR ROAD GYM	BN2 5EA	Football
39	UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON	BN1 9PH	Cricket, Rugby
40	UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX	BN1 9PL	Football, Cricket
41	VARNDEAN HIGH SCHOOL	BN1 6NP	Football, Cricket
42	VICTORIA RECREATION GROUND	BN41 1UB	Football
43	WATERHALL SPORTS GROUND	BN1 8YR	Football, Rugby
44	WHITEHAWK FOOTBALL CLUB (THE ENCLOSED GROUND)	BN2 5TS	Football
45	WILD PARK	BN1 9JS	Football
46	WITHDEAN SPORTS COMPLEX	BN1 5JD	Football

Figure 3.7 Distribution of natural turf playing pitch sites



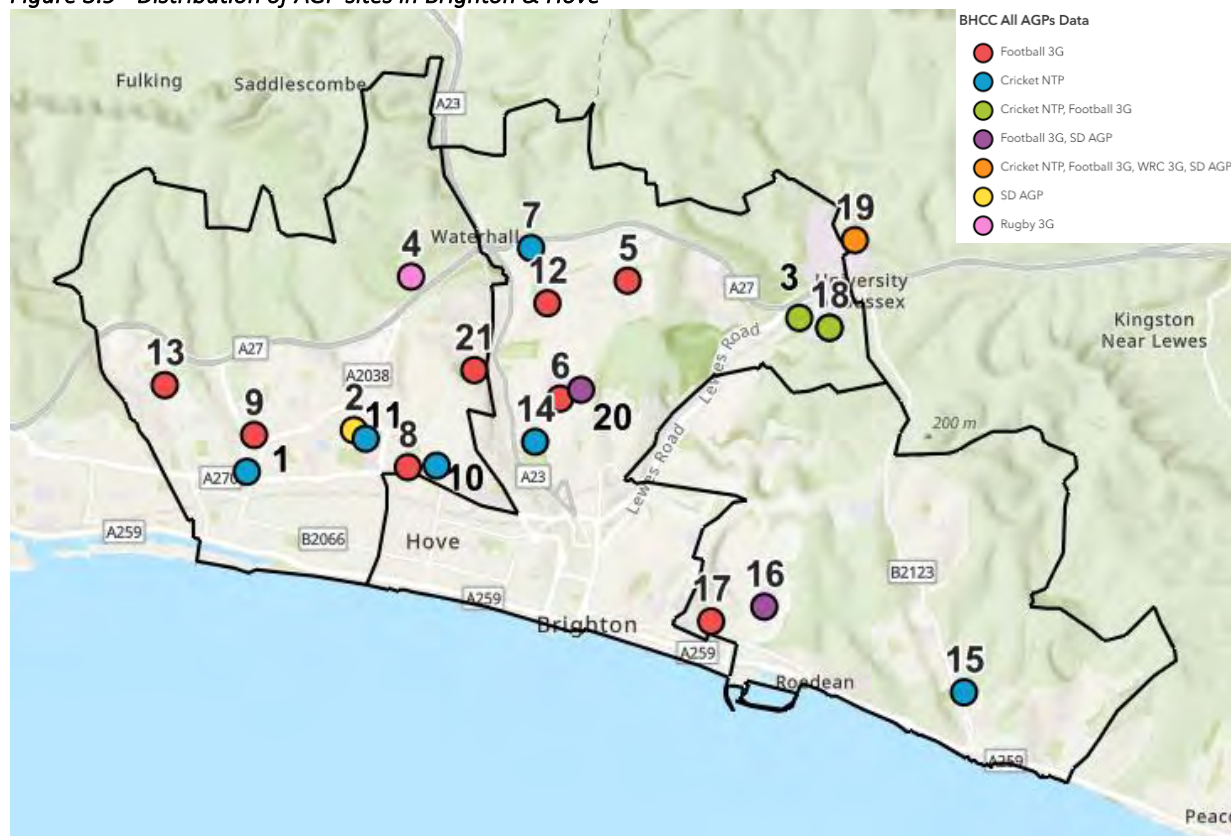
Artificial turf playing pitches

- a. Sites in Brighton & Hove with artificial grass playing pitches (and the sports the sites provide for) are listed in Figure 3.8. The locations of these artificial pitches showing their distribution throughout the City are in Figure 3.9. For cricket, NTP means Non-Turf Pitch which is an artificial strip located adjacent to a fine turf table or as a standalone wicket instead of a fine turf wicket table, this type of facility is used mainly for junior cricket and for recreation level adult cricket and practice.

Figure 3.8 – Artificial Turf Playing Pitches with community use in Brighton & Hove

No	Site Name	Post Code	Sports / Facility Type
1	BENFIELD VALLEY RECREATION GROUND	BN3 7GE	Cricket NTP
2	BLATCHINGTON MILL SCHOOL	BN3 7BW	SD AGP
3	BRIGHTON ALDRIDGE COMMUNITY ACADEMY	BN1 9PW	Cricket NTP, Football 3G
4	BRIGHTON FOOTBALL RUGBY CLUB	BN1 8YR	Rugby 3G (not WRC)
5	CARDINAL NEWMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL	BN1 8LU	Football 3G
6	DOROTHY STRINGER SCHOOL	BN1 6PZ	Football 3G
7	HORSDEAN RECREATION GROUND	BN1 8UA	Cricket NTP
8	HOVE PARK	BN3 6BG	Football 3G
9	HOVE PARK SCHOOL- VALLEY CAMPUS	BN3 8AD	Football 3G
10	HOVE RECREATION GROUND	BN3 6LL	Cricket NTP
11	NEVILL PLAYING FIELDS	BN3 7QD	Cricket NTP
12	PATCHAM HIGH SCHOOL	BN1 8PB	Football 3G
13	PORTSLADE SPORTS CENTRE	BN41 2WS	Football 3G
14	PRESTON PARK	BN1 6SD	Cricket NTP
15	ROTTINGDEAN CRICKET & FOOTBALL CLUB	BN2 7DA	Cricket NTP
16	STANLEY DEASON LEISURE CENTRE	BN2 5PB	Football 3G, SD AGP
17	THE MANOR ROAD GYM	BN2 5EA	Football 3G
18	UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON	BN1 9PH	Cricket NTP, Football 3G
19	UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX	BN1 9PL	Cricket NTP, Football 3G, WRC 3G, SD AGP
20	VARNDEAN SCHOOL	BN1 6NP	Football 3G, SD AGP
21	WITHDEAN SPORTS COMPLEX	BN1 5JD	Football 3G

Figure 3.9 - Distribution of AGP sites in Brighton & Hove



3.4 Is there enough provision for current demand?

- Cricket – No.** The assessment of facility needs shows that the majority of fine turf pitches in the City are either over played or used to capacity, despite a number of sites having NTPs to support fine turf capacity. Many of the larger clubs utilise secondary sites to ensure all their teams have pitches at the weekends, with Portslade CC, Rottingdean CC, St Peters CC, and Brighton & Hove CC all using secondary sites to supplement the facilities at their main site. Many council owned sites are shared between clubs with 2 or 3 clubs regularly playing matches at the sites. There are 2 sites under capacity which may be able to cater for some of this demand, as well as NTP's and grass pitches on education sites which are not used.
- Overall, the cricket clubs in Brighton & Hove benefit from good security of access on their home grounds, however Palmers CC are reliant on a 5-year rolling agreement and Portslade CC's lease on Benfield Valley Recreation Ground is expiring in 2026.
- Football – No.** A number of playing field sites in Brighton & Hove have pitches that are being played to capacity or overplayed, in the main, they are sites that are the home ground for large youth clubs with a number of teams and a limited number of pitches. The sites with large youth clubs that are overplayed are:
 - Braypool Recreation Ground – Hollingbury Hawks (*also used by Sussex Sunday League*)
 - Hill Park – Saltdean United FC
 - Nevill Playing Fields – *Various youth clubs*
 - Nuffield Playing Fields – Woodingdean Wanderers
 - Waterhall Sports Ground- Hollingbury Hawks (*also used by Sussex Sunday League*)
 - Wild Park – Coldean Colts

- d. There is no spare capacity for adult 11v11, youth 11v11, or youth 9v9 pitches in the peak period based on discounting poor quality pitches and those that are unsecured from the supply. These pitches are discounted as they are less attractive to clubs due to their quality and uncertainty over long term community access. There is sufficient spare pitch capacity currently for Mini Soccer (7v7 and 5v5 pitches).
- e. There are shortfalls in provision of floodlit 3G pitches to meet training demand. There are several clubs who travel outside of the area for training or use sand-based pitches or grass areas for training, which constrains the growth aspirations of these clubs and contributes to latent demand. The FA training scenario suggests one full sized floodlit 3G AGP can accommodate the training demand from 38 teams, based on this there is a shortfall in current supply, with investment needed in the provision of one more full size equivalent 3G football AGPs across the area. This should be strategically located in the East of the City to support the larger youth clubs enabling them to meet the needs of their teams for training and matches.
- f. **Hockey – No.** Although there is capacity at Stanley Deason Leisure Centre, the playing surface is in poor condition and needs resurfacing. This limits the amount of play it can receive and its attractiveness to community clubs to use for matches with clubs preferring to play elsewhere. Other sites are at capacity for matches, requiring careful scheduling to accommodate all fixtures.
- g. **Rugby – No.** Overall, the rugby pitches in Brighton & Hove are over-used and cannot sustain the current demand for training and matches. The two clubs (Brighton RFC and Hove RFC) manage the quality of their pitches through careful operational management and are often required to cancel training and matches to protect the pitches for future use.
- h. This is particularly problematic for Hove RFC at Hove Recreation Ground as the pitches on site are particularly overused, especially the two training pitches. Whilst the pitches at Brighton RFC are overused, this is to a lesser extent as non-contact training can take place on their 3G pitch. Should this pitch be resurfaced and made World Rugby Compliant (WRC) again, this would further reduce the over play on their grass pitches. The WRC 3G pitch at the University of Sussex is good quality, however, it hosts limited community use due to the amount of student sport it accommodates. There is some spare capacity at the site, however not enough to satisfy the training demands of either club. The 3G pitch developed at Cardinal Newman School during the course of this study is proposed to be suitable for rugby, subject to testing. This would be an ideal location to absorb some training demand from Hove RFC, being less than a mile from the club. Additional capacity could also be accommodated by exploring regular community access to education sites across the City which are within suitable catchment of each club, including:
- Dorothy Stringer School
 - Hove Park School – Nevill Campus
 - Varndean High School
 - Cardinal Newman School
- i. All of these schools listed above are within a 10-minute driving catchment of at least one of Brighton RFC or Hove RFC and have rugby pitches which are not currently used by community groups. If community use was secured at all the schools listed, an additional 5 grass pitches could be added to the supply of community rugby pitches.
- j. Both clubs have secure use of their sites, with long term leases in place at both Hove Recreation Ground (80+ years) and Brighton RFC (90+ years), although only the pavilion is covered under the lease at Brighton RFC with the pitches being under annual license.

3.4 Is the provision of sufficient quality?

- a. **Cricket – No.** The club managed fine turf cricket pitches across the City are mostly maintained to a 'good' level, whereas the council managed pitches were mostly rated as 'standard' or 'poor' leaving some opportunities to improve pitch quality thereby increasing playing capacity. Opportunity to secure ECB funding for pitch quality improvement on shared football/cricket sites is available under the new joint FA/ECB PitchPower initiative. This funding would support the required improvement to the maintenance regime of council owned pitches. As highlighted above, many clubs use council owned pitches as secondary sites, often with multiple clubs playing regularly on the pitches. The high level of usage on the pitches may be a contributing factor to the generally 'poor' or 'standard' quality, suggesting that the scheduling of matches and allocation of secondary sites should be investigated.
- b. There are some NTPs which have lost community use due to their poor condition (ie University of Brighton and Longhill Sports Centre), but those NTP wickets which are available for community use are generally good quality. The non-turf practice net systems are in good or standard condition with only the nets at the University of Sussex in need of upgrading.
- c. Investment into pavilions is required including new or refurbished provision at a number of sites, where the current provision is inadequate or failing into disrepair. These sites are:
 - Braypool Recreation Ground
 - Preston Park (Cricket Pavilion)
 - Patcham Place Recreation Ground (permanently closed)
- d. **Football – No.** The majority of AGPs in the area are good quality, with newly laid playing surfaces, however two are poor and no longer meet FA standards, requiring resurfacing (Brighton RFC and the University of Brighton). A number of grass pitches (21%) are of poor quality and suffer from poor natural drainage, compaction of the ground, and overuse, thereby limiting the playing capacity of these pitches. To address this issue on a large scale it would require significant additional investment in maintenance works at the frequencies required to effectively aerate and de-compact the playing surfaces of the poor-quality natural turf pitches. It is noted that due to the pressure which the council budget is under, this may not be possible for all sites. The council should consider exploring options of alternative management models for sites, such as asset transfers or support from volunteers, in order to improve the quality of sites and mitigate budget restrictions.
- e. The delivery of the grass pitch improvements recommended by the Grounds Maintenance Association through the recent Football Foundation's PitchPower pitch assessment reports would go a long way to improving the playing capacity at the sites assessed. In most cases, this will necessitate increased revenue investment in enhanced pitch maintenance regimes with club sites with secure usage potentially being supported by grant funding from the Football Foundation's Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund.
- f. The ancillary facilities supporting community club football across the City are generally poor quality with several sites needing improvement. The facilities at Patcham Place Recreation Ground and Waterhall Sports Ground are currently closed due to vandalism and damage, the facilities at Easthill Park are also closed. There were ongoing works to the ancillary facilities at Hill Park during site visits, as part of the improvements undertaken by Saltdean United FC. There is a lack of basic changing or toilet facilities at Hollingbury Park (Brentwood Road) and a further three sites (listed below) only have public toilets available with no changing or shelter for matches. This limits their usage, particularly by women and girls' teams and ideally dedicated toilet provision and some shelter should be provided at each site.

- Southwick Hill Recreation Ground
 - Rottingdean Recreation Ground
 - Wild Park
- g. Improvements to the current provision is also needed at the following sites to modernise facilities and make them fit for purpose to accommodate women and girls and provide disability access:
- Aldrington Recreation Ground (Wish Park)
 - Braypool Recreation Ground
 - Greanleas Recreation Ground
 - Happy Valley
 - Nuffield playing Fields
 - Victoria Recreation Ground
- h. **Hockey – No.** The playing surfaces on the artificial grass pitches at Stanley Deason Leisure Centre and University of Sussex are of poor quality and need resurfacing. The pitches at Blatchington Mill School will also require resurfacing in 2-3 years time and should have an independent assessment now to confirm the pitch conditions and timescales for resurfacing.
- i. The clubhouse and changing facilities at Blatchington Mill School, the home site for Brighton & Hove HC, are poor and in need of improvement. The school support proposals for a new clubhouse and changing rooms but is dependent on the club lease being extended beyond its current duration.
- j. **Rugby – No.** Drainage to half of the city’s naturally drained rugby pitches available for community rugby is classified as ‘inadequate’ with only two pitches having engineered drainage systems in place (Hove Recreation Ground). The maintenance regimes of pitches are generally ‘Poor’ with 6 of the 10 pitches being maintained to a ‘Poor’ standard. Hove RFC are currently accessing Football Foundation funding to improve their pitch maintenance having undertaken Pitch Power Assessments which rated all pitches as ‘Basic’. Whilst more investment in pitch maintenance has potential to deliver quality improvement (and thereby increase playing capacity by reducing cancellations), this is challenging in the current financial climate and the pressures on local authority and sports club budgets.
- k. If the necessary funding could be secured, the installation of engineered drainage to the pitches would be beneficial. Installing pipe drainage to an adequately maintained pitch would increase its playing capacity by 0.5 ‘Match Equivalent Sessions’ (MES) each week, whilst a more sophisticated pipe & slit drainage system would increase the weekly playing capacity of each pitch by one full MES.
- l. The 3G pitch at Brighton RFC was previously WRC and suitable for contact rugby to be played, being utilised for matches by the 1st and 2nd teams. However, the surface is now no longer WRC due to the poor quality of the surface and cannot be used for any contact training or matches. The club currently use the pitch for non-contact training. Resurfacing this pitch and maintaining it to a good quality would allow the club to significantly reduce the overplay of their grass pitches for both training and match play.

3.5 Future supply and demand

- a. **Planned new supply-** On the future supply side, there are committed projects (or current planning applications) for new and enhanced playing pitch provision in the City which, taken together, will address much of the current need for additional playing pitch capacity. These ‘pipeline’ projects are:
- **Hill Park –** Saltdean United FC are currently developing a new 3G stadia pitch, replacing their current stadia grass pitch, alongside wider ancillary projects.

- **Toads Hole Valley** – A new full size 3G pitch has been proposed as part of a housing development in the area.
 - **Moulsecomb** – B&HCC are working to develop a 7v7 3G pitch with WRC surface in the area. Although this pitch would be too small to meet demands for rugby matches, it could absorb some training demand.
 - **Longhill Sports Centre** – The sports centre is exploring options to develop a full size 3G pitch with WRC surface.
 - **St Andrew CE Primary School** – The school have been granted planning permission for a new 3G pitch.
 - **Varndean College** – The school have been granted planning permission for a new 3G pitch.
 - **Aldrington Recreation Ground (Wish Park)** – The council are seeking to develop a new cricket NTP at the site, creating a new pitch, subject to planning.
 - **Braypool Recreation Ground**- The council are seeking to develop a new cricket NTP at the site, creating a new pitch.
 - **East Brighton Park**- The council are seeking to develop a new cricket NTP at the site, extending the current pitch
- b. **Population growth**- In terms of estimating future demand for community playing pitches, assuming current levels of participation per capita and the forecast population growth (+12,477) people resident in Brighton & Hove City by 2041²), application of Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC) tool indicates a potential need to secure more playing pitch capacity. This additional capacity will need to be achieved through a combination of investment in new provision, enhancement of existing pitches and negotiating and securing more community access to existing and any planned new school and college playing pitches.
- c. As football is the most popular pitch sport, the additional demand for football pitches generated by the impact of population growth will be by far the largest. The PPC indicates there will be a requirement to provide an additional 7 natural turf pitches (+2 adult football pitches, +4 youth football pitches and +1 mini soccer pitches) plus around 14 additional weekly training slots on a 3G artificial pitch, equivalent to 0.35 additional full size floodlit AGPs.
- d. Population growth will also create need for additional playing pitch capacity for cricket, rugby and hockey although at a much lower level than for football (see Figure 3.10).

Figure 3.10 – Additional capacity needed by 2041- Population change only: Sport England playing pitch calculator planning tool

Sport and pitch type	Additional capacity needed by 2041 (pitches) due to forecast population growth (i.e. assuming static demand)
Cricket – fine turf	+ 1 (12 wickets of good quality)
Football – grass	+ 7 (1 mini; 4 youth; 2 adult)
Football – 3G AGP	+ 0.35
Hockey – sand/water AGP	+ 0.15
Rugby	+ 1

- e. In considering future playing pitch capacity needs, it is important to note that the run of the Playing Pitch Calculator shown in figure 3.10 above that this additional capacity does not account for improvements made to existing provision, which could increase the capacity of pitches and reduce

² Population change from 2022 to 2041 based on B&HCC Strategic Housing Market Assessment

the need for new pitches. The calculation also assumes ‘static demand’ i.e., the proportion of the population by age group and gender that currently play pitch sports stays the same.

- f. Recent trends suggest further growth in demand to play rugby, football and cricket among women and girls stimulated by recent successes of the national teams, the hosting and winning of major tournaments such as the 2022 Women’s Football Euros and the upcoming 2025 Women’s Rugby World Cup to be held in England, of which Brighton & Hove is one of the host Cities, together with recently announced changes to physical education policy and practice in schools aimed at equal opportunities for girls. Football is the playing pitch sport where demand increase is likely to be the greatest and have the most impact on future playing pitch needs. England Hockey have a strategic focus on 5-11 years and will be hosting the EuroHockey Championships in 2027 which is likely to increase demand.
- g. For this reason, it is recommended that, for the purposes of facility planning, the PPC estimates in figure 3.10 should be considered as the minimum future requirement for new playing pitch capacity that is likely to result from population growth to 2041. Scenarios to illustrate the impact on the future pitch needs of a large scale increase in demand in women’s and girl’s rugby, football, cricket and hockey are explored in section 4 of this study (using Sports England’s Playing Pitch Calculator). Actual growth should be monitored as part of regular PPS updates to identify whether the population growth or participation growth scenarios outlined in section 4 are proving to be accurate. Future needs should be revised on an ongoing basis to ensure facilities are planned accordingly.
- h. A further key consideration in the assessment of future playing pitch needs is the extent to which the clubs based in the City deliver on their development aspirations. Research and consultation for this strategy has found that a significant number of playing pitch sports clubs in the area have embraced the youth, women and girls and recreational participation development initiatives and programmes of the national governing bodies. Accordingly, these clubs aspire to convert latent demand for their sport into new teams and/or to develop more playing opportunities at a recreational level alongside traditional league competition provided that required pitch capacity can be secured along with the additional volunteer coaches/ team managers needed to run the additional teams and activities.

3.6 Is there enough provision to meet future demand?

- a. The clear conclusion of the assessments of need for playing pitches in Brighton & Hove is that, by 2041, there will be a need to provide additional playing and training capacity for all four major playing pitch sports.
- b. **Cricket – No.** There is not sufficient accessible and secured community use provision in the City to meet future demand. There is a need for a minimum of 12 additional good quality grass wickets in the area, which could be met satisfied by developing 1 large square (12 wickets) or 2 smaller square (2x 6 wickets). Due to the lack of space in Brighton & Hove however, the planned new supply detailed above (see para 3.5a), to develop an additional 3 NTP wickets across Aldrington Recreation Ground (Wish Park), Braypool Recreation Ground, and East Brighton Park will be able to contribute toward meeting this demand and provide new standalone pitches at both Aldrington Recreation Ground and Braypool Recreation Ground, subject to planning. These NTPs, whilst a positive addition to the supply, will not however address the full demand and growth projections for cricket in Brighton & Hove.

- c. To provide further capacity, the council should seek to explore options for community use at the 4 education sites which currently do not have community use (Brighton College, Lancing College Preparatory School, Roedean School, and Mile Oak Primary School).
- d. In relation to meeting demand, pitches rated as poor quality are deemed to not have any capacity for cricket by the ECB, so it is important that the square at Patcham Place is improved to at least standard quality. For those pitches that are standard quality there is some scope to increase the playing capacity of the existing supply by improving the quality of the pitches used by cricket clubs and teams based in Brighton & Hove, but these are mainly council sites and would require an increase in maintenance budget which is already under significant pressure due to the wider budget pressures on local authorities.
- e. PitchPower (and ECB funding) is available to cricket clubs as of April 2024, providing potential for joint PitchPower and Football Foundation projects for sites with both football and cricket facilities. This could open an avenue to increased capacity and quality at joint sports sites such as Braypool Recreation Ground, Horsdean Recreation Ground and Rottingdean Cricket and Football Club which are used at or above capacity.
- f. There are also opportunities to increase the utilisation of council owned sites which are currently used by community clubs. East Brighton Park currently has a total surplus of 40 MES, which will be further increased should the council realise their proposed development of an additional NTP on the site. There are some limitations to the amount of peak period use the pitch can receive as, despite having 24 grass wickets, there is only 1 pitch which limits the pitch to one match at a time.
- g. Investment into pavilions is required in the area including new or refurbished provision at many sites across the City. Clubs have noted that their current facilities are either not suitable for women's and girl's teams or are insufficient for any further growth of the club. Many pavilions were rated 'Poor' and have been included as projects in the action plan (section 7) including those at:
 - Aldrington Recreation Ground (Wish Park)
 - Braypool Recreation Ground
 - Patcham Place Recreation Ground – Currently closed
 - Preston Park (Cricket Pavilion)
- h. The key pavilion projects across all sports are highlighted in Section 7 of this strategy in the Action Plan to assist the council in prioritising the leading pavilion projects and those which will have the most positive impact on community sports.
- i. **Football – No.** By 2041 additional grass pitches and artificial pitches will need to be developed to address forecast population growth, unmet and latent demand identified by clubs.
- j. To continue to deliver on the FA's strategy to transfer more affiliated competitive football to 3G surfaces and meet the needs of clubs and players for improved facilities further secured provision of 3G AGP pitches is needed. Investment in at least 1 additional full-size FA registered floodlit 3G AGP's is needed to cater for current demand plus an additional 0.35 full sized pitch equivalent for the demand generated by future population growth. This totals a need for 1.35 full sized 3G FTPs in the City, equivalent to 1 full size AGP and a 7v7 AGP. There are already proposals to deliver 2 new full-sized pitches at Saltdean FC (East) and Toad Hole Valley (Central), and a small pitch (60x40m) at Moulsecomb Community Leisure Centre (East), which would meet this demand. The council should also engage with the stakeholders managing and operating 3G pitches which are in a poor condition to encourage and support them in resurfacing their facilities.

- k. Additional natural turf pitches are needed for adult 11v11, youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 for match play by 2041 in light of the scale of forecast population growth and demand. Given the lack of space within the City to provide further grass pitches the council should look to improve the quality of pitches in the area to provide additional capacity, consider reconfiguring spare 7v7, 5v5 pitches to accommodate larger pitch sizes, investigate options to increase community use on education sites in the area, or consider the development of additional 3G AGP's to cater for this shortfall.
- l. Transferring match play onto 3G pitches should also be explored at sites where there is capacity to accommodate this as well as making improvements to pitch quality on key grass football sites to increase capacity, such as Braypool Recreation Ground and Wild Park.
- m. Ongoing assessments of team generation rates in line with population growth should be completed due to the high rates of year-on-year growth found by the FA insights. This will ensure that pitch requirement figures can be updated in line with concurrent data.
- n. **Hockey – No.** There is spare capacity at Stanley Deason Leisure Centre, but the facility needs to be resurfaced to be of sufficient quality to accommodate future demand. The location of the pitch in relation to the current clubs is not ideal but is within Sport England's recommended minimum drive time of 20 minutes. There are no other sites within the City which have surplus match capacity, with clubs having to carefully plan schedules to meet the current level of match and training demand.
- o. The majority of current supply is secured, with Brighton & Hove HC co-owning the facility at Blatchington Mill School, with a lease agreement in place with 8 years remaining. Stanley Deason Leisure Centre is council owned and secure, however the University of Sussex does not have a Community Use Agreement in place and this should be secured as part of any future resurface of the pitch. Southwick HC also has no security of tenure on their current facility just outside of the City in Steyning, should they be displaced from this site then there would be further demand on the facilities in the area.
- p. Improvements to changing provision is needed at Blatchington Mill School and the council support proposals to develop a new clubhouse with changing rooms, but this is dependent on the school extending the clubs lease past its current 8 years and sufficient funding being sourced by the club and school.
- q. **Rugby – No.** There is currently insufficient provision for rugby to meet future demand. Improvement to the maintenance and drainage at all pitches would increase the number of match equivalent sessions in the City, but this is likely to be difficult due to the pressures on council and club budgets and would still not bring all the pitches within their carrying capacity due to amount of training demand.
- r. Additional capacity could also be accommodated by exploring regular community access to the pitches at Dorothy Stringer School (1), Hove Park School (1), University of Sussex (2), Brighton College (1), Varndean High School (1), and Cardinal Newman Catholic School (2).
- s. The current capacity deficit in Brighton & Hove is 12 MES including training sessions. To accommodate this on natural turf pitches (assuming adequate natural drainage and adequate maintenance) would require 6 natural turf pitches. Due to the lack of alternative green space which would be suitable for developing additional grass pitches, this demand may be reduced by considering enhanced maintenance and drainage of current rugby pitches.
- t. The overuse of grass pitches is mainly due to the level of training demand. Whilst Brighton RFC currently use their 3G pitch for non-contact training, there is a need for this pitch to be resurfaced

in order to comply with World Rugby regulations. If resurfaced and certified for contact rugby, it could accommodate some of the clubs training demand and match demand. This is a priority project for the area, ensuring there is appropriate management of the facility, community use is secured and a sufficient sinking fund is in place for a future resurface.

- u. The 3G pitch developed at Cardinal Newman School during the process of this study is proposed to be suitable for rugby, subject to testing, this would be an ideal location to absorb some of the training demand and possible youth match demand for Hove RFC, especially as it is less than a mile from the club. The new facility is subject to a community use agreement, and this should be monitored by the council to ensure there is good community access and that a sinking fund is in place for a future resurface.
- v. The council are also exploring options to develop a small sized WRC 3G AGP at Moulsecoomb Community Leisure Centre which may also be able to accommodate some youth training demand from each club.

Figure 3.11 – Estimate of minimum future additional playing pitch capacity needs to 2041 to meet current and future demands based on current unmet demand and future population growth

Sport	Additional playing capacity equivalent to:
Cricket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +2 fine turf pitches (12 good quality wickets) • Non Turf Pitches at Aldrington Rec, Braypool Rec, and East Brighton Park
Football	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +1 floodlit full size or equivalent 3G Football Turf Pitch • +7 natural turf pitches
Hockey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +0.15 full size floodlit hockey AGP
Rugby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +7 natural turf pitches (minimum of one to be floodlit)

- w. The options or scenarios in Brighton & Hove for meeting the identified capacity needs are explored in more detail in the following section.

Brighton & Hove City Council
Playing Pitch Strategy
2025 – 2041
Section 4: Meeting the Needs
(‘How to’ Scenarios)



4 – Meeting the needs ('How to' scenarios)

- a. As part of the Strategy Development process a number of scenarios have been identified as options to meet the future facility needs summarised in the preceding section. The Steering Group has considered these scenarios along with their potential implications on the future picture of provision for the leading playing pitch sports in Brighton & Hove and how best to meet existing and future playing pitch facility demand. These scenarios have also been considered in relation to setting the priorities for future enhancement and provision detailed in the action plan for playing pitches in section 7 of this Playing Pitch Strategy – i.e., the initial action plan.

4.1 Improved quality of sites

- a. Before considering the provision of new playing fields it is important to first consider the potential for increasing capacity of existing sites (particularly those grounds owned or leased by community clubs) as these have resources and structures in place (e.g., grounds maintenance, coaching) and an established sporting identity developed over many years.
- b. Improving the quality of ancillary facilities such as practice, changing and social provision can also have an impact by sustaining and retaining existing demand and on attracting under-represented groups (e.g., the provision of suitable changing provision for women and girls).
- c. **Cricket** – As set out above in para. 2.5, the existing 'poor' and 'standard' quality fine turf cricket pitches at key cricket sites in the City also used for football – e.g. Patcham Place Rec, Braypool Rec, Aldrington Rec, and East Brighton Park - have potential to secure ECB funding via a new joint PitchPower football and cricket pitch improvement programme to be launched in 2024. Improving the quality of these four fine turf pitches at key sites from 'standard', or 'poor' in Patcham Recreation Ground's case, to 'good' quality would increase the total playing capacity by approximately 133 match equivalent sessions a season (i.e. +2 MES per season x 39 'standard' strips/wickets + 5 MES per season x 11 'poor' strips/wickets). It should be noted that this includes the 24 wicket square at East Brighton Park, which although has significant capacity for matches in theory, can only accommodate 1 match at a time, therefore the actual increase in MES is lower than the 133 in practice.
- d. Other improvement priorities for cricket in Brighton & Hove relate to ancillary facilities which are important both to sustain existing membership and participation and to meet the quality expectations of potential new players including women and girls, a priority for the ECB and the council. The priority sites for cricket pavilion improvements are detailed in the recommendations (section 7).
- e. **Football**- The delivery of the grass pitch improvements recommended by the Grounds Maintenance Association through the Football Foundation's PitchPower pitch assessment reports to 27 pitches at 5 key football sites in the City (e.g. Braypool Rec, Happy Valley Rec, Nevill Playing Fields, Victoria Rec, and Aldrington Rec) would go a long way to improving the playing capacity at selected club sites supported by funding from the Football Foundation's Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund. For example, if the existing 'standard/basic' or 'poor' quality assessed pitches were all upgraded to good/high this would create an additional capacity of +40 MES a week. This would meet the identified need to 2041 of additional natural turf football pitches. Outside of the key sites identified above, there are an additional 12 pitches that are rate 'poor' or 'basic' by Pitch Power reports that, if improved, would further increase playing capacity in the City.
- f. However, in light of the high playing capacity of floodlit 3G pitches relative to natural turf, the quality improvement that would have the greatest positive impact on football in the City is resurfacing the

playing surface at Brighton RFC to ensure it passes FA regulations for match play. Although this pitch would be primarily used by Brighton RFC for training and matches, it would still provide opportunities for football clubs in the area. As identified above in paragraph 2.4a, there are a number of pipeline 3G pitch projects being assessed which may be realised over the strategy period, providing further 3G pitch provision.

- g. There are a number of football changing pavilions (some serving both football and cricket) that need substantial quality improvement or replacement in order to sustain and grow participation particularly among women and girls aligning with FA and council priorities. The priority projects are set out in the action plan (section 7).
- h. **Hockey** – The clear quality enhancement priority to sustain existing hockey participation in Brighton & Hove is to upgrade the worn playing surfaces to the sand based AGPs at Stanley Deason Leisure Centre and University of Sussex, as well as carry out an independent assessment of Blatchington Mill School to confirm the pitch conditions and timescales for resurfacing.
- i. A key project for Hockey in Brighton & Hove is the development of a new pavilion and changing rooms at Blatchington Mill School, home of Brighton Hockey Club. The current ancillary facilities available to the club at the school were rated poor and not sufficient for the club.
- j. **Rugby** – As set out in para. 3.4j, half of the naturally drained rugby pitches in the City are classified as having ‘inadequate’ drainage. If the necessary funding could be secured, which is unlikely in the current financial climate, the installation of engineered drainage to these pitches would increase the playing capacity by 0.5 ‘Match Equivalent Sessions’ (MES) each week per pitch (assuming installation of a pipe system), whilst a more sophisticated pipe & slit system would increase the weekly playing capacity of each pitch by one full MES.
- k. There is a need for the 3G AGP pitch at Brighton RFC to be resurfaced so that it can be used for contact training and matches. Currently, the pitch surface is not deemed suitable for contact rugby and is only used for none contact training. Should the pitch be resurfaced, this would help reduce the current overplay on grass pitches at the club and may provide opportunities to cater for some football demand.
- l. In 2022, PitchPower assessments were made available to rugby clubs. These assessments provide pitch maintenance recommendations, support, and funding if applications are successful. This process can help guide and support both clubs in improving the quality and capacity of their playing pitches. Priority sites for PitchPower assessments and associated maintenance actions are highlighted in the action plan (Section 7).

4.2 More community use at education sites

- a. Whilst the Government seeks to widen access to sports facilities on school premises as part of the Department for Education’s School Sport and Physical Activity Action Plan, investment available from its Opening Schools Facilities Fund has been restricted to revenue spending on capacity building, sports leaders/coaches, equipment to deliver community activities out-of-hours specifically targeted at under-represented groups in sport and physical activity living in areas of relative deprivation. Whilst the Opening Schools Fund is scheduled to end in early 2025, should it be extended Active Sussex should consider the findings of this strategy to increase community access of sports facilities at school sites. A priority for further exploration in Brighton & Hove should be St Margaret’s COE Primary School. Consultation during this study has identified that the schools’ 7v7 football pitch is available for hire but has not received any enquiries from clubs.

- b. Varndean High School find themselves in a similar situation to St Margaret’s, with their senior rugby pitch being available for community use, but no clubs are currently hiring the facility. Given the significant demand for additional rugby pitches in the City and the school’s proximity to both Hove RFC and Brighton RFC, the use of this pitch could help reduce the overplay at either club site, subject to suitable ancillary facilities being available.
- c. The education sites highlighted above have specifically expressed an interest in hiring out their pitches for community use, however further opportunities to increase community access to education facilities in strategic locations (detailed in Section 7) should be explored by the council to help meet the current and future surplus demand highlighted in Section 3.

