

Rutland County Council

Playing Pitch Strategy Executive Summary

A report by Strategic Leisure Limited

April 2024



Rutland
County Council

1 Introduction and Context

1.1. As set out in Rutland County Council's (RCC) Corporate Strategy 2024-2026, the vision for Rutland is to be a:

County for everyone and a place to live your best life.

1.2. RCC's mission is to "improve lives by focusing quality services and expertise where they are needed most, helping the County to grow and thrive whilst remaining a special place our residents know and love". This will be achieved by aligning all long term planning and policies to 4 key priorities identified by the Council:

- **Tackling the climate emergency**
- **Provide good public services.**
- **A diverse and sustainable local economy**
- **Support the most vulnerable.**

Purpose of the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPOSS)

1.3. The PPOSS will help to inform and guide the future provision of playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities to serve existing and new communities in Rutland.

Methodology for developing the PPOSS.

1.4. The PPOSS has been developed using the 2013 Sport England Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance (https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport?section=assessing_needs_and_playing_pitch_strategy_guidance), and for non-pitch sports the Sport England 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance (ANOG)'.

1.5. Sport England is a statutory consultee on all planning applications affecting playing fields used in the last 5 years, and a consultee on other applications: it looks to improve the quality, access, and management of sports facilities as well as investing in new facilities to meet unsatisfied demand.

1.6. The key drivers for the production of the PPOSS as advocated by Sport England are to protect, enhance and provide sports facilities, as follows:

1. **Protect:** To provide evidence to inform policy and specifically to support site allocations and development management policies which will protect sports facilities and their use by the community, irrespective of ownership;

2. **Provide:** To ensure that sports facilities are effectively managed and maintained and that the best uses are made of existing resources – whether facilities, expertise and/or personnel to improve and enhance the existing provision – particularly in the light of pressure on local authority budgets; and
3. **Enhance:** To provide evidence to help secure external funding for new facilities and enhancements (if on the infrastructure list) and Section 106 agreements. Sport England and the local authority can then use the strategies developed and the guidance provided in making key planning decisions regarding facility developments in the area.

Executive Summary and Recommendations

- 1.7. Stage D of the PPOSS, provides a summary of key findings, explores specific scenarios and makes recommendations for individual sports informed by work undertaken at Stages B and C. These are summarised in the table below.

Stage E

- 1.8. Stage E of the PPOSS involves establishment of a Steering Group to oversee implementation of the recommendations, update the PPOSS when needed, and ensure ongoing dialogue with both Sport England and National Governing Bodies (NGBs) about pitch and outdoor facility provision.

Recommendations

Pitch Type/Facility	Recommendations
3G Artificial Grass Pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protect the existing stock of 3G pitches, ensuring community use is kept.• Secure additional community use on Sundays of the 3G pitch at Uppingham Community College• Develop the 7v7 3G AGP that is highlighted in the Rutland LFFP, or similar facility elsewhere in the study area (e.g. Ketton)• Ensure that Uppingham Community College meets FA standards and is included on the FA 3G pitch register.• Ensure that any new 3G pitches are constructed to meet FA/RFU/RFL recommended dimensions that are appropriate for that sport and the appropriate quality performance standards that meet the performance testing criteria.• Ensure that any new 3G pitches have community use agreements in place, particularly those at education sites.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all 3G pitch providers put in place a sinking fund to meet the cost of carpet and sports lighting replacement/refurbishment to ensure long-term pitch sustainability. • Where any housing/building development is of a size to justify S106/CIL monies, consider contributions for the 3G AGP development. • It must be noted that this PPS uses 2022-2023 season affiliation data, that includes 38 teams in Rutland. However, the number of teams has increased in 2023/2024 to 54, suggesting that any deficits will have increased, and any spare capacity may have been reduced or lost. The effects of this team number increase should be considered in as part of Stage E.
Grass Football Pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect existing quantity of pitches (unless replacement provision is agreed upon and provided), in line with paragraph 103 of the NPPF and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. • Improve the quality of grass playing pitches, with a focus on Ketton Sports and Community Centre, Meadow Playing Fields, Wakerley and Barrowden CC and Ridlington and Belton CC. Prioritise investment and review maintenance regimes using PitchPower to ensure it is of an appropriate standard to sustain use and improve quality to a 'good' standard. • Monitor the merging of Ketton FC, Blackstones and Stamford Lions and consider the implications of additional demand being brought to the area. • Provide security of tenure for clubs using unsecured sites through the development of community use agreements wherever possible. • Any future large housing development should assess the need for new grass pitch provision to reduce the worsening of future shortfalls. • Improve ancillary facilities where there is a demand to do so and where it can benefit the wider footballing offer, particularly for women and girls. A particular focus should be on Meadow Playing Fields, where the current facilities are rated as poor. • It must be noted that this PPS uses 2022-2023 season affiliation data, that includes 38 teams in Rutland. However, the number of teams has increased in 2023/2024 to 54, suggesting that any deficits will have increased, and any spare capacity may have been reduced or lost. The effects of this team number increase should be considered in as part of Stage E.
Hockey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect hockey sites to ensure any future clubs have adequate access to good quality facilities. • Continue to encourage development of hockey in Rutland, through working with players, community partners and education providers.

