

# **Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy 2007 – 2016**

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## **FOREWORD: Councillor Glenn Jordan, Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities and Leisure**

Thank you for your interest in the Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy.

This document identifies how Plymouth playing pitches should be managed over the forthcoming years. Whilst Plymouth City Council is the major provider of community playing pitches in the area, and this Strategy is ostensibly a Council document, all local playing pitch providers may choose to align their own strategies and action plans with this one. In so doing it will help to: 'make Plymouth one of Europe's finest, most vibrant waterfront cities where everyone enjoys an outstanding quality of life'.

If we follow the guidance proposed by this document we will also be specifically supporting the key strategic objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy in relation to 'health and well-being' and the provision of 'stimulating culture and leisure activities'.

Formal playing pitches make a significant contribution to our cultural lives. Many of us make use of them at some stage, if only at school. It is estimated that in excess of 6,000 people regularly play competitive sport in community leagues on city pitches. And for every one that puts on the kit and actively plays the game there are many more behind the scenes who help to organise, prepare for and support the process.

There are bound to be trends in participation, but the modern agenda for sport is to try and buck any downward trend. Indeed there are many activity programmes and sports development initiatives nationally, regionally and locally specifically designed to have a positive effect.

In Plymouth we are playing our part with two specialist Sports Colleges, an active School Sports Co-ordinator Partnership and a dedicated (Council) Sports Development Unit. These, in partnership with the Plymouth Sports Forum and relevant sport-specific forums/development groups are working hard to support the achievement of (amongst others) - the Sport England target of a 1% year-on-year increase in levels of physical activity.

Details will regularly change because the sector is so dynamic. However, the strategy will continue to focus on any modification that may be caused by material change in supply and demand.

I hope that you will find this Strategy both helpful and informative.

## Section 1 – Introduction and context

### Who should read this document?

- 1.1 The Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy (PPPS) has been produced for the benefit of everyone with an interest in pitch sports, playing pitches and their development, so the potential audience for this document is very wide.
- 1.2 The PPPS will help the City Council as a local planning authority, and as the main provider of local playing pitches. It will be valuable to Sport England, the Football Foundation and the various National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of sport. The document should be helpful to neighbouring local authorities and comparative Unitary Authorities elsewhere in the country. It should also be of interest to sports academics; schools; people involved in sport and all the relevant Plymouth sports forums. There will also be a role for the strategy as an information source for property developers and their agents.

### What is the scope of the Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy?

- 1.3 The PPPS identifies the needs of local community sports teams for access to appropriate Plymouth playing pitches for cricket, football, hockey, rugby union; American football, baseball and softball. It has been prepared in conformity with PPG17 - Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, which requires local authorities to undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sports and recreational facilities. Other strategies are being prepared to address other elements of the city's sport and recreation provision. The strategy does not address the needs of schools or the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Neither does it consider the informal needs of the local community for access to amenity areas and/or 'kick about' areas.
- 1.4 The PPPS analyses:
  - The overall stock of playing pitches within the city boundary<sup>1</sup>,
  - Their availability for public use – *i.e.*, community sports teams that regularly compete in formal league structures locally;
  - The perceived quality of such playing pitch provision
  - And the predicted shortfalls or surpluses that might reasonably be expected to occur in Plymouth by the year 2016, *i.e.*, if no action was taken between now and then.

The year 2016 has been chosen to provide a meaningful period for strategic action and review.

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<sup>1</sup> Some playing pitches that are managed by Plymouth City Council (*e.g.*, those at Horsham and Staddiscombe) are actually located just beyond the city's formal administrative boundary within the South Hams. However, for the purposes of this strategy they have been considered to be within the Plymouth boundary.

## Section 2 – What is the purpose of the Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy?

- 2.1 The purpose (or the aim) of this strategy is to support Plymouth’s Sustainable Community Strategy and Plymouth City Council’s Corporate Plan priorities with recommended actions designed to guide the management of the city’s playing pitch stock over the next ten years. The intention is to ensure that, subject to available resources, there are sufficient playing pitches to be able to meet the predicted future needs of the local community; such recommended actions having been developed using a nationally recognised (and Government recommended<sup>2</sup>) method.