4.3 Change of use from one sport or pitch type to another

- a. The most common scenarios involving change of pitch type are:
 - Upgrading natural turf pitches to 3G artificial football turf and to rugby turf
 - Resurfacing sand-based hockey AGPs as 3G football turf.
- b. The first scenario has potential to make a significant impact on meeting existing and future capacity shortfalls for football and for rugby in Brighton & Hove. Whilst the current proposals to address the demand for football by developing additional AGPs on natural turf pitches identified in section 3.5, and AGP proposals which may support rugby usage at Cardinal Newman School and Longhill Sports Centre, the resurfacing of the current AGPs at Brighton RFC should be the key priority.
- c. None of the sand-based hockey AGPs used by the hockey clubs in the City are currently considered at risk of loss due to change of playing surface. Any proposed future changes would need to ensure Sport England and England Hockey are consulted.

4.4 Potential loss of availability of key sites

- a. Little imminent threat to availability of key community playing pitch sites in Brighton & Hove has been identified in the course of the research and consultation for this PPS. The rugby pitch at Brighton Hove & Sussex Sixth Form College is being considered for replacement by the college, with discussions around developing a MUGA in its place. This pitch is largely unused due to its significant slope and is no longer used by Hove RFC, however consultation would be needed with Sport England to determine the new provision would be suitable mitigation for loss of a rugby pitch.
- b. Nevertheless, in the absence of either a formal Community Use Agreement (CUA) or binding grant funding conditions, there is always a risk of loss of availability of education pitches for community club use. This loss of availability is potentially a concern in Brighton & Hove for clubs as CUAs or grant conditions are not in place with a number of schools in the City that hire pitches to these clubs on a seasonal or term by term basis. Examples include Hove Park School, University of Sussex, and Longhill Sports Centre.
- c. There is little to no mechanisms in place in Brighton & Hove to manage those CUAs that are in place, which could mean that key facilities are lost to community use or the full level of access required by planning conditions is not provided. The council should consider ways to manage this going forwards as effectively as possible.
- d. The over-riding priority recommendation of the PPS is to continue to retain the existing overall quantity of land in the City available for use as playing pitches, so it will be important to try to secure these education pitches for community use where possible.

4.5 New or reinstated pitches in Brighton & Hove

- a. As detailed in para. 3.5 above under the heading ‘Planned Provision’, there are advanced plans for a number of new or reinstated playing pitches in the City that will impact substantially on addressing the overall future needs identified in figure 3.10.
- b. The proposed projects more than cater for the 1.35 additional full size floodlit 3G AGPs needed by 2041, many of which have already been granted planning permission. Where possible football use of sand dressed AGPs should be moved to new 3G AGPs to enable growth of hockey on site.
- c. The 3 NTPs planned for development at Braypool Rec, Aldrington Rec, and East Brighton Park will provide additional capacity for cricket, with the NTPs at Braypool Rec and Aldrington Rec creating additional pitches, however these pitches are generally used to complement natural turf wickets. The demand for 12 additional natural turf wickets is unlikely to be met by developing new pitches due to the lack of land available in the City, it may be more realistic to meet this demand by improving maintenance to ‘poor’ and ‘standard’ quality pitches in the City, as discussed in section 4.1 above.
- d. In the 2023/24 season, new junior football grass pitches were developed at Happy Valley Recreation Ground. The pitches are open to all clubs to book and are currently used by Woodingdean Wanderers. There are no additional plans to develop new natural turf pitches in the City.
- e. There are no proposed new Hockey AGPs in the City. The movement of football training from Hockey AGP’s to new 3G pitches should be a priority on key hockey sites.
- f. Finally, in the case of rugby, Cardinal Newman School have recently developed a new 3G AGP which will be available for rugby clubs to use for training on and includes a rugby specific shockpad, however at the time of this report is subject to testing to confirm world rugby compliance, if approved this allow contact rugby and could be used for some matches. The school is with easy reach of Hove RFC being only half a mile away. Longhill Sports Centre are exploring options to develop a new 3G pitch with WRC shockpad, providing facilities which could be used for training and contact matches. The sports centre has been in discussions with Hove Rugby Club and Lewes Rugby Club about their appetite for training use. Longhill Sports Centre is located in the East of the City, 10.2 miles from Hove RFC and 8.2 miles from Brighton RFC, so may not be an ideal location for training for either club. Brighton & Hove City Council are exploring options to develop a 7v7 3G AGP at Moulsecomb Community Leisure Centre which would have a World Rugby Compliant surface. This would be too small to satisfy match demand but with the Leisure Centre between 4 and 5 miles away from each rugby club but could be a suitable facility to satisfy some youth training demand from either club.

4.6 Significant increase in demand by an age group or sport

- a. Nationally, Sport England's latest Active Lives Survey (ALS) data report published in April 2024 suggests that participation in all four key playing pitch sports has returned to, and in some cases exceeded, levels of participation prior to COVID-19. In the 5 years following the pandemic, participation in all sports has been increasing year on year, with hockey recording it’s highest levels of participation since the data started being collected. The focus of England Hockey on youth hockey (5-11 years) and hosting the EuroHockey Championships in 2027 will continue to drive demand in all age groups. The FA report that youth football is growing at 3.09% per annum, and the growth in number of junior teams identified in figure 3.4 shows that there has been a strong growth in junior sports participation across the City. Figure 3.4 also identifies a significant growth in women’s and girls’ teams across all playing pitch sports.

- b. While hockey participation is already evenly split between the genders, the governing bodies of football, cricket and rugby all have a clear strategic focus on delivering more opportunities for women and girls to play and compete. As identified in the detailed assessments of future need for each sport, it is demand growth from women and girls that is likely to be the most significant over the next planning period and place the most pressure on the available capacity in the peak hours at existing pitches.
- c. This demand growth is particularly evident in **football** and, if sustained, will place additional demand pressure on the available stock of youth and mini soccer pitches and 3G AGPs as well as on the existing stock of pavilions many of which do not have adequate changing and toilet facilities.
- d. The FA’s insight shows that youth football is growing at an average of 3.09% year on year. Brighton & Hove’s previous strategy in 2016 predicted a growth of 22 teams based on population rates to 2030, this number has already been exceeded in 2024 by an extra 44 teams in the City, which is a growth rate of 3.15% per year.
- e. In view of these demand pressures, a further run of the Playing Pitch Calculator has been made to show the possible impact on pitch needs with an adjusted demand rate of 69% for youth football (3.15% iterative increase per year over 16 years).
- f. To meet football demand from 12,477 additional residents and adjusting demand for a growth of 69% in youth football for matches and training in the peak period until 2041, the PPC indicates that the equivalent capacity of +2 adult football pitches, +6 youth football pitches and +3 mini soccer pitches will be needed in the area (totalling +11 natural turf pitches) as well as 20 hours of training on a 3G pitch equivalent to half an additional AGP needed.
- g. The needs for additional playing pitch capacity for community football in the area by 2041, identified in figure 3.11 in the above section, should therefore be considered as a minimum requirement as they take no account of any increase in the rate of demand within the area population. The adjusted needs based on this scenario for football are as outlined in figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 – Estimate of impact on pitch needs of a demand growth scenario for youth football

Sport	Additional playing capacity equivalent to:
Football	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +1.5 floodlit full size equivalent 3G Football Turf Pitches • +11 natural turf pitches

- h. Brighton & Hove are one of the City hosting the 2025 Womens Rugby World Cup and are part of the RFU’s Impact 25 programme. The programme will see over £12 million invested nationally into community rugby clubs to upgrade facilities and make them more inclusive for women and girls as well as supporting female coaches and match officials. Funding has been allocated to Brighton & Hove RFC for toilet and sanitary provision upgrades. It is anticipated that the World Cup and the Impact 25 programme will increase the participation of women and girls nationally, and especially within Brighton & Hove as a host City. As such, the estimated facilities needed to cater for future demand outlined in figure 2.4 should be treated as the minimum required.
- i. Actual team generation rates should be monitored as part of regular PPS updates to identify whether the population growth or participation growth scenarios outlined above are proving to be accurate. Future pitch capacity and demand should be revised on an ongoing basis to ensure provisions are planned accordingly.

Brighton & Hove City Council

Playing Pitch Strategy

2025 – 2041

Section 5: Strategic Recommendations



5. Strategic Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

- a. This section of the Playing Pitch Strategy sets out a number of overarching strategic recommendations, endorsed by the Strategy Steering Group, aimed at ensuring the on-going provision of high-quality, accessible playing pitches that can meet the needs and demands of the city's current and future populations. The recommendations respond to the facility needs highlighted in section 3 of this Playing Pitch Strategy.

5.2 Planning policy

- a. The need to protect the existing scale of facility provision for artificial and natural turf playing pitches remains similar to the findings of the previous strategy in 2017 but with the growth in demand across all sports the requirement to provide further enhancements to facilities to accommodate this demand has increased.
- b. Given the evidence presented, the principles established in the current Local Plan Policies with regard to community, sport and recreation facilities i.e., policies CP7 (Infrastructure and Contributions), CP16 (Open space), and CP17 (Sports Provision) - need to be maintained but updated as part of the new City Plan to reflect current Sport England Playing Fields guidance.
- c. These current planning policies established in the City Plan for Brighton & Hove (2016) are set out in full at Appendix F to this document. A review of the City Plan focusing on the strategic policies in City Plan 1 has commenced. The new plan will be known as City Plan 2041. The first stage of public consultation takes place from 4 November 2024 to 20 January 2025.
- d. The strategic recommendations of the Brighton & Hove City Council's Playing Pitch Strategy Steering Group for playing pitches are set out in the following paragraphs. The recommendations are based on the Needs and Opportunities Assessment completed in 2024 reported in this document and its appendices, as agreed by the Steering Group.

5.3 Protect

- a. This Playing Pitch Strategy has assessed existing and future needs for all provision across the area. The firm conclusion is that there is an identified need to retain the existing **quantity** of sports facilities within the City whilst recognising that the distribution of facilities may change (for example, through any change of sites of poor quality or of limited value for community sport being offset by new provision). This headline finding and recommendation remains applicable in relation to any examination at LPA level.
- b. It is therefore recommended that, in line with Sport England's playing fields policy and as proposed, the new Local Plan should continue to maintain a policy framework to resist granting planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss, or would prejudice the use, of a playing field or sports facility unless:
 - The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a location well-related to the users of the existing facility; or
 - The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss or,
 - The development is for a small part of the site that does not affect or prejudice the use of playing pitch provision or,
 - where it has been demonstrated that it will result in an enhanced sport or recreational facility.

- c. Should a current or newly created sports facility exist in Brighton & Hove City Council that is not mentioned in this Strategy and appendices, its omission is not an endorsement by the council, Sport England or the relevant national governing body of that sport of its disposal.
- d. It is also recommended that the council continue to work with strategic sports partners (Sport England and the National Governing Bodies of sport) to seek agreements to secure access for community sport at those sites in the City where there is existing access, but long-term access is currently unsecured (i.e. by means of Community Use Agreements).
- e. Where sports facility sites are in the council's ownership, the policy of securing community access through asset transfer to community clubs and/or sports associations should continue to be applied, provided that:
 - The facilities are assessed as 'good' quality by the relevant governing bodies of sport prior to transfer, and
 - The transferee is able to demonstrate it has the capacity and resources to maintain the facilities to good quality (and this forms part of any service level agreement). It is recommended that the terms of future transfer agreements include incentives for the clubs to deliver sports development outcomes (e.g. grow numbers of teams, volunteering, and sporting opportunities for under-represented groups).
- f. It is recommended the council continue to seek to influence the design and specification of any new education sports facilities and extensions to existing facilities to ensure their suitability for both education and community use (i.e., provided to Sport England and/or the relevant sport's national governing body design dimensions and standards as opposed to education dimensions and standards).
- g. It is further recommended that the council negotiates secure affordable community access as a condition of planning consent (via formal Community Use Agreements) for applications from education providers of sports facilities relating to:
 - Extending hours of permitted use
 - Extensions to existing sports facilities
 - Provision of new or enhanced sports facilities

5.4 Enhance and provide

- a. It is recommended that the Local Planning Authority continue to seek the advice of appropriate sport national governing bodies whenever pre-planning proposals or planning applications involving new sports facilities are brought forward or new S106 Agreements for sports facilities are drafted. This is to ensure that the design, layout and management plans maximise the community value of the new facilities and that any maintenance plans meet any relevant Performance Quality Standards.
- b. For all developments involving the creation of one or more residential units, contributions should be sought (under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or through the Community Infrastructure Levy mechanism) towards the delivery of 'off site' priority sports and recreation infrastructure projects as identified in the Playing Pitch Strategy in locations well-related to the proposed development. Appropriate contributions should also continue to be sought for ongoing maintenance of any new sports facilities.
- c. The priority projects are those set out in the Action Plan current at the time the planning application is submitted. The initial Action Plan is at Section 7 of this document. The priority projects include

sites in private ownership and on school sites outside the council's control. Accordingly, the lead party responsible for progressing the actions is identified in the Action Plan along with supporting agencies.

Where a site specific policy in the Local Plan allocates the provision of sports facilities and open space facilities. On-site provision will typically be secured via a legal agreement and contributions may be sought (under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or through the Community Infrastructure Levy mechanism) towards its delivery and maintenance.

- d. The latest version of Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator planning tools should be used, as appropriate, to scope the appropriate scale and approximate costs of new provision and to provide the starting point for project specific negotiations of S106 and/or CIL developer contributions. (For example, if 500 new dwellings are proposed at an average of 2.4 persons per dwelling, the additional population total to enter into the Calculator will be 1,200). The figure per dwelling can be adjusted based on local factors and specific development details.
- e. It is recommended that in the case of all planning applications with implications for sports facilities (both indoor and outdoor), the latest version of Sport England's Model Planning Conditions should be used as appropriate. Current model conditions cover the following:
 - I. Protection/New Provision of Sport & Recreation Facilities;
 - II. Compensatory Provision, Continuity of Use and Phasing of Development;
 - III. Built Design and Layout;
 - IV. Playing Field Provision;
 - V. Operational Matters.
- f. It is recommended that the council's Strategy Steering Group, comprising of membership from Sport England, and the NGB's, should review and update the Action Plan and priority projects annually during the strategy period. In line with Sport England guidance a full review of the strategy will be required after 5 years. If no annual monitoring takes place a full review is required after 3 years.

Brighton & Hove City Council

Playing Pitch Strategy

2025 – 2041

Section 6: Recommendations by Pitch Sport



6 – Recommendations by Pitch Sport

- a. Based on the findings of the assessment of current and future facility needs for the four major playing pitch sports summarised in section 3 of this strategy and detailed in sport-specific reports at appendices A to D, the following recommendations are made for strategic provision of playing pitch facilities in Brighton & Hove to 2041.
- b. The recommendations assume the quantum of population growth forecast in B&HCC Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2023 – i.e. +12,477 additional residents by 2041 and take into consideration the range of potential scenarios available to the council and its partner sports bodies to address the facility needs detailed in section 4 above.

6.1 Protect

- a. In the context of current demand, future net population growth and the development aspirations of key sports clubs – particularly to grow opportunities for more women and girls to play cricket, football and rugby- the over-riding priority recommendation of the PPS is to continue to retain the existing overall quantity of land in the City available for use as playing pitches.
- b. Protecting the supply of playing fields, playing pitches and ancillary provision should continue to be a core principle in the planning policies of Brighton & Hove City Council in its emerging Local Plan.
- c. The relevant existing planning policies for the protection of playing pitches in Brighton & Hove are detailed in Appendix F of this Playing Pitch Strategy.
- d. Strategic recommendations aimed at maximising the effectiveness of local planning policy in Brighton & Hove and the planning process to both protect playing fields, playing pitches, ancillary provision and to secure community access are set out in Section 5 above.
- e. Effective use of the planning process to ensure protection of access to education playing pitches is particularly critical to community sport. Continued access to school and college playing fields at weekends is key to many community football clubs in the City to deliver their programmes of match play for growing numbers of youth and mini-soccer teams.

6.2 Enhance and provide

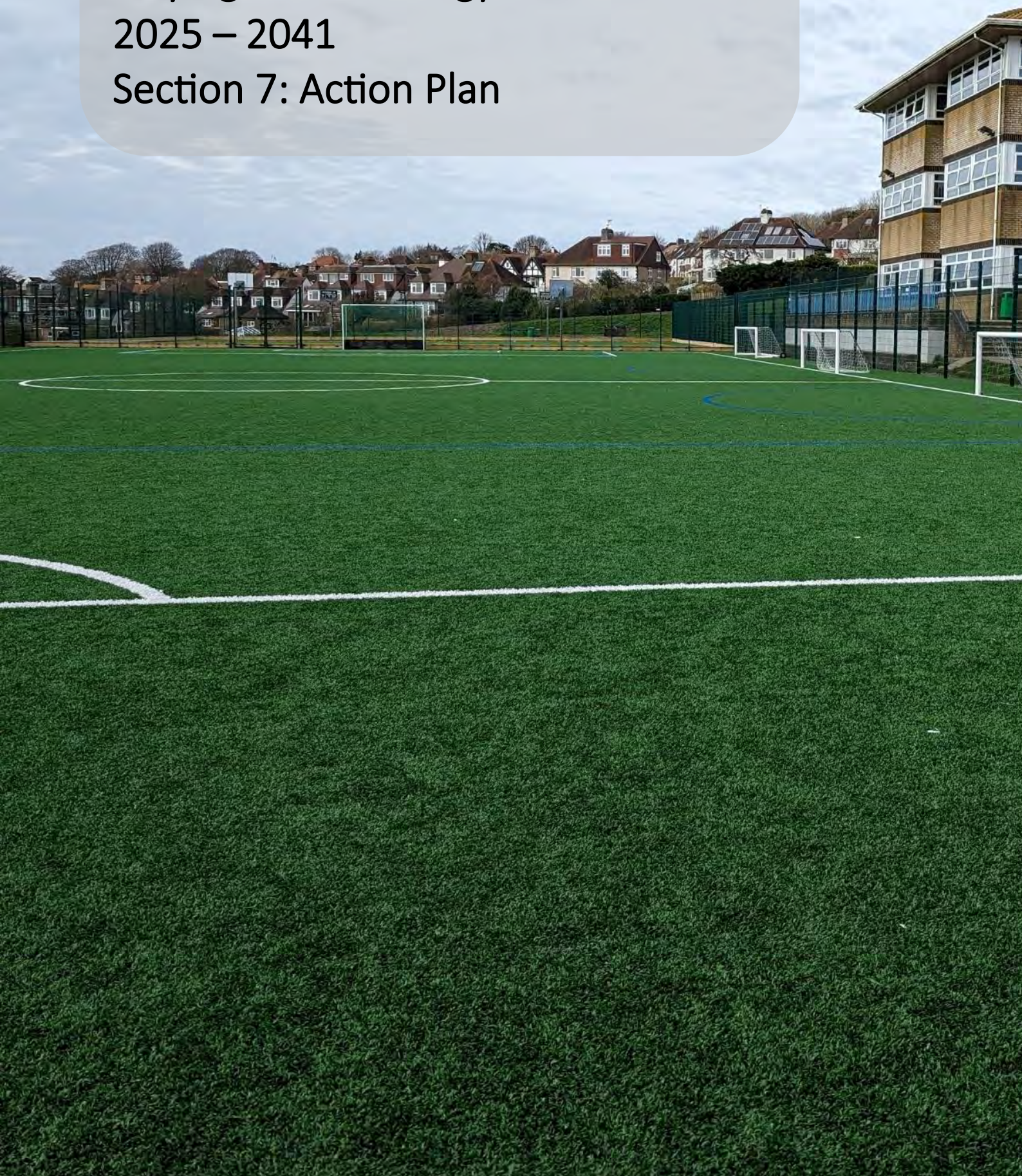
- a. It is recommended that a number of existing playing pitch facilities should be prioritised for investment in upgrades (subject to funding, planning and feasibility) in order to continue to meet existing demand from community teams and individuals and to ensure, where possible, that additional capacity is provided to contribute to meeting demand growth.
- b. Greater playing capacity will be needed in future as a result of population growth and as a consequence of demand growth stimulated by the sports development initiatives of local clubs supported by the council and other stakeholders including the relevant sport's governing bodies. Improved safeguarding and accessibility at ancillary facilities will also be critical to attracting and retaining players, particularly women and girls who remain under-represented in cricket, football and rugby participation.
- c. The assessment of needs and the possible scenarios to address the needs has established that the additional playing pitch capacity that is likely to be needed over the strategy period will not be achievable without significantly improving the maintenance of many sites.

- d. Figure 6.1 below summarises the strategic recommendations for enhancement of existing playing field sites and for new provision.

Figure 6.1 – Recommended facility enhancement and new provision by sport

Sport	Site(s)	Recommendation
Cricket	Aldrington Rec, Braypool Rec, East Brighton Park	Develop NTPs
	Patcham Place Recreation Ground	Commission joint ECB/FA Pitch Power assessment and deliver recommendations to raise quality from poor
	Benfield Valley Rec	Renew club lease to secure future community use
	Nevill Playing Fields, University of Sussex	Provide new or upgraded non turf practice net systems
	Preston Park	Investigate options to safeguard against ball strikes
	Education sites	Explore options for community use
	Braypool Rec	Explore the feasibility of self-management opportunities with local sports clubs
	Aldrington Rec, Braypool Rec, Nevill Playing Fields, Patcham Place Rec, Preston Park (Cricket Pavilion)	Repair/upgrade/replace pavilions as necessary (e.g. replacement roofs, improved security, enhanced facilities for women & girls, disabled access)
Football	Key natural turf sites (e.g. Braypool Rec, Happy Valley Rec)	Deliver FA PitchPower pitch quality report recommendations for natural turf improvement
	Longhill Sports Centre, Moulsecoomb Community Leisure Centre, Toads Hole Valley	Investigate the feasibility of proposed 3G projects and deliver planned 3G pitch projects
	Brighton RFC, Dorothy Stringer School, University of Brighton	Support resurfacing of 3G pitches, where the surface is coming to the end of its usable life.
	St Margarets C of E School	Support the school in hiring out their pitch to community clubs
	Aldrington Rec, Braypool Rec, Greenleas, Happy Valley Rec, Nuffield Playing Fields, Patcham Place Rec, Preston Park, Victoria Recreation Ground, Waterhall Sports Ground (bottom area), Withdean Sports Complex, Wild Park	Repair/upgrade/replace pavilions as necessary (e.g. replacement roofs, improved security, enhanced facilities for women & girls, disabled access)
	Withdean Sports Complex	Upgrade sports lighting to LED
	Braypool, Hapy Valley, Waterhall Sports Ground (bottom area)	Explore the feasibility of self-management opportunities with local sports clubs
	Hockey	Blatchington Mill School
Stanley Deason Leisure Centre, University of Sussex.		Resurface the existing pitch
Rugby	Brighton RFC	Resurface existing AGP to meet World Rugby regulations for contact play
	Waterhall Sports Ground (bottom area)	Repair/upgrade/replace pavilions as necessary (e.g. replacement roofs, improved security, enhanced facilities for women & girls, disabled access)
	Hove Recreation Ground	Investigate options to install engineered drainage on the 2 remaining pitches with natural drainage
	Education Sites	Explore options for community use
	Cardinal Newman School, Varndean High School	Support the school in hiring out their pitch to community clubs
	Hove Recreation Ground, Waterhall Sports Ground (top area)	Undertake Pitch Power assessments and action recommended maintenance

Brighton & Hove City Council
Playing Pitch Strategy
2025 – 2041
Section 7: Action Plan



Section 7 – Action Plan

- a. This section of the strategy provides an outline action plan related to the potential development and delivery of the priority projects and facility needs for sport and recreation as set out in the previous sections.
- b. Figures 7.1 – 7.3 presents the projects split by analysis area, in alphabetical order, with a reference to their potential to be progressed either in the short term (defined as within 2 years approximately), the medium term (defined as within 2-5 years) or longer to progress- for example projects dependent on acquisition of land, the outcome of wider area development planning or large-scale review of options, feasibility and viability. Figure 7.4 that follows highlights a number of sites which present opportunities for providing or extending community sports. These sites sit outside of the main action plan as further work is required to investigate relevant permission, access, suitability, and funding.
- c. Figure 7.5 identifies those sites that are not identified in figures 7.1 – 7.3 (for enhancement or new provision) or 7.4 (opportunity sites) but are in need of protection for community sport through the planning system. The omission of any playing pitch site from this Strategy is not an endorsement by the council, Sport England or the relevant national governing body of that sport of its disposal.
- d. The action plan is a guide to how facilities might be developed, pending funding confirmation and planning permission where necessary, where and whom they might be developed by to meet identified demand, exploit opportunities that may arise and provide sustainable management and operational models often through engaging with either voluntary or commercial partners. A number of project proposals within the strategy are subject to design and cost analysis and for some projects feasibility testing and options appraisals.
- e. Each potential project must be evaluated considering the current situation, as the strategy and action plan set out the position at the time of writing; so, factors on both the demand and supply side may have changed as well as the cost and viability of the project at the point when an individual project is being considered within the lifespan of this strategy. The action plan should be reviewed and adjusted on an annual basis by the Strategy Steering Group to ensure these factors are taken into consideration.
- f. The immediate priority for Brighton & Hove City Council, as with many local authorities at the time of this strategy, is to protect and continue to maintain the current level of facilities to ensure no loss of provision during the current challenging time for local authorities. The current pressures on public sector budgets alongside increasing operational costs and capital costs (for maintenance and new facilities) means the council must plan prudently for future needs.
- g. The updates to the Action Plan should in turn inform periodic updates of the council's priorities for investment and future decision on funding either through capital grant and / or financing and budgetary planning.

Figure 7.1 Priorities and actions for playing pitches in Brighton & Hove (West)

Site	Timescale	Facility type	Priority actions	Lead	Partners
Aldrington Rec	Short	Cricket	Complete development of new NTP, subject to planning.	B&HCC	ECB / SCF
	Short	Football	Deliver FA PitchPower pitch quality report recommendations for natural turf improvement	B&HCC	FA
	Medium	Cricket, Football	Complete proposed pavilion refurbishment.	B&HCC	ECB / SCF / FA
Benfield Valley Rec	Short	Cricket	Renew club lease to secure future community use	B&HCC	Club
	Short	Football	Deliver FA PitchPower pitch quality report recommendations for natural turf improvement	B&HCC	FA
Blatchington Mill School	Short	Hockey	Support Brighton & Hove HC in extending their lease at the site	B&HCC / School	Club
	Short	Hockey	Undertake an independent survey to determine the current condition of the facilities and timescale for resurfacing.	School / Club	B&HCC / EH
	Medium	Hockey	Support the resurfacing of both SD pitches.	School / Club	B&HCC / EH
	Long	Hockey	Develop a new clubhouse and changing rooms at the hockey pitches.	School / Club	B&HCC / EH
Brighton RFC	Short	Rugby	Deliver PitchPower pitch quality report recommendations for natural turf improvement	Club / B&HCC	RFU
	Medium	Rugby, Football	Resurface the AGP to WRC standards to allow for contact rugby training and matches, and football usage.	Club / B&HCC	FA / RFU
Easthill Park	Short	Football	Deliver FA PitchPower pitch quality report recommendations for natural turf improvement	B&HCC	FA
	Medium	Football	Investigate options to repair and refurbish changing rooms to reinstate usage.	B&HCC	FA
Greenleas Rec	Short	Football	Deliver FA PitchPower pitch quality report recommendations for natural turf improvement	B&HCC	FA
	Long	Football	Investigate options to refurbish poor quality changing rooms and showers.	B&HCC	FA
Hove Park School – Valley Campus	Long	Football, Cricket	Ensure the protection of existing 3G pitch and Cricket nets on site should proposals to close the school site go ahead.	B&HCC	FA / ECB / SCF
Hove Rec	Short	Rugby	Deliver PitchPower pitch quality report recommendations for natural turf improvement	Club	B&HCC
	Medium	Rugby	Investigate options to install engineered drainage on the 2 remaining pitches with natural drainage	Club / B&HCC	RFU
Cardinal Newman School	Short	Football, Rugby	Support the school in providing community use to the new 3G pitch on site.	B&HCC / School	FA / RFU
Nevill Playing Fields	Short	Football	Deliver FA PitchPower pitch quality report recommendations for natural turf improvement	Club	B&HCC
	Short	Cricket	Deliver upgraded NTP practice nets	Club / B&HCC	ECB / SCF

Figure 7.1 Priorities and actions for playing pitches in Brighton & Hove (West)					
Site	Timescale	Facility type	Priority actions	Lead	Partners
	Short	Cricket, Football Hockey	Refurbish existing changing room to improve layout and quality	Club / B&HCC	ECB / SCF / FA / EH
Toads Hole Valley	Long	Football	Proceed to deliver the 3G pitch proposed within the housing development planning application	B&HCC	FA
Victoria Rec	Short	Football	Deliver FA PitchPower pitch quality report recommendations for natural turf improvement	B&HCC	FA
	Short	Football	Explore usage of recently developed changing facilities at the bowls pavilion.	B&HCC	FA
	Long	Football	Explore options to refurbish poor quality pavilion.	B&HCC	FA
Waterhall Sports Ground (bottom area)	Short	Football, Rugby, Aussie Rules	Deliver PitchPower pitch quality report recommendations for natural turf improvement	B&HCC	FA, RFU
	Short	Football, Rugby	Explore the feasibility of self-management opportunities and FA home advantage programme with local sports clubs	B&HCC / FA	RFU
	Medium	Football, Rugby, Aussie Rules	Explore options to refurbish or redevelop pavilion to reinstate community use.	B&HCC	FA, RFU
Withdean Sports Complex	Short	Football	Upgrade sports lighting to LED	B&HCC	FA
	Short	Football	Carry out and deliver FA PitchPower pitch quality report recommendations for natural turf improvement.	B&HCC	FA
	Medium	Football	Investigate options to refurbish changing rooms and showers to meet ground grading requirements.	B&HCC	FA

Figure 7.2 Priorities and actions for playing pitches in Brighton & Hove (Central)					
Site	Timescale	Facility type	Priority actions	Lead	Partners
Braypool Rec	Short	Cricket	Complete development of new NTP.	B&HCC	ECB
	Short	Football	Deliver FA PitchPower pitch quality report recommendations for natural turf improvement	B&HCC	FA
	Medium	Cricket, Football	Explore the feasibility of self-management opportunities and FA home advantage programme with local sports clubs	B&HCC/ FA	ECB / SCF
	Long	Cricket, Football	Refurbish pavilion to improve quality and provide additional showers and accessible W/Cs to allow women and girls, youth teams, and adult male teams to use the pavilion simultaneously	B&HCC	ECB / SCF / FA
Dorothy Stringer School	Medium	Football	Support resurfacing of 3G pitches, where the surface is coming to the end of its usable life to ensure the facility can meet FA pitch register requirements.	School	B&HCC / FA
Moulsecomb Community LC	Short	Football	Deliver proposed 7v7 3G pitch	B&HCC	FA

Figure 7.2 Priorities and actions for playing pitches in Brighton & Hove (Central)

Site	Timescale	Facility type	Priority actions	Lead	Partners
Patcham Place Recreation Ground	Short	Cricket, Football	Commission joint ECB/FA Pitch Power assessment and deliver recommendations to raise quality from poor.	B&HCC, ECB / SCF	FA
	Long	Cricket, Football	Repair and reinstate usage of the pavilion. Develop additional security measures to deter vandalism of the pavilion.	B&HCC	ECB / SCF / FA
Preston Park	Short	Cricket	Investigate options to safeguard against ball strikes	Club / B&HCC	ECB / SCF
	Long	Cricket	Investigate options to upgrade the cricket pavilion	Club / B&HCC	ECB / SCF
University of Brighton	Medium	Football	Resurface poor quality 3G pitch to achieve FA 3G Pitch Register standards	University	B&HCC / FA
University of Sussex	Medium	Cricket	Upgrade the current NTP practice nets	University	B&HCC / ECB / SCF
Varndean High School	Short	Rugby	Investigate options to extend the community use of the pitch.	B&HCC / RFU / School	
Wild Park	Short	Football	Deliver FA PitchPower pitch quality report recommendations for natural turf improvement	B&HCC	FA
	Long	Football	Explore feasibility of developing changing rooms on site.	B&HCC	FA

Figure 7.3 Priorities and actions for playing pitches in Brighton & Hove (East)

Site	Timescale	Facility type	Priority actions	Lead	Partners
Bevendean Recreation Ground	Short	Football	Review appropriateness of retaining formal sports provision, if not viable, retain as open space for informal recreation.	B&HCC	FA
East Brighton Park	Short	Cricket	Complete development of new NTP.	B&HCC	ECB / SCF
Happy Valley Rec	Short	Football	Commission FA Pitch Power assessment covering the recently developed youth pitches and deliver recommendations for both adult and junior pitches	B&HCC	FA
	Medium	Football	Explore the feasibility of self-management opportunities and FA home advantage programme with local sports clubs	B&HCC	FA
	Medium	Football	Explore feasibility of redeveloping pavilion using S106 monies.	B&HCC	FA
Longhill Sports Centre	Medium	Football	Support the development of a 3G pitch subject to satisfactory resolution of outstanding planning issues.	B&HCC	FA
	Long	Rugby	Explore rugby club interest in use for training to justify WRC surface being funded as part of the project.	Sports Centre/ RFU	FA / B&HCC
	Short	Football	Encourage club to complete a FA Pitch Power assessment to improve pitches further.	B&HCC / FA	

Figure 7.3 Priorities and actions for playing pitches in Brighton & Hove (East)

Site	Timescale	Facility type	Priority actions	Lead	Partners
Nuffield Playing Fields	Long	Football	Support club in discussions with landowner to explore options to develop a new pavilion on site	Club / B&HCC / FA	
Stanley Deason Leisure Centre	Short	Hockey	Resurface existing SD AGP and restore surrounding fence.	B&HCC / Leisure Provider	EH
St Margarets C of E School	Short	Football	Support the school in hiring out their pitch to community clubs	B&HCC / FA / School	

Figure 7.4 Opportunities for providing or extending community sports opportunities to be investigated further at the following sites, all pending funding and relevant permissions; all potential opportunities listed are dependent on the support of the site owners/operators

Site	Timescale	Facility type	Analysis area	Potential actions	Partners
Brighton College	Short	Cricket	Central	Explore options to secure further community use of playing pitches	B&HCC, ECB / SCF
Cardinal Newman School	Short	Rugby	West	Explore options to secure further community use of playing pitches	B&HCC, RFU
Dorothy Stringer School	Short	Rugby	Central	Explore options to secure further community use of playing pitches	B&HCC, RFU
Hove Park School – Nevill Campus	Short	Rugby	West	Explore options to secure further community use of playing pitches	B&HCC, RFU

Figure. 7.5 Other playing pitch sites for protection

Analysis area- East	
Site	Sport
Bevendean Primary School	Football
Brighton Aldridge Community Academy	Cricket, Football
Hamilton Lodge School and College for Deaf Children	Football, Hockey
Portslade Sports Centre	Football
Roedean School	Football, Cricket, Hockey
Rottingdean Cricket & Football Club	Football, Cricket
Rottingdean Recreation Ground	Football
Saltdean Oval Park	Football
The Crew Club	Football
The Manor Road Gym	Football
University of Brighton	Rugby

Figure. 7.5 Other playing pitch sites for protection	
Whitehawk Football Club (The enclosed ground)	Football
Analysis area- Central	
Site	Sport
Balfour Junior School	Football
Carden Park	Football
Hertford Junior School	Football
Hill Park	Football
Hollingbury Park (Brentwood Road)	Football
Horsdean Recreation Ground	Football, Cricket
Patcham High School	Football, Cricket
Patcham Junior School	Football
St Bernadette Catholic Primary School	Football
University of Sussex	Football, Cricket
Varndean High School	Football, Cricket
Wild Park	Football

Analysis area- West	
Site	Sport
Benfield Valley Recreation Ground	Football, Cricket
Brighton Hove & Sussex Sixth Form College Sports Centre	Rugby
Cardinal Newman Catholic School	Football
Cottesmore St. Mary's RC Primary School	Football
Dyke Road Park	Football
Hove Park	Football
Hove Park School- Nevill Campus	Football
Knoll Park	Football
Portslade Aldridge Community Academy	Football
Portslade Sports Centre	Football
Mile Oak Recreation Ground	Football
Withdean Sports Complex	Football
Nuffield Playing Fields	Football
Southwick Hill Rec Ground	Football
Waterhall Sports Ground (top area)	Baseball

Brighton & Hove City Council
Playing Pitch Strategy
2025 – 2041
Section 8: Summary



Section 8- Summary

8.1 Summary

- a. Throughout the development of this strategy Brighton & Hove City Council and key partners have continued to emphasise the importance of facilities for sport and physical activity to improve the health and wellbeing of the local population. Alongside this is the recognition of the vital contribution these facilities make to the local economy and quality of life for all residents, communities, and visitors.
- b. Through this strategy a number of priorities have emerged for the area for the council to consider and plan for. Football has grown significantly since the last strategy putting pressure on the facilities in the area. There is a clear need to provide more artificial grass pitches across Brighton & Hove, this includes continuing to progress the current planned AGP pitches as well as new ones identified, there is the evident need to improve existing grass pitch sites as well introduce or extend community use at education sites. For cricket there is a need for at least one new fine turf pitches (of 12 wickets) as well as additional NTP's alongside pitch improvements to support the clubs especially those with large junior sections. The key priority for hockey is the resurfacing of the pitches at Blatchington Mill School and Stanley Deason Leisure Centre. The rugby clubs in the area have high levels of demand for matches and training, with identified pitch improvements that will improve capacity as well as resurfacing the WRC AGP at Brighton RFC.
- c. As well as the investment needs identified the overarching need is for the council to protect the overall quantity, maintain the quality and secure availability for the wider community to the existing supply of sports facilities. Within Brighton & Hove, like many local authorities, many playing pitches are located on education sites which require new or on-going community use agreements to protect future usage and extend community access where possible.
- d. Alongside direct provision Brighton & Hove City Council also plays an enabling role in developing better quality facilities by engaging and empowering community organisations through the asset transfer process to potentially independently manage and operate facilities funded through partnerships with Sport England and National Governing Bodies of Sport as well as other funding organisations.
- e. As local authorities continue to manage difficult budget decisions and the challenges of providing both statutory and critical non-statutory services, the important role physical activity has in positively impacting on the health of the nation is even more evident. Investment into the future health and wellbeing of Brighton & Hove's residents will be impacted very positively by the priorities highlighted within this strategy. This will be in the form of both protecting the current playing pitch facilities as well as investing in improved and new facilities where the opportunities arise.
- f. Brighton & Hove City Council has always recognised and must continue to do so, despite the ongoing challenges, the importance of protecting and investing in accessible and sustainable community sports facilities which play a critical role in providing activities and opportunities and improving the lives and wellbeing of all of their residents.



