



LICHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SEPTEMBER 2020

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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This is the Executive Summary for Lichfield District Council's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS). Both the Strategy and the preceding Assessment Report have been produced in accordance with Sport England guidance and both have achieved sign off from National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) and Sport England. The study covers the period up to 2040, in line with the emerging local plan.

Scope

The project provides guidance and support in order to understand and assess the need for playing pitches. It provides a strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing provision and covers the following sports:

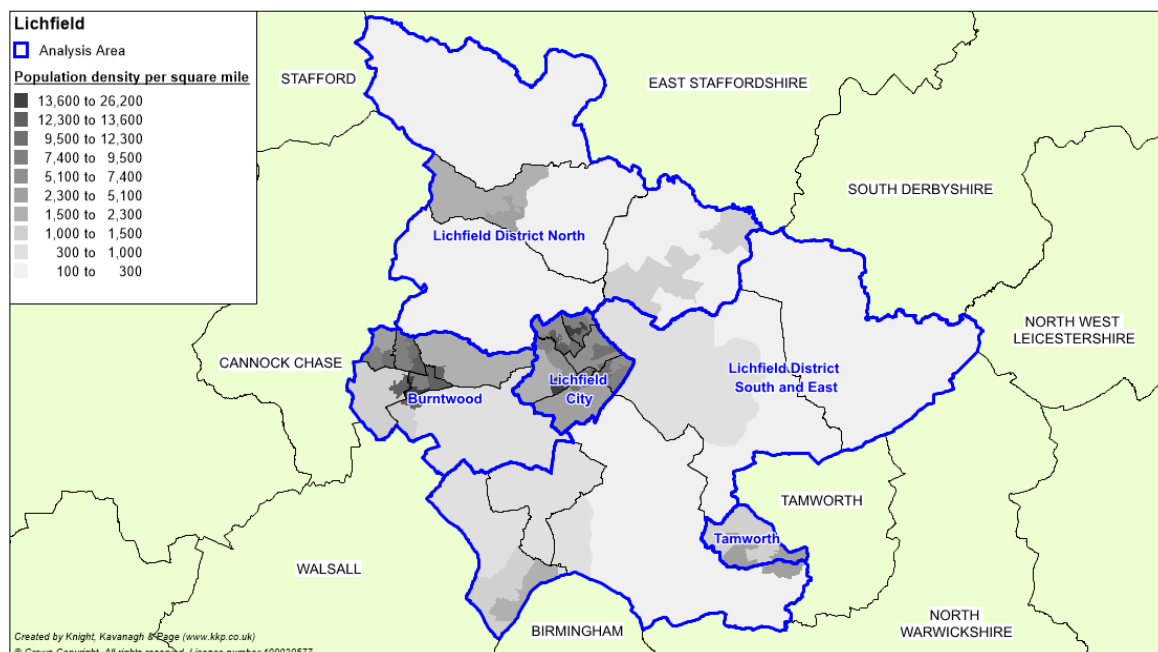
- ◀ Football pitches (including 3G pitches)
- ◀ Cricket pitches
- ◀ Rugby union pitches (including 3G pitches)
- ◀ American football pitches
- ◀ Hockey pitches (sand/water based AGPs)
- ◀ Tennis courts
- ◀ Bowling greens
- ◀ Netball courts

Study area

The study area is the whole of the District Council's administrative area. In addition, cross-boundary issues will also be explored to determine the level of imported and exported demand from neighbouring authorities such as East Staffordshire, Cannock Chase, Walsall and Tamworth.

Analysis areas (or sub areas) have been used to allow for a more localised analysis in addition to the analysis for Lichfield as a whole. Five analysis areas were agreed upon: Lichfield City, Burntwood, Lichfield District North, Lichfield District South and East and Tamworth. These analysis areas are illustrated below in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Analysis area map



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Vision

A vision has been set out to provide a clear focus with desired outcomes for the Lichfield PPS. It seeks to:

‘Provide a robust and up-to-date assessment to enable policy provision which protects, enhances and delivers, where required, an accessible network of high-quality sustainable open spaces which provide the opportunity for sport and physical activity to promote health and wellbeing within our communities, and to provide evidence to support mechanisms that will enable and maintain high levels of participation that make a sustained difference for local people.’

Aims

The following overarching aims are based on the three Sport England themes. It is recommended that they are adopted by the Council and partners to enable delivery of the overall PPS vision and Sport England planning objectives.