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Pitch Type/Facility	Recommendations
Rugby Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve pitch quality through drainage and maintenance works at both Stoneygate RFC and Oakham RFC. This should be informed by GMA inspections and reports at both sites. • The development of a WR22 3G pitch, and its use to meet rugby training demand should be considered. Although rugby union alone may not generate enough demand for the development, a 3G pitch would help meet the future deficit of football provision also. • The development of an additional senior grass pitch at Stoneygate RFC, as well as a floodlit training area if space allows. A floodlit training area could be created through back-lighting from the columns erected on the senior pitch. • Explore the feasibility of developing community use agreements with education sites in Oakham and Uppingham. A particular focus should be made at Uppingham Community College to provide long term security of tenure for Stoneygate RFC.
Cricket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that any new large-scale housing developments provide for cricket and the need is assessed by use of Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator. This can be through new on-site developments, or off-site improvements to existing cricket facilities. • Secure community use of cricket facilities at either Oakham School or Uppingham School. • Protect the existing supply of cricket provision, in line with Sport England's Playing Field Policy and paragraph 103 of the NPPF. • Improve the quality of grass wickets, with a specific focus on Wakerley and Barrowden CC.
Tennis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect existing quantity of tennis courts and community access to them. Responsibility of RCC, Sports Club, Facility Owners. • Support grounds staff to review quality issues on courts to ensure appropriate quality is achieved at sites assessed as standard and sustained at sites assessed as good. Priority sites for quality reviews are Catmose Sports Centre, Ryhall Tennis Club and Whissendine Sports Club. Responsibility of LTA, RCC and schools where appropriate. • Ensure club future demand can be accommodated on existing supply of courts. Responsibility of LTA, RCC and Sports Clubs where appropriate. • Ensure that any large housing developments provide for tennis and need is assessed by use of Sport England's ANOG Guidance.

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Pitch Type/Facility	Recommendations
Netball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect existing quantity of netball courts. Responsibility of RCC, Sports Club, Facility Owners. • Ensure club future demand can be accommodated on through existing indoor provision and supplemented through existing supply of outdoor courts, working with facility owners/managers to provide both indoor and outdoor netball. Responsibility of England Netball, RCC and Sports Clubs where appropriate. • Secure community use of netball courts in the study area, with a particular focus on Uppingham Community College. • Ensure that any large housing developments provide for netball, need should be assessed by use of Sport England’s ANOG Guidance.
Bowls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect existing quantity of all facilities. Responsibility of RCC, Sports Club, Facility Owners. • Aim to improve the quality of playing surface and ancillary facilities at Meadow Playing Fields. • Support grounds staff to review quality issues on greens to ensure appropriate quality is achieved at sites assessed as standard and sustained at sites assessed as good. Responsibility of Bowls bodies, RCC and Sports Clubs where appropriate. • Ensure club future demand can be accommodated on existing supply of greens. Responsibility of Bowls bodies, RCC and Sports Clubs where appropriate. • Work with clubs to support development and growth of the sport.
Athletics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new athletics facilities in Rutland. This should be a New:Gen track, but the exact nature of these facilities should be explored and identified throughout Stage E of the PPS. Responsibility of RCC, England Athletics, Facility Owners. • Work with clubs to support development and growth of the sport.