CONTINUUM
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Brighton & Hove City Council
Playing Pitch Strategy 2025 Appendix A
Assessment of Need Report Cricket

Appendix A: Cricket - Assessment of needs (Stages B and C)

The findings of the assessment of needs for cricket facilities in Brighton & Hove City Council are summarised in this appendix to the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS). Affiliated cricket clubs in Brighton & Hove playing their home fixtures in the area have contributed to this assessment either by submitting an online club survey and/or through in person consultation during site visits. The number of clubs that responded to consultation as part of this process represent 94% of teams playing cricket in the area.

The last playing pitch assessment carried out in 2016 recorded 14 fine turf wickets on 12 sites available for community use, the same level of provision recorded for this strategy. There has been a change in supply of Non Turf Cricket Pitches (NTP's) with the previous strategy recording a total of 14 NTP's available for community use, which has reduced to just 10 NTP's, with a number of NTP's on education sites being no longer available for community use or, have not been maintained or replaced, and are no longer fit for use.

Sussex Cricket Foundation, via its devolved ECB County Grants Fund, has invested almost £35,000 into Brighton & Hove Clubs in the last 3 years, with the aim to create welcoming environments, provide enhanced facilities and playing opportunities, and to tackle [the impact of] climate change. The four club projects were St Peters CC (2021) towards a social space refurbishment, Brighton & Hove CC (2022) for shower and toilet improvements, Rottingdean CC (2023) for electric mower and Scarifier and Brighton & Hove CC for digitalising project.

1. Cricket supply (Step 1)

The findings of the assessment of supply of cricket facilities in Brighton & Hove are summarised in this section and detailed by site, both for fine turf pitches and for non-turf artificial grass pitches (NTP's). The supply side information is generated through standard facility audits based on the visual assessment, grading and playing capacity guidance (as set out by Sport England and the ECB in the national guidance for the development of playing pitch needs assessments) supported by consultation with the Council, Sussex Cricket and user clubs.

1.1 Cricket pitches in Brighton & Hove

A total of 14 fine turf pitches are identified as available for community cricket in the area in 2024, on 12 playing pitch sites.

The Sussex County Cricket Ground and indoor school is also located within the city. The facility provides a base for the Sussex Cricket Foundation whose aim is to actively change lives through cricket and whilst a significant site for Cricket in the area, it is excluded from the data as it is not available for community use.

There are a further 4 fine turf pitches on education sites not available for regular community use (Brighton College x2, Lancing College Prep and Roedean School).

There are 10 non-turf pitches on 9 sites currently available for community use, with a further 5 NTP's on education sites not available for community use (Brighton College, Longhill Sports Centre (poor condition) Roedean School (x2) and Varndean High School).

Figure 1.1: Fine turf cricket sites in Brighton & Hove

Site name & address	Ownership / management	Access security	Pitches / wickets	NTP	NT nets	Pavilion / changing rooms	Pitch & outfield rating	Pavilion rating	Fine turf capacity (MES pa)	Fine turf use (MES pa)	Peak use (%)	Supply/demand balance	RAG
Aldrington Rec. Ground (Wish park), BN3 4LN	Council	Secured	1 (12)	None	None	2 changing rooms with 1 open shower block shared between changing rooms. 1 w/c. No accessible or ambulant facilities.	Standard (P & O) Club rate 2/5	Poor	36	30	83%	6	Yellow
Benfield Valley Recreation Ground, BN3 7GE	Council / Portslade CC	Club has 2 yrs left on 25 yr lease	1 (8)	1 Good	None	Pavilion with changing, social space bar and kitchen	Good (P) Standard (O)	Standard	40	40	100%	0	Red
Braypool Recreation Ground, BN1 8ZH	Council	Secured	1 (7)	None	None	Large changing rooms (x10), open shower room with kitchen and large club room. External male and female w/c. No accessible or ambulant facilities.	Standard (P & O)	Poor	21	21	100%	0	Red
Brighton Aldridge Com. Academy, BN1 9PW	Education	Secured - Education	1 (12)	1 Good	Indoor - 3x Good	High spec gym and indoor cricket facility with changing rooms	Good (P) Good (O)	Good	60	60	100%	0	Red
East Brighton Park, BN2 5TS	Council	Secured	1 (24)	None	None	Designated male and female changing rooms (2x each) with associated showers and w/c.	Standard (P) Standard (O)	Standard	70	30	43%	40	Green
Horsdean Recreation Ground, BN1 8UA	Horsdean Com. Sports Ass. (Patcham Utd FC, Brighton & Hove Cres. CC)	25 year lease joint with Football club.	1 (14)	1 Standard	None	Pavilion with 2 small changing rooms. Recently renovated.	Good (P) Standard (O) Club rate 4/5	Good	70	70	100%	0	Red
Hove Recreation Ground, BN3 6LL	Council / Palmers CC	Rolling 5 yr license	1 (10)	1 Good	None	Use Hove RFCs pavilion and changing facilities and paying an affiliate fee.	Good (P) Standard (O) Club rate 4/5	Standard	50	36	72%	14	Yellow
Nevill Playing Fields, BN3 7QD	Council / Brighton & Hove CC	Ground on licence, building leased to 2034	2 (13 & 6)	2 Good	3x Standard	Pavilion with 4 changing rooms, basic recently repainted, separate showers in poor condition. No accessible toilet	Good (P) Good (O) Club rate 4/5	Standard	95	100	105%	-5	Red

Site name & address	Ownership / management	Access security	Pitches / wickets	NTP	NT nets	Pavilion / changing rooms	Pitch & outfield rating	Pavilion rating	Fine turf capacity (MES pa)	Fine turf use (MES pa)	Peak use (%)	Supply/demand balance	RAG
Patcham Place Recreation Ground, BN1 8PB	Council	Secured	1 (11)	None	None	Pavilion closed due to damage and vandalism. 4 changing rooms with open shower w/cs and officials changing.	Poor (P & O) Club rate 3/5	Poor	0	30	N/A	-30	
Preston Park, BN1 6SD	Council / St Peters CC	Club has long term lease on Pavilion	2 (10 & 13)	1 Good	2x Good	Pavilion is dated and in need of improvement. Lack of storage.	Good (P&O)	Poor	115	115	100%	0	
Rottingdean Cricket & Football Club, BN2 7DA	Rottingdean Cricket Club	Secured 21 years remaining	1(11)	1 Standard	3x Standard	Basic pavilion facilities which are not suitable for the women and girls game.	Good (P) Good (O) Club rate 4/5	Standard	55	55	100%	0	
University of Brighton, BN1 9PH	University	Education - unaware of CUA	None	1 standard 1 Not in use	None	Large changing block with 8 changing rooms	Good (O)	Good	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
University of Sussex, BN1 9PL	University	Secured - Education	1(9)	1 Poor	2x Poor	9 changing rooms - 4 designated male/female, 5 shared. Part of the Falmer Sports Complex	Good (P) Good (O)	Standard	27	40	148%	-16	

1.2 Junior pitches

In general, the clubs with junior sections set aside one strip on the main square for junior matches requiring shorter dimensions and/or use of the non-turf pitches where these are available on their grounds. At most sites, Kwik cricket for younger children is generally played on temporary pitches set up on a mown strip in the outfield (or several strips around the outfield in the event of Kwik cricket tournaments and festivals). Most sites with NTP wickets have different markings for each age group to allow for regulation bowling lengths.

1.3 Closed sites

There is one site in the city, at Victoria Rec which previously had a cricket square that was removed prior to 2018.

1.4 Non-turf pitches (NTPs)

In the younger age groups (U10 to U13), some hardball match play takes place on non-turf pitches (NTPs). Currently, all of the clubs with youth sections in the city have access to an NTP wicket to support their youth teams.

NTPs are also used for training and adult play including most short format friendly games between non-traditional single team clubs without a secured home ground. There are 10 NTP's across the city. The majority are in a good condition allowing up to 60 match equivalent sessions (MES) for adults, with the exception of the NTP at University of Sussex which is in a poor condition and needs upgrading. Not included in the number above is one of the NTP's at University of Brighton, which is not in use due to its condition and NTP's at Brighton College, Longhill Sports Centre (poor condition) Roedean School (x2) and Varndean High School which all have no community use.

1.5 Non-turf practice nets

There is a mix in provision of non-turf practice nets which are available at 7 sites in city, a number of these are education sites without a fine turf square or NTP, such as Cardinal Newman Catholic School, Hove Park School – Valley Campus and Patcham High School (where new nets are in development). The nets at Hove Park School – Valley Campus are not ECB approved as they are shorter than the minimum length. Brighton & Hove CC has planning permission to extend their nets at Nevill Playing Fields from 3 to 5 lanes. Clubs without non-turf net systems rely on mobile net cages for practice on the NTP on the square or on one of the fine turf strips. The majority of net systems are in a good or standard condition, however the nets at the University of Sussex are in a poor condition and need upgrading.

Figure 1.2 – Non-turf permanent net systems: locations and quality

Location	No. of lanes	Quality
Cardinal Newman Catholic School	4	Standard
Hove Park School - Valley Campus	4	Good – but not ECB approved.
Nevill Playing Fields	3	Standard
Patcham High School	3	Good
Preston Park (St Peters CC)	2	Good
Rottingdean Cricket & Football Club	3	Standard
University of Sussex	2	Poor
Total	21	

1.6 Indoor cricket and practice nets

There is multiple indoor cricket net provision used by clubs throughout the city, based on a mixture of education and council run leisure centre sites (Kings School, Longhill Sports Centre, Portslade Sports Centre, Stanley Deason Leisure Centre and Varndean High School).

Brighton Aldridge Community Academy has an indoor cricket centre with three full cricket lanes, a bowling machine, high specification gym and physio room. The facility is home to the Aldridge Cricket Academy and Sussex Women and Girls Cricket.

Indoor sports hall space is in high demand across the area as the main constraint on cricket hires is the competing demand from sports hall team sports and badminton, these are all year-round activities whereas demand for indoor cricket nets is generally limited to peak evening or weekend slots from January to March and therefore disruptive to the core programme and income.

1.7 Facilities for non-traditional forms of cricket

Sussex Cricket is working along with the ECB towards the aim to inspire a new generation to say that 'Cricket is a game for me', with one of their aspirations by 2028 to become the most inclusive team sport.

Sussex Cricket Foundation created a 5- year urban plan for cricket in Greater Brighton in 2021, in partnership with B&HCC and Adur District Council. The plan provides a number of strategic action plan priorities including supporting the growth and development of friendly cricket, to improve access to ethnic minority groups, increase the numbers of participants of all ages and to provide additional facilities for summer use.

Non-traditional facilities range from non-turf pitches (NTPs) for organised cup and league 20 over matches and 'Last Man Stands' (games of 75 minutes approximately for teams of 8 players played in public parks) down to hard-court Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) for informal games of 'Cage Cricket' using a softball or tapeball (a tennis ball wrapped in tape). There is a 'Last Man Stands' league in the city at Hove Rec.

1.8 Ownership and security of access

Cricket pitches in the study area fall into one of two categories of site ownership where community access is considered to be 'secured':

- **Council owned** – Grounds owned by the council are considered to be secured for community use and are hired out by the council to clubs and teams either on a match-by-match pre-booked letting basis or under terms of a seasonal agreement.
- **Council owned with club lease arrangement** – Grounds owned by the council leased to clubs. A number of clubs have lease arrangements including Brighton & Hove Crescent CC (25 year joint lease under sports association), Brighton & Hove CC (10 years remaining on pavilion, ground on licence) Portslade CC (2 years on 25 year lease remaining), Rottingdean CC (21 years remaining) and St Peters CC (long lease on pavilion).

Community club access and use of privately owned or education sector playing fields is deemed 'unsecured' where a club has no legally enforceable right of access agreement in place for more than a year. None of the educational sites in B&HCC provide a permanent home ground to cricket clubs, however some are available for community bookings, and some provide nets for training.

1.9 At risk sites

There are no pitches in Brighton & Hove deemed to be at risk of being lost.

1.10 Opportunity sites for cricket

B&HCC are working with Sussex Cricket to deliver three new NTPs at Aldrington Recreation Ground, Braypool Recreation Ground, and East Brighton Park. The proposed NTPs at Aldrington Recreation

Ground and Braypool Recreation Ground will create new pitch provision. The East Brighton Park NTP will be located at the end of the existing square replacing one of the fine turf strips.

1.11 Pitch quality

The table below shows the quality of pitches within the study area based on their operation.

Figure 1.3 – Pitch square and outfield quality and operation

Rating	Club managed		Council managed		Education managed		Total	
	Pitch	Outfield	Pitch	Outfield	Pitch	Outfield	Pitch	Outfield
Good	8	5	0	3	2	2	10	10
Standard	0	0	4	4	0	0	4	4
Poor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
						Total	14	14

The cricket pitches (squares) and outfields in the city are, in the main, maintained to a good quality standard (assessed by means of a combination of visual inspection, umpire ratings and club survey feedback) with council managed sites to a standard quality. There is one pitch deemed to be in poor condition at Patcham Place Rec. ground.

Where pitches are good, but outfields are rated as ‘standard quality’ this is partly due to shared use with football or rugby or issues with dogs or other animals or informal use on open access recreation grounds (e.g., Benfield Valley Rec Ground, Horsdean Rec Ground and Hove Rec Ground).

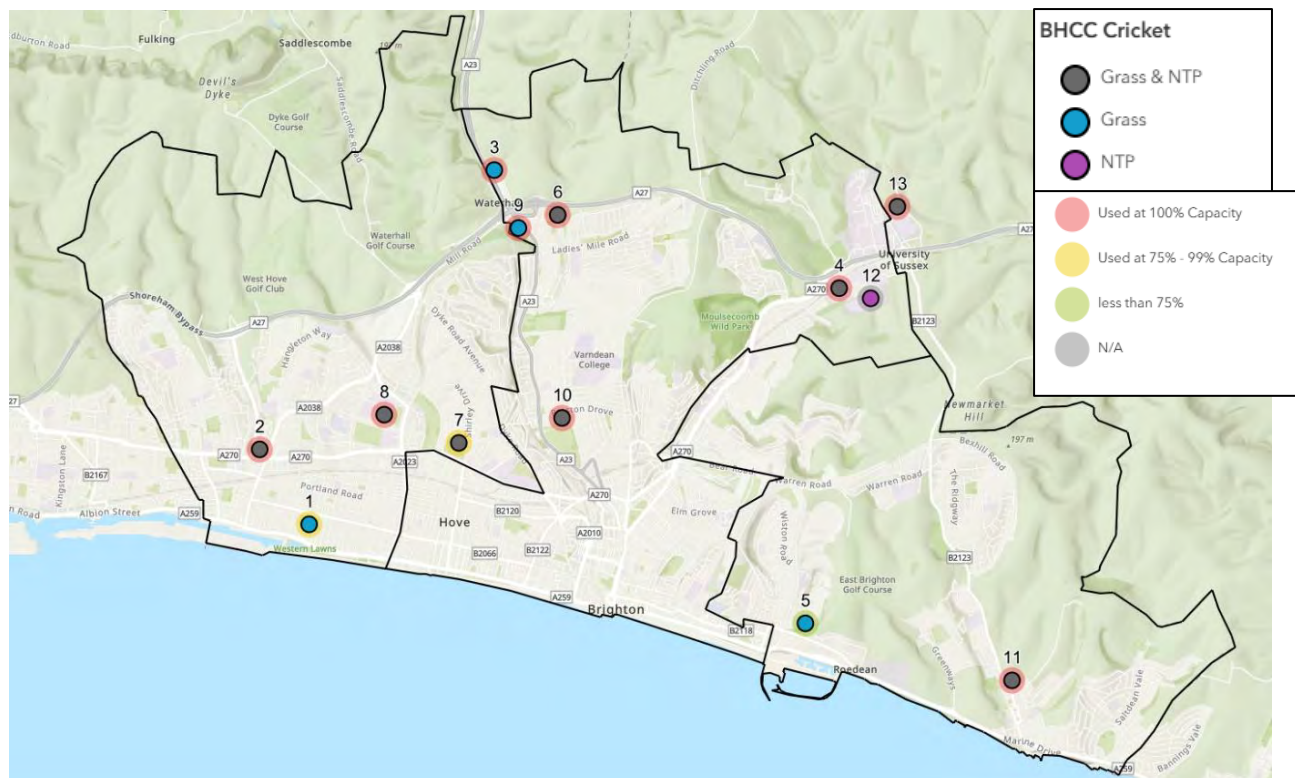
Generally, where clubs are responsible for maintaining a square and have access to a trained professional or experienced volunteer grounds person, the pitch quality tends to be a higher than at council maintained sites. Similarly, the open access / shared use nature of recreation ground sites renders cricket pitches on these sites more vulnerable to incidences of damage and acts of vandalism than at sites where access is controlled.

Pitches rated as poor quality are deemed to not have any capacity for cricket, so it is important these squares are improved. For those pitches that are generally maintained to a standard quality there is some scope to increase the playing capacity of the existing supply by improving the quality of the pitches used by cricket clubs and teams based in Brighton but this would require an increase in maintenance budget which is already under significant pressure due to the wider budget pressures on local authorities.

1.12 Distribution of cricket sites

Figure 1.4 shows the distribution of fine turf and non turf pitch cricket sites across Brighton & Hove which are available for community use. This shows that there are cricket facilities in each of the area analysis areas and most of the residents live within a reasonable distance of a community cricket pitch.

Figure 1.4 – B&HCC cricket site distribution



Key	Site	Postcode
1	Aldrington Recreation Ground (Wish park)	BN3 4LN
2	Benfield Valley Recreation Ground	BN3 7GE
3	Braypool Recreation Ground	BN1 8ZH
4	Brighton Aldridge Community Academy	BN1 9PW
5	East Brighton Park	BN2 5TS
6	Horsdean Recreation Ground	BN1 8UA
7	Hove Recreation Ground	BN3 6LL
8	Nevill Playing Fields	BN3 7QD
9	Patcham Place	BN1 8PB
10	Preston Park	BN1 6SD
11	Rottingdean Cricket & Football Club	BN2 7DA
12	University of Brighton	BN1 9PH
13	University of Sussex	BN1 9PL

1.13 Cricket supply of relevance in neighbouring local authorities

There are a number of other cricket pitches with community access within a 20-minute drivetime (5 mile catchment area) of the B&HCC boundary based on a review of the Active Places Database and these are shown in figure 1.5 below. Some cricket demand from Brighton & Hove is exported to community cricket sites further afield, which is detailed further in Section 2.

Figure 1.5 – Cricket supply in neighbouring local authorities

Neighbouring venues	LA	Quantity	Accessibility
Southwick Green	Adur	1 pitch	Council site – located to the North
Spennithorne Memorial Ground	Hassocks	2 pitches	Sports Club – to the Northwest
Stanley Turner Ground	Lewes	1 pitch	Council site – located to the East

2. Cricket demand (step 2)

Findings relating to cricket pitch demand in Brighton & Hove are summarised below.

2.1 Cricket clubs and teams

In the 2024 cricket season, 17 clubs were identified through consultation as being active in Brighton & Hove. These clubs, their teams and where they play are shown in figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1- Open age cricket expressed demand in B&HCC

Cricket clubs	Adult teams	Youth teams	Home ground(s)	Other grounds used
Alternatives CC	1 Male	N/A	No main site but Aldrington Rec (Wish Park) preferred.	
Brighton Brunswick CC	1 Male	N/A	University of Sussex	
Brighton & Hove Crescent CC	6 Male	N/A	Horsdean Rec Ground	
Brighton & Hove CC	6 Male, 3 female	13 Youth, 3 Girls	Nevill Playing Fields	Brighton Uni, Patcham Place, Horsdean Rec Ground
Brighton Xiles	1 Male	N/A	East Brighton Park	
Brighton Malayalee Association	5 Male	N/A	Patcham Place	Braypool Rec Ground
Dome Mission CC	2 Male	N/A	Braypool Rec Ground	Aldrington Rec (Wish Park)
Hove Unicorns	2 Male	N/A	Hove Rec Ground	
Palmers CC	10 Male, 2 Mixed	N/A	Hove Rec Ground	
Portslade CC	6 Male	6 Youth	Benfield Valley Rec, Aldrington Rec (Wish Park) – 3 rd & 4 th	
Preston Park CC	3 Male	N/A	None play away games only	
Rottingdean CC	6 Male, 2 female, 5 Mixed	11 Youth, 4 Girls	Rottingdean CC & FC East Brighton Park – 3 rd & 4 th	Teams, Sussex University
St Matthias CC	5 Male	10 Youth	Horsdean Rec Ground	Sussex University
St Peter's CC	10 Male, 2 Female	16 Youth, 5 Girls	Preston Park (within the Velodrome)	Brighton Aldridge Comm. Acad. (Junior use), Uni of Brighton, Braypool, Patcham Place
Sussex Ukrainians CC	1 Male	N/A	Uses a variety of grounds outside B&HCC	
The Greys	1 Male		St James's Montefiore (<i>Mid Sussex DC</i>)	
Zambuca Tigers	1 Male		Hove Rec Ground	Wivelsfield Green (<i>Lewes</i>), East Brighton Park, Firle (<i>Lewes</i>), Aldrington Rec (Wish Park), Patcham Place

Five clubs provide opportunities for juniors to play competitive cricket – Brighton & Hove CC, Portslade CC, Rottingdean CC, St Matthias CC and St Peters CC. Three clubs provide girls specific teams Brighton & Hove CC, Rottingdean CC and St Peters CC. All these clubs provide junior 'All Stars' and/or 'Dynamos' sessions supported by Sussex Cricket, or a similar club based junior programme.

There has been a decrease in the number of clubs in the area from 25 to 17 however the number of teams across all formats of the game has increased significantly from 92 teams to 149 teams. The number of adult male teams have increased by 23 teams (a 52% increase), there are an additional 5 women's teams (+250%) and 7 mixed teams, a category not previously recorded in the last Playing Pitch Strategy. The number of youth teams has also growth with an additional 16 boy's teams (+40%) and 6 girl's teams (+100%).

In total it is estimated that, in the 2024 season, there were 67 men's teams (aged 18+), 7 women's teams, 7 mixed adult teams, 56 boys'/mixed teams (aged 7-18), and 12 youth girls teams (aged 7-18),

playing cricket matches in Brighton & Hove mainly at weekends. A large proportion of these teams also train on a midweek evening in season and most of the senior teams will also train indoors pre-season in January/February.

2.2 Active lives survey

The most recently published findings of the national Active Lives Adult Survey¹ showed that self-reported regular participation (i.e., taken part at least twice in the last 28 days) in cricket in England by adults (aged 16+) has decreased from 0.8% in November 2021-2022 to 0.7% in November 2022-2023. If cricket participation in the study area was at the national average (i.e., 0.7%), this would indicate around 1,457 adults (aged 16+) living in the area play cricket out of a 16+ adult population of approximately 208,187. This playing population considers both regular club participation and regular informal recreational play in parks and hired facilities, and Brighton & Hove residents who participate outside of the city.

With approximately 81 adult teams currently, the 'adult' cricket club playing membership in the area is close to 1,215 players (assuming an average of 15 squad players per team). Assuming the total adult cricket participation in Brighton & Hove is in line with the national average of 0.7%, this suggests that approximately 17% of total regular adult cricket participation is either through informal activity outside of a club environment (i.e., through informal games with family, friends and/or work colleagues in parks) or exported to other clubs outside of the city.

2.3 Casual cricket demand

Demand for less formal forms of play - using free to use net systems and non-turf facilities in public parks, as well as the use of hard-surface areas such as MUGAs, streets, footpaths and hard standing areas on housing estates - is a growing feature of cricket demand nationally, particularly among teenagers and young adults in the Black, Black/British, Asian and Asian/British minority ethnic (BME) communities.

Whilst the population of Brighton & Hove is predominately White British (85.4%)², the provision of facilities for free to access casual play across the area could help to increase cricket activity among all types of diverse participant groups and groups of friends and families. The parks and green spaces across Brighton & Hove provide opportunities for informal cricket participation, with many areas not being marked for sports use such as Withdean Park and Hollingbury Park. There are also areas of public parks that are used for grass pitch sports which are unmarked and provide opportunities for informal use such as Preston Park and Hove Park.

The NTPs and practice net facilities at cricket sites are all owned and operated by either the cricket club or by B&HCC. There is currently provision for informal forms of cricket in the area on NTPs at Benfield Valley Rec Ground, Horsdean Rec Ground, Hove Rec Ground and Preston Park, but these are all clubs' sites, so availability is limited by club activities. Use of these NTPs can be booked for public use either through B&HCC Sports Bookings or by speaking to the cricket club. The only publicly accessible cricket nets available are at Preston Park, with other provision based on education sites, public use of these facilities would need to be booked directly with the club or school.

It would be worth the council investigating the feasibility of providing more publicly accessible provision for casual cricket particularly in more diverse areas of the City.

¹ Active Lives Adult Survey Nov 2022-23, Sport England

² 2021 census

2.4 Displaced / Imported demand

From the consultation carried out, it was found that three clubs based in Brighton & Hove are reliant on using facilities outside of the city. Preston Park CC only play away games due to a lack of home ground, The Greys play the majority of games at St James’s Montefiore in Mid Sussex and Sussex Ukrainians CC use a variety of grounds outside of the city. Zambuca Tigers also play some games outside of the city in Lewes.

2.5 Unmet / Latent demand

There was no identified unmet demand in the area, but clubs highlighted ambitions for growth to meet perceived latent demand, e.g., teams that could be created if additional pitch provision was available. This information is drawn from the club consultation surveys carried out from March to July 2024 and therefore only includes those clubs that completed the survey. Conversion of this perceived latent demand into new teams will depend on these clubs engaging sufficient volunteer team managers and coaches as well as securing suitable pitches to play and train on in the peak period.

7 clubs outlined their aspirations to grow their club in the next 3 years. Figure 2.2 outlines the growth aspirations of these clubs, and it is apparent that there is latent demand in the city for youth and girls cricket.

Figure 2.2: B&HCC cricket clubs - Self-reported team growth plans

Club	Growth aspirations
Brighton & Hove Crescent CC	Looking to grow the club in a small way, by increasing players and organising more games
Brighton & Hove CC	Growing the Junior Section with teams increasing season on season through good management and coaching of teams
Brighton Malayalee Association CC	Planning to add a junior team and women’s team
Palmers CC	<i>No details provided</i>
Preston Park CC	Aiming to start a second XI
Rottingdean CC	<i>No details provided</i>
St Matthias CC	Looking to start a girls/women's section

2.6 Trends in demand for team cricket

Nationally the ECB has reported significant growth in women and girls participation between 2019-2022, with clubs who have an existing women’s section reporting a growth of 50% and double the amount of fixtures. Sussex Cricket report growth in all areas of the game, including disability cricket.

This is reflected in Brighton & Hove with the increase in teams in the area and several clubs reporting growth in their junior section, including women and girls as well as introducing midweek formats and mixed teams with friendly only fixtures to provide more flexible formats of the game, catering for people’s busy lifestyles. Since the previous strategy there has been a total increase of 57 cricket teams across Brighton & Hove, with the greatest increase being reported in adult women’s teams (growing from 2 teams in 2016 to 7 teams in 2024, a 350% increase) and youth girls teams (growing from 6 teams in 2016 to 12 teams in 2024, a 100% increase).

3. The situation at individual cricket sites (Step 4)

The fine turf cricket pitches were assessed during the 2024 season. All the sites were assessed using the methodology established by Sport England and the ECB in the published Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance and Appendices (2013) - i.e., a non-technical visual site assessment.

Two sites within the city had a PitchPower assessment by the County Pitch Advisor, Braypool Rec Ground and Aldrington Rec Ground (Wish Park), both were graded as Basic under the PitchPower PQS measurements, equivalent to Standard in the PPS pitch quality rating.

The findings of the site-specific audit assessments were reviewed with representatives of Sussex Cricket and ratings for each agreed as a basis for comparison of the amount of play each site can accommodate (i.e., site carrying capacity) against the amount of play that takes place. Carrying capacity is a measure of the number of match equivalent sessions per season for community use each pitch can take without adversely affecting its quality and use. It was agreed with the ECB representative to adopt the following pitch carrying capacities according to each quality rating to be consistent with the approach adopted in similar assessments in other areas:

Figure 3.1: Cricket pitch carrying capacity

Pitch quality rating	Carrying capacity - Match equivalent sessions per prepared fine turf wicket (strip) per season
Good	5
Standard	3
Poor	0

The site-specific audit assessments (figure 1.1) details the situation at each cricket site with regard to:

1. *Pitch supply* (including the quality ratings) and conclusions reached as to the amount of play a site can accommodate (i.e., it's carrying capacity for community use).
2. *The amount of play that takes place at each site* (i.e., the expressed demand) adjusted to reflect any casual or education use in addition to club use for matches and training.
3. *The comparison* (shown as a RAG rating) as to whether, for each pitch type it contains, a site is:
 - **RED** - Being overplayed (current use exceeds the carrying capacity)
 - **AMBER** - Being played to the level the site can sustain, or
 - **GREEN** - Potentially able to accommodate some additional play (current use falls significantly below the carrying capacity)

Nine sites (listed below) are highlighted from the audit as a **RED** rated site where the available fine turf cricket pitches are considered to be played at or over their estimated carrying capacity based on the size of the square (i.e., number of wickets/strips) and the assessed quality of the square.

- Benfield Valley Rec ground
- Patcham Place Rec ground
- Braypool Rec Ground
- Preston Park
- Brighton Aldridge Community Academy
- Rottingdean Cricket & Football Club
- Horsdean Rec Ground
- University of Sussex
- Nevill Playing Fields

Two sites (listed below) from the audit are rated as **AMBER** indicating that the majority of the available natural turf pitches are played very close to their playing capacity:

- Aldrington Rec ground (Wish Park)
- Hove Rec ground

4. The current and future picture of provision for cricket (Step 5)

4.1 Current

Overall, the assessment of facility needs shows that the majority of fine turf pitches in the area are largely played at or over their estimated capacity and that clubs require additional facilities to cater for current demand. Only three sites in the city have capacity to cater for additional usage based on current demand and playing facilities available at each site, Aldrington Rec ground (+6 MES), East Brighton Park (+40 MES), Hove Rec ground (+14 MES), although it should be noted this capacity is not available during peak times. The square at Patcham Place was rated as poor and as such is deemed to have no capacity for use, in addition the pavilion on this site is also closed meaning there is no access to toilets or changing rooms. There are also a number of clubs also playing outside of the city highlighting a need for additional cricket facilities in the area to cater for this demand.

The supply of accessible indoor practice nets in the study area is insufficient with a number of clubs identifying a need for more provision and some travelling outside of the city to train (e.g. The Alternatives CC use Newbury Indoor Nets in Lancing). The non-turf practice net systems in the area are generally good, however public access is limited.

Investment into pavilions is required including new or refurbished provision at a number of sites, listed below, where the current provision is inadequate or failing into disrepair. The pavilion at Patcham Place is permanently closed.

- Aldrington Rec Ground (Wish Park)
- Braypool Rec Ground
- Nevill Playing Fields
- Patcham Place
- Preston Park (pavilion adjacent to the velodrome / cricket pitch)

Following site visits to assess ancillary facilities, it was identified that many of the ancillary facilities in the area are unsuitable for women's and girls' cricket and may be preventing further growth of female cricket at clubs. Some clubs have noted that improvements are needed to their pavilion to accommodate women and girls provision such as providing additional changing rooms to allow men's and women's matches to be played at the same time or improved privacy and access to showers and toilet facilities. Pavilions with unsuitable floor plans (e.g. shared shower blocks between changing rooms), unsafe access, or lines of sight from the changing rooms restrict women's and girls' teams from using the facilities and prevent clubs from providing equal opportunities for all.

4.2 Future

To estimate the potential impact of population growth over the strategy period to 2041 on the need for cricket pitch capacity in the peak period, Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC) tool has been used to determine the demand likely to be generated in the future based on population growth. To meet cricket demand from 12,477 additional residents (as currently forecast³) and assuming current levels of cricket demand by age group for matches and training in the peak period, the PPC indicates that the equivalent capacity of 57 MES is needed, equivalent to 1 pitch with 12 wickets of a good quality. (figure 4.2)

³ Population change from 2022 to 2041 based on B&HCC Strategic Housing Market Assessment

Figure 4.2: Demand from population growth

	Match equivalent sessions (MES)	Estimated demand for new grass pitches (match & training demand)
Cricket (open age & junior)	57	1.26
Total	57	1 pitch (12 wickets of good quality)

7 of the clubs surveyed during the consultation process stated that they are striving to grow their club over the next 3 seasons, with 3 of these clubs looking to specifically grow their women and girls or junior sections. With many clubs' aspirations for team growth and the impact of cricket development initiatives with regard to primary age children, women and girls' cricket and under-represented ethnic minority groups are added, it is noted that there may be higher than expected growth rates in these groups, leading to a greater demand for additional fine turf pitches.