AIM 1

To **protect** the existing supply of outdoor sport facilities where it is needed to meet current and future needs.

AIM 2

To **enhance** outdoor sport facilities and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites.

AIM 3

To **provide** new outdoor sport facilities where there is current or future demand to do

Headline findings

The table below highlights the quantitative headline findings relating to the main pitch sports from the Assessment Report.

Sport	Analysis area	Current demand (2019)		Future demand (2040)
		Pitch type	Current capacity total (match equivalent sessions)	Future capacity total (match equivalent sessions)
Football (grass pitches)	Burntwood	Adult	Spare capacity of 3.5	Spare capacity of 3.5
		Youth 11v11	At capacity	At capacity
		Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 0.5
		Mini 7v7	Spare capacity of 0.5	Spare capacity of 0.5
		Mini 5v5	At capacity	Shortfall of 2
	Lichfield City	Adult	Spare capacity of 2	Spare capacity of 1.5
		Youth 11v11	Spare capacity of 2.5	Spare capacity of 2.5
		Youth 9v9	Spare capacity of 0.5	Spare capacity of 0.5
		Mini 7v7	Spare capacity of 2	Spare capacity of 2
		Mini 5v5	Spare capacity of 1.5	Shortfall of 0.5

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Sport	Analysis area	Current demand (2019)		Future demand (2040)		
		Pitch type	Current capacity total (match equivalent sessions)	Future capacity total (match equivalent sessions)		
	Lichfield District North	Adult	Spare capacity of 1.5	Spare capacity of 1.5		
		Youth 11v11	At capacity	At capacity		
		Youth 9v9	At capacity	At capacity		
		Mini 7v7	At capacity	At capacity		
		Mini 5v5	At capacity	At capacity		
	Lichfield District South and East	Adult	Spare capacity of 2	Spare capacity of 2		
		Youth 11v11	At capacity	At capacity		
		Youth 9v9	Spare capacity of 0.5	Spare capacity of 0.5		
		Mini 7v7	Spare capacity of 2	Spare capacity of 2		
	Tamworth	Mini 5v5	Spare capacity of 1.5	Spare capacity of 1.5		
		Adult	Spare capacity of 1	Spare capacity of 1		
		Youth 11v11	At capacity	At capacity		
		Youth 9v9	At capacity	At capacity		
		Mini 7v7	At capacity	At capacity		
Football (3G pitches) ¹	Lichfield District	Mini 5v5	At capacity	At capacity		
		Full size, floodlit	Shortfall of one full size 3G pitch for team training	Shortfall of one full size 3G pitch for team training		
		Cricket	Burntwood	Senior	Spare capacity of 7	Spare capacity of 7
		Lichfield City	Senior	At capacity	At capacity	
		Lichfield District North	Senior	Spare capacity of 18	Spare capacity of 9	
Lichfield District South and East	Senior	Spare capacity of 20	Shortfall of 6			
Tamworth	Senior	At capacity	At capacity			
Rugby union	Burntwood	Senior	Shortfall of 2.75	Shortfall of 3.75		
	Lichfield City	Senior	At capacity	Shortfall of 1		
	Lichfield District North	Senior	At capacity	At capacity		
	Lichfield District South and East	Senior	Shortfall of 4	Shortfall of 4		
	Tamworth	Senior	At capacity	At capacity		
Hockey (sand AGPs)	Lichfield District	Full size, floodlit	Adequate provision for community hockey	Adequate provision for community hockey		
		Tennis	Lichfield District	Courts	Shortfall of floodlighting	Shortfall of floodlighting

¹ Based on accommodating 38 teams on one full size pitch

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Sport	Analysis area	Current demand (2019)		Future demand (2040)
		Pitch type	Current capacity total (match equivalent sessions)	Future capacity total (match equivalent sessions)
Bowls	Lichfield District	Greens	Adequate provision However, shortfall in the Lichfield City Analysis Area	Adequate provision However, increased shortfalls in the Lichfield City Analysis Area
Netball	Lichfield District	Courts	Adequate provision	Adequate provision

The existing position for all pitch sports is either that demand is being met or that there is a shortfall, whereas the future position shows the exacerbation of current shortfalls and the creation of shortfalls for some pitches and for some areas where demand is currently being met. As such, there is a need to protect all existing playing pitch provision until demand is met; or there is a requirement to replace any lost provision to an equal or better quantity and quality before it is lost.