5. Key findings and issues for cricket (Step 6)

Figure 5.1 - Cricket key findings and issues

<p>The main characteristics of the <u>current</u> supply of and demand for provision</p>
<p>Fourteen grass pitches are identified as available for community cricket across Brighton & Hove in 2024, on 12 playing pitch sites. There are 10 non-turf pitches on 9 sites available for community use. Since the last assessment was carried out in 2016 there has been little change in the supply of cricket pitches in the area, with the same number of fine turf pitches, however the availability of NTP facilities is less with a number of NTP's on education sites being no longer available for community use or, have not been maintained or replaced, and are no longer fit for use.</p> <p>Seventeen clubs were identified in Brighton & Hove through the consultation with a total of 149 teams (67 men's, 7 women's, 7 mixed adult, 56 boys/mixed teams and 12 girls' teams). Five clubs provide opportunities for juniors to play competitive cricket – Brighton & Hove CC, Portslade CC, Rottingdean CC, St Matthias CC and St Peters CC. Three clubs provide girls specific teams Brighton & Hove CC, Rottingdean CC and St Peters CC.</p>
<p>Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet <u>current</u> demand?</p>
<p>No - The assessment of facility needs shows that there is not sufficient fine turf pitches in the area to cater for the demand of clubs in the area, with several playing outside of the city and the majority of fine turf pitches in the area being played to their maximum. There are only three sites in the city that have capacity Aldrington Rec ground (+6 MES), East Brighton Park (+40 MES), Hove Rec ground (+14 MES), although none of this capacity is available for peak adult Saturday provision and would only be suitable for midweek or youth cricket. In total an additional 50 MES (for 5 teams) is needed to accommodate current demand which is currently exported outside of the city.</p> <p>Overall, the cricket provision in Brighton & Hove is secured with 10/12 cricket sites being owned by the council, with some leased to cricket clubs. A number of clubs have lease arrangements in need of review to clarify the maintenance arrangements and some such as Portslade CC, who have only two years remaining, needs review. A few clubs hire annually facilities from the council and the council should look to formalise arrangements to provide clubs longer leases where possible to enable them to grow provision.</p>
<p>Is the provision that is accessible of sufficient quality and appropriately maintained?</p>
<p>No – The cricket pitches (squares) and outfielders in the city vary in quality with club sites maintained to a good quality standard in the main and council managed sites to standard quality, there is however one site at Patcham Place rated as poor, which needs improving to at least a standard quality level. The delivery of the grass pitch improvements recommended by the Grounds Maintenance Association through the PitchPower pitch assessment reports would help to improve the playing capacity at the site assessed.</p> <p>There are some NTPs which have lost community use due to their poor condition (i.e. University of Brighton and Longhill Sports Centre), but those NTP wickets which are available for community use are generally good quality, with 6/10 available being graded as 'good' quality, 3 being rated as 'standard' and 1 as poor at the University of Sussex.</p> <p>The non-turf practice net systems are in good or standard condition with only the nets at the University of Sussex in need of upgrading. Patcham High School are in progress of constructing new 3 lane nets and Brighton & Hove CC has planning permission to extend their nets at Nevill Playing Fields to 5 lanes.</p>

Investment into pavilions is required including new or refurbished provision at a number of sites, where the current provision is inadequate or failing into disrepair. The pavilion at Patcham Place is permanently closed.

What are the main characteristics of the future supply and demand for provision?

To meet cricket demand from 12,477 additional residents and assuming current levels of cricket demand by age group for matches and training in the peak period, the PPC indicates that the equivalent capacity of a minimum one additional (12 wicket) cricket pitch will be needed in the study area.

In addition, club consultation highlighted that seven clubs have aspirations to grow their clubs over the next three years. Should this growth be achieved, future demand for pitches is likely to grow significantly.

Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet future demand?

No - There is not sufficient accessible and secured community use provision in Brighton & Hove to meet future demand.

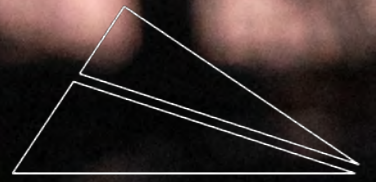
Pitches rated as poor quality are deemed to not have any capacity for cricket, so it is important the square at Patcham Place is improved to at least standard quality. For those pitches that are standard quality there is some scope to increase the playing capacity of the existing supply by improving the quality of the pitches used by cricket clubs and teams based in Brighton & Hove but these are mainly council sites and would require an increase in maintenance budget which is already under significant pressure due to the wider budget pressures on local authorities.

PitchPower (and ECB funding) is due to be available to local authorities and cricket clubs, providing potential for funding pitch improvements either through the ECB or the Football Foundation for sites with both football and cricket facilities. This could open an avenue to increased capacity and quality at joint sports sites such as Braypool Rec. ground, Horsdean Rec ground and Rottingdean Cricket and Football Club which are used at or above capacity.

Overall, there is a shortfall of two fine turf pitches, but due to the lack of space in the city to provide additional fine turf pitches the council should seek to try and increase community use at the 4 education sites without community use (Brighton College, Lancing College Preparatory School, and Roedean School).

B&HCC have committed to developing an additional 3 NTP wickets in partnership with the ECB and Sussex Cricket, one at each of Braypool Rec. ground, East Brighton Park, and Aldrington Rec. ground, subject to planning. These developments are expected to be available for use in 2025. The NTP's at Braypool and Aldrington Rec. ground, subject to planning, will be new pitch provision which will have provision to cater for up to 60 MES for adult use at each site.

There are also opportunities to increase the utilisation of council owned sites for midweek and junior provision such as at East Brighton Park which has a total of 40 MES surplus.



CONTINUUM
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Brighton & Hove City Council
Playing Pitch Strategy 2025 Appendix B
Assessment of Need Report Football

Appendix B: Football - Assessment of needs (Stages B and C)

1. Introduction

The findings of the assessment of football facilities in Brighton & Hove are summarised in this appendix to the Playing Pitch Strategy. FA affiliated football clubs registered to Sussex FA and playing home fixtures in the area have contributed to this assessment by submitting an online club survey and/or through in person consultation during site visits. The number of clubs that responded to consultation as part of this process represents 83% of teams playing affiliated football in the area.

Since the last assessment was carried out in 2016 there have been changes in both the supply of football pitches in Brighton & Hove and in football demand. On the supply side, there has been additional provision of new full sized 3G AGPs at Hove Park School (2021), Patcham High School (2021), University of Sussex (2019), and Portslade Sports Centre (2019) as well as a 70x31m 3G AGP at Hove Park (2018) with LED floodlights installed in 2021. In addition, the AGPs at Stanley Deason Leisure Centre, and the 60x40m 3G AGP at the University of Sussex have all been resurfaced. There are also 4 new small-sided 3G AGP's at Withdean Sports Complex and a full-size pitch at Cardinal Newman School being completed ready for the 24/25 season. At the time of reporting there are a number of 3G AGP projects which have been granted planning permission including a new stadia 3G pitch at Hill Park (Saltdean United FC) due to be installed in 2025 and a full size AGP at Toads Hole Valley as part of housing development, in addition the council are looking to apply for funding to develop a 3G 7v7 pitch in Moulsecoomb.

There has been some change to grass pitch provision with new youth grass pitches developed at Happy Valley Rec. ground, improvements to pitch maintenance at Aldrington Rec ground (Wish Park), Greenleas Rec ground, Happy Valley Rec ground and Nevill Playing Fields and at the time of reporting the youth pitches at Mile Oak Rec ground and one of the adult pitches at Nevill Playing Fields were being renovated.

There has been an increase in demand, as the number of football teams in Brighton & Hove has increased to 326 teams. This represents an increase of 66 teams (26%) since the previous audit in 2016 when 260 affiliated teams were registered in the city. There has been a change in football provision with a reduction in adult male (-12 teams) and an increase in adult female teams (+19 teams, including small sided), youth football (+22) and mini soccer (+37) teams.

2. Football supply (Step 2)

The findings of the assessment of supply of football facilities in Brighton & Hove are summarised in this section and detailed by site for both grass and artificial turf pitches. The supply information is generated through standard facility audits based on the visual assessment, grading and playing capacity guidance (as set out by Sport England and the FA in the national guidance for the development of playing pitch needs assessments), supported by consultation with the Council, Sussex FA, and user clubs. At a number of key football sites, more detailed pitch quality assessments were undertaken using the Football Foundation's 'PitchPower' methodology. At these sites, the estimates of playing capacity are informed by the results of the PitchPower assessments and Performance Quality Standards (PQS) ratings provided by the Grounds Maintenance Association (GMA). It should be noted that in some cases the pitch grading used was different to the PitchPower assessment, based on the current pitch condition and agreed by Sussex FA, in these cases the quality used is highlighted in bold with PP rating also noted (see Figures 2.5 and 2.6).

2.1 Distribution of football supply

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 show the distribution of key football sites across Brighton & Hove in each analysis area.

2.2 Grass football pitches in Brighton & Hove

In total there are 134 grass pitches across 64 sites in Brighton & Hove, of these 31 pitches (20 sites) are on school playing fields and either are not currently available for community use or have no known history of community use. These include:

- Bevendean Primary School – 2 pitches (2xMini 7v7)
- Carden Primary School – 1 pitch (Mini 7v7)
- Cardinal Newman Catholic School – 1 pitch (Youth 11v11)
- Coldean Primary School – 1 pitch (Youth 9v9)
- Dorothy Stringer School – 2 pitches (Adult 11v11, Youth 9v9)
- Goldstone Youth School – 2 pitches (2x Mini 7v7)
- Hamilton Lodge School and College for Deaf Children – 1 pitch (Youth 9v9)
- Kings School Hove – 1 pitch (Youth 11v11)
- Lancing College Preparatory School – 3 pitches (Adult 11v11, Youth 11v11, Mini 7v7)
- Mile Oak Primary School – 1 pitch (Mini 7v7)
- Moulsecoomb Primary School – 2 pitches (Mini 7v7, Youth 9v9)
- Saltdean Primary School – 3 pitches (2x Mini 5v5, Mini 7v7)
- St Andrews COE Primary School – 1 pitch (Youth 9v9)
- St John the Baptist RC School – 1 pitch (Youth 9v9)
- St Nicolas COE Junior School – 1 pitch (Youth 9v9)
- University Brighton – 3 pitches (Adult 11v11)
- Varndean College – 1 pitch (Adult 11v11)
- West Blatchington Primary School -1 pitch (Youth 9v9)
- Westdene Primary School – 2 pitches (Mini 7v7, Youth 9v9)
- Woodingdean Primary School – 1 pitch (Mini 7v7)

An additional mini 7v7 pitch at St Margaret's COE Primary School, although not currently hired by any community clubs, would be available for hire if the school received assistance with marking out the pitch. Bevendean Rec. ground previously had one adult 11v11 pitch, however due to badger damage, a closed pavilion and poor access this site is not suitable for match play. These two sites and the education sites listed above have been excluded from the supply and demand calculations, as they are not currently available for community use.

This means the number of secured grass pitches available for community football in Brighton & Hove is 101 pitches on 42 sites (figure 2.1) and the number of AGP pitches is 25 across 15 sites (figure 2.2). Further details of these facilities can be found in figures 2.5 – 2.8 and 2.10 – 2.11.

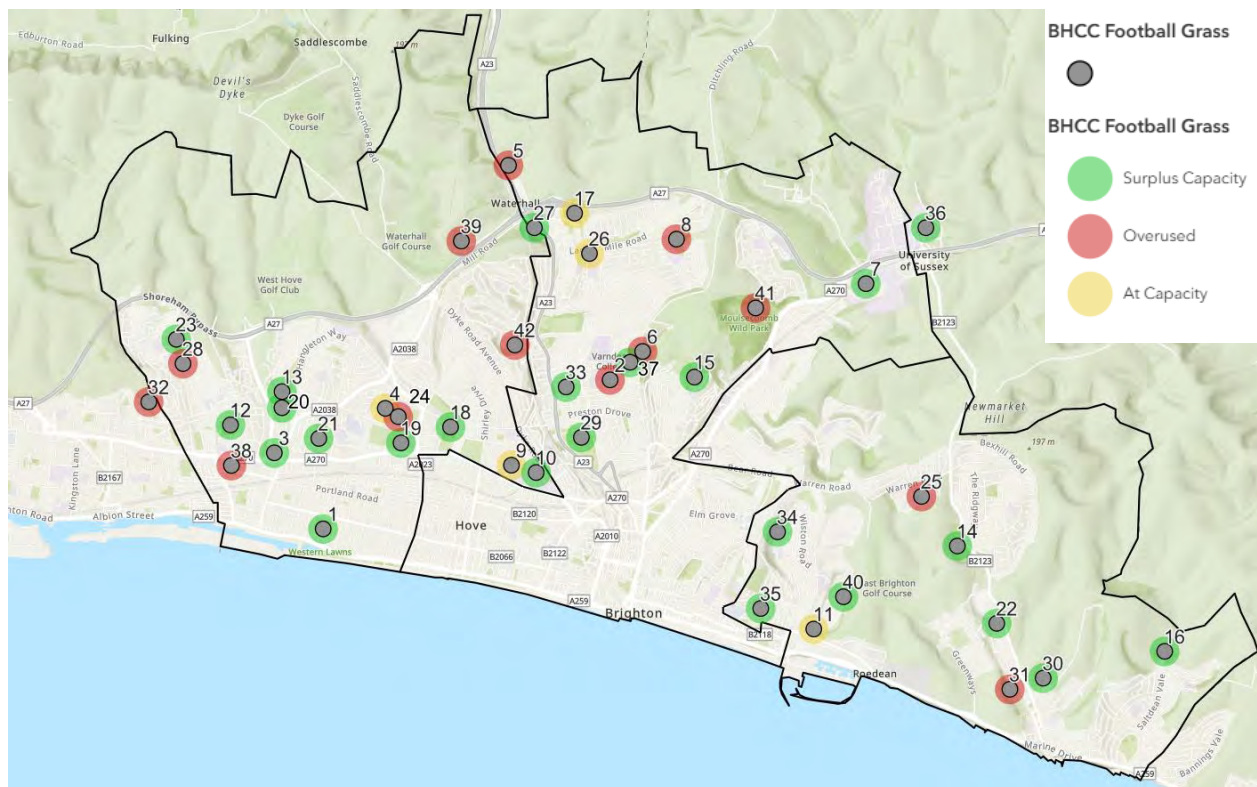
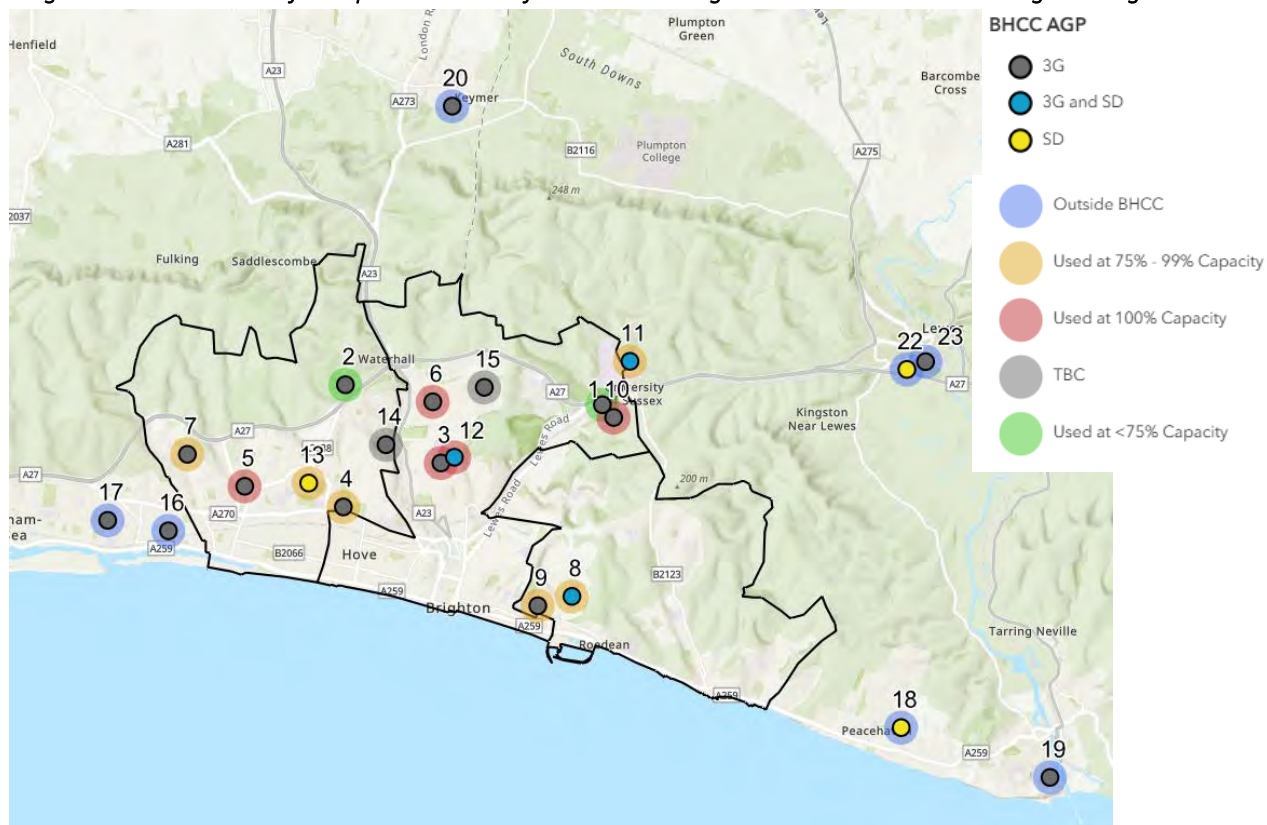


Figure 2.1 - Distribution of grass football pitch sites in Brighton & Hove

Key: Grass pitch Sites					
No	Site name	Postcode	No	Site name	Postcode
1	Aldrington Recreation Ground (Wish park)	BN3 4LN	22	Longhill Sports Centre	BN2 7FR
2	Balfour Junior School	BN1 6NE	23	Mile Oak Recreation Ground	BN41 2WF
3	Benfield Valley Recreation Ground	BN3 7GE	24	Nevill Playing Fields	BN3 7QD
4	Blatchington Mill School	BN3 7BW	25	Nuffield Playing Fields	BN2 6DX
5	Braypool Recreation Ground	BN1 8ZH	26	Patcham Junior School	BN1 8PB
6	Hollingbury Park (Brentwood Road)	BN1 7EX	27	Patcham Place Recreation Ground	BN1 8ZF
7	Brighton Aldridge Community Academy (BACA)	BN1 9PW	28	Portslade Aldridge Community Academy	BN41 2WS
8	Carden Park	BN3 6EG	29	Preston Park	BN1 6SD
9	Cottesmore St. Mary's RC Primary School	BN3 6ND	30	Rottingdean Cricket & Football Club	BN2 7DA
10	Dyke Road Park	BN1 5AS	31	Rottingdean Recreation Ground	BN2 7DA
11	East Brighton Park	BN2 5TS	32	Southwick Hill Recreation Ground	BN42 4QU
12	Easthill Park	BN41 2FA	33	St Bernadette Catholic Primary School	BN1 6UT
13	Greenleas	BN3 8AN	34	The Crew Club	BN2 5QW
14	Happy Valley Recreation Ground	BN2 6LA	35	The Manor Road Gym	BN2 5EA
15	Hertford Junior School	BN1 7FP	36	University of Sussex	BN1 9PL
16	Hill Park	BN2 8HJ	37	Varndean High School	BN1 6NP
17	Horsdean Recreation Ground	BN1 8UA	38	Victoria Recreation Ground	BN41 1UB
18	Hove Park	BN3 6BG	39	Waterhall Sports Ground	BN1 8YR
19	Hove Park School - Nevill Campus	BN3 7BN	40	Whitehawk Football Club (The enclosed ground)	BN2 5TS
20	Hove Park School - Valley Campus	BN3 8AD	41	Wild Park	BN1 9JS
21	Knoll Park	BN3 7JG	42	Withdean Sports Complex	BN1 5JD

Figure 2.2- Distribution of AGP pitch sites used for Football in Brighton & Hove and those in neighbouring areas.



SD = Sand Dressed Artificial Grass Pitch, 3G = Third Generation Artificial Grass Pitch

Key: Artificial pitch sites		
No	Site name	Postcode
1	Brighton Aldridge Community Academy (BACA)	BN1 9PW
2	Brighton Football Rugby Club	BN1 8YR
3	Dorothy Stringer School	BN1 6PZ
4	Hove Park	BN3 6BG
5	Hove Park School - Valley Campus	BN3 8AD
6	Patcham High School	BN1 8PB
7	Portslade Sports Centre	BN41 2WS
8	Stanley Deason Leisure Centre*	BN2 5PB
9	The Manor Road Gym	BN2 5EA
10	University of Brighton	BN1 9PH
11	University of Sussex	BN1 9PL
12	Varndean School	BN1 6NP
13	Blatchington Mill School	BN3 7BW
14	Withdean Sports Complex**	BN1 5JD
15	Cardinal Newman Catholic School**	BN1 8LU
Sites outside of B&HCC		
16	Southwick Leisure Centre	BN42 4NT
17	Shoreham Academy	BN43 6YT
18	Peacehaven Community School	BN10 8RB
19	Fort Road Recreation Ground	BN9 9DL
20	Hassocks Sports Centre	BN6 8LP
22	Southdown Sports Club	BN7 3PR
23	Lewes FC (The Rockery 3G)	BN7 2XA

*The 3G pitch at Stanley Deason Leisure Centre is used to 82% of capacity whereas the SD pitch is used to only 29%. Site is marked as used at 75% - 99% capacity in figure 2.2 as the 3G pitch is the primary football surface.

** Sites are in development at the time of reporting and do not yet have confirmed usage schedules, however it has been confirmed that the facilities will offer community bookings.

Figure 2.3 shows the number of secured pitches currently available compared with the number of FA affiliated teams by age group in June 2024. Comparison of current team numbers with the available supply of natural turf pitches shows that there is a relatively even distribution of pitches with 2-3 teams per pitch for adult 11v11, 9v9, 7v7, and 5v5 pitches. There are over 7 teams for each Youth 11v11 pitch, meaning some will play on full sized pitches.

There are few youth pitches within Brighton & Hove which are overmarked for smaller sided games, with 3 pitches being overmarked for smaller sided football matches and 1 being overmarked with a Gaelic Football pitch. This can be an effective way to manage demand in areas of concentrated youth football but can lead to overplay, as is evident at Hill Park and Waterhall Sports Ground.

Figure 2.3: Pitch size / Team comparison

Pitch type	Available pitch supply		Teams playing in Brighton & Hove	
11v11 (Open Age, Veterans, U19, U18, U17)	37	37%	90	29%
Youth 11v11 (U13 - U16)	10	9%	73	24%
Youth 9v9 (U11 – U12)	21	21%	58	19%
Mini Soccer 7v7 (U9 - U10)	22	22%	55	18%
Mini Soccer 5v5 (U6 – U8)	11	11%	31	10%
Total	101		307	

2.3 Local authority owned sites with grass football pitches for hire:

Brighton & Hove City Council (B&HCC) own 76 grass pitches throughout the city, two thirds of which are available to hire through their booking system whilst others are leased or managed by sports clubs, sports associations, community groups, or commercial companies. Figure 2.4 below outlines the management of council owned pitches.

Figure 2.4: Management agreements of council owned pitches

Ownership agreement	Grass pitches	
Managed by B&HCC	51	66%
Lease / licenced to Sports Clubs	26*	33%
Tenancy at Will	1	1%
Total	78	

*Includes 2 pitches sublet by Rottingdean CC to Rottingdean FC. Rottingdean CC have a 20+ year lease for the pitches with B&HCC and 2 pitches at Southwick Hill Rec ground just outside the Council boundary but owned by the Council and on an annual recurring licence to Mile Oak Wanderers Youth FC.

2.4 Grass football pitches with other ownership agreements:

There are four pitches at Nuffield Playing Fields in commercial ownership with Nuffield Hospital, this site is used by Woodingdean Wanderers FC on an annual hire basis. There is also a 7v7 grass pitch at The Manor Gym, as council site currently managed by The Manor Community company (figure 2.7)

2.5 Football pitches on education sites:

Brighton & Hove based community football clubs currently play on pitches at several education sites, as listed in figure 2.8. The clubs using pitches on education sites have little security of access as continued use from one season to the next depends on the consent of the site's management (head

teacher, board of governors, management company and/or governing trust). The majority of education sites do not have community use agreements in place and whilst none of these education providers has indicated any intention to stop allowing access in future, without specific agreements in place for longer than a single season, security of access for football clubs at these sites must be considered a risk. It should also be noted that the capacity of pitches on education sites are typically influenced by school use including PE activity, extra-curricular use and playtimes.

Further youth and mini-soccer pitches (or space to accommodate pitches) exist in the area on playing fields at other school sites across the city, as listed in section 2.2. However, the majority are single pitch sites at primary schools which offer little or no access to ancillary facilities. Arranging future access to these pitches at weekends at reasonable cost while safeguarding the security of the schools' buildings would be difficult to achieve in most cases.

2.6 Changes to grass football pitch provision

The pitches at Aldrington Rec Ground (Wish Park) are due to be reconfigured.

2.7 Facilities for informal football

Most of the parks and larger public open spaces in the city provide flat grass areas suitable for casual recreational games of football and kick-about. Many open spaces across Brighton & Hove also offer a fenced but open access multi use games area (MUGA) and/or a smaller ball court (for football/basketball/skate), some of which are floodlit. Examples identified include:

- Hangleton Park – Poor quality sand based MUGA for football and basketball.
- Knoll Park – Poor quality sand based MUGA for football and basketball.
- Crew Club – 2 recently refurbished hard court MUGAs for football and basketball.
- Preston Park – 3 MUGAs for football and basketball.
- Saunders Park – 1 large MUGA with 2 basketball courts.
- Stoneham Park – 1 hard court MUGA for basketball.
- Carden Park – 1 hard court MUGA for basketball.
- East Brighton Park – 1 hard court MUGA for football.
- Saltdean Oval Park – 1 hard court MUGA for football and basketball.

2.8 Commercial football centres

There are no commercial football centres in Brighton & Hove, however a number of five a side providers do operate leagues using 3G AGP's in the area, often securing peak evening slots which reduces the availability for club training use.

Providers operating in the area include Power League at Stanley Deason on a Monday, Wednesday and Thursday (men's and women's), Hove Park School (Monday), Portslade Sports Centre (Wednesday) and Withdean Sports Complex (Tuesday & Wednesday starting Sept 24). Play Football at Dorothy Stringer School (Monday) and 5's football at Dorothy Stringer School (Tuesday, women) Hove Park (Sundays), Manor Road Gym (Tuesday and Thursday, men and women) and Patcham High School (Monday).

Figure 2.5: Council owned sites with grass football pitches for hire:

Site	Postcode	Pitches by size	Overmarked ?	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Capacity	Estimated use	Supply / Demand balance	RAG
Aldrington Rec. Ground (Wish Park)	BN3 4LN	Youth 11v11	N	Clubs rate 3/5, 2/5 Standard PP - Good	Significant graffiti. Poor public toilets with signs of damage. B&HCC plan to refurbish facilities, which received support from SFA and Sussex Cricket. 2 changing rooms and 1 open showers, no privacy screen. No accessible or ambulant facilities.	Council owned	2	1.75	0.25	Green
		Youth 11v11	N	PP - Good			4	2.25	1.75	Green
		Youth 9v9	N	PP - Basic			2	3.25	-1.25	Red
		Mini 7v7	N	Standard PP - Good			4	2.75	1.25	Green
		Mini 5v5	N	PP - Poor			2	1.75	0.25	Green
Braypool Rec. Ground	BN1 8ZH	Adult 11v11	N	League rate 3/5. Club rate 3/5 PP - Poor	Poor facilities. 10 large changing rooms with open showers, kitchen, and club room. No accessible or ambulant facilities. Evidence of non-booked use by football clubs.	Council owned	1	2.5	-1.5	Red
		Adult 11v11	N	PP - Poor			1	2	-1	Red
		Youth 9v9	N	PP - Basic			2	3	-1	Red
		Adult 11v11	N	PP - Basic			2	2	0	Yellow
Carden Park	BN3 6EG	Adult 11v11	N	PP - Poor	None	Council owned	1	2	-1	Red
Dyke Road Park	BN1 5AS	Youth 9v9	N	Standard	None	Council owned	2	1.75	0.25	Green
		Mini 7v7	N	Standard			4	1.75	2.25	Green
East Brighton Park	BN2 5TS	Adult 11v11	N	Clubs rate 1/5, 2/5 PP - Poor	Separated men's and women's changing rooms and showers. No accessible or ambulant facilities.	Council owned	1	1	0	Yellow
		Adult 11v11	N	PP - Basic			2	2	0	Yellow
Easthill Park	BN41 2FA	Adult 11v11	N	PP - Good	Changing rooms closed due to deterioration. Public and accessible w/c to the rear.	Council owned	3	0	3	Green
Greenleas	BN3 8AN	Adult 11v11	N	Standard PP - Good	Poor facilities. 4 changing rooms, 2 communal showers, public toilet facilities. Rarely used.	Council owned	2	0.5	1.5	Green
		Youth 9v9	N	Standard PP - Good			2	1	1	Green
Happy Valley Recreation Ground	BN2 6LA	Adult 11v11	N	PP - Basic	2x changing rooms, 1 shower block, storage, and public toilets. No accessible or ambulant facilities.	Council owned	2	0.5	1.5	Green
		Adult 11v11	N	PP - Basic			2	0.5	1.5	Green
		Youth 11v11	N	PP - Basic			2	0	2	Green
		Youth 9v9	N	Standard			2	1.5	0.5	Green
		Mini 7v7	N	Standard			4	1.5	2.5	Green
		Mini 5v5	N	Standard			4	0.5	3.5	Green

Site	Postcode	Pitches by size	Overmarked ?	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Capacity	Estimated use	Supply / Demand balance	RAG
Hove Park	BN3 6BG	Mini 7v7	N	PP - Basic	Cafe, and public toilets (poor) on site.	Council owned	4	2	2	
		Mini 7v7	N	PP - Poor			2	1.5	0.5	
Knoll Park	BN3 7JG	Mini 7v7	N	PP - Basic	2 pavilions, one leased by bowls, one by the youth club which the football club have informal access to.	Council owned	4	2.5	1.5	
		Mini 5v5	N	PP - Basic			4	2	2	
Patcham Place Rec. Ground	BN1 8ZF	Youth 9v9	N	Standard	Pavilion closed due to vandalism and damage 4 changing rooms, communal showers and w/cs. No accessible or ambulant facilities.	Council owned	2	1.5	0.5	
		Adult 11v11	N	Standard			2	0.5	1.5	
Preston Park	BN1 6SD	Mini 5v5	N	Standard	Café, public toilets, and 4x first floor changing rooms. Male, female, and accessible public toilets.	Council owned	4	1.75	2.25	
		Mini 7v7	N	Standard			4	1.25	2.75	
		Mini 7v7	N	Standard			4	1.25	2.75	
Rottingdean Recreation Ground	BN2 7DA	Youth 9v9	N	Standard	No changing facilities, but 2 toilets on site, one out of order.	Council owned	2	2.25	-0.25	
		Mini 7v7	N	Poor			2	2.25	-0.25	
The Crew Club	BN2 5QW	Mini 7v7	Y - 5v5	Poor	Changing block with self-contained showers	Council owned	2	1	1	
		Youth 9v9	N	Poor			1	1	0	
		Adult 11v11	N	Standard			2	0.5	1.5	
Victoria Recreation Ground	BN41 1UB	Adult 11v11	N	League rate 1/5 PP - Basic	Bowls Pavilion 2 changing rooms (+ officials changing) are in very good condition and haven't been used since it was developed. The main pavilion is very poor. 4 changing rooms (+ referees changing), 2 shower units (communal), and male/female toilets.	Council owned	2	2	0	
		Adult 11v11	N	PP - Basic			2	2	0	
		Adult 11v11	N	PP - Basic			2	2.5	-0.5	
Waterhall Sports Ground	BN1 8YR	Adult 11v11	Gaelic Football	League rate 2/5	Pavilion has been closed for 2-3 years 16 changing rooms and 2 sets of communal showers, male toilets internally. Male and female public toilets externally. Large clubroom.	Council owned	1	2.75	-1.75	
		Adult 11v11	N	Standard			2	2.75	-0.75	
		Adult 11v11	N	Standard			2	2.75	-0.75	
		Adult 11v11	N	Standard			2	2.75	-0.75	
		Adult 11v11	N	Standard			2	2.75	-0.75	

Site	Postcode	Pitches by size	Overmarked ?	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Capacity	Estimated use	Supply / Demand balance	RAG
Wild Park	BN1 9JS	Mini 5v5	N	Poor	One accessible public W/C and Café within pavilion. No changing room facilities on site.	Council owned	2	1.75	0.25	Green
		Mini 7v7	N	Poor			2	2.25	-0.25	Red
		Youth 9v9	N	Poor			1	1.25	-0.25	Red
		Youth 9v9	N	Poor			1	1.25	-0.25	Red
		Adult 11v11	N	Poor			1	3.25	-2.25	Red
Withdean Sports Complex	BN1 5JD	Adult 11v11 stadia pitch	N	Standard Club rate 3/5	Modular building separate to leisure centre for changing and clubhouse of pitch. Repairs needed council looking at options for replacement. Public address system floodlights need upgrading.	Council facility, managed by Freedom Leisure, clubs have no SoT	2	2.5	-0.5	Red

Figure 2.6 Council owned grass pitches with lease / licence agreements:

Site	Postcode	Pitches by size	Overmarked ?	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Capacity	Estimated use	Supply / Demand balance	RAG
Benfield Valley Recreation Ground	BN3 7GE	Youth 11v11	N	Standard PP - Good	Pavilion with changing, social space bar and kitchen Significant graffiti on the outside of pavilion.	Leased by Portslade CC - 2 years remaining on 25-year lease	4	0.5	3.5	Green
		9v9	N	Standard PP - Good			4	0.5	3.5	Green
Hollingbury Park (Brentwood Road)	BN1 7EX	Youth 11v11	N	Standard	None	Hollingbury Hawks lease	2	2.75	-0.75	Red
Hill Park	BN2 8HJ	Adult 11v11	N	Club rate 4/5 PP - Basic	Standard/good quality clubroom with bar. Good changing facilities (2 changing with integrated showers. + refs changing room. Planning permission has been granted to further improve the facilities.	Saltdean Utd own buildings and main pitch. 22-year lease from B&HCC	2	2.5	-0.5	Red
		Youth 11v11	9v9	PP - Poor			1	3	-2	Red
		Mini 7v7	N	PP - Basic			4	3	1	Green
Horsdean Recreation Ground	BN1 8UA	Mini 7v7	N	Standard Club rate 3/5	Pavilion with changing recently renovated	25-year lease under sports ass	4	2	2	Green
		Mini 7v7	N	Standard			4	1.5	2.5	Green
		Mini 7v7	N	Standard			4	1.5	2.5	Green
		Mini 7v7	N	Standard			4	1.5	2.5	Green
		Mini 5v5	N	Standard			4	1.5	3.5	Green

Site	Postcode	Pitches by size	Overmarked ?	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Capacity	Estimated use	Supply / Demand balance	RAG
Mile Oak Recreation Ground	BN41 2WF	Adult 11v11 stadia pitch	N	Standard	Pavilion average condition but needs work to be more energy efficient and improve layout.	25-year lease on main pitch, licence on youth pitches	2	3	-1	Red
		Youth 9v9	N	Standard			2	1	1	Green
		Mini 7v7	N	Standard			4	2.5	1.5	Green
		Mini 5v5	N	Standard			4	1.5	2.5	Green
Nevill Playing Fields	BN3 7QD	Adult 11v11	N	Standard Clubs rate 3/5- 5/5 PP - Poor	Pavilion with 4 changing rooms, basic, recently repainted, separate showers in poor condition. No accessible toilet	Brighton & Hove CC have ground on licence, lease on building	2	3	-1	Red
		Youth 9v9	N	PP - Basic			2	5.5	-3.5	Red
		Youth 11v11	N	PP - Basic			2	4.25	-2.25	Red
		Youth 9v9	N	PP - Basic			2	5.25	-3.25	Red
		Mini 7v7	N	Standard PP - Poor			4	2.25	1.75	Green
		Adult 11v11	N	Standard PP - Poor			2	5.25	-3.25	Red
Rottingdean Cricket & Football Club	BN2 7DA	Adult 11v11	N	Club rate 4/5 PP - Good	Standard quality pavilion shared with Rottingdean CC. 2x separate changing is available to the football club, separate showers. Pavilion is step 7 compliant.	Sublet from Rottingdean CC. 21 years remaining	3	3.5	-0.5	Red
		Mini 5v5	N	Standard			4	3	1	Green
Southwick Hill Recreation Ground	BN42 4QU	Youth 11v11	N	Poor	No ancillary facilities or toilets available	Recurring annual licence to Mile Oak Wanderers	1	1.5	-0.5	Red
		Youth 9v9	N	Poor			1	1.5	-0.5	Red
Whitehawk FC (The enclosed ground)	BN2 5TS	Adult 11v11	N	Club rate 2/5 Standard	Changing rooms and showers need refurbishing. Licensed bar.	Club 90+ year lease	2	1.5	0.5	Green

Figure 2.7 Grass football pitches with other ownership agreements:

Site	Postcode	Pitches by size	Overmarked ?	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Capacity	Estimated use	Supply / Demand balance	RAG
Nuffield Playing Fields	BN2 6DX	Youth 11v11	N	Club rate 3/5 Standard	Poor. Container unit on site with changing space and small kitchen area, no mains water (just outside tap) and composing toilets. Damage to flooring and issues with mice.	None. commercial ownership. Club annual hire agreement	2	4.5	-2.5	Red
		Youth 9v9	N	Standard			2	3.75	-1.75	Red
		Mini 7v7	N	Standard			4	3.75	0.25	Green
		Mini 5v5	N	Standard			4	3	1	Green

Site	Postcode	Pitches by size	Overmarked ?	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Capacity	Estimated use	Supply / Demand balance	RAG
The Manor Road Gym	BN2 5EA	Mini 7v7	N	Poor	Changing and toilets in community centre.	Council site Tenancy at Will	2	0.5	1.5	

Figure 2.8 Football pitches on education sites:

Site	Postcode	Pitches by size	Overmarked ?	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Capacity	Estimated use	Supply / Demand balance	RAG
Balfour Junior School	BN1 6NE	Youth 9v9	N	Standard	None	Education unaware of CUA	2	3	-1	
Blatchington Mill School	BN3 7BW	Adult 11v11	N	Standard	Toilet access for football clubs but changing not available	CUA in place	2	2	0	
Brighton Aldridge Comm. Academy	BN1 9PW	Adult 11v11	N	Good	Use of toilets and changing rooms at request of the hiring clubs	Education unaware of CUA	3	1.5	1.5	
		9v9	5v5	Good			4	1.5	2.5	
Hertford Junior School	BN1 7FP	Youth 11v11	N	Standard	Unknown	Education unaware of CUA	2	2	0	
Hove Park School - Nevill Campus	BN3 7BN	Adult 11v11	N	Club rate 5/5 Standard	Changing available in school	Education unaware of CUA	2	2	0	
		Adult 11v11	N	Standard			2	1	1	
Hove Park School - Valley Campus	BN3 8AD	Mini 7v7	N	Standard	Changing available in school	CUA in place	4	0.5	3.5	
Longhill Sports Centre	BN2 7FR	Adult 11v11	N	Club rate 2/5 Standard	Changing available in sports centre	CUA in place – expires August 2025	2	2.5	-0.5	
		Youth 9v9	N	Standard			2	0.5	1.5	
		Youth 7v7	N	Standard			4	0.5	3.5	
Patcham Junior School	BN1 8PB	Youth 9v9	N	Standard	Unknown	Education unaware of CUA	2	2	0	
Portslade Aldridge Com. Academy	BN41 2WS	Adult 11v11	N	Poor	Changing available in school	Education unaware of CUA	1	3	-2	
St Bernadette Catholic Prim School	BN1 6UT	Mini 5v5	N	Poor	Access to changing facilities if needed	Education unaware of CUA	2	0.5	1.5	
		Mini 5v5	N	Standard			4	0	4	
University of Sussex	BN1 9PL	Adult 11v11	N	Good	9 changing rooms – 4 designated male/female (2 male, 2 female), 5 with shared showers. Roof repairs ongoing	Education unaware of CUA	3	1.5	2.5	
		Adult 11v11	N	Good			3	1.5	2.5	
Varndean High School	BN1 6NP	Adult 11v11	N	Standard	Toilets and changing facilities available upon request	Education unaware of CUA	2	1.5	0.5	

2.9 Quality

The table below summaries the standard of the pitches assessed. The ratings attributed to each pitch are detailed in the audit spreadsheet. These were informed by a combination of visual assessment on site visits and PitchPower assessments as well as feedback from consultation with user clubs and the Council. It should be noted that in some cases the pitch grading used was different to the PitchPower assessment, based on the current pitch condition, in these cases the quality used is highlighted in bold with PP rating also noted and includes pitches at the following sites Aldrington Rec. ground, Greenleas, Benfield Valley Rec. ground and Nevill Playing Fields (Figures 2.5 and 2.6). This audit data was agreed with the Sussex FA.