Sport-by-sport recommendations

A number of relevant scenarios have been tested against key issues for each sport, resulting the following recommendations.

Football

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of pitches until all demand for all pitch types is being met (unless replacement provision meets Sport England requirements and is agreed upon and provided).
- ◀ Where pitches are overplayed and/or assessed as poor quality, prioritise investment and review maintenance regimes to ensure it is of an appropriate standard to sustain use and improve quality.
- ◀ Where appropriate, transfer play from sites which remain overplayed to alternative sites with spare capacity, sites which are not currently available for community use, or to 3G provision.
- ◀ Work to accommodate future demand as well as expressed exported, unmet and latent demand at sites which are not operating at capacity or at sites not currently available for community use that could be moving forward.
- ◀ Secure tenure for clubs using unsecure school sites through community use agreements.
- ◀ For unsecure, non-education sites, seek to gain access and ensure appropriate mitigation should the provision fall out of permanent use.
- ◀ Ensure all teams are playing on the correct pitch sizes and explore reconfiguration of pitches to better accommodate youth 11v11 demand, where possible.
- ◀ Improve ancillary facilities where there is a demand to do so and where it can benefit the wider footballing offer.
- ◀ Assess the need for new pitch provision derived from large housing developments through master planning on an individual basis and provide provision when and where it is required.
- ◀ Where a development is of a size to justify on-site football provision, focus on the creation of multi-pitch sites that reduce existing shortfalls, with accompanying

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clubhouse provision included given that single pitch sites without appropriate ancillary facilities can be unsustainable.

- ◀ Where a development is not of a size to justify on-site football provision, consider using contributions to improve existing sites within the locality, using the PPS as a guide to inform suitable sites.
- ◀ In line with the Cannock Chase PPS, re-provide the football pitch that was lost following the closure of Rugeley Power Station. Any new pitch should be of adult size to address current and future shortfalls and should be linked to Key site developments in the District.

3G pitches

- ◀ Protect current stock of 3G pitches and encourage providers to have a sinking fund in place to ensure long-term sustainability (and that pitches remain on the FA Register).
- ◀ Increase the number of 3G pitches in Lichfield and fully determine that the proposed locations for new 3G pitches are feasible (Hospital Road and Scholars Ground) and update the LFFP accordingly.
- ◀ Ensure that all new 3G pitches are constructed to meet FA/RFU recommended dimensions and quality performance standards.
- ◀ Ensure that any new 3G pitches have secure community use agreements in place.
- ◀ Encourage more match play demand to transfer to 3G pitches through a phased approach starting with transferring mini demand. Ensure local football leagues and clubs are involved with and support this process.
- ◀ Ensure that any new 3G pitches are priced competitively against the cost of hiring a grass pitches and are aimed at local grassroots clubs.
- ◀ Explore options to provide a World Rugby compliant 3G pitch in the Lichfield District South and East Analysis Area to address shortfalls on football and rugby union pitches.
- ◀ Carry out consultation with EH when determining the location of new 3G pitches to ensure the sustainability of hockey demand and existing sand-based AGPs.

Cricket

- ◀ Protect all cricket squares in current use.
- ◀ Work with clubs and grounds staff to review quality issues on squares to ensure appropriate quality is achieved at sites assessed as standard and sustained at sites assessed as good.
- ◀ Look to sustain minimal levels of overplay at Hammerwich Cricket Club and Whittington Cricket Club through dedicated levels of enhanced maintenance and monitor future levels of demand.
- ◀ Work to eradicate overplay via the transfer of demand to the existing NTP at Hammerwich Cricket Club and through the establishment of a new NTPs at Whittington Cricket Club.
- ◀ Ensure growth in women's cricket can be accommodated.
- ◀ Ensure security of tenure for all clubs with lease arrangements in place by ensuring agreements have over 25 years remaining.
- ◀ Pursue security of tenure for Wall CC at the Friary School.
- ◀ Support pavilion developments where improvement/extension is required.
- ◀ Support the growth of cricket through programmes such as All Stars and Dynamos as well as via women's and girls' softball cricket.
- ◀ Ensure that any large housing developments are provided for and assess the need for new pitch provision through master planning on an individual basis.
- ◀ Where a development is of a size to justify on-site cricket provision, ensure that any proposals for new squares will attract adequate demand.

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- ◀ Where a development is not of a size to justify on-site cricket provision, or if sufficient demand cannot be attracted, consider using contributions to improve existing sites within the locality.