Figure 2.9 – Brighton & Hove grass football pitch quality

	Total	Percentage
Good	7	7%
Standard / Basic (PP)	73	72%
Poor	21	21%
Total	101	

* This final number will vary due to overmarking, and pitches closed / being improved at time of audit

21% of pitches in the area that have been assessed are of poor quality, with the majority (72%) of the available grass football pitches accessible for community use in Brighton & Hove rated as 'standard' (i.e., providing a playing capacity for up to two match equivalent sessions a week on average for adults). Only 7% of pitches are rated as good.

Inadequate natural drainage and compaction of the ground are issues at some of the football pitch sites, due to the largely clay soils of much of the area. Brighton & Hove City Council have received funding from the Football Foundation for specialist equipment to improve the drainage of grass pitches and regular PitchPower assessments are being done to monitor the impact of this.

Thirty seven pitches (on 14 sites) in Brighton & Hove have been assessed using the Football Foundation's PitchPower assessment and reporting tool. The PitchPower report findings for these sites identify the maintenance needs required together with budget costs. These sites are identified in Figures 2.5-2.8 with 'PP' in brackets next to their pitch rating.

2.10 Informal and unauthorised use of formal pitches by teams

Informal recreational use and unauthorised use of the maintained pitches in Brighton & Hove parks is a challenge for the Council. Clubs tend to take advantage of these sites especially for early and late season training when there is sufficient daylight on weekday evenings. This leads to reduced pitch quality for those that do book and pay for the pitch. The Council strive to address this whether it is by FA affiliated football teams, private soccer schools or independent coaches by aiming to monitor the situation and contacting teams when armed with evidence as well as directing people to use other open spaces and not the formal pitch spaces.

2.11 Artificial grass pitches (AGPs) in Brighton & Hove

In total, there are 25 pitches of various sizes across 15 sites with artificial grass surfaces suitable for football play at some level (i.e., either 3G preferred football surface or a sand-dressed multi use playing surface), which are available for community use. There are 10 FA compliant 3G pitches in the area (although the pitch at Dorothy Stringer School is due to expire in May 2025, at the time of this report), 7 of these are on education sites with high levels of community usage both for training and matches. The 3G pitches at Brighton Aldridge Community Academy and Brighton RFC and the SD pitches at Blatchington Mill School, Stanley Deason Leisure Centre, and Varndean School have some capacity. The pitch at Brighton RFC is primarily used by the rugby club for rugby training and is not FA Registered due to the poor condition of the pitch. At the time of visit, the SD pitch at Varndean School, the new 3G

pitch at Cardinal Newman School and the 4 small sided 3G pitches at Withdean Sports Complex were being developed so do not currently have any community use, however all sites are committed to community use once they are opened.

Over half (64.3%) of all the football clubs consulted (12 clubs, 141 teams) stated that the current number of hours available to them for training did not meet their demand and had the following comments.

- We cannot welcome new players and teams due to a lack of training and match space.
- We need more 11 v 11 and 7 v 7 pitches.
- Training facilities are limited by lack of 3G availability.
- The cost of training slots on floodlit 3G pitches is too high.
- Availability of 3G pitches does not meet levels of demand.
- Teams have to travel significant distances across the city as there are no suitable 3G pitches in our area for winter training.

There are a number of alternative full size (or near full size) floodlit 3G AGPs in neighbouring boroughs within a 20-minute drive (5-mile catchment area) based on a review of Active Places data as shown in Figure 2.2. A further full size 3G AGP is due to be developed at the Russel Martin Foundation site in Southwick, which is expected to be open in 2025. The future demand for 3G artificial pitches is outlined in Section 5 of this document.

There are also several artificial grass pitches in the city with sand-based playing surfaces designed for hockey as the main sport, but which also accommodate a large amount of demand for small sided football and club training, as detailed in figure 2.11.

2.12 AGPs at risk

There are no AGPs known to be at risk, however there is no known sinking fund in place at the University of Brighton, which could affect the ability to resurface the pitches when needed. At Brighton RFC the value of the sinking fund at the club is not enough to cover the resurfacing due to the increase in costs.

2.13 Proposed new AGPs

Saltdean United FC have received planning permission to install a new full sized, stadia 3G pitch in place of their current main 11v11 pitch, which is due to be completed in time for the start of the 2025/26 season. A full size 3G AGP is due to be provided at Toads Hole Valley as part of housing development and the council are looking to apply for funding to develop a 3G 7v7 pitch in Moulsecoomb. Longhill Sports Centre are exploring options to develop a full sized 3G AGP with potentially a rugby shock pad, but this is subject to funding and planning permission. St Andrews Primary School and Varndean College have been granted planning permission for new 3G pitches.

Figure 2.10: 3G AGPs - Situation at individual sites

Site	Postcode	AGP size & type	Date built (refurbished)	Rating	On FA 3G Reg. Apr 24	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Peak hrs available ¹	Est. use in peak hours	Supply / Demand balance	RAG
Brighton Aldridge Community Academy	BN1 9PW	100m x 60m Floodlit 3G	2013	Standard	Yes	Use of toilets and changing available at request	Education unaware of CUA - Sinking fund in place	31 hrs	22hrs (71%) Football	9	
Brighton Football Rugby Club	BN1 8YR	119m x 69m Floodlit 3G	2005	Poor	No - Not passed test	6 changing rooms, 2 showers, 200-person capacity clubhouse. Club rate 3/5 90+ year lease for clubhouse.	Annual lease for the pitches. Sinking fund amount requires clarification	34 hrs	17hrs (47%) (estimated) Rugby 11 hrs Other 5hrs	20	
Cardinal Newman Catholic School	BN1 8LU	94x56m 3G	2024 due to open Sept 24	Good	Yes	New 4 team changing facilities.	CUA being drafted at time of reporting	In development at time of audit but will be available for community use			
Dorothy Stringer School	BN1 6PZ	88m x 56m (9v9) Floodlit 3G	2015	Standard Club rate 4/5	Yes - Expires May 2025	Changing in school block	Education funded through FF - Sinking fund in place.	34 hrs	34 hrs (100%)	0	
Hove Park	BN3 6BG	70m x 31m Floodlit 3G	2018	Good	Yes	None but public toilets available	Russel Martin Foundation - 9 yrs of 15-year lease left. Sinking fund required as part of lease.	34 hrs	29 hrs (85%)	5	
Hove Park School - Valley Campus	BN3 8AD	100m x 63m Floodlit 3G	2021	Good	Yes	Changing in school if needed	Education site with CUA	29 hrs	29 hrs (100%)	0	
Patcham High School	BN1 8PB	100m x 63m Floodlit 3G	2021	Good	Yes	Changing rooms separate to school for ease of comm use.	Education site with CUA	25.5 hrs	25.5 hrs (100%)	0	
Portslade Sports Centre	BN41 2WS	100m x 60m Floodlit 3G	1990 (2019)	Good	Yes	Changing in leisure Centre	Operated by Freedom Leisure. Sinking Fund and CUA in place	34 hrs	32 hrs (94%)	2	
Stanley Deason Leisure Centre	BN2 5PB	95m x 60m Floodlit 3G	1994 (2021)	Good	Yes	Changing and toilet facilities in the leisure centre	Operated by Freedom Leisure. Sinking Fund in Place	34 hrs	28hrs (82%)	6	
The Manor Road Gym	BN2 5EA	50m x 35m Floodlit 3G	2016	Standard	N/A	Changing and toilets in community centre.	Managed by community org. Insufficient sinking fund in place.	34 hrs	28 hrs (82%)	6	

¹ Peak hours = M-Th 5-9pm, Fri 5-7pm, S&S 9-5pm = 34hrs

Site	Postcode	AGP size & type	Date built (refurbished)	Rating	On FA 3G Reg. Apr 24	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Peak hrs available ¹	Est. use in peak hours	Supply / Demand balance	RAG
Withdean Sports Complex	BN1 5JD	4 x small sided 3G courts	2024 due to open 9th April	Good	N/A	Changing in leisure Centre / outdoor modular building	Operated by Freedom Leisure.	In development at time of audit but will be available for community use			
Varndean School	BN1 6NP	74m x 35m Not Floodlit (portable floodlights) 3G	2002 (2014)	Standard	N/A	Toilets and changing available upon request	Education unaware of CUA	29 hrs	29 hrs (100%)	0	Red
		9v9 3G Not Floodlit	2024	Good	N/A			29 hrs	29 hrs (100%)	0	Red
University of Sussex	BN1 9PL	60m x 40m Floodlit 3G	2016 (2019)	Good	Yes	9 changing rooms - 4 designated male/female, 5 shared	Education unaware of CUA	34 hrs	27 hrs (80%)	7	Yellow
		105m x 70m Floodlit 3G WRC	2019	Good	Yes			34 hrs	27 hrs (80%)	7	Yellow
		60m x 40m Floodlit 3G	2016 (2019)	Good	Yes			34 hrs	27 hrs (80%)	7	Yellow
University of Brighton	BN1 9PH	115m x 76m Floodlit 3G	2007	Poor	Expired	Large Changing block with 8 changing rooms	Education unaware of CUA - not aware of sinking fund	34 hrs	34 hrs (100%)	0	Red

Figure 2.11: Hockey sand based AGPs available for football training - Situation at Individual Sites

Site	Postcode	AGP size & type	Date built (refurbished)	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Peak hours available	Est. use in peak hours	Supply / Demand balance	RAG
Blatchington Mill School	BN3 7BW	97m x 62m Floodlit SD ATP (North)	2012	Standard	Changing rooms in school for hockey club use, as well as access to Cricket Club pavilion	Pitches co-owned by B&HCC - agreement in place - sinking fund in place	32 hrs	25hrs (78%) (24 hrs hockey, 1 hr football)	7	Yellow
		97m x 62m Floodlit SD ATP (South)	2012	Standard			32 hrs	16.5 hrs (52%) (10.5 hockey, 6 football)	15.5	Green
Stanley Deason Leisure Centre	BN2 5PB	100m x 60m Floodlit SF	1994	Poor	Changing available in Leisure Centre	Council owned, operated by Freedom Leisure.	34 hrs	10 hrs 29% (8 hrs football, 2hr other events / rugby tots)	24	Green
University of Sussex	BN1 9PL	97m x 60m SD Floodlit	1999 (2009)	Standard	9 changing rooms - 4 designated male/female, 5 shared	Education unaware of CUA	34 hrs	34 hrs (100%) 33 hrs hockey 1 hr football	0	Red
Varndean School	BN1 6NP	50m x 30m SF Not Floodlit	2000 (2024)	Good	Toilets and changing available upon request	Education unaware of CUA	In development at time of audit but will be available for community use			

2.14 Ancillary facilities

The ancillary facilities across the city are generally poor quality with several sites needing improvement. Figures 2.5-2.8 detail the situation at each site. Ancillary facilities are closed at Patcham Place Recreation Ground and Waterhall Sports Ground due to vandalism and damage to the facilities and the changing rooms at Easthill Park are also closed. There was ongoing works at the ancillary facilities at Hill Park during site visits, with new facilities being developed as part of Saltdean FC's ongoing improvements. There is a lack of basic changing or toilet facilities at Hollingbury Park (Brentwood Road) and no changing facilities at Rottingdean Recreation Ground and Southwick Hill Recreation Ground, although public toilets are available. The facilities at many sites are rated poor and require modernisation to accommodate women and girls and provide disability access. These sites are detailed in figure 2.12 below.

Figure 2.12 – Brighton & Hove ancillary facility issues

Site	Ancillary facility issues
Aldrington Recreation Ground (Wish Park)	Public toilets are in poor conditions. No accessible or ambulant facilities. Showers not working.
Braypool Recreation Ground	Poor quality facilities with minimal maintenance schedule. No accessible or ambulant facilities.
Easthill Park	Changing rooms closed due to deterioration
Greenleas Recreation Ground	Poor quality changing and shower facilities.
Hollingbury Park (Brentwood Road)	No changing facilities or toilets
Happy Valley	No accessible or ambulant facilities. Public toilets are in poor condition.
Nuffield Playing Fields	Changing facilities in a storage container with no mains water. Damage to flooring and issues with mice.
Patcham Place Recreation Ground	Pavilion closed due to vandalism and damage.
Preston Park	Work ongoing to fix holes in the roof. Changing rooms all on the 1st floor with no disability access.
Southwick Hill Recreation Ground	No changing facilities
Victoria Recreation Ground	Main pavilion has poor quality changing and shower facilities. Public toilets closed due to damage.
Waterhall Sports Ground	Pavilion closed due to vandalism and damage.

3. Football demand (Step 3)

The findings relating to football pitch demand in Brighton & Hove are summarised in this section of the report.

3.1 Clubs and teams

In the 2023/24 season, Brighton & Hove had a total of 65 affiliated clubs (including separately constituted youth sections of adult clubs) registered to Sussex FA with 326 teams all playing home fixtures on pitches in the city. The total of 326 teams is an increase of 66 teams - 26% - since the previous audit in 2016 when 260 affiliated teams were registered to Brighton & Hove.

Of the 326 Sussex FA affiliated teams in Brighton & Hove, 71 are adult men's teams (U19 + including veterans and walking football teams), 24 women's teams (U19+ including veterans and small sided), 143 youth teams (U10 – U18) comprising of 48 mixed teams, 56 boys' teams and 39 girls' teams and 88 mini-soccer teams (U6 – U10) of which 50 are mixed, 23 are boys' teams, and 15 are female.

29% of teams in the city are adult teams (down from 34% in 2018), 44% are youth teams (down from 47%) 27% are mini-soccer teams (up from 20%). There has been an increase of 60 women's and girl's teams within the city since the previous report in 2016, an increase of 433%.

14 of the clubs in Brighton & Hove have youth sections with 10 or more age group teams. Of these clubs 4 have over 20 teams, Withdean Youth FC with 32 teams, Hove Park Colts with 26 teams, Mile Oak FC with 25 teams and Woodingdean Wanderers with 24 teams. Withdean Youth FC mostly play home fixtures on 3G pitches available at education sites (Varndean School, Dorothy Stringer and Stanley Deason) but say they are having to turn new players away due to lack of facilities. Hove Park Colts are spread across several sites throughout the city including Nevill Playing Fields, Hove Park (3G), Dyke Road Park, Hove Park Lower School (3G), Greenleas Recreation Ground, and Patcham Place. Mile Oak FC have a 25 year lease on Mile Oak Recreation Ground from the council which covers the main pitch, and a license for use of the youth pitches. They also use the 3G pitch at Portslade Sports Centre for training and occasional matches, however the club state that the hours available to them for training and matches does not meet their demand. Woodingdean Wanderers use a couple of sites throughout the city, with their main ground being Nuffield Playing Fields, which has poor ancillary facilities with no running water. In the 2023/24 season the council developed new youth pitches at Happy Valley for the club to help accommodate their demand for pitches, however, they still require additional facilities to be able to maximise these pitches such as goals for larger pitches, or a secure storage area. All 4 clubs state they need access to more training and match day provision to support the continued growth of their clubs.

3.2 Active Lives Survey

The most recently published findings of the national Active Lives Adult Survey² (November 2023) showed that self-reported regular participation (i.e., taken part at least twice in the last 28 days) in football within England by adults (aged 16+) increased by 0.2% from 4.4% between November 2021 - November 2022 to 4.6% between November 2022 - November 2023.

If football participation in the city were at the national average in November 2023 (i.e., 4.6%), this would indicate around 10,497 adults (aged 16+) living in Brighton & Hove play football out of a 16+ adult population of approximately 238,562. This playing population considers both regular club participation and regular informal recreational play in parks and hired facilities, and Brighton & Hove residents who participate outside of the city.

² Active Lives Adult Survey November 2022-23, Sport England, (April 2024)

The 'adult' football club playing membership in the city is approximately 1,700 players (Sussex FA player registration estimate). Assuming adult football participation in Brighton & Hove is in line with the current national average of 4.6%, this suggests that 84% of total regular adult football participation is either through informal activity outside of a club environment (i.e., through informal games with family, friends and/or work colleagues in parks) or exported to other clubs outside of the city.

3.3 Expressed demand

Expressed demand in the city for all levels and types of football is summarised in this section. Sources of demand information include FA databases, club and league websites, club survey returns, and information gathered from site visits and meetings.

Open age men's football – There are 7 men's teams based in Brighton & Hove who play within the National League System. Brighton & Hove Albion FC play at the highest level in the Premier League followed by Whitehawk FC at Step 3. These clubs must comply with the FA's minimum Ground Grading Guidelines to maintain their league status, promotion from their current division / league requires the club's home ground to meet the requirements of the corresponding ground grading at each 'Step'.

Figure 3.1: Senior adult football league clubs

Senior football clubs	League(s)	Home ground	Training ground
Premier League			
Brighton & Hove Albion FC	Premier League	American Express Community Stadium	AMEX Elite Football Performance Centre, Lancing
Step 3			
Whitehawk FC	Isthmian Football League	The Enclosed Ground (Whitehawk FC)	Stanley Deason Leisure Centre Brighton Aldridge Community Academy Dorothy Stringer School
Step 5			
AFC Varndenians	Southern combination Football League, Premier Division	Withdean Sports Complex	Brighton Aldridge Community Academy Cardinal Newman School
Saltdean United FC	Southern combination Football League, Premier Division	Hill Park	<i>Newhaven</i> Brighton Aldridge Community Academy University of Sussex
Step 6			
Mile Oak FC	Southern combination Football League, Division One	Mile Oak Recreation Ground	Mile Oak Recreation Ground Portslade Sports Centre
Step 7 (Regional feeder league)			
Brighton Electricity FC	Southern combination Football League, Division two	Withdean Sports Complex	Hove Park
Rottingdean Village FC	Southern combination Football League, Division two	Rottingdean Cricket Club	Rottingdean Cricket Club Rottingdean Recreation Ground Stanley Deason Leisure Centre

Other adult clubs based in the city and playing within the FA affiliated leagues that have been identified are detailed in Figure 3.2 below.

Figure 3.2: Men's adult league clubs

Other adult men's league clubs	League(S)	Home ground	Training ground
AFC Manor • 2 teams	Sussex Sunday League	East Brighton Park	Unknown
AFC Stanley Old Boys	Sussex Sunday League	Victoria Recreation Ground	Victoria Park (Grass)

Other adult men's league clubs	League(S)	Home ground	Training ground
AFC Varndeanians • 4 teams	Sussex Sunday League Mid Sussex Football League Friendlies / Training Only	University of Brighton Withdean Sports Complex	Brighton Aldridge Community Academy, Cardinal Newman
Aldrington Rangers	Sussex Sunday League	Victoria Recreation Ground	Waterhall (Grass)
B Town • 2 teams	Sussex Sunday League	Brighton RFC Victoria Recreation Ground	Unknown
BHASVIC • 2 teams	ECFA Men's League	BHASVIC	BHASVIC
Bison Beer • 2 teams	Sussex Sunday League	Braypool Recreation Ground Waterhall Sports Ground	Hove Park
BLAGSS	Friendlies / Training Only	Withdean Sports Complex	
BN3 United	Sussex Sunday League	Aldrington Recreation Ground (Wish Park)	Unknown
Boys Brigade Old Boys	Brighton, Worthing & District Football League	Brighton RFC	Brighton RFC
Brighton & Sussex Medical School	Mid Sussex Football League	University of Brighton	University of Brighton
Brighton Aces	Sussex Sunday League	Patcham Place Rec. Ground	Unknown
Clarendon Athletic	Brighton, Worthing & District Football League	Patcham Place Rec. Ground	Unknown
Crew Club Hawks Athletic	Sussex Sunday League	The Crew Club	The Crew Club
Diversity United	Brighton, Worthing & District Football League	Preston Park	Unknown
East Brighton Wanderers	Sussex Sunday League	East Brighton Park	Unknown
East Sussex Seagulls	Sussex Sunday League	Patcham Place Recreation Ground	Unknown
Garden Bar	Sussex Sunday League	Aldrington Recreation Ground	Unknown
Hove • 2 teams	Sussex Sunday Football League	Victoria Recreation Ground	Hove Park School – Valley Campus
Hove Lawns	Sussex Sunday Football League	Aldrington Recreation Ground	Unknown
Hove Lions	Sussex Sunday Football League	Nevill Playing Fields	Portslade Sports Centre
Hove Park Rangers	Sussex Sunday Football League	Victoria Recreation Ground (Portslade)	Hove Park School – Valley Campus
Hove Park Wednesday	Sussex Sunday Football League	Nevill Playing Fields	Hove Park School – Valley Campus
Kingston Broadway	Sussex Sunday Football League	Longhill Sports Centre	Unknown
Knollenton Oak	Sussex Sunday Football League	Victoria Recreation Ground (Portslade)	Unknown
Mile Oak • 2 teams	Southern Combination Football League	Mile Oak Recreation Ground	Mile Oak Recreation Ground (Grass) Portslade Sports Centre
Ovingdean	Brighton, Worthing & District Football League	Longhill Sports Centre	Unknown
Patcham United	Sussex Sunday Football League	Patcham High School	Patcham High School
Portslade Athletic • 2 teams	Mid Sussex Football League	Brighton Aldridge Community Academy	Hove Park School
Preston Dynamos 1958	Sussex Sunday Football League	Rottingdean Football	Unknown
Preston Manor Royals	Mid Sussex Football League	Portslade Sports Centre	Brighton Aldridge Community Academy
Preston Park	Brighton, Worthing & District Football League	Waterhall Sports Ground	Brighton Aldridge Community Academy
Queens Park	Sussex Sunday Football League	East Brighton Park	Brighton Aldridge Community Academy

Other adult men's league clubs	League(S)	Home ground	Training ground
Saltdean United FC	Southern Combination Football League	Hill Park	Stanley Deason Leisure Centre
Scape	Brighton, Worthing & District Football League	Preston Park	Aldrington Rec. Ground, The Manor Road Gym
Sporting Hand in Hand	Sussex Sunday Football League	Victoria Recreation Ground	Hove Park School – Valley Campus
SSB Unity	Brighton, Worthing & District Football League	Preston Park	Unknown
The View • 2 teams	Mid Sussex Football League	Waterhall Sports Ground	Unknown
University of Brighton • 4 teams	BUCS Men's Football	University Of Brighton	University Of Brighton
Varndean College • 2 teams	ECFA Men's League	Varndean College	Varndean College
West Hove Jaguars	Sussex Sunday Football League	Victoria Recreation Ground (Portslade)	Portslade Sports Centre
Whitehawk Rangers	Sussex Sunday Football League	East Brighton Park	Dorothy Stringer
Withdean Youth	Sussex Sunday Football League	Stanley Deason Leisure Centre	Stanley Deason Leisure Centre Varndean School
Woodingdean Wanderers • 4 teams	Sussex Sunday Football League	Happy Valley Recreation Ground Longhill Sports Centre Rottingdean Football	Various 3G pitches across area

Youth football - There are 21 youth football clubs in Brighton & Hove, 10 of these have 10 or more teams playing in affiliated leagues. The two largest youth clubs, Withdean Youth FC and Hove Park Colts FC regularly put out 32 teams and 26 youth teams respectively.

Figure 3.3: Youth and mini Soccer clubs (boys/ mixed)

Youth and mini soccer teams	League(s)	Home ground	Training ground
AFC Varndeanians • 2 teams	Mid Sussex Youth FL Southern Combination FL	Brighton Aldridge Community Academy	Brighton Aldridge Community Academy, Cardinal Newman
Coldean Colts • 11 teams	Mid Sussex Youth FL	Wild Park	Brighton Aldridge Community Academy
Crew Club Hawks • 3 teams	Mid Sussex Youth FL	The Crew Club	The Crew Club
Goldstone Valley • 1 team	Mid Sussex Youth FL	Nevill Playing Fields	Portslade Sports Centre
Hangleton Rangers Yth • 14 teams	Mid Sussex Youth FL Sussex Sunday Youth FL	Knoll Park Nevill Playing Fields Hove Park School – Valley Campus	Blatchington Mill School Portslade Sports Centre
Hollingbury Hawks Colts & Youth • 9 teams	Mid Sussex Youth FL Sussex Sunday Youth FL	Braypool Recreation Ground Hollingbury Park Patcham Place Rec. Ground Preston Park The Manor Road Gym	Preston Park (Grass), Hollingbury Park (Grass), Dorothy Stringer, Stanley Deason Leisure Centre, Varndean School
Hove • 3 teams	Sussex Sunday Youth FL Mid Sussex Youth FL	Hove Park Victoria Recreation Ground (Portslade)	Hove Park School – Valley Campus
Hove Park Colts • 17 teams	Sussex Sunday Youth FL Mid Sussex Youth FL	Dyke Road Park Hove Park Nevill Playing Fields	Hove Park School – Valley Campus, Hove Park Council rec grounds (Grass)

Youth and mini soccer teams	League(s)	Home ground	Training ground
Hove Rivervale Youth • 4 teams	Sussex Sunday Youth FL	Benfield Valley Recreation Ground Braypool Recreation Ground	University Of Brighton
Mile Oak • 23 teams	Sussex Sunday Youth FL Mid Sussex Youth FL	Mile Oak Recreation Ground Portslade Sports Centre Portslade Aldridge Community Academy	Mile Oak Recreation Ground Portslade Sports Centre
Moulsecoomb & Bevendean • 2 teams	Mid Sussex Youth FL	Brighton Aldridge Community Academy	Unknown
Patcham United • 16 teams	Sussex Sunday Youth FL Mid Sussex Youth FL	Carden Park Horsdean Rec. Ground	Carden Park, Horsdean Rec. Ground (Grass), Patcham High School
Poets Corner • 10 teams	Sussex Sunday Youth FL Mid Sussex Youth FL	Aldrington Recreation Ground Hove Park School – Valley Campus	Aldrington Recreation Ground (Grass), Hove Park School – Valley Campus, Portslade Sports Centre
Rottingdean Village • 9 teams	Sussex Sunday Youth FL Mid Sussex Youth FL	Rottingdean Football	Stanley Deason Leisure Centre
Saltdean United FC • 13 teams	Sussex Sunday Youth FL Mid Sussex Youth FL	Hill Park Saltdean Park	Stanley Deason Leisure Centre
Sussex Girls JPL RTC • 5 teams	Junior Premier League	Stanley Deason Leisure Centre	Stanley Deason Leisure Centre
Sussex Lionesses • 1 team	Sussex County Women & Girls Football League	Stanley Deason Leisure Centre	
West Hove Dynamos • 6 teams	Sussex Sunday Youth Football League	Aldrington Recreation Ground	Aldrington Recreation Ground (Grass) Blatchington Mill School
Whitehawk • 2 teams	Mid Sussex Youth FL Isthmian Youth FL	East Brighton Park The Enclosed Ground	Stanley Deason Leisure Centre
Withdean Youth • 19 teams	Sussex Sunday Youth FL Mid Sussex Youth FL Junior Premier League	Dorothy Stringer School (3G)	Varndean School
Woodingdean Wanderers • 17 teams	Sussex Sunday Youth FL Mid Sussex Youth FL Junior Premier League	Nuffield Hospital Happy Valley Rec Ground Longhill High School	Stanley Deason Leisure Centre

There are two women's teams who play within the tier system 1-5, Brighton & Hove Women's at the highest level in the Women's Super league and Saltdean United FC Women playing Tier 5. The other senior women's teams play at Tier 7 County league level.

Figure 3.4: Senior Women's Teams

Senior football clubs	League(s)	Home ground	Training ground
Tier 1 National			
Brighton & Hove Albion Women's	Women's Super League	<i>Broadfield Stadium, Crawley American Express Community Stadium</i>	<i>AMEX Elite Football Performance Centre, Lancing</i>
Tier 5 Women's regional league			
Saltdean United FC Women	London and South East Regional Women's FL	Hill Park	<i>Newhaven Brighton Aldridge Community Academy, University of Sussex</i>
Tier 7 Women's county leagues			
Saltdean United FC Women Development	Sussex County Women FL	Hill Park Portslade Sports Centre	<i>Newhaven Brighton Aldridge Community Academy University of Sussex</i>

Brighton Seagals	Sussex County Women FL	Brighton Aldridge Community Academy	Portslade Sports Centre Blatchington Mill School
Hollingbury Hawks Women	Sussex County Women FL	Braypool Recreation Ground	Preston Park, BHASVIC Dorothy Stringer, Hollingdean
Mile Oak FC Women	Sussex County Women FL	Mile Oak Recreation Ground	Mile Oak Recreation Ground Portslade Sports Centre
Whitehawk Women	Sussex County Women FL	The Enclosed Ground (Whitehawk FC)	Stanley Deason Brighton Aldridge Community Academy Dorothy Stringer School
Woodingdean Wanderers Women	Sussex County Women FL	Longhill Sports Centre	Nuffield Playing Fields Happy Valley recreation Ground

There are a total of 55 women's and girl's teams (including friendly / training only teams) affiliated to the Sussex FA. Those outside of the Tier system are listed below.

Figure 3.5: Clubs with women and girl's teams

Other women and girls' teams	Leagues	Home ground	Training ground
5s Football • 12 teams	Small sided league	The Manor Road Gym	
AFC Varndeanians Vets • 1 team	Friendlies / Training Only	N/A	Withdean Sports Complex
BHASVIC U19 • 1 team	ECFA Women's League	Brighton Hove & Sussex Sixth Form College Sports Centre	Brighton Hove & Sussex Sixth Form College Sports Centre
Brighton Seagals Recreational	Friendlies only	Brighton Aldridge Community Academy	Blatchington Mill School
Coldean Colts • 4 teams (U10, U12x2, U13)	Friendlies / Training Only Sussex County Women & Girls Football League	Wild Park	Brighton Aldridge Community Academy
Hangleton Rangers Youth • 2 teams (U10,U12)	Sussex County Women & Girls Football League	Nevill Playing Fields Hove Park School – Valley Campus	Blatchington Mill School Portslade Sports Centre
Hollingbury Hawks Youth • 5 teams (U9, U11,U14,U15,U16)	Sussex County Women & Girls Football League	Braypool Recreation Ground Brentwood Road Patcham Place Recreation Ground The Manor Road Gym	Preston Park (Grass), Hollingbury Park (Grass), Dorothy Stringer, Stanley Deason Leisure Centre, Varndean School
Hove Park Colts • 9 teams (U9-U15)	Sussex County Women & Girls Football League	Dyke Road Park Nevill Playing Fields	Hove Park School – Valley Campus Hove Park Council rec grounds (Grass)
Mile Oak • 3 teams (U9,U14,U16)	Sussex County Women & Girls Football League	Mile Oak Recreation Ground Portslade Sports Centre Portslade Aldridge Community Academy	Mile Oak Recreation Ground Portslade Sports Centre
Poets Corner • 2 teams (U12, U15)	Sussex County Women & Girls Football League	Aldrington Recreation Ground	Aldrington Recreation Ground (Grass), Hove Park School – Valley Campus, Portslade Sports Centre
Saltdean United FC • 2 teams (U9, U13)	Sussex County Women & Girls Football League London and SE Regional Women's Football League	Hill Park Saltdean Park	Stanley Deason Leisure Centre
Socialball	Sussex County FA Women's Walking Football	Portslade Sports Centre	
Sussex Girls JPL RTC • 5 teams (U12-U18)	Junior Premier League	Stanley Deason Leisure Centre	Stanley Deason Leisure Centre
Sussex Lionesses (U10)	Sussex County Women & Girls Football League	Stanley Deason Leisure Centre	

Other women and girls' teams	Leagues	Home ground	Training ground
University of Brighton	BUCS Women's Football	University Of Brighton	University Of Brighton
Withdean Youth • 14 teams (U9-U16)	Sussex County Women & Girls Football League	Dorothy Stringer School (3G)	Varndean School
Woodingdean Wanderers • 7 teams (U9-U15)	Sussex County Women & Girls Football League	Nuffield Playing Fields	Stanley Deason Leisure Centre

Disability football – There is one affiliated disability specific team in Brighton & Hove playing powerchair football run by Brighton & Hove Albion Foundation, but the foundation run a comprehensive disability programme with over 400 members accessing sessions each week. There are a further eight disability teams from the area that play at a central venue in Lancing.

3.4 Soccer schools

There is significant demand for playing space for children's football coaching in Brighton & Hove, whether from commercial soccer schools, coaching providers or coaching organised by local community football clubs. Several youth football clubs based in the city run development sessions for u5s and u6s and/or soccer schools in the school holidays to generate income for their clubs and as a pathway to feed new teams.

Brighton & Hove Albion Foundation, Brighton Galaxy Girls Football, and The Russell Martin Foundation are key providers of coaching provision within Brighton & Hove offering football sessions across the whole city for a broad range of demographics.

Brighton & Hove Albion Foundation offer a wide range of sporting opportunities which are specifically tailored to different demographic groups. They provide opportunities for children and young people, women and girls, and offer a range of different disability sessions. Their main weekly sessions (hub activity, pathway centres and holiday provision) all taking place mainly on 3G pitches at Dorothy Stringer School (Mon, Wed, Fri) and Patcham High School (Tues, Thurs) as well as using their out of area training ground at Lancing. They run a Kick's inclusion programme at The Manor and use the University of Sussex and BACA for their girls and disability sessions.

Brighton Galaxy Girls Football runs after school and academy provision with up to 15 sessions each week for over 300 girls, they link with Withdean youth to provide girls with an opportunity to play regular matches within the club's girls' section. They use facilities at Balfour Primary School, Blatchington Mill School, Varndean School, and Varndean College.

The Russell Martin Foundation supports young people 4-19 years and runs a number of academy courses at the Hove Park 3G and BACA as well as sites outside of the city.

3.5 Casual demand

Casual football play among groups of children and adults, using free to use open access grass and MUGA in public parks continues to be a major feature of football demand. Indeed, the Active Lives Survey data suggests that 90% of all regular adult football played in the area is unaffiliated football within small-sided leagues, friendly games or park kick-about.

As identified in the supply section of the report, Brighton & Hove provides for informal football demand by maintaining open areas of grass in parks and open spaces, open access MUGAs or single sets of small size goalposts (such as Hangleton Park). Where these informal play facilities are provided in parks alongside formal pitches designated for match play, they help to reduce wear of the formal pitches.

However, it has been identified that formal pitches in the area are subject to unauthorised use by organised teams and soccer schools for training and coaching.

3.6 Unmet / Latent demand

One club reported unmet demand with Mile Oak FC stating that they have demand for up to 10 boys' teams and 3 girls' teams, based on interest and those training with the club but the lack of facilities prevents them from being able to accommodate extra teams. Other clubs and leagues highlighted ambitions for growth to meet perceived latent demand, e.g., teams that could be created if additional pitch provision were available. This information is drawn from the club consultation surveys carried out from March to July 2024 and therefore only includes those clubs that completed the survey. Conversion of this perceived latent demand into new teams will depend on these clubs engaging sufficient volunteer team managers and coaches as well as securing suitable pitches to play and train on in the peak period. Figure 3.6 outlines the growth aspirations of clubs, and it is apparent that there is latent demand in the city for all formats of football from youth to adult football including women and girl's provision. This demand is explored further in Section 5 which outlines the effect of these potential demand trends.

Figure 3.6: Brighton & Hove football clubs - Self-Reported team growth plans

Club	Growth aspirations
AFC Varndeanians	We want to start a women's team.
BHAFC Foundation	<i>No details provided</i>
Brighton, Worthing and District Football League	<i>No details provided</i>
Clarendon Athletic	Develop youth teams
Coldean Colts FC	Continuing growth from the last 3 years
Hangleton Rangers FC	More Girls teams
Hollingbury Hawks Youth & Colts FC	Through the development of the Wildcats and Saturday morning sessions, there is greater interest including from mums and dads
Hove Park Colts FC	We plan to increase the size of the club having two teams at each age group.
Mile Oak FC	Our objective within the next 36 months is to have the volume of boy's teams mirrored by girls' teams and bring our total youth structure closer to 50 teams.
Ovingdean FC	<i>No details provided</i>
Patcham United	Running girls only sessions with the local school to encourage more girls to join a team and play football
Poets' Corner FC	New Under 7s teams
Rottingdean Village FC	We expect sustained but gradual growth of youth football in particular to fill the age groups where we do not currently have teams.
Saltdean United FC	<i>No details provided</i>
Scape FC	<i>No details provided</i>
Sussex Girls JPL RTC	We would like our own ground and also develop a grassroots programme for development
Sussex Sunday Youth FL	<i>No details provided</i>
Sussex Sunday FL	League grows by around 5 teams per year on average
The Caxton Arms FC	We would like to create a reserve team to our first team.
Whitehawk Football Club	Continue to expand youth, women, disability and vets' teams.
Woodingdean Wanderers Football Club	We need help to find/secure additional suitable facilities, in our area, to help us accommodate the steady growth of the Club.

3.7 Displaced and imported demand

The research and consultation show that as far as match play is concerned, there is some displaced demand of football - i.e., teams of clubs based in Brighton & Hove having to travel outside the area to find pitches to play home fixtures or for training. Brighton & Hove Albion Women's FC play the majority of their games at the Broadfield Stadium in Crawley and train at the club's training ground in Lancing.

The club are actively seeking a suitable site to develop a specific stadium for the Women's team. Saltdean United reporting they travel to Newhaven 3G (Lewes) for training as well as using facilities in Brighton & Hove.

There is imported demand from clubs from outside the city using the facilities for training. Two clubs at the University of Sussex, Montpelier Villa FC (Adur) and Crawley Town (Crawley), one club at University of Brighton, Peacehaven and Telscombe Rangers FC (Lewes) and two clubs at Blatchington Mill School, Fishergate Flyers (Adur), and Southwick Youth (Adur).

Eight clubs in the area have teams training on sand dressed artificial pitches (A&R United, Hangleton Rangers, Hollingbury Hawks, West Hove Dynamos, Saltdean Utd, Seagulls, Sussex Girls JPL RTC and Woodingdean Wanderers youth) and some clubs report using grass pitches for training throughout the season (Hollingbury Hawks, Hove Park Colts, Mile Oak, Patcham United, Poets Corner and West Hove Dynamos). It is likely other youth training takes place on grass pitches particularly in the lighter evenings and at weekends. Adult Sunday teams will typically train on grass pitches in the early season then either stop training, utilise artificial pitches where space allows or play within a 5-a-side league.

4. The situation at individual football sites (Step 4)

4.1 Grass pitch sites

The grass football pitches were assessed in March of the 2023/24 season, with most of the sites assessed using the methodology established by Sport England and the FA in the published Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance (2013) - i.e., a non-technical visual site assessment. Fourteen of the grass pitch football sites had a more in-depth assessment using the Football Foundation's PitchPower methodology and reporting. Sussex FA have reviewed the findings of these site-specific assessments and agreed the quality ratings as a basis for comparison of the amount of play each site can accommodate (i.e., 'carrying capacity') against the amount of play that takes place. Carrying capacity is a measure of the number of match equivalent sessions per week for community use each pitch can take without adversely affecting its quality and use.

The following pitch carrying capacities have been used and are consistent with the PPS Guidance methodology, informed (where applicable) by the Performance Quality Standard ratings (from Poor to High) in the PitchPower Assessment Reports.

Figure 4.1: Grass football pitch carrying capacity

PPS guide ratings/ PitchPower PQS ratings	Adult football	Youth football (9v9, 11v11)	Mini soccer (5v5, 7v7)
	Number of match equivalent sessions a week		
Good / High or Advanced	3	4	6
Standard / Basic or Good	2	2	4
Poor / Poor	1	1	2

The full pitch audit details the situation at each individual football site with regard to:

1. *Pitch supply* (including the quality ratings) and conclusions reached as to the amount of play a site can accommodate (i.e., its carrying capacity for community use);
2. *The amount of play that takes place at each site* (i.e., the expressed demand where known) adjusted to reflect any casual or education use in addition to club use for matches and training;
3. *The comparison* (shown as a RAG rating) as to whether, for each pitch type it contains, a site is:
 - **RED** - Being overplayed (current use exceeds the carrying capacity)
 - **AMBER** - Being played to the level the site can sustain (current use matches the carrying capacity), or
 - **GREEN** - Potentially able to accommodate some additional play (current use falls below the carrying capacity)

There are twelve sites highlighted from the site audit spreadsheet as **RED** rated sites where the majority of the available natural turf football pitches are overplayed.

- Balfour Junior School
- Braypool Rec. ground
- Carden Park
- Hill Park
- Hollingbury Park (Brentwood Road)
- Nevill Playing fields
- Nuffield Playing Fields
- Portslade Aldridge Community Academy
- Rottingdean Rec ground
- Southwick Hill Rec ground
- Waterhall Sports Ground
- Wild Park
- Withdean Sports Complex

Five sites from the full site audit are **AMBER** rated where the majority of the natural turf pitches are played at (or very close to) their playing capacity:

- Blatchington Mill School
- East Brighton Park
- Hertford Junior School
- Patcham Junior School
- Victoria Rec. ground

The table below compares estimates of the total football play on natural grass pitches in the peak period (weekends and evenings) against available capacity across all the football playing field sites in the areas.

Figure 4.2: Grass pitches supply / demand balance –community football sites

Pitch Type	Capacity (MES / Week)	Estimated use (MES/ Week)	Supply / Demand balance
11v11 (Open Age, Veterans, U19, U18, U17)	72	75	-3
Youth 11v11 (U13-U16)	22	22.5	-0.5
Youth 9v9 (U11-U12)	40	42.25	-2.25
Mini Soccer 7v7 (U9-U10)	78	39.5	38.5
Mini Soccer 5v5 (U7-U8)	38	17.25	20.75
Total	250	196.5	53.5

The table shows that there is a positive supply balance (i.e., unused capacity) of natural turf pitches for football in the area for Mini Soccer. However, not all of this accounts for actual spare capacity in peak periods (Saturday PM and Sunday all day for adult football, Sunday all day for youth boys / girls' football), some sites may be managed to below capacity to account for recreational / friendly matches, others do not have secured community use e.g., education sites and pitches rated as poor quality should also be discounted. It should also be noted that as shown earlier there are 73 youth teams (U13-U16) playing in the area (figure 2.3) equating to 37 MES but estimated use above equates to 22 MES, a difference of 15 MES. Whilst some of this use may be on 3G artificial pitches it is likely some matches are either played on the wrong size pitch creating additional pressure on adult 11v11 pitches.

Figure 4.3 lists the natural turf playing pitch sites with capacity to determine if this capacity is available in the relevant peak period and secured.

Figure 4.3 - Does the potential to accommodate additional play equate to spare capacity?

Pitch sites with spare capacity	Is there any reason why additional play could not take place (Y/N)?	Are all the pitches for the particular pitch type used during the relevant peak period (Y/N)?	Pitch type	Total pitch capacity surplus	Spare capacity in peak (MES)?	Capacity discounted	Comments/ Rationale
Aldrington Rec. Ground (Wish Park)	N	N	Y 11v11 7v7 5v5	2 1.25 0.25	2 1 0	0 0.25 0.25	Pitches available during peak times for youth football due to flexible kick off times. 5v5 pitch capacity discounted due to poor pitch condition. 0.25 discounted as 0.5 minimum for match use.
Benfield Valley Rec	N	N	Y 11v11 9v9	3.5 3.5	3.5 3.5	0 0	Youth pitches are available due to flexible kick off times.
Brighton Aldridge Comm. Academy	N	N	A 11v11 9v9	1.5 2.5	0 0	1.5 2.5	Pitches available but discounted as unsecure with no known CUA in place.
Dyke Park Road	N	N	9v9 7v7	0.25 2.25	0 2	0.25 0.25	Youth pitches are available due to flexible kick off times. 0.25 discounted as 0.5 minimum for match use.
Easthill Park	N	N	A 11v11	3	2	1	Adult pitch available for 2 MES in peak period due to flex kick off times.
Greenleas	N	N	A 11v11 9v9	1.5 1	1.5 1	0 0	Pitches available during peak times due to flexible kick off times
Happy Valley Rec. Ground	N	N	A 11v11 Y 11v11 9v9 7v7 5v5	3 2 0.5 2.5 3.5	3 2 0.5 2.5 3.5	0 0 0 0 0	Pitches available during peak times due to flexible kick off times
Hill Park	N	N	7v7	1	1	0	Youth pitches are available due to flexible kick off times
Horsdean Rec Ground	N	N	7v7 5v5	9.5 3.5	9.5 3.5	0 0	Youth pitches are available due to flexible kick off times
Hove Park	N	N	7v7	3.5	1.5	0	Some capacity discounted due to one pitch being poor quality
Hove Park School – Nevill Campus	N	N	A 11v11	1	1	0	CUA agreement in place
Hove Park School – Valley Campus	N	N	7v7	3.5	0	3.5	Pitches available but discounted as unsecure with no known CUA in place.
Knoll Park	N	N	7v7 5v5	1.5 2	1.5 2	0 0	Youth pitches are available due to flexible kick off times
Longhill Sports Centre	N	N	9v9 7v7	1.5 3.5	0 0	1.5 3.5	Pitches available but discounted as unsecure with no known CUA in place.
Mile Oak Rec. Ground	N	N	9v9 7v7 5v5	1 1.5 2.5	1 1.5 2.5	0 0 0	Youth pitches are available due to flexible kick off times
Nevill Playing Fields	N	N	7v7	1.75	1.5	0.25	Youth pitches are available due to flexible kick off times. 0.25 discounted as 0.5 minimum for match use.

Pitch sites with spare capacity	Is there any reason why additional play could not take place (Y/N)?	Are all the pitches for the particular pitch type used during the relevant peak period (Y/N)?	Pitch type	Total pitch capacity surplus	Spare capacity in peak (MES)?	Capacity discounted	Comments/ Rationale
Nuffield Playing Fields	N	N	7v7 5v5	0.25 1	0 0	0.25 1	Capacity discounted as provision not secured.
Patcham Place Rec Ground	N	N	A 11v11 9v9	1.5 0.5	1.5 0.5	0 0	Pitches are available due to flexible kick off times
Preston Park	N	N	7v7 5v5	5.5 2.25	5.5 2	0 0.25	0.25 discounted as 0.5 minimum for match use.
Rottingdean Cricket and FC	N	N	5v5	1	1	0	Pitches are available due to flexible kick off times
St Bernadette Catholic P. School	N	N	5v5	5.5	0	5.5	Pitches available but discounted as unsecure with no known CUA in place.
The Crew Club	N	N	A 11v11 7v7	1.5 1	1.5 1	0 0	Pitches are available due to flexible kick off times
The Manor Road Gym	N	N	7v7	1.5	0	1.5	Capacity discounted due to poor pitch condition.
University of Sussex	N	N	A 11v11	5	0	5	Pitches available but discounted as unsecure with no known CUA in place.
Varndean High School	N	N	A 11v11	0.5	0	0.5	Pitches available but discounted as unsecure with no known CUA in place.
Whitehawk FC	N	Y	A 11v11	0.5	0	0.5	Pitch managed to accommodate senior football.
Wild Park	N	N	5v5	0.25	0	0.25	0.25 discounted as 0.5 minimum for match use.

Figure 4.4 below summarises the final capacity in the peak period across each type of natural turf pitch after discounting capacity due to unavailability in peak period or pitches being unsecured or of poor quality.

Figure 4.4: Grass pitches supply / demand balance –community football sites

Pitch type	Capacity (MES / Week)	Estimated use (MES/ Week)	Supply / Demand balance	Capacity discounted	Capacity in peak period	Pitch equivalent*
11v11 (Open Age, Veterans, U19, U18, U17)	72	75	-3	-8.5	-11.5	-5
Youth 11v11 (U13-U16)	22	22.5	-0.5	0	-0.5	0
Youth 9v9 (U11-U12)	40	42.25	-2.25	-4.25	-6.5	-3
Mini Soccer 7v7 (U9-U10)	78	39.5	38.5	-10	28.5	7
Mini Soccer 5v5 (U7-U8)	38	17.25	20.75	-7.25	13.5	3
Total	250	196.5	53.5	-30	24.5	2

*based on standard pitch ratings rounded down to whole number.

It should be noted that whilst the overall supply and demand balance appears to show a large surplus in match equivalent sessions (MES) per week, when this is converted into pitch equivalents (based on a standard pitch quality e.g. 2 MES for adult 11v11, 2 MES for youth 11v11/ 9v9, 4 MES for 7v7/5v5), it shows clear need to provide more 9v9 and adult 11v11 pitches, there is also a need for more youth 11v11 provision given the number of teams in the area and the lack of pitches, resulting in some teams using the wrong size pitch. This could be partly achieved by reconfiguring some of the spare 7v7 and 5v5 pitches into larger sizes, but this would still not cater for the number of pitches needed. For example, 2 x 7v7 pitches would be required for an adult 11v11 and 2 x 5v5 pitches for a 9v9 pitch. This also does not cater for future demand for pitches covered in section 5.2.

4.3 The FA National Football Facilities Strategy

In 2018, in partnership with the Football Foundation and Sport England, the Football Association developed a ten-year investment plan in facilities for grass roots football - *The National Football Facilities Strategy 2018-2028*. The facilities strategy aims to ensure that by 2028:

- Every FA-affiliated club has access to a 3G artificial pitch for training and potentially matches.
- Accelerated improvements are made to the key grass pitch sites across England to reduce fixture cancellations.

To support delivery of the FA's new national strategy titled '*A Thriving Grassroots Game*', Sussex FA - in partnership with the Football Foundation and the county local authorities - is focused on the following interventions in relation to the overarching priority to **Build more and improve existing facilities**:

Transform grass pitch quality

- Engage with organisations to create a pipeline of projects
- Provide post award support to organisation receiving Grass Pitch Maintenance funding

Support the development of more 3G pitches

- Encourage organisations to deliver the 3G projects identified in the Local Football Facility Plans
- Specific goal of seeking partnerships which could facilitate a Sussex County FA run facility in the east of the county

Create inclusive and accessible facilities

- Ensure all planning application projects are welcoming, inviting and feel safe for women and girls
- Ensure each Football Foundation project is community led

Improvement environmental sustainability

- Embrace the Football Foundation Energy Fund

4.4 Brighton & Hove Local Football Facilities Plan

A Local Football Facilities Plan (LFFP) for Brighton & Hove was published separately by the Football Foundation in May 2019 informed by consultation with the Council, Sussex FA and the large community football clubs based in the city.

The priorities for Brighton & Hove were the delivery of four additional full size floodlit 3G AGPs (at Patcham High School, Portslade Sports Centre, Toads Hole Valley, and Waterhall Sports Ground) and three small sided 3G AGPs (Withdean Sports Complex, Moulsecroomb Community Leisure Centre, University of Brighton). The full sized pitches at Patcham High School and Portslade Sports centre have been delivered along with the small sided pitches at Withdean Sports Complex. The Toads Hole Valley 3G is due to be provided as part of housing development and the council are currently developing an application for a small sided pitch at Moulsecroomb Community Leisure Centre.

Twelve projects were prioritised for the improvement of grass pitches. Improvements are in progress or have been carried out at 5 of the 12 sites (Aldrington Rec ground, Greenleas Rec. ground, Happy Valley Rec. ground, Mile Oak Rec. ground, and Nevill Playing Fields). An updated LFFP is scheduled to be prepared and published in 2025.

The Playing Pitch Strategy methodology is more detailed than that used to inform the LFFP investment priorities. Accordingly, whilst in most instances there is a good deal of commonality between the PPS and LFFP in terms of the conclusions reached, this is not always the case. The LFFP does not provide an evidence base to inform the development planning process, so the PPS should be referred to as the evidence base.

4.5 FA training scenario for 3G AGP assessments of need

The FA has designed a model scenario to help with understanding what demand there may be for full size equivalent floodlit 3G AGPs if increased amounts of play were to take place on them. The scenario question tested is: *How many full size floodlit 3G AGPs may be required to meet demand within the city if all teams playing competitive football had access to a full size floodlit 3G AGP to train on once a week?*

The answer to this scenario question for Brighton & Hove is set out below based on the current 6 full size (or near full size) floodlit 3G AGPs on the FA Register which have community use for football during peak periods³ (Brighton Aldridge Community Academy, Hove Park School – Valley Campus, Patcham High School, Portslade Sports Centre, Stanley Deason Leisure Centre, Uni of Sussex), as well as the following 3 smaller sized pitches on the FA Register (Dorothy Stringer School-9v9, Uni of Sussex-7v7 and Hove Park-7v7), equating to one further full sized pitch and a new full sized pitch which has recently been completed at Cardinal Newman School. Making a total of 8 full sized pitches or equivalent in the city.

Two full sized pitches in the area have been discounted due to their poor condition. The pitch at Brighton RFC, which is predominately for Rugby and the pitch at the University of Brighton, both pitches are not on the FA Register but still cater for some club training. There are also a number of smaller facilities discounted that cater for recreational provision including student use, 5-side matches and

³ Weekdays 17:00 - 21:00 (or 19:00 on Fridays) and 09:00 - 17:00 on weekends.

coaching programmes of which there is significant demand for in Brighton & Hove (The Manor Road Gym, Varndean School, Withdean Sports Complex, University of Sussex).

As a guide the FA suggest that one full size floodlit 3G AGP could potentially accommodate the training demand from 38 teams. The information from the assessment indicates that there are 326 teams playing competitive football in Brighton & Hove and as such the 1:38 ratio suggests that 9 (rounded up from 8.6) full size equivalent floodlit 3G AGPs would be required to meet 100% of team football training on 3G within the city. As such there is a need for a minimum of one further accessible full sized pitch in the area to support current training and match play demands.

The majority of full sized 3G pitches are used to capacity during peak hours, with little free time. It should also be noted that some of the facilities across Brighton & Hove have limited hours for community use either due to school access up to 6pm or floodlighting restrictions on evening and weekend use for example Patcham High school is only available for 25.5 peak hours out of a maximum of 34. The club training scenario calculation also takes no account of the accessibility of the available AGPs to clubs nor cost / affordability issues.

5. The current and future picture of provision for football (Step 5)

5.1 Grass pitches

A number of playing field sites in Brighton & Hove have pitches that are being played to capacity or overplayed, these are either sites that are the home ground for clubs with a large number of teams and a limited number of pitches, such as Hill Park (Saltdean United), Nuffield Playing Fields (Woodingdean Wanderers FC), Rottingdean Cricket & Football Club and Rottingdean Rec. ground (Rottingdean FC) and Wild Park (Coldean Colts) or those with good maintenance with additional clubhouse facilities which make them popular (Nevill Playing Fields, Withdean Sports Complex) or have poor maintenance and limited capacity and used for adult football (Braypool Rec Ground, Carden Park, Waterhall Sports ground).

There is a shortfall of pitches for Youth 9v9, Youth 11v11 or Adult 11v11 pitches in the peak period once poor pitches and those unsecured are discounted, there is some capacity for Mini Soccer 7v7 and 5v5 pitches, but this is likely to be needed in the future with the increasing demand for youth football.

The PitchPower report findings for the sites in Brighton & Hove identifies the potential for enhanced quality and playing capacity at a number of sites if the ongoing pitch maintenance can be improved.

AGPs

The trends in football point to the continuing growth in the recreational game including walking football, small sided and women's recreation provision as well as youth, mini soccer and girls' football, the provision of more full size 3G football AGPs on the FA Register with large youth clubs as the primary user will help to accommodate training and match day provision reducing the need for training on grass pitches, as well as the number of over-marked or overused natural turf pitches.

5.2 Future

To estimate the potential impact of population growth over the strategy period to 2041 on the need for football pitch capacity in the peak period, Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC) tool has been used to determine the number of teams likely to be generated in the future based on population growth.

To meet football demand from 12,477 additional residents (as currently forecast⁴) and assuming current levels of football demand by age group for matches and training in the peak period, the PPC indicates that the equivalent capacity of +2.06 adult football pitches, +3.39 youth football pitches and +1.26 mini soccer pitches will be needed in the area (totaling +6.71 natural turf pitches) as well as +13.42 hours of estimated demand for training per week, equivalent of a third of a full sized (0.35) AGP, see figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1: Demand from population growth

Football	No of pitches to meet demand
Adult	2.06
Youth	3.39
Mini	1.26
Total grass pitches	6.61
Training	13.42 (Hours)
Total AGP	0.35

⁴ Population change from 2022 to 2041 based on B&HCC Strategic Housing Market Assessment

Potential effect of demand trends (how pitch sports are played) – Among adults, national trends show a reduction in interest in taking part in sports that demand a commitment to regular attendance, in favour of more casual involvement. This national picture is reflected in Brighton & Hove where Sussex FA adult team affiliations has decreased by 12 teams (from 83 in 2016 to 71 in 2023/24). Youth football continues to show a growth trend, but this growth slows through the older youth age groups when exams and other interests tend to impact. The biggest growth in Brighton & Hove has been in mini soccer teams with an additional 37 teams (from 51 in 2016 to 88 in 2023/24). Clubs through their survey returns have indicated further growth aspirations for adult and youth teams. A total of 19 clubs and two leagues in the area outlined growth aspirations, as outlined in Section 3, figure 3.5, and whilst clubs are reliant on volunteers to deliver this growth it is reasonable to suggest that with sufficient facilities each club could grow by 1-2 teams a year, resulting in a possible additional 19-38 teams a year. There is also likely to be a further increase in demand for girls' football following the success of the England Women's team and the FA's investment in development programmes such as the girls football school's partnership and Wildcats and Squad Girls at club level.

The FA's insight shows that youth football is growing at an average of 3.09% year on year. Brighton & Hove's previous strategy in 2016 predicted a growth of 22 teams based on population rates to 2030, this number has already been exceeded in 2024 by an extra 44 teams in the city, which is a growth rate of 3.15% per year.

In view of these demand pressures, a further run of the Playing Pitch Calculator has been made to show the possible impact on pitch needs with an adjusted demand rate of 69% for youth football (3.15% iterative increase per year over 16 years).

Figure 5.2: Demand from population growth and increase in youth football demand

Football	No. of pitches to meet demand	Rounded
Adult	2.06	2
Youth	5.72	6
Mini	2.14	3
Total gross pitches	9.92	11
Training	19.84 (Hours)	20
Total AGP	0.52	0.5

To meet football demand from 12,477 additional residents and adjusting demand for a growth of 69% in youth football for matches and training in the peak period until 2041, the PPC indicates that the equivalent capacity of +2 adult football pitches, +6 youth football pitches and +3 mini soccer pitches will be needed in the area (totaling +11 natural turf pitches) as well as 20 hours of training on a 3G pitch equivalent to half an additional AGP needed. Figure 5.3 outlines the effects of future demand on pitch capacity based on population growth and adjusted demand.

Figure 5.3 Changes in capacity after accounting for future growth and demand.

Pitch type	Pitch equivalent capacity in peak period	Demand (pitch equivalent)	
		Future demand	Total
11v11 (Open Age, Veterans, U19, U18, U17)	-5	2	-7
Youth 11v11 (U13-U16)	0	6	-9
Youth 9v9 (U11-U12)	-3		
Mini Soccer 7v7 (U9-U10)	7	3	7
Mini Soccer 5v5 (U7-U8)	3		
Total	2	11	-9

6. Key findings and issues for football (Step 6)

Figure 6.1: Football key findings and issues

The main characteristics of the <u>current</u> supply of and demand for provision
<p>There have been significant changes to the facilities for football in Brighton & Hove since the last facility review in 2016. On the supply side, there has been additional provision of new full sized 3G AGPs at Hove Park School (2021), Patcham High School (2021), and the University of Sussex (2019) as well as a 70x31m 3G AGP at Hove Park (2018) with LED floodlights installed in 2021. In addition, the AGPs at Stanley Deason Leisure Centre, Portslade Sports Centre, and the 60x40m 3G AGP at the University of Sussex have all been resurfaced. There are also 4 new small-sided 3G AGP's at Withdean Sports Complex and a full size pitch at Cardinal Newman School being completed ready for the 24/25 season.</p> <p>There has been some changes to grass pitch provision with new youth grass pitches developed at Happy Valley Recreation Ground, improvements to pitch maintenance at Aldrington Rec Ground (Wish Park), Greenleas Rec Ground, Happy Valley Recreation Ground and Nevill Playing Fields, and the youth pitches at Mile Oak Rec ground, and one of the adult pitches at Nevill Playing Fields being renovated.</p> <p>101 grass pitches are identified as available for community football across the city, on 42 operational playing pitch sites. Along with 10 FA compliant 3G pitches in the area of various sizes.</p> <p>Key trends in football demand identified in 2016 have continued to impact and Brighton & Hove have seen a growth in all areas except adult male football, with the biggest growth being in women and girls' football and mini soccer teams.</p> <p>In the 2023/24 season, Brighton & Hove had a total of 65 affiliated clubs (including separately constituted youth sections of adult clubs) registered to Sussex FA with 326 teams playing home fixtures in the area. This is an increase of 66 teams - 26% - since the previous audit in 2016 when 260 affiliated teams were registered to Brighton & Hove. There is also significant demand for small sided, recreational and informal formats of the game across the city.</p>
Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet <u>current</u> demand?
<p>No - A number of playing field sites in Brighton & Hove have pitches that are being played to capacity or overplayed, these are either sites that are the home ground for clubs with a large number of teams and a limited number of pitches, such as Hill Park (Saltdean United), Nuffield Playing Fields (Woodingdean Wanderers FC), Rottingdean Cricket & Football Club, and Rottingdean Rec. ground (Rottingdean FC), and Wild Park (Coldean Colts) or those with either good maintenance with additional clubhouse facilities which make them popular (Nevill Playing Fields, Withdean Sports Complex) or have poor maintenance and limited capacity and used for adult football (Braypool Rec Ground, Carden Park, Waterhall Sports ground)</p> <p>There is a shortfall of pitches for Youth 9v9, Youth 11v11 or Adult 11v11 pitches in the peak period once poor pitches and those unsecured are discounted, there is some capacity for Mini Soccer 7v7 and 5v5 pitches, but this is likely to be needed in the future with the increasing demand for youth football.</p> <p>There are shortfalls in provision of 3G pitches to meet training demand. There are several clubs who travel outside of the area for training or use sand based pitches or grass areas for training, which constrains the growth aspirations of these clubs and contributes to latent demand. To meet the shortfall in current supply investment is needed in the provision of one more full size 3G football AGP in the area which should be strategically located in the East to support youth clubs in this area to meet the needs of their teams for training and matches.</p>

Is the provision that is accessible of sufficient quality and appropriately maintained?

No - The majority of AGPs in the area are of good quality, with newly laid playing surfaces, however two are poor and no longer meet FA Standards (Brighton Football Rugby Club and University of Brighton). A number of grass pitches (21%) are of a poor-quality suffering from poor natural drainage, compaction of the ground and overuse, thereby limiting the playing capacity of these pitches. To address this issue on a large scale would require significant additional investment in maintenance works at the frequencies required to effectively aerate and de-compact the playing surfaces of the poor-quality natural turf pitches.

The delivery of the grass pitch improvements recommended by the Grounds Maintenance Association through the Football Foundation's PitchPower pitch assessment reports would go a long way to improving the playing capacity at the sites assessed. In most cases, this will necessitate increased revenue investment in enhanced pitch maintenance regimes supported by grant funding from the Football Foundation's Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund.

The ancillary facilities across the city are generally poor quality with several sites needing improvement. The facilities are closed at Patcham Place Recreation Ground and Waterhall Sports Ground due to vandalism and damage to the facilities and the changing rooms at Easthill Park are also closed. There was ongoing works at the ancillary facilities at Hill Park during site visits, with new facilities being developed at Hill Park as part of Saltdean FC's ongoing improvements. There is a lack of basic changing or toilet facilities at Hollingbury Park (Brentwood Road) and Southwick Hill Recreation Ground and no changing facilities at Rottingdean Recreation Ground and Wild Park. The facilities at many sites are rated poor and require modernisation to accommodate women and girls and provide disability access.

What are the main characteristics of the future supply and demand for provision?

Future demand for football facilities will put increasing pressure on the existing supply. Application of Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC) tool indicates there will be a requirement to provide 7 additional natural turf pitches plus an additional 13.5 hours of weekly training slots on a 3G artificial pitch by 2041, assuming current levels of participation per capita and the forecasted population growth.

The growth plans of the football clubs based in Brighton & Hove will also place further pressure on pitch supply. 19 clubs and two leagues responded to the survey indicating they have aspirations to increase the number of teams they run over the coming seasons, provided they have sufficient volunteers and pitches for matches and training can be secured.

This combined with the previous level of growth across the city of 3.15% per year means it is likely provision will increase above the usual rate. When adjusting for this increase in demand in youth football, the PPC indicates a need for 11 additional natural turf pitches as well as 20 additional hours for training on a 3G pitch, equivalent to half a pitch.

Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet future demand?

No - Over the period of the strategy to 2041, to address forecast population growth, unmet and latent demand identified by clubs and to continue to deliver on the FA's strategy to transfer more affiliated competitive football to 3G surfaces, further secured provision of 3G AGP pitches is needed.

Investment in at least 1 additional full sized FA registered 3G AGP is needed to cater for current demand plus an additional 0.5 full sized pitch equivalent for future population growth and demand, resulting in a need for a minimum of an additional 1.5 3G AGP's in the area. There are already proposals to deliver 2 new full sized pitches at Saltdean FC (East), Toad Hole Valley (Central) and a small pitch (60x40m) at Moulseccomb Community Leisure Centre (East), which would meet this demand. The council should also

engage with the stakeholders managing and operating 3G pitches which are in a poor condition to encourage and support them in resurfacing their facilities.

Additional natural turf pitches are needed for adult 11v11, youth 11v11 and Youth 9v9 for match play by 2041 in light of the scale of forecast population growth and demand. Given the lack of space within the area to provide further grass pitches the Council should look to improve the quality of pitches in the area to provide additional capacity, consider reconfiguring spare 7v7, 5v5 pitches to accommodate larger pitch sizes, investigate options to increase community use on education sites in the area or consider the development of additional 3G AGP's to cater for this shortfall.



CONTINUUM
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Brighton & Hove City Council
Playing Pitch Strategy 2025 Appendix C
Assessment of Need Report Hockey

Appendix C: Hockey - Assessment of needs (Stages B and C)

The findings of the assessment of needs for hockey facilities in Brighton & Hove are summarised in this appendix of the main Playing Pitch Strategy.

There is two main Hockey clubs based in the area – Brighton & Hove HC and Brighton Rogues HC. Both clubs have contributed information and their views on hockey facility needs via online survey returns and in liaison with England Hockey.

Since the last assessment in 2016, there has been a change in supply with a loss of a sand dressed pitch at Portslade Sports Centre, which has been converted to 3G. There has been an additional pitch developed in the area at Roedean School in 2018, however it is not available for community use.

1. Hockey supply (Step 2)

1.1 Hockey pitches in Brighton & Hove

There is currently four full sized floodlit sand based artificial grass pitches (AGP) in the area currently available for community hockey;

- Blatchington Mill School x2, home site for Brighton & Hove HC
- Stanley Deason Leisure Centre, occasional use by Brighton Rogues HC
- University of Sussex, home site for University of Sussex and Brighton Rogues HC.

There are a further two full sized (or near full sized) pitches, on education sites in the area but these are almost exclusively used by the schools with no or very little community use (Brighton Girls School - Radinden Site, which is not floodlit and Roedean School), as well as small sided pitches on education sites not suitable for match provision.

The pitches were quality-assessed during the 2023/24 season on the basis of site visits and informed by consultation surveys with the user clubs and insight from England Hockey. Figure 1.1 details the situation at each site.

The availability of the pitches for community hockey use are usually dependant on bookings by other sports (e.g., football, touch rugby, lacrosse, tennis). For each site, this is noted in column headed estimated use in peak hours.

The Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rating refers to whether, in the peak period in a typical week in the main hockey season, there is considered to be:

- Unused capacity for hockey matches- **Green**
- The available peak slots for hockey matches are used close to capacity - **Amber**, or
- The available peak slots for hockey matches are at capacity - **Red**.

Indoor hockey

Brighton & Hove HC have an indoor men's team, who train at University of Sussex, Falmer Sports Centre.