Rugby union

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of rugby union pitches.
- ◀ Improve quality of pitches, prioritising club sites with identified overplay.
- ◀ Explore the installation of additional floodlighting of pitches, or suitable off-pitch training areas, to better accommodate training demand.
- ◀ Consider the establishment of a full size, World Rugby compliant 3G pitch in the District to allow clubs to move training demand off grass pitches and alleviate overplay.
- ◀ Extend and/or improve quality of ancillary provision where it is required.
- ◀ Retain supply of rugby pitches at all school sites for curricular and extra-curricular purposes and encourage secure community availability should community demand exist in the future.
- ◀ Ensure that any large housing developments are provided for and assess the need for new pitch provision through master planning on an individual basis; developer contributions may be best served being channelled toward existing club sites given nature of the sport in the District.

Hockey

- ◀ Protect the following AGPs for hockey use: Erasmus Darwin Academy, King Edward VI Sports Centre and Lichfield Hockey & Cricket Club.
- ◀ Protect DMS Whittington for hockey use until such time as demand is suitably transferred to another secure AGP.
- ◀ Encourage sinking funds to be put in place at all sites for long-term sustainability.
- ◀ Look to secure long-term usage agreements at Erasmus Darwin Academy, DMS Whittington and King Edward VI Sports Centre.
- ◀ If access is secured at King Edward VI Sports Centre and long-term usage agreements are arranged at Erasmus Darwin Academy, consider DMS Whittington for conversion to a World Rugby compliant 3G pitch.

Bowls

- ◀ Retain existing quantity of greens.
- ◀ Improve quality at sites assessed as poor or standard quality and sustain quality at sites assessed as good.
- ◀ Support Lichfield Winter Bowls League and Hammerwich BC to improve ancillary provision at their respective sites.
- ◀ Support clubs with plans to increase membership so that growth can be maximised.
- ◀ Explore methods to accommodate the five members on the waiting list at Lichfield BC.
- ◀ Look to secure tenure for Duke of York BC at Duke of York Public House; if this is unattainable ensure the Club can continue to be serviced.
- ◀ In line with the Cannock Chase PPS, there does not appear to be a local need to re-provide the bowling green that was previously lost following the closure of Rugeley Power Station; investment would be better served improving the quality and sustainability of provision locally. However, the picture could change if the green at Duke of York Public House is lost.

Tennis

- ◀ Retain and sustain quality of club courts for competitive play through implementation of appropriate maintenance regimes.

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- ◀ Support clubs with aspirations to install floodlighting and/or to increase their number of floodlit courts.
- ◀ Support clubs with aspirations to develop their clubhouse facilities.
- ◀ Improve quality of local authority courts and accompanying ancillary provision, first and foremost focusing on Beacon Park due to the significant informal demand already on site.
- ◀ Support Erasmus Darwin Academy with its ambition to resurface four of the eight courts on site and installing floodlights to provide another hub for informal and recreational tennis in Lichfield.
- ◀ Work with the LTA to implement a District-wide use of its Clubspark system to book courts and RALLY to promote easy access.
- ◀ Work with the LTA to develop more Tennis for Free sites in park and education venues.
- ◀ In line with the Cannock Chase PPS, re-provision of the two tennis courts that were lost following the closure of Rugeley Power Station, would not appear to best serve the District. Investment should be made to improve the quality of courts in the Analysis Area; whilst also encouraging participation in tennis with the development of LTA programmes such as Tennis for Free.

Netball

- ◀ Protect quantity of courts.
- ◀ Seek to improve poor quality courts quality through resurfacing or improved maintenance.
- ◀ Ensure any future development of tennis courts takes into consideration demand for outdoor netball (including Erasmus Darwin Academy and Beacon Park).
- ◀ Look to continue and expand the use of courts for England Netball initiatives such as Back to Netball and Walking Netball.
- ◀ Facilitate improved engagement between England Netball and schools.

Delivering the Strategy

The PPS seeks to provide guidance for maintenance/management decisions and investment made across Lichfield District. By addressing the issues identified in the Assessment Report and using the strategic framework presented in the Strategy, the current and future sporting and recreational needs of Lichfield District can be satisfied.

It is important that there is regular annual monitoring and review against the actions identified in the Strategy. This monitoring should be led by the local authority and supported by all members of the steering group. As a guide, if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years, Sport England and the NGBs would consider the PPS and the information on which it is based to be out of date.