Figure 1.1: Situation at individual sites available for community use

Site	AGP size and type	Floodlights LUX level	Date built (last refurb)	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Management & ownership of site	Pitch rating	Peak hours available ¹	Est'd use in peak hours ²	Supply/Demand balance	RAG ³
BLATCHINGTON MILL SCHOOL, BN3 7BW	Sand dressed, 97x62m	LED installed 2024 500 Lux	2012	Poor quality changing facilities and clubhouse. Club rate 2/5	BHHC 8-year lease	Education (LEA) School managed	Standard, club rate 3/5	31	28.5 hrs (92%) 27.5 hrs hockey (T- 17.5, M- 10) 1 hr football	2.5	Red
	SD 97x62m	LED installed 2024 500 Lux	2012						21.5 hrs (68%) 14.5 hrs hockey (T-7.5, M -7) 7 hrs football	9.5	
STANLEY DEASON LEISURE CENTRE, BN2 5PB	Sand Filled 100x60m	LED installed 2023 550 Lux	1994	Changing facilities	Secured, Council facility	Council site Freedom Leisure operator	Poor	31	14 hours (41%) 1 hr hockey (T) 11 hrs football - 2 hrs rugby -	17	Green
UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX, BN1 9PL	SD 97x60m	Unknown	1999 (2009)	Changing available. Club rate 4/5	Education, Unaware of any CUA	Education University Managed	Standard club rate 5/5	31	31 (100%) 30 hours hockey (T-16, M-14) 1 hour football	0	Red

¹ Peak hours = M-Th 6-9:30pm, Fri 6-9pm, S&S 10-5pm = 31hrs

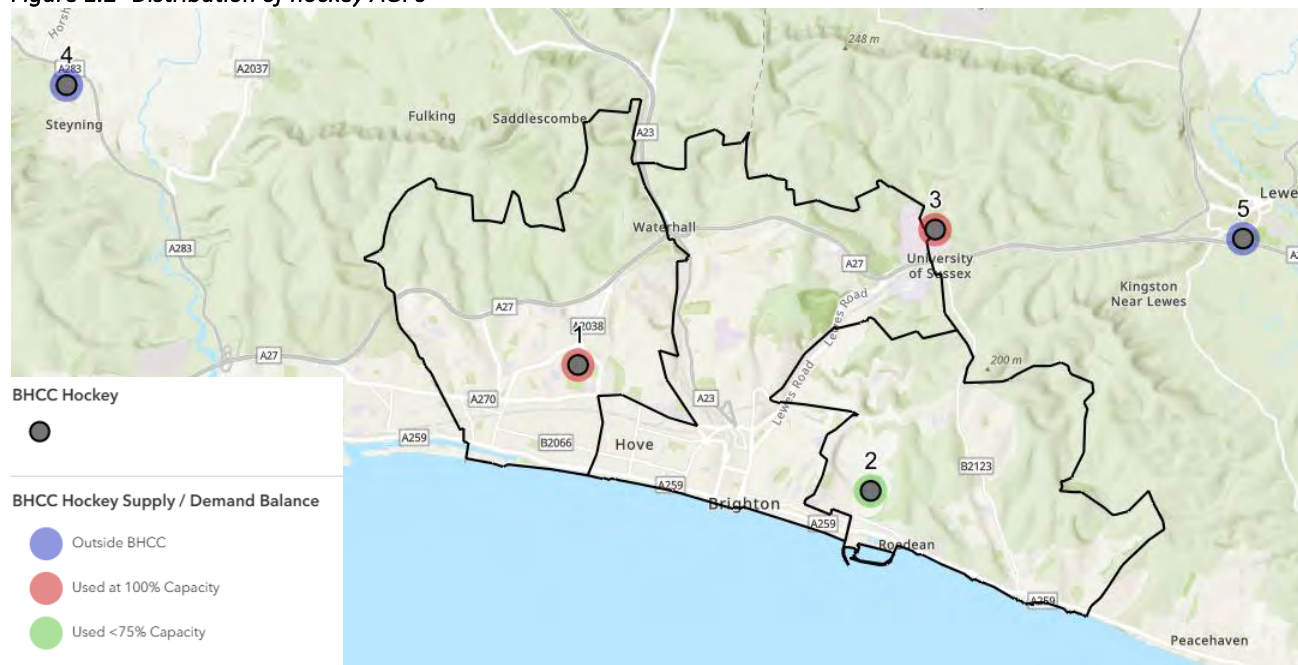
² T = Training, M = Match use

³ RAG based on availability for Saturday match use

1.2 Distribution of hockey AGP Sites

Figure 1.2 shows the distribution of full-sized (or near full sized) hockey AGP sites available for community use in Brighton & Hove. The distribution of sand based AGP sites is relatively well spread across the city, with at least one pitch in each analysis area, although the pitch at the University of Sussex is on the very edge of the borough.

Figure 1.2- Distribution of hockey AGPs



Key	Site name	Postcode
1	BLATCHINGTON MILL SCHOOL,	BN3 7BW
2	STANLEY DEASON LEISURE CENTRE,	BN2 5PB
3	UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX,	BN1 9PL
4	STEYNING GRAMMER SCHOOL	BN44 3RX
5	SOUTHDOWN SPORTS CLUB	BN7 3PR

1.3 Hockey AGP's in neighbouring boroughs

The nearest alternative full size floodlit hockey pitch in the neighbouring boroughs within a 20-minute drive (5-mile catchment area) based on review of the Active Places Power data is at Southdown Sports Club (Lewes DC) to the East and Steyning Grammer School (Horsham DC) to the Northwest. The nearest Hockey clubs between 20-30 minutes' drive away are Lewes Hockey Club (Lewes DC) to the East, Mid Sussex HC (Mid Sussex DC) to the North, Southwick HC (Horsham DC) and Phoenix HC (Adur DC and Worthing BC) to the West.

Generally, hockey players (and parents of junior players) are prepared to travel some distance to access good quality facilities, coaching and standards of match play, but Sport England and England Hockey recommend facilities should be within a 20-minute drive at peak time.

1.4 Ownership, operation, quality and access

Brighton & Hove HC have security on the site at Blatchington Mill School with the pitches being co-owned by the club and a lease in place which has 8 years remaining. The University of Sussex have their own facilities at Falmer Sports Ground. Only Brighton Rogues HC has no long-term security and annually hires facilities.

The pitch at Blatchington Mill School is in a standard condition with the facility, having had 8 years of regular use, there is currently no damage to the surface carpet, but it is likely to need replacing in the next 2-3 years. England Hockey would recommend an independent assessment of the facility to confirm its condition and the timescales for resurface. The school have a sinking fund in place for a resurface of both pitches and the floodlights have been upgraded with LED lights for the 24/25 season.

The pitch at the University of Sussex is in standard condition and is also likely to need resurfacing in the next few years based on the age of the pitch.

The pitch at Stanley Deason Leisure Centre needs replacing urgently. The pitch was independently assessed in August 2023 and the report concluded that the carpet had 12-18 months life left with some of the seams starting to lift and patch repairs already in place. It was also highlighted that the fencing needs replacing. The floodlights for the facility were upgraded to LED in 2023. Whilst the facility has limited club use it is used significantly during the day by Brighton College.

Changing facilities across the area are varied. The provision at the University of Sussex and Stanley Deason Leisure Centre are good. The facilities used by Brighton & Hove HC consist of changing rooms at the school site and clubhouse where they serve post-match teas and hospitality at Nevill Playing Fields Pavilion. The facilities are poor and the club has ambitions to build their own clubhouse.

1.5 At risk sites

There are no current community sites known to be at risk of development.

1.6 Proposed new supply

There are no new sites proposed in the area

2. Hockey demand (Step 3 and 4)

Findings relating to hockey pitch demand in Brighton & Hove are summarised below.

2.1 Clubs and teams

There are currently two main hockey clubs based in the area, as well as the University of Sussex, with student teams and Southwick HC, who were previously based in Brighton and are now located just outside the city.

- **Brighton & Hove HC** provide both adult and junior hockey provision for males and females. They have 20 adult teams (9 male, 1 male masters hockey, 8 female, 1 female veterans and 1 mixed team) and a large junior section with 11 teams, boys x5 (U10, U12, U14, U16x2), girls x5 (U10, U12, U14, U16x2) and 1 mixed U10 team. They state all of their members come from within the Brighton & Hove area. The club report a growth in membership over the last few years with an increase of 50 members.
- **Brighton Rogues HC** has one adult female team and offer a back to hockey programme. They state 80% of their members come from the Brighton & Hove area, with the remaining 20% from the Worthing and Lewes areas. They have had a stable number of members the last few years.
- **University of Sussex** has five teams made up of university students (2 male and 3 female).
- **Southwick HC** was previously based in Brighton at Portslade Sports Centre and relocated to Steyning Grammer School. The club has 2 adult male teams and 2 adult female teams, and it is likely the club has a number of members from the Brighton & Hove area. The club has no security of tenure on this site.

2.2 Club players - Demand trend

Player affiliation data in Figure 2.1 provided by England Hockey for this season shows demand for hockey participation totaling 653 affiliated players for the 2024/25 season a decline of 98 players since the 2023/24 season. However, through consultation, Brighton & Hove HC have reported a growth in membership in the past three years with an additional 50 players, whereas Brighton Rogues HC reports their numbers are about the same. There has been a decline in junior players, with 71% of the decline over the last year being attributed under 18 players.

Figure 2.1 Club affiliation data

Club	2024/25		2023/24	
	Under 18	Over 18	Under 18	Over 18
Brighton & Hove HC	230	294	310	323
Brighton Rogues HC	0	19	0	23
University of Sussex	10	100	0	95
Totals	240	413	310	441
	653		751	

2.3 Imported and displaced demand

Lewes HC use the facility at the University of Sussex on a Saturday for matches as a secondary pitch and Halisham HC also use the facility. It is likely these clubs may attract members from the East of Brighton & Hove and as mentioned in Section 2.1 Southwick HC is likely to have members from the West of Brighton & Hove.

2.4 Active Lives Survey

Adults: The most recently published findings of the national Active Lives Adult Survey⁴ (November 2022-2023) showed that self-reported regular participation (i.e., taken part at least twice in the last 28 days)

⁴ Active Lives Adult Survey November 2022-23, Sport England

in hockey in England by adults (aged 16+) had increased from 0.3% to 0.4% between November 2022 and November 2023.

If hockey participation in the area were at the national average (i.e., 0.4%), this would indicate around 833 adults (aged 16+) living in the area play hockey out of the 16+ adult population of approximately 208,187. This playing population considers both regular club participation and regular informal recreational play in parks and hired facilities, and Brighton & Hove residents who participate outside of the city.

With 26 adult teams currently in the city, plus an additional 2 teams (assuming 50% of the membership of Southwick HC is from Brighton & Hove), the 'adult' hockey club playing membership is close to 420 players (assuming an average of 15 squad players per team). If we then assume adult hockey participation in Brighton & Hove is in line with the national average of 0.4%, this suggests that 51% of all regular adult hockey played by residents in Brighton & Hove is either 'displaced' to venues outside of the area (e.g., at other clubs) or takes place in informal, social game formats such as Back 2 Hockey.

2.5 Club aspirations - Hockey development priorities and facility needs

The clubs in Brighton & Hove have ambitions to grow and have reported the following facility needs,

- **Brighton & Hove HC** are looking to grow but need access to a secondary facility to accommodate matches. The club have ambitions to build a clubhouse and state they need better changing facilities.
- **Brighton Rogues HC** have ambitions to grow but needs additional affordable facilities close to public transport to expand to.

3. The current and future picture of provision for hockey (Step 5)

3.1 Current

Since the last assessment of hockey facility needs in 2016, the main changes of relevance are the loss of a sand dressed pitch at Portslade Sports Centre in 2019 and the upgrade of floodlights to LED at Stanley Deason Leisure Centre in 2023 and at Blatchington Mill School in 2024.

The current priority facility issues facing the sport of hockey in Brighton & Hove is that the majority sites are at capacity for match use. The pitch at Stanley Deason Leisure Centre is currently used extensively by Brighton College during education hours and has capacity for clubs but needs refurbishing. The location of the pitch however is not ideal for the clubs who have identified the need for additional facilities. Through consultation, Brighton & Hove HC noted that they require a second facility within close distance to their current venue, they are currently located 5.5 miles from the leisure centre, which is not an acceptable travel time for members during peak drive times. Brighton Rogues HC have ambitions to grow but have stated a need for affordable facilities with good transport links. Although Stanley Deason Leisure Centre is serviced by a bus stop, its nearest train station is over a 50-minute walk away.

The pitches at Blatchington Mill School will require resurfacing in 2-3 years' time and the current changing provision for Brighton & Hove HC needs improving. The club require access to new dedicated clubhouse and improved changing facilities to help generate secondary income and attract commercial revenue to make them more sustainable in the future.

3.2 Future

To estimate the potential impact of population growth over the strategy period to 2041 on the need for hockey pitch capacity in the peak period, Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC) tool has been used to determine the demand of new teams and junior training squads likely to be generated in the future based on population growth (figure 3.1)

Figure 3.1 Future demand.

Age	Match equivalent sessions (MES)	Training demand hours on AGP	Estimated demand for new AGP
Adult	0.59	1.77	0.15
Junior and Mixed	0	0.26	
Total	0.59	2.03	0.15

To meet hockey demand from 12,477 additional residents (as currently forecast⁵) and assuming current levels of hockey demand by age group for matches and training in the peak period, the PPC indicates that the equivalent capacity of +0.15 additional sand based artificial grass pitches suitable for hockey will be needed in the area based on the need for 0.59 additional match equivalent sessions and a total of 2.03 training hours per week.

There is capacity in the area for club's aspirations to grow and to meet future demand at Stanley Deason Leisure Centre if the facility is resurfaced. There is a need to protect the existing quantity of pitch supply in the area and look to improve club house and changing provision for Brighton & Hove HC.

⁵ Population change from 2022 to 2041 based on B&HCC Strategic Housing Market Assessment

3.3 Conclusion

To better meet current and likely future needs for the sport of hockey in Brighton & Hove, the strategy should seek to:

- Protect the current supply of sand based artificial pitches in the area.
- Undertake an independent assessment of the pitches at Blatchington Mill School to confirm the pitch condition and timescales for resurface.
- Resurface the pitch at Stanley Deason Leisure Centre and work with England Hockey to establish a schedule of activities.
- Resurface the pitch at University of Sussex and secure the facility with a community use agreement.
- Improve the current changing provision at Nevill Playing Fields.
- Investigate the feasibility to develop a new clubhouse and changing facilities at Blatchington Mill School.
- Support Brighton & Hove Hockey Club to extend their lease in order to maintain security on their facility and enable them to seek funding opportunities.

4. Key findings and issues for hockey (Step 6)

Figure 4.1: Key findings and issues

<p>The main characteristics of the <u>current</u> supply of and demand for provision</p> <p>There is currently four full sized (or near full sized) floodlit sand based artificial grass pitches in the area currently available for community hockey. Since the last assessment in 2016 there has been a change in supply with the loss of one pitch at Portslade Sports Centre.</p> <p>There are two main hockey clubs in the area as well as the University of Sussex, with 4/5 student teams and Southwick HC (2 male and 2 female teams), previously based in Brighton and now located just outside the city in Steyning. Brighton & Hove Hockey Club has 20 adult teams (9 male, 1 male veterans, 8 female, 1 female veteran's and 1 mixed team) and a large junior section with 11 teams, boys x5 (U10, U12, U14, U16x2), girls x5 (U10, U12, U14, U16x2) and 1 mixed U10 team. Brighton Rogues Hockey Club have one adult female team.</p> <p>Club consultation suggests participation numbers have increased slightly, with Brighton & Hove Hockey Club recording a growth in playing members, however England Hockey affiliation data reports a decline in membership across the two clubs of 114 members.</p>
<p>Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet <u>current</u> demand?</p> <p>No – Although there is surplus capacity at Stanley Deason Leisure Centre, the surface is in a poor condition and the location of the site does not support use by current clubs due to travel times in peak hours. Other sites in the city are at capacity for matches which requires careful scheduling to accommodate all fixtures.</p>
<p>Is the provision that is accessible of sufficient quality and appropriately maintained?</p> <p>No - The pitches at Stanley Deason Leisure Centre and University of Sussex needs resurfacing. The pitches at Blatchington Mill School will also require resurfacing in 2-3 years' time and should have an independent assessment now to confirm the pitch condition and timescales for resurface.</p> <p>The current changing provision for Brighton & Hove HC is poor and needs improving. The club require access to new dedicated clubhouse and improved changing facilities to make them more sustainable in the future.</p>
<p>What are the main characteristics of the <u>future</u> supply and demand for provision?</p> <p>Both clubs have ambitions to grow over the next 3 years. Brighton & Hove HC report requiring access to another pitch to support the growth of their club within reach of their current facility. There is capacity in at Stanley Deason Leisure Centre, however the location is not within recommended travelling times for the club and the surface needs to be replaced.</p> <p>The pitches at Blatchington Mill need to be protected and maintained within the anticipated timelines to ensure continued use. An independent survey should be carried out to determine the timescale for resurfacing.</p> <p>The forecast population growth to 2041 of over 12,477 additional residents is estimated to generate little demand for additional pitches in the area, however with England Hockey's strategic focus on 5-11 year olds and the EuroHockey Championships 2027 being hosted in England further demand is likely to be generated.</p>
<p>Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet <u>future</u> demand?</p> <p>No - There is spare capacity at Stanley Deason Leisure Centre, but the facility needs to be resurfaced to be of sufficient quality to accommodate future demand. The location of the pitch in relation to the current clubs is not ideal but is within Sport England's recommended minimum drive time of 20 minutes. There are</p>

no other sites within the city which have surplus match capacity, with clubs having to carefully plan schedules to meet the current level of match and training demand.

The majority of current supply is secured, Brighton & Hove Hockey Club have a lease agreement in place at Blatchington Mill School with 8 years. Stanley Deason Leisure Centre is council owned and secure, however the University of Sussex does not have a Community Use Agreement in place and this should be secured as part of any future resurface of the pitch. Southwick Hockey club also has no security of tenure on their current facility just outside of the city in Steyning, should they be displaced from this site then there would be further demand on the facilities in the area.

Brighton & Hove City Council
Playing Pitch Strategy 2025 Appendix D
Assessment of Need Report Rugby



Appendix D: Rugby - Assessment of needs (stages B and C)

The findings of the assessment for needs for rugby facilities in Brighton & Hove are summarised in this appendix to the Playing Pitch Strategy. Site visits to the home grounds used by clubs in Brighton & Hove have been made and club officials/site managers have been consulted regarding floodlit training provision and match use.

Consultation with Rugby Football League (RFL) suggests there is one club in the area, Brighton & Hove Rugby League, who operate a men's team playing in the London Premier Division and a women's team playing in League 1 South East. Sussex is an area which the RFL are looking to develop teams in in the future, as the nearest affiliated clubs are based in South London (Bromley Bengals, South London Silverbacks), Maidstone (Invicta Panthers), and Portsmouth (US Portsmouth Seahawks). These clubs are all approximately 40 miles from Brighton & Hove. There is also an Australian Rules Football team based in Brighton & Hove, the Sussex Swans who have one male adult team playing at Waterhall Sports Ground (bottom area).

Since the last assessment of Rugby Union in 2016, there has been a significant change in the total supply of rugby pitches available for community use. There has been a loss of community use on both junior and mini pitches in the city, with Patcham High School and Longhill High School now being the sole users of their rugby pitches. Dorothy Stringer School, Hove Park School, Varndean High School, University of Sussex, Brighton College, and Cardinal Newman Catholic School do not receive any community use on their pitches, with only Varndean High School (who currently advertise bookings on their school website) expressing interest in providing community use if there is sufficient demand. This results in a total of 10 senior pitches (11 including Varndean High School) available for community use, 6 fewer than reported in the 2016 study.

Following the assessment report in 2016, the 3G pitch at Brighton Rugby Club is no longer World Rugby Compliant, meaning no contact rugby can take place on the facility, but improvements to the two senior pitches at Hove Rugby Club were made to increase the carrying capacity of the pitches.

A facility audit compiled from the research, consultation and site visits was reviewed by the RFU Facility Development Team and is included in this report (Figure 3.1).

1. Rugby pitch supply (Step 2)

There are two rugby clubs in Brighton & Hove based on playing field sites with rugby pitches – Brighton RFC and Hove RFC.

Distribution of rugby sites

Figure 1.1 shows the distribution of grass rugby pitches in Brighton & Hove. Four of the 5 rugby sites are located in the West of the City (Brighton Rugby Football Club, Brighton Hove and Sussex Sixth Form College, Hove Recreation Ground, and Waterhall sports Ground), with one being located in the East (Brighton University) and one in the centre of the city (Varndean High School).

1.1 Rugby pitches in Brighton & Hove

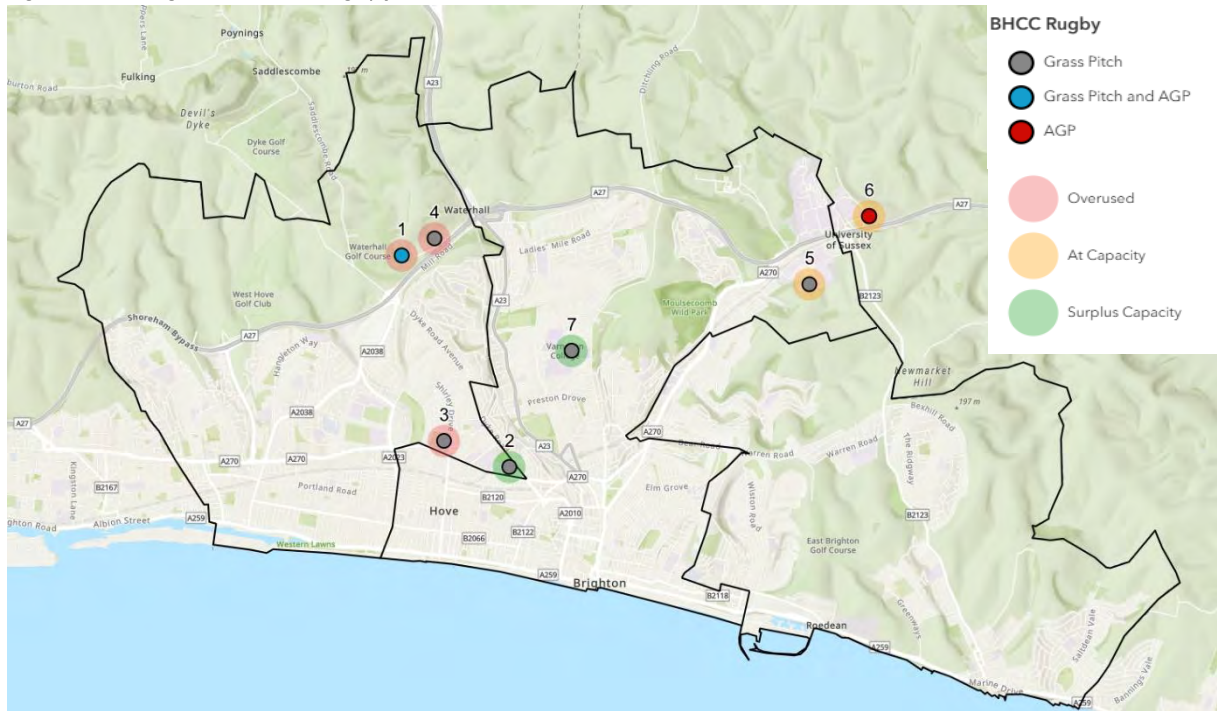
In the 2023/24 season, Brighton & Hove had a total of 10 adult size grass rugby pitches marked out with posts in situ available for community use. It should be noted that whilst available for community use the pitch at Varndean High School it is currently only used by the school. There are additional pitches at Dorothy Stringer School (1), Hove Park School (1), University of Sussex (2), Brighton College (1), and Cardinal Newman Catholic School (2) but these are not currently available for regular community use.

The city has one AGP pitch in the area which is World Rugby compliant (WRC) at the University of Sussex, however this is used mainly for student rugby and football training. The AGP at Brighton Rugby Club is no longer compliant due to the condition of the pitch. There are 3 floodlit natural turf pitches at Brighton Rugby Club (1) and Hove Recreation Ground (2), with Brighton RFC also using the 3G for non-contact training. Details on individual sites can be found in figure 1.3.

1.2 Ownership and security of access

Brighton RFC are the sole users of the rugby pitches at their site and use the pitches for home matches and training. The club have a lease with Brighton & Hove City Council for 90+ years for the use of the clubhouse and hire the pitches at Waterhall Sports Ground (top area) annually. The club occasionally use the pitch at Waterhall Sports Ground (bottom area) as a secondary site. Hove RFC have an 80 year lease for the pitches, clubhouse, and outlying buildings at Hove Recreation Ground.

Figure 1.1 – Brighton & Hove rugby facilities



Key	Site	Postcode
1	Brighton Rugby Football Club	BN1 8YR
2	Brighton Hove & Sussex Sixth Form College Sports Centre	BN2 0AL
3	Hove Recreation Ground (Hove RFC)	BN3 6LL
4	Waterhall Sports Ground	BN1 8YR
5	University of Brighton	BN1 9PH
6	University of Sussex	BN1 9PL
7	Varndean High School	BN1 6NP

1.3 Pitch quality – Maintenance and drainage

The public pitch maintenance in Brighton & Hove is mostly the responsibility of the city council, who maintain the pitches at Brighton RFC, Hove Recreation Ground, and Waterhall Sports Ground. Whilst the council are mainly responsible for maintenance, both clubs carry out additional maintenance at their own expense to ensure pitches are suitably maintained. Brighton Hove & Sussex Sixth Form College and University of Brighton both maintain their own sites. As shown in figure 1.2 the maintenance of grass pitches varies between poor and adequate across the city.

Figure 1.2– Pitch maintenance and drainage ratings from site visits and club consultation

Number of pitches		Maintenance			
		Poor (M0)	Adequate (M1)	Good (M2)	Total
Drainage	Natural Inadequate (D0)	3	1		4
	Natural Adequate (D1)	1	3		4
	Pipe Drained (D2)				
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	2			2
	Total	6	4		10

1.4 Park pitches

All 3 public access sites (Brighton RFC, Hove Rec., Waterhall Sports Ground) receive frequent recreational use from walkers, joggers, and dog walkers. There is significant use of the Waterhall Brighton RFC pitches by dog walkers, with one large commercial company using it as the main site for its dog walking operations and it is a key event site. Baseball is also played at Waterhall Sports Ground (top area).

1.5 At risk sites

The pitch at Brighton Hove & Sussex Sixth Form College is being considered for replacement by the college, with discussions around developing a MUGA in its place. This pitch is largely unused due to its significant slope and is no longer used by Hove RFC, however consultation would be needed with Sport England to determine the new provision would be suitable mitigation for loss of a rugby pitch. Brighton & Hove Rugby League Club have a 1 year rolling agreement for use of the pitch at the University of Brighton, which whilst it's not at risk, is unsecured community use.

1.6 Proposed new supply

Cardinal Newman School have recently developed a new 3G AGP which will be available for rugby clubs to use for training on and includes a rugby specific shockpad, however at the time of this report is subject to testing to confirm world rugby compliance, if approved this allow contact rugby and could be used for some matches. The school is with easy reach of Hove RFC being only half a mile away.

Longhill Sports Centre are exploring options to develop a new 3G pitch with WRC shockpad, providing facilities which could be used for training and contact matches. The sports centre has been in discussions with Hove Rugby Club and Lewes Rugby Club about their appetite for training use. Longhill Sports Centre is located in the East of the city, 10.2 miles from Hove RFC and 8.2 miles from Brighton RFC, so may not be an ideal location for training for either club.

Brighton & Hove City Council are exploring options to develop a 7v7 3G AGP at Moulsecoomb Community Leisure Centre which would have a World Rugby Compliant surface. This would be too small to satisfy match demand but with the Leisure Centre between 4 and 5 miles away from each rugby club, It could be a suitable facility to satisfy some youth training demand from either club.

1.7 Ancillary facilities

Brighton RFC currently have a 90+ year lease on their clubhouse, which has 6 changing rooms, 2 shower blocks, and a 200 person capacity clubroom. The club have aspirations to increase the capacity of the changing facilities so they can cater for more than 3 matches at once. Brighton RFC have fully accessible ancillary facilities with an outside bar, lift up to the club room, and accessible toilets.

Hove RFC have a large pavilion with 4 changing rooms (2 of the larger changing rooms can be divided in half to create 6 in total) which the club state are in good condition.

The pavilion at Waterhall Sports Ground (bottom area) has been permanently closed following significant vandalism and damage to the interior in 2021. Although this pavilion was not previously used for Rugby, with a single rugby pitch on site, there is potential for the pavilion to also be used by a rugby union or rugby league clubs if the pavilion was reinstated.

1.8 Rugby supply in neighbouring boroughs

The following rugby clubs have home grounds within reach of residents in Brighton & Hove:

- Shoreham RFC – To the West, Adur
- Lewes RFC – To the East, Lewes
- Plumpton RFC – To the North, Lewes
- Ditchling Wild RFC – To the North, Lewes
- Burgess Hill RFC – To the North, Mid Sussex

It is expected that some of these clubs may have members from Brighton & Hove particularly Shoreham RFC from the far West of the City and Lewes RFC from the East of Brighton & Hove where there is limited rugby provision.

Figure 1.3: The situation at individual sites

Site	Pitch	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Pitch capacity	Estimated use 23/24	Supply / Demand balance	RAG
Brighton RFC	P1 - In front of Rugby Club building (floodlit)	M1/D0	Clubhouse and pavilion on site. 6 changing rooms, 2 showers, and a 200 person capacity clubhouse. Club rate the quality of facilities as 3/5 and would like to increase the changing room capacity to facilitate more matches at once.	90+ year lease with Brighton & Hove City Council for the clubhouse. The club hire pitches annually.	1.5	Matches 1.5 (3 adult teams) Training 1 (adult) Total 2.5	-1	Red
	P2 - Northeast corner	M1/D1			2	Matches 3 (Juniors) Total 3	-1	Red
	P3 – North of pavilion (training)	M1/D1			2	Training 1.5 (Juniors) Total 1.5	0.5	Green
	P4 - AGP	Full sized Floodlit 3G Poor – Not WRC			NA	Only used for non-contact training	NA	NA
Brighton Hove & Sussex Sixth Form College	P1 - Full-size Main pitch	M0/D1	Unused changing and clubroom facilities. Poor condition.	Half the pitch is on Council land, the other half is on school owned land. Pavilion is owned by the school.	1.5	Training 0.5 (Try Tag Rugby) Total 0.5	1	Green
Hove Recreation Ground (Hove RFC)	P1 – Main pitch	M0/D3	Changing provision in pavilion with 4 main changing rooms. The two larger changing rooms can be divided to make 6 changing rooms in total. The club rate the facility qualities 4/5.	80 year lease from the Council for the pitches, clubhouse, and outlying buildings.	2	Matches 3.5 (3 adult male, 2 adult female) Total 3.5	-1.5	Red
	P2 – Floodlit training pitch	M0/D3			2	Training 5 (adult teams) Total 5	-3	Red
	P3 – Grass pitch	M0/D0			0.5	Matches 4 (juniors / vets / BHSS) Total 3	-2.5	Red
	P4 – Grass pitch	M0/D0			0.5	Training 4 (juniors/minis)	-3.5	Red
Waterhall SG (bottom area)	P1 – Main pitch	M0/D0	Pavilion was permanently closed in 2021 due to damage from vandalism.	Brighton & Hove City Council owned site	0.5	Matches 1 (Sussex Swans Australian Rules Football Club) 0.5 (BRFC) Total 1.5	-1	Red
University of Brighton	P1 – Main pitch	M1/D1	Large changing block with 8 changing rooms, all of which are standard quality.	1 year rolling agreement between the university and Brighton & Hove Rugby League Club.	2	Total 2	0	Orange
University of Sussex	P1 - AGP	Full Sized Floodlit 3G Good-WRC	9 changing rooms - 4 designated male/female, 5 shared	Education unaware of CUA	34 peak hours	Used 27 hours (80%) (student rugby use and football matches / training)	7 hours	Orange

2. Rugby pitch demand (Step 3)

Findings relating to rugby pitch demand in Brighton & Hove are summarised below.

2.1 Clubs and teams

Brighton RFC have two regular men's Saturday league teams, one social team and a full junior section offering both youth boys age grade rugby and mixed mini rugby. Hove RFC have 4 men's teams, 3 who play regular league matches, a social team, a veteran team, 2 women's teams, and a full junior section.

Figure 2.1: Table of senior rugby club information

Ruby clubs	2023/24 league(S)	Youth teams (squads)	Home ground	Training ground
Brighton RFC 1 st XV Men's	London & SE Division – Regional 1 South Central	U7 (3) U8 (3) U9 (3) U10 (3)	Brighton RFC	Brighton RFC
Brighton RFC AS XV Men's	London & SE Division – Counties 2 Sussex	U11 (3) U12 (1) U13 (1)		
Brighton RFC Social	Training Only	U14 (1) U15 (1) U16 (1) U18 (2)		
Hove RFC 1 st XV Men's	London & SE Division – Counties 1 Surrey/Sussex	U7 (2) U8 (2) U9 (2)	Hove Recreation Ground	Hove Recreation Ground
Hove RFC 2 nd XV Men's	Harvey's Brewery Counties 3 Sussex	U10 (2) U11 (2) U12 (3)		
Hove RFC Beefeaters	Harvey's Brewery Counties 3 Sussex	U13 (3) U14 (3 - 2B & 1G) U15 (1)		
Hove RFC Vets	Friendlies	U16 (3 - 2B & 1G) U18 (3 - 2B & 1G)		
Hove RFC Women's 1 st XV	Women's Championship South East 2			
Hove RFC Women's 2 nd XV	Women's NC 2 South East (South)			

2.2 Active lives survey

The most recently published findings of the national Active Lives Adult Survey¹ showed that self-reported regular participation (i.e., taken part at least twice in the last 28 days) in rugby in England by adults (aged 16+) increased from 0.4% in November 2021-22 to 0.5% in November 2022-23, an increase in participation of 0.1%. If rugby participation in the city were at the national average (i.e., 0.5%), this would indicate around 1,041 adults (aged 16+) living in the area play rugby out of a 16+ adult population of approximately 208,187. This playing population considers both regular club participation and regular informal recreational play in parks and hired facilities, and Brighton & Hove residents who participate outside of the city.

With approximately 9 senior rugby teams based in Brighton & Hove, the adult rugby club playing memberships in the city is roughly 315 players (assuming an average squad size of 35 players per team). Assuming that adult rugby participation in Brighton & Hove is in line with the national average of 0.5%, this suggests that over a two thirds of adults (70%) play rugby at clubs outside of the area (displaced

¹ Active Lives Adult Survey Nov 2022/23, Sport England.

demand) or participate in informal, social game formats such as Touch Rugby at clubs and parks within Brighton & Hove and outside the city.

2.3 Casual rugby demand

Demand for less formal forms of play – such as non-contact Touch or Try rugby - is a growing in popularity as it provides flexibility to be able to enjoy the game and stay active without the pressure of the regular commitment or risk of injury.

TryTag Rugby Brighton runs two mixed adult social leagues in Brighton & Hove. The activity launched in April 2023 and already attracts up to 150 people each week, over two evenings. They use Hove Park in Summer and in the Winter have used Brighton Rugby Club and Southwick FC in the past but are now moving to use of the new 3G at Cardinal Newman School for two nights a week from September 2024.

2.4 Imported and displaced demand

There is no imported or displaced demand for match or training sessions from rugby clubs outside of the city, although Lewes RFC have been in discussions about potential training demand if Longhill Sports Centre are to develop a WRC 3G pitch.

3. The situation at individual sites for rugby (Step 4)

The pitches were assessed during March of the 2023/24 season, with the sites assessed using the methodology established by Sport England and the RFU in the published Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance (2013) - i.e., a non-technical visual site assessment. Hove RFC have undertaken PitchPower Assessments, which rated all their pitches as Basic. These assessments were reviewed in discussion with the RFU and ratings for each agreed as a basis for comparison of the amount of play each site could accommodate (it's carrying capacity) against the amount of play that takes place.

Carrying capacity is a measure of the number of match equivalent sessions per season for community use each pitch can take without adversely affecting its quality and use. The following pitch carrying capacities according to each quality rating was used to be consistent with the approach adopted in similar assessments across the country:

Figure 3.1: Rugby pitch carrying capacity

Match equivalent sessions a week		Maintenance		
		Poor (M0)	Adequate (M1)	Good (M2)
Drainage	Natural inadequate (D0)	0.5	1.5	2
	Natural adequate (D1)	1.5	2	3
	Pipe drained (D2)	1.75	2.5	3.25
	Pipe and slit drained (D3)	2	3	3.5

1. *Pitch supply* (including the quality ratings) and conclusions reached as to the amount of play a site can accommodate (i.e., its carrying capacity for community use):
2. *The amount of play that takes place at each site* (i.e., the expressed demand) adjusted to reflect any casual or education use in addition to club use for matches and training:
3. *The comparison* (shown as a RAG rating) as to whether, for each pitch type it contains, a site is:
 - **RED** - Being overplayed (current use exceeds the carrying capacity)
 - **AMBER** - Being played to the level the site can sustain (current use matches the carrying capacity), or
 - **GREEN** - Potentially able to accommodate some additional play (current use falls below the carrying capacity)

There are 3 sites, highlighted from the site audit spreadsheet as **RED** rated sites where the majority of the available natural turf rugby pitches are overplayed.

- Brighton RFC,
- Hove Recreation Ground,
- Waterhall Sports Ground (bottom area),

One site is rated as **AMBER** indicating that the majority of the available natural turf pitches are played at (or very close to) their playing capacity.

- University of Brighton's pitch

Brighton Hove and University of Sussex's pitch was rated as **GREEN** indicating that their natural turf pitch has spare carrying capacity.

4. The current and future picture of provision for rugby (Step 5)

4.1 Current

Overall, the rugby pitches in Brighton & Hove are currently overused or at capacity for the amount of demand for training and matches, with 7/10 community pitches being used in excess of their carrying capacity. The location of facilities is concentrated in the West of the city, with 8/10 pitches located in the West. Although the facilities in the West are no more than a 30-minute drive from residents in the East, some players may travel outside of the city to clubs such as Lewes RFC.

4.2 Future

Planned/expected growth – Brighton RFC reported a growth of adult teams whereas Hove RFC reported a loss of adult players since COVID-19 but a significant growth in junior and social teams. Both clubs are looking to grow in the next three seasons with Brighton RFC looking to grow the number of teams they have across adult and junior sections, specifically focussing on women's and girl's, whilst Hove RFC are planning a senior player recruitment drive.

Potential effect of population change – To estimate the potential impact of population growth over the strategy period to 2041 on the need for rugby pitch capacity in the peak period, Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC) has been used to determine the demand likely to be generated in the future due to population growth (figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: Future demand.

Sport	Match equivalent sessions (MES)	Training demand MES on floodlit natural pitch	Estimated demand for new grass pitches (match & training demand)
Rugby Union	0.74	0.89	0.74
Rugby League	0.06	0.06	0.06
Total	0.80	0.95	1 (rounded up)

To meet rugby demand from 12,477 additional residents (as currently forecasted²) and assuming current levels of rugby demand by age group for matches and training in peak period, the PPC indicates that the equivalent capacity of +1 additional full size natural turf pitches is needed to accommodate the additional demand. Pitches will require sufficient floodlighting to accommodate training demand for new teams.

There is also likely to be an increased demand for women and girls' rugby as England will host the 2025 Women's Rugby World Cup, with some games being played in Brighton & Hove at Brighton & Hove Albion FC's stadium. As such the above future demand should be considered the minimum amount of additional provision needed when planning future provisions.

² Population change from 2022 to 2041 based on B&HCC Strategic Housing Market Assessment

5. Key findings and issues for rugby (Step 6)

Figure 5.1 - Rugby key findings and issues

<p>The main characteristics of the <u>current</u> supply of and demand for provision</p>
<p>Since the last assessment of needs for rugby union in 2016, there has been a change in the total supply of rugby pitches available for community use. There has been a loss of community use at six pitches across the city, all of which are located on education sites, with only students using the pitches. Varndean High School expressed an interest in providing community use if there was sufficient demand for the pitch. Hove RFC previously hired the pitch at Brighton College but have not in the 2023/24 season and will not be hiring it in the future due to parking requirements and pitch quality.</p> <p>There are two clubs based in Brighton & Hove, Brighton RFC and Hove RFC, with 3 and 4 adult male teams respectively. Hove RFC also have two women's team. Both clubs have full junior and mini sections offering age grade rugby. There is also a Rugby League and Australian Rules Football team playing in the city using rugby pitches.</p>
<p>Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet <u>current</u> demand?</p>
<p>No - Overall, the rugby pitches in Brighton & Hove are overused and cannot maintain the current demand for training or matches. Clubs in the area manage the quality of their pitches through careful operational management and are often required to cancel training and matches to protect the pitches.</p> <p>Both clubs have secure use of their sites, with long term leases in place at both Hove Recreation Ground (80+ years) and Brighton RFC (90+ years), although only the pavilion is covered by the lease at Brighton RFC whilst the pitches are under annual license.</p> <p>There is significant overplay on the pitches at Hove Recreation Ground (Hove RFC), particularly on the two training pitches. Whilst the pitches at Brighton RFC are largely used above capacity, this is to a lesser extent than those at Hove Recreation ground as non-contact training can take place on their 3G pitch. Should this pitch be resurfaced and approved for contact rugby again, this would further reduce the overuse of grass pitches at the site.</p>
<p>Is the provision that is accessible of sufficient quality and appropriately maintained?</p>
<p>No - The 8 naturally drained rugby pitches across Brighton & Hove are split evenly between 'Natural Adequate' and 'Natural Inadequate', with only 2 pitches having a built drainage system (Hove Recreation Ground). The maintenance of pitches is generally poor, improvements to the maintenance of pitches would greatly increase the playing capacity of pitches but this is likely to be difficult due to the pressures on council and club budgets.</p> <p>Hove RFC are currently accessing Football Foundation funding to improve their pitch maintenance having undertaken Pitch Power Assessments, which rated all pitches as Basic. Improved maintenance of the 6 pitches rated poorly to an adequate rating would, in most cases, increase the carrying capacity of pitches by 1 match equivalent session per week. This would result in additional capacity for 5.5 MES per week across the city. Improving the maintenance of pitches at Hove Recreation ground wouldn't completely offset the current level of demand but would reduce the overuse from 10.5 MES to 6.5 MES. At Waterhall Sports Ground, improved maintenance would balance out the current overuse of 1 MES per week.</p> <p>A capital scheme to develop engineered drainage may be a further solution to increasing the capacity of rugby pitches in Brighton & Hove. Developing pipe drainage at adequately maintained pitches increases their capacity by 0.5 MES, whilst developing pipe & slit drainage increases MES capacity by 1.</p>

What are the main characteristics of the future supply and demand for provision?

To meet rugby demand from the projected population growth of 12,477 additional residents (as currently forecasted) and assuming levels of rugby demand for matches and training remain at the current levels, the equivalent capacity of +1 additional floodlit natural turf pitch would be required in the city.

It is anticipated that women's and girls' participation for rugby will increase as England are set to host the Women's Rugby World Cup in 2025, with games taking place in the city creating additional demand for matches and training provision. The RFU have launched Impact 25, a legacy programme for the 2025 Women's Rugby World Cup which has committed funding to facility development, coaching and match officials, playing and volunteering, and community and fan engagement. This programme aims to grow women's rugby to 100,000 female players by 2027. Sport England's Active Places Survey suggests that 0.1% of the female population regularly participate in rugby union, roughly 30,400 participants. Should the RFU achieve the ambitions set out in Impact 25, female participation nationally could increase by roughly 70,000 over the next 3 years.

Both clubs are looking to grow in the next three seasons with Brighton RFC looking to grow the number of teams they have across adult and junior sections, specifically focussing on women's and girls's, whilst Hove RFC are planning a senior player recruitment drive.

Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet future demand?

No - There is currently insufficient provision for rugby to meet future demand. Improvement to the maintenance and drainage at all pitches would increase the number of match equivalent sessions in the city, but this is likely to be difficult due to the pressures on council and club budgets and would still not bring all the pitches within their carrying capacity due to amount of training demand.

Additional capacity could also be accommodated by exploring regular community access to the pitches at Dorothy Stringer School (1), Hove Park School (1), University of Sussex (2), Brighton College (1), Varndean High School (1), and Cardinal Newman Catholic School (2).

The current capacity deficit in Brighton & Hove is 12 MES including training sessions. To accommodate this on natural turf pitches (assuming adequate natural drainage and adequate maintenance) would require 6 natural turf pitches. Due to the lack of alternative green space which would be suitable for developing additional grass pitches, this demand may be reduced by considering enhanced maintenance and drainage of current rugby pitches.

If it is assumed that the maintenance of all poorly maintained pitches can be improved, the deficit is reduced to 6.5 MES, requiring 3 new pitches plus 1 for future demand. An alternative method of increasing MES capacity is to develop engineered drainage systems such as pipe or pipe & slit drainage. Assuming all naturally drained pitches in the area have pipe drainage installed, the surplus MES demand is reduced to 5, and if all naturally drained pitches have pipe & slit drainage installed, the surplus demand falls to 2.5 MES. Whilst enhanced maintenance and drainage could considerably reduce the pitch deficit across the City, it is likely not feasible to undertake these enhancements at all sites due to the financial demand on the council. A targeted approach to improving the maintenance and drainage at sites which are heavily used, such as Hove Recreation Ground, may be more feasible.

The overuse of grass pitches is mainly due to the level of training demand. Whilst Brighton RFC currently use their 3G pitch for non-contact training, there is a need for this pitch to be resurfaced in order to comply with World Rugby regulations. If resurfaced and certified for contact rugby, it could

accommodate the clubs training demand and match demand of up to 4 MES across adult and youth teams. This is a priority project for the area, ensuring there is appropriate management of the facility, community use is secured and a sufficient sinking fund is in place for a future resurface.

The 3G pitch developed at Cardinal Newman School during the process of this study is proposed to be suitable for rugby, subject to testing, this would be an ideal location to absorb some of the training demand and possible youth match demand for Hove RFC, especially as it is less than a mile from the club. The new facility is subject to a community use agreement, and this should be monitored by the council to ensure there is good community access and that a sinking fund is in place for a future resurface.

The council are also exploring options to develop a small sized WRC 3G AGP at Moulsecomb Community Leisure Centre which may also be able to accommodate some youth training demand from each club.



Brighton & Hove City Council
Playing Pitch Strategy
2025 – 2041

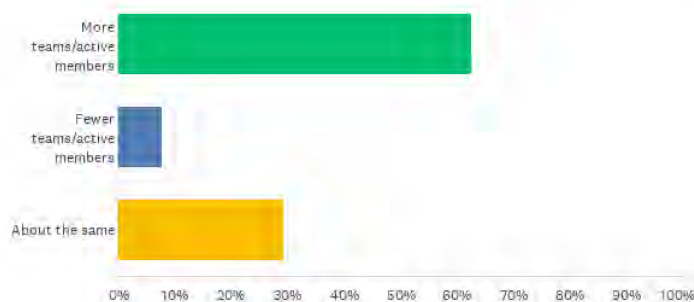
Appendix E – Club Consultation and Aspirations

Appendix F- Club consultation and aspirations

To understand the current landscape of clubs in the Brighton & Hove area, data was collected from a survey distributed to the sports clubs in the area. 51 individual sports clubs responded to the invitation to complete the survey. A summary of the club survey results is provided in the strategy introduction with this appendix providing the results of key questions asked and details of clubs aspirations for improved facilities.

Figure F.1 Club responses – Growth trend last 3 years

Q8 Does your Club/Organisation have more or fewer teams/active members than three seasons/years ago, or has the number of teams/active members stayed about the same?



Two thirds of sports clubs (62.75%) reported an increase in active members from three years ago, with 29.41% of clubs reporting similar levels of active members. This growth of active members suggests a significantly greater demand for playing pitch and ancillary facilities to support club's growth in playing memberships.

Figure F.2 Future growth

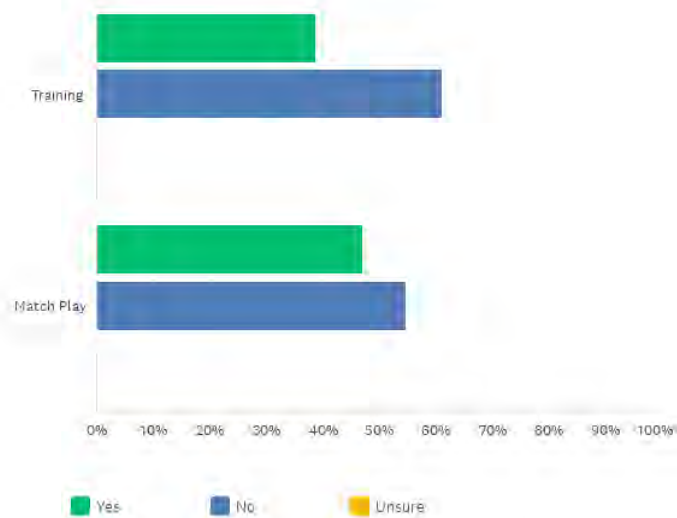
Q10 Does your Club/Organisation have plans to grow in the next three seasons/years?



Looking to the future, over 85% of the clubs surveyed were positive regarding plans for growth over the next three years/seasons, emphasising further the strength of the club sector in Brighton & Hove as well as likely rising demand. The remaining 14% of the respondents do not have any further plans to grow, signalling a need to maintain the current provisions for these clubs to remain sustainable.

Figure F.3 Club needs – Meeting demand

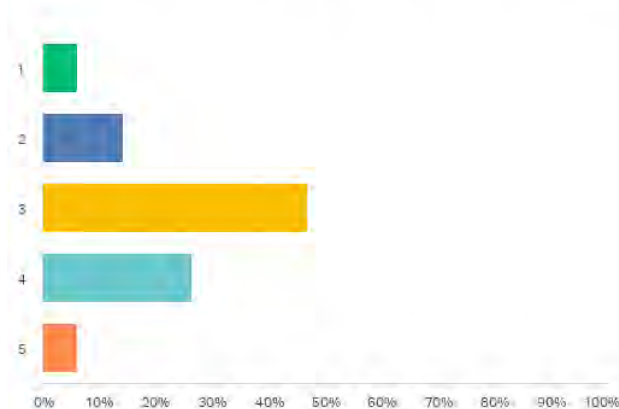
Q13 Is your current number of hours/pitches/evenings sufficient to meet the demand for your Club's/Organisation's activities for training and match play?



Nearly two thirds of clubs responded that they do not have sufficient programming time available at the sporting venues they access to meet current training demand from their memberships and 54.9% for match play. This shows the supply or availability of facilities and resources is not meeting the demands of the sports clubs, signalling a potential need to increase accessibility and capacity of sport facilities.

Figure F.4 Club response – Playing pitch ratings

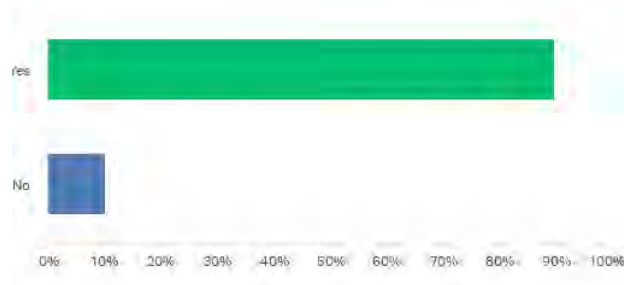
Q22 How do you rate the quality of your Club's/Organisation's main playing pitches? (1 being very poor and 5 being very good)



In terms of the quality of sports facilities available to the sports clubs in the area, nearly 50% of respondents rated their playing facilities as 'average', with only 32.65% rating their facilities as 'good' or 'very good'. This is a largely positive response, suggesting that the current quality of sports facilities in Brighton & Hove is suitable for the clubs and organisations that use them, with only 20.41% of respondents rating their facilities as 'poor' or very poor'. There is however a clear need to upgrade these facilities rated as Poor as well as trying to improve average pitches to a good quality.

Figure F.5 Main site – Playing pitch improvements

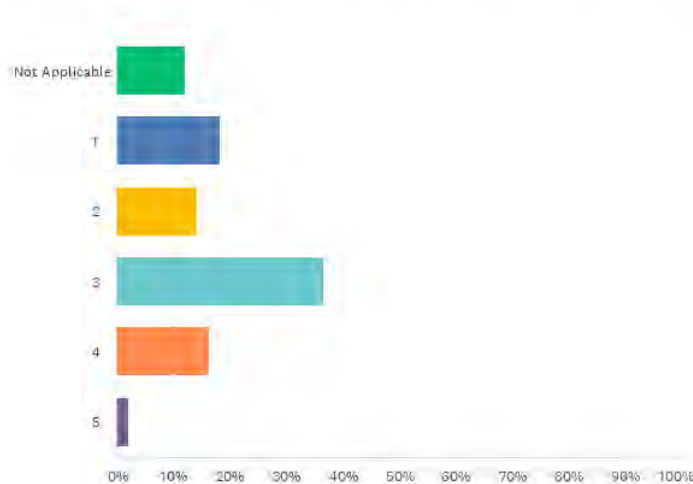
Q23 Is there a need to improve or change the playing pitches to sustain or grow your Club/Organisation (ie improved maintenance, engineered drainage, develop additional pitches etc)?



The majority of clubs (89.80%) believe they are in need of change or improvements to their current main playing facilities to sustain or grow their club. This data shows that support is clearly needed for those clubs who are keen to promote growth or in many cases to ensure sustainability and longevity. Whilst the strategy details a number of enhancements and investment needs for sport and physical activity, the Council also acknowledges that in difficult financial times, the maintenance of the current stock of facilities is of prime importance as well as planning for the future.

Figure F.6 Main site – Ancillary facilities rating

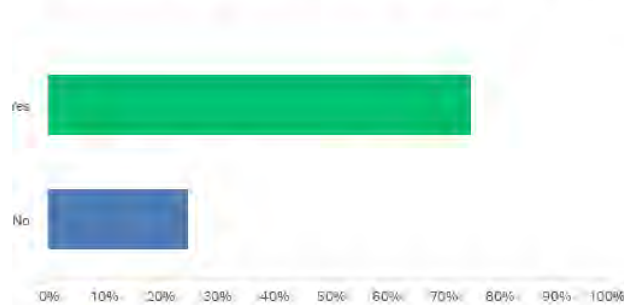
Q24 How do you rate the quality of the clubhouse/changing rooms at your Club's/Organisation's main site? (1 being very poor and 5 being very good).



Only 18.37% of clubs rated the ancillary facilities (clubhouse, changing rooms, social spaces etc) at their main site as 'good' or 'very good', with 69.39% rating their facilities as 'average' or worse (12.24% of clubs responded that this question was not applicable to them). This highlights a clear need for the ancillary facilities at club sites across Brighton & Hove to be enhanced.

Figure F.7 Main site – Ancillary facilities improvement

Q25 Is there a need to improve or change the clubhouse and/or changing rooms to sustain or grow your Club/Organisation (ie additional changing rooms or showers, general refurbishments, reconfiguring the layout etc)?



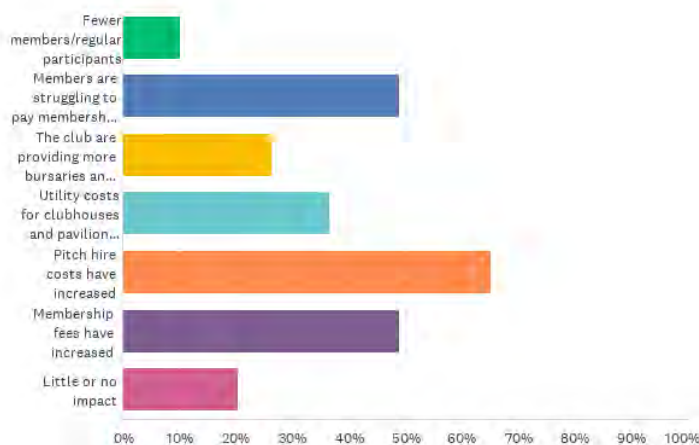
75% of the respondent clubs consider they need to improve or change their ancillary facilities to sustain the appeal of their club to existing members and to attract new members. This is key to accommodating the growth of sports clubs and noting that two thirds of sports clubs in the area have grown in the past three years, as identified in figure F.2 the demand on facilities is under pressure. Therefore, whilst a high majority of clubs are keen to expand further, there appears a need to invest in the wider infrastructure for clubs such as ancillary / support facilities to support this.

The impact of cost of living on clubs and organisations

It is important to investigate how the economic environment is affecting clubs and participants so that they can be supported. Significant financial impacts may reduce clubs’ ability to operate sustainably, and negatively impact members ability to continue participating. The 49 responses to Q9, ‘What impact (if any) do you think the ‘cost of living crisis’ will have on your club/organisation are summarised in figure F.8 below.

Figure F.8 Key themes of the impact of cost of living on clubs and organisations

Q9 What impact (if any) do you think the increased 'cost of living' is having on your Club/Organisation?



The most common impact of increased cost of living was that the cost of pitch hire has increased, this along with increased utility costs, has a knock-on effect on membership prices. Clubs are often forced to increase membership prices to cover increasing costs, this is observed in the responses received from clubs in Brighton &Hove with nearly 50% of clubs increasing their membership fees. Nearly 50%

of responding clubs have stated that members are struggling to pay membership fees. Some clubs (26.53%) are offering members bursaries to help support them, ensuring they can still afford memberships and are able to participate in the club activities. Initiatives like these need to be protected to ensure physical activity rates are protected across the district and residents in areas of high deprivation have access to organised sport and physical activity.

Survey summary

Many clubs are looking to grow over the next three years, and they are reporting needs for further development of facilities to achieve these goals. The data has shown that the majority of clubs are not satisfied with the facilities that they have access to, highlighting a need for improvements. Most clubs believe they are in need of funding to grow for a range of reasons, many of which are linked directly to facilities and improving the accessibility of provisions to members.

Club aspirations and demands for facility improvements

The clubs surveyed cited a range of aspirations and facility needs to assist in growing and developing their respective clubs. A number of these have been considered during the formation of the strategy action plan in discussion with the steering group, however not all of these needs were considered as priorities at the time of the strategy being developed and therefore have not been included in the action plan. The table below illustrates the aspirations provided by the responding clubs, in their own words, as part of the survey process for reference and information.

Figure F.9 Club aspirations and demands for facility improvements

Club/Sport	Aspirations/Demands
AFC Varndeanians	Improved maintenance on the Withdean pitch will help with more usage and enhance the playing experience. The pitch is not at a satisfactory standard
Brighton & Hove Cricket Club	Growth in demand from the community and schools to use our facilities. We need to upgrade showers and toilets to a modern standard as they are currently 40 years old. Our ambition is to support disability sports groups but we do not have a disability toilet?
Brighton & Hove Scorpions AFC	Marked pitches reduce coaches time and allows more accurate officiating. Currently use unmarked rugby pitch we manually set up with cones. Would reduce cancellations due to bad weather.
Brighton & Hove Hockey Club	Replace surface and do some repairs. To grow we need another pitch. We are trying to build a clubhouse that we will manage and clean but we need permission to use the land owned by Brighton & Hove City Council.
Brighton Baseball Club	Need to develop an additional diamond and improve fencing & seating areas for fans around the existing 2 diamonds.
Brighton F.C. (Rugby Club)	Greater investment in pitches will allow for greater use; also ATP needs investment to enable rugby to be replayed on the facility. The clubhouse was built circa 1994, and needs significant development to cater for additional players, different sexes and accessibility. There is a pavilion (on the lower Waterhall site) that the club could, with support of the Council, assimilate into its management structures to redevelop, not just for its growing rugby participants, but for a range of other sports, such as football, cricket etc.
Brighton Malayalee Ass. Cricket Club	Proper maintenance is required Pavilion facilities need to be improved.
Brighton Rogues Hockey	We want to reach out to women in vulnerable groups to help them with finding better wellbeing in sports
Brighton, Worthing and District FL	Action is needed as poor pitches and facilities are driving teams away and extortionate prices given the facilities
Clarendon Athletic	To allow safe play for youth teams and enough time for matches during the season, pitches need more care
Coldean colts	There is an additional area at the top of the park that could sustain another pitch with some work done to it. We could benefit with some external storage of which we wouldn't be against paying for or contributing to. There also needs to be additional toilets as 1 toilet

Club/Sport	Aspirations/Demands
	isn't enough. Disabled access down to the pitches would help as the park is surrounded by steep banks. The club could double in size in the next 3 years if we had the facilities.
Hollingbury Hawks Youth & Colts FC	More teams in general, more cancellations due to weather and very importantly fewer sites with toilet access which affects all female matches. There is a need to improve council changing rooms. We currently don't have a base only a garage lock up.
Hove Park Colts FC	Our girls section is continuing to grow and the need for specific changing facilities/toilets limits the availability of pitches. With climate change the winters have become wetter which has led to the cancellation of lots of games. This has put a lot of strain on the clubs arranging fixtures at end of the season. Better maintained pitches with drainage would allow more games to be played. We had lots of council pitches pulled but were able to play on our main pitches due to better maintenance.
Hove Rugby Football Club	Overall increase in demand for both training and playing surfaces, due to increased numbers of youth (both male and female) and social teams. We desperately need two additional changing with private showers.
Mile Oak FC	Mile Oak FC requires a 3G pitch at the recreation ground to allow for all the teams who wish to play on the site throughout the week. This would allow all day matches on Sunday, training on Saturdays and mid weeks for our youth teams growth. Our main objective is to grow the girls game at the site as well as further youth boy teams, allowing for more teams, more space and greater impact. The club would also like to start up a Ladies Vets football team and football for disabilities. The next change would be to have cubicle showers in the changing rooms, to allow for the Ladies and Girls game to change and get clean and dry after use.
Palmers CC	Better outfield maintenance. We would like a tea room and scorers covered area.
Patcham United	More pitches are required for 9v9 matches and there is a need generally to have greater number of 3G pitches as weather has a major impact on grass pitches
Poets' Corner Football Club	maintenance - lawn mowing, drainage, goal post sockets
Preston Dynamos 1958	The pitch is prone to flooding and games are moved to council pitches for roughly 2 months of our playing season.
Preston Park Cricket Club	Suitable well maintained pitches with changing and tea facilities not available. If we had access to suitable local facilities we could grow/expand.
Rottingdean CC	Additional changing rooms for Ladies and youths.
Rottingdean Village FC	Our planned increase in players and teams will put increased demand on existing pitches which are barely fit for purpose. We would be interested in discussing with the council how we might take over responsibility for pitch maintenance.
Saltdean United FC	We would like to develop the top pitches further to allow more space.
St Peters Cricket Club	The cricket clubhouse at Preston Park is in need of significant improvements in all areas (changing rooms, shower/toilets, layout, functionality, space for activity, storage space, disability access). The ground may also benefit from installing artificial pitches on both squares to help meet demand. There is a need for more storage facilities that are fit-for-purpose and appropriately located to ensure equipment can be stored and accessed more easily and efficiently.
St. Matthias CC	Insufficient pitches for training as ground is used by 3 clubs
Sussex Girls JPL RTC	We need a base to enable our program to improve, we need better opportunities to enable us to give girls better facilities and pitches and somewhere to socialise. including changing rooms and showering facilities.
Sussex Sunday Football League	Growth of teams and rules requiring changing room and toilets
Sussex Sunday Youth FL	The FA recommend the different sizes in Goal posts for the various age groups but clubs need to provide their own for any 5 v 5 area and for u13s teams upwards they only have pitches with full size adult goals to play on.
Sussex Swans Australian Rules Football Club	Approval to put in posts and mark up oval and need for access to changing facilities.

Club/Sport	Aspirations/Demands
The Alternatives Cricket Club	Improved council pitches in terms of quality and availability would help encourage players' involvement.
The Caxton Arms FC	Team are now required to have changing rooms at all home games. This means Waterhall will be unusable for all teams creating a greater demand for other pitches. This is unsustainable.
Try Tag Rugby Brighton & Hove	If we had access to more central venues all year round with better facilities, I think we would be able to grow at a faster rate than last year. It is very helpful to have access to a toilet for those who need it. Our venue over winter was only accessible by bike/car, so not having public transport was an issue for a lot of our members. We saw a drop off during winter. If we had floodlights on our central venues that would really help with safety and people being able to reach the venue.
West Hove Dynamos FC	Growth of teams, improved maintenance, pitch layout needs revising due to increased demand
Whitehawk Football Club	Growth of teams, especially women teams. Ideally grass pitch would be replaced with 3G to support number of teams for training and matches and grow community outreach. Showers and toilets in need of refurbishment.
Woodingdean Wanderers Football Club	We have outgrown the Site we are on and cannot improve the facilities or gain funding because we don't have a lease. We have no running water & no flushing toilets.
Zambuca Tigers Cricket Club	Better pitches make better cricket and safer. Proper kitchen, new changing rooms and showers and more secure.



CONTINUUM

SPORT & LEISURE LTD

Brighton & Hove City Council

Playing Pitch Strategy

2025 – 2041

Appendix F – Existing Planning Policies

Appendix F – National, regional and local planning policy: Sport and recreation facilities

National planning policy

The relevant policy promoting healthy and safe communities in the government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 is at paragraphs 96 and 98:

Para 96 -

Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

- a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;*
- b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and*
- c) enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.*

Para 98 –

To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

- a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*
- b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;*
- c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;*
- d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and*
- e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.*

The relevant national planning policy protecting existing sports facilities and land is at paragraphs 103 and 103 of the NPPF 2024:

Para 103 -

Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate'.

Para 104 -

'Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and formal play spaces, should not be built on unless:

- An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.'*

Regional and sub regional planning policy

The last Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South East of England - The South East Plan (published in May 2009) – had previously set out a vision and strategic framework for growth to 2026.

The overall spatial vision set out in The South East Plan 2009-2026 had a focus on health and climate change:

A socially and economically strong, healthy and just South East that respects the limits of the global environment. Achieving this will require the active involvement of all individuals to deliver a society where everyone, including the most deprived, benefits from and contributes to a better quality of life. At the same time the impact of current high levels of resource use will be reduced and the quality of the environment will be maintained and enhanced.

The Government has subsequently revoked the South East Plan.

Local planning policy

The current adopted statutory development plans for Brighton & Hove City Council Local Planning Authority Area are made up of:

- **Brighton & Hove City Plan Part 1** – adopted on 24 March 2016. The plan provides the overall strategic and spatial vision for the future of Brighton & Hove through to 2030.
- **Brighton & Hove City Plan Part 2** – adopted on 20 October 2022 which builds on the strategic policy framework set out in City Plan part One, allocates additional development sites and sets out a detailed policy framework to assist in determining planning application.
- **East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove waste and minerals local plan**
- **Neighbourhood plans** - These are prepared by neighbourhood forums/parish councils to set a locally specific development framework to guide development in their area. Currently there are two Neighbourhood Plans that have been 'made' and form part of the development plan for their areas. These are **Hove Station and Rottingdean Parish**, both formally made on 28 March 2024. In addition to this **Shoreham Harbour** have a Joint Area Action Plan adopted on 24 October 2019.

The existing Local Plan

Brighton & Hove City Plan Part One (2016) and Part Two (2022) provide the overall strategic and spatial vision for the future of Brighton & Hove through to 2030.

It provides a policy framework that plans for new development to deliver the following vision that has been developed alongside the City's Sustainable Community Strategy, other city wide plans and strategies.

By 2030, Brighton & Hove will have a sustainable, resilient low carbon economy with sufficient jobs at all levels. Local residents will have the skills to enable them to progress through the labour market and earn incomes to help them live successfully within the city. New housing of different types, including

affordable housing, will be provided in suitable locations to match a range of requirements and lifetime needs.

Towards achieving this vision, the City Plan includes key planning policies relating to proposals for new sport and recreation facilities and proposals involving the loss of facilities. The current key Local Plan policies of relevance are as follows:

CP7- Infrastructure and developer contributions

To meet the needs of Brighton & Hove and the wider sub-region the council will work with partners to ensure that the necessary social, environmental and physical infrastructure is appropriately provided in time to serve the development. This will be achieved through the following:

- 1. Preparing, regularly updating and facilitating the implementation of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan for the city that will set out the infrastructure to be provided in the city by infrastructure partners including the public sector and utilities, to meet future needs.*
- 2. Investigation into the possible implementation of a locally adopted Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to provide for infrastructure with contributions that will deliver strategic infrastructure to support wider area development. The cumulative impact of all development and differing needs for infrastructure provision will be reflected in the CIL tariff.*
- 3. To make development acceptable and enable the granting of planning permission, inadequacies in infrastructure arising from proposed development will be required to be mitigated through s.106 Planning Obligations via a legal agreement and will be sought where they meet the statutory tests of being:*
 - necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;*
 - directly related to the development; and*
 - fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.*

CP16 – Open space

The council will work collaboratively to safeguard, improve, expand and promote access to Brighton & Hove’s open spaces (public and private) and the diverse range of experiences offered by these spaces. Retaining and enhancing open space

- 1. The council will require the retention of and seek better, more effective and appropriate use of all existing open space, as shown on the policies map, having regard to the Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study and the Open Space Update Study.*

Planning permission resulting in the loss of open space, including the beach, will only be granted where:

- a) The loss results from a development allocation in a development plan and regard has been given to maintaining some open space (physically and visually); or*
- b) The site is not part of a playing field (current or historical) and the loss is necessary to bring about significant and demonstrable long term enhancements to the city’s public open space offer as a whole; or*
- c) The proposed development is ancillary to the use of the open space and will result in only a small loss of open space, provides improvements to and better use of the remaining space and optimises public access; or;*
- d) The site is:*
 - physically incapable of meeting the city’s wider open space needs;*
 - is not part of the beach or a playing field (current or historical); and,*
 - in accordance with the Open Space Study Update 2011 (or subsequent approved revisions), is*

of a poor quality without potential for improvement (current and potential) and there is an identified surplus (current and future) in all types of open space within the locality (ward and sub area). In order to test the importance of the site to the local community the site must be actively marketed at a price that reflects its use, condition and local market prices for at least a year with no success before alternative proposals can be considered.

CP17 – Sports provision

To facilitate the council’s aspiration to increase participation in sports and physical activity, the council will safeguard, expand, enhance and promote access to Brighton & Hove’s sports services, facilities and spaces through the following:

- 1. Support for the delivery of the replacement and enhancement of sports provision currently provided at the King Alfred (see SA1).*
- 2. Require the retention, seek the enhancement and more effective use of existing indoor and outdoor sports facilities and spaces in accordance with the Sports Facilities Plan and the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study and subsequent approved revisions, audits and strategies recognising the importance of major sporting venues such as the American Express Community Stadium, County Cricket Ground, Withdean Sports Complex and Brighton Racecourse. Planning permission resulting in the loss of indoor and outdoor sports facilities and spaces will not be granted except where:*

In respect of buildings:

- The building has been demonstrated to be redundant for a sports use and marketed for at least 18 months at a price that reflects its condition and market value, any loss in the surrounding space is minimised and necessary to provide improvements to and better use of the remaining space in accordance with the Open Space policy (CP16); or,*
- the facilities are to be replaced by improved facilities that help meet the sporting needs of the city and optimises access by sustainable transport modes.*

In respect of outdoor sports facilities and spaces

- The land has been marketed as detailed above and the proposal complies with the Open Space policy (CP16).*

Emerging local plan policy

A review of the City Plan focusing on the strategic policies in City Plan 1 has commenced. The new plan will be known as City Plan 2041. The first stage of public consultation took place from 4 November 2024 to 20 January 2025.

The council has recognised the need to update CP17 Sports Provision stating that

‘The need to safeguard, expand, enhance and promote access to sports service still remains and reflects current council strategies and plans. The evidence base which underpins the standards for indoor and outdoor sports provision is out of date and a policy review will enable further consideration of more recent national standards and emerging council strategies.’

In developing new policies, the council should engage with Sport England to ensure the policies meet their Playing Fields Policy Guidance to ensuring playing pitches are protected from development.¹

¹ Sport England – Playing Fields Policy and Guidance March 2018