### Alignment of the Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy with Plymouth’s ‘Sustainable Community Strategy’

- 2.2 The 2020 vision for Plymouth as identified within its ‘Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2010’ is that:

**Plymouth will be recognised as ‘One of Europe’s finest, most vibrant waterfront cities, where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone.’**

- 2.3 Towards this shared vision there are four visionary goals identifying that Plymouth seeks to be:
- **HEALTHY** - a healthy place to live and work (improving health and well-being)
  - **WEALTHY** - a city that creates and shares prosperity (enhancing its economy and sharing the benefits with all its community)
  - **SAFE** - a safe, strong city (reducing crime, making people feel safe, making the most of its environment)
  - **WISE** - a location for learning, achievement and leisure (raising aspirations and attainment, promoting creativity and leisure)

These goals are underpinned by eight **strategic objectives**:

- Improving health and well-being
- Developing a prosperous economy
- Promoting community safety
- Raising educational achievement
- Promoting inclusive communities
- Developing an effective transport system
- Maintaining a clean and sustainable environment
- Stimulating culture and leisure activities

- 2.4 The two strategic objectives highlighted identify the most obvious alignment for the PPPS. However, the Government and many relevant

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<sup>2</sup> Government guidance is provided in the form of Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs). The relevant PPG for playing pitches is PPG17. And this strategy seeks to follow that guidance - thereby achieving ‘PPG17 compliance’.

non-governmental organisations are now of the opinion that sport and physical recreation activities can also contribute to other agendas such as social inclusion, education and community safety.

### **Alignment of the Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy with Plymouth City Council's 'Corporate Plan'**

2.5 The latest plan entitled 'Plymouth's Performance Plan (2007-2010) sets out five **Corporate Objectives**:

- **Building Plymouth's future.** The database of information, the playing pitch methodology, PPS recommended actions and policies will specifically assist the city in relation to its strategic objectives for 'health and well-being' and 'culture and leisure activities'.
- **Providing excellent and efficient services.** The PPS database and methodology has been specifically constructed with the intention of providing an efficient management information system that can inform and assist with the making of key decisions in relation to the future management of the city's playing pitch stock.
- **Putting the customer first.** The PPS was produced with regard to survey information provided by 457 of the city's main local sports teams who regularly use its playing pitches. The survey results provide a benchmark for the level of customer satisfaction. The Strategy proposes performance indicators against which improvements in service delivery can be measured.
- **Ensuring access for all.** The PPS identifies areas of inequality in relation to access to local playing pitches and it proposes specific actions and policies designed to reduce such deficiencies in service provision.
- **Improving our capacity to deliver together.** The PPS clearly identifies its relationship to the wider sports agenda and its local role. Playing pitches are provided by institutions, the Ministry of Defence, Private Companies and the City Council. The pitch sports requirements of the local community can only be met by access to and improvements in the stock of pitches that is collectively managed by all such local providers. A strategy of this type enables each provider to recognise the relevance of its own contribution and to make informed decisions in reference to its tacit partnership responsibilities

### **Key objectives of the Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy**

2.6 The Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy key objectives for the period from 2007 – 2016 are identified as seeking the achievement of:

- A position (within geographical limitations) where Plymouth is recognised as having the right number of playing pitches, of the right quality, in the right places.
- A higher standard of playing pitch changing accommodation provision than currently exists (2007) to better meet the needs of local sports participants.
- An adopted series of local standards for Plymouth in relation to the playing pitches it should seek to provide for its local residents.

2.7 The recommendations contained within this document need:

- To be delivered within the context of a difficult financial position for Plymouth City Council and strictly within current, medium and long-term financial frameworks;
- To maximize potential funding by working with partners and developers to move towards meeting targets in line with population growth.

## Section 3 - Why produce a separate playing pitch strategy?

- 3.1 A separate Playing Pitch Strategy lends itself to independent production. Producing it as a distinct document helps to avoid any confusion that might otherwise result in relation to playing pitches specifically required for formal sports, and more general areas of open space that are used for broadly defined public recreation and amenity purposes.

### Government guidance

- 3.2 Government guidance provided via its Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) notes (most notably 'PPG17') is that all local planning authorities should undertake robust assessments of local needs for access to 'open space, sports and recreational facilities' using an approved method. As well as this PPG, the City Council is also preparing a Sports Facilities Strategy and a Green Space Strategy.
- 3.3 There are clear advantages in relation to playing pitches for local planning authorities that comply with such guidance. The advantages include:
- Clarity when it comes to determining planning applications for any proposed redevelopment of local playing pitches;
  - The identification of local needs, leading to the adoption of Local Standards for open space, sports and recreational provision;
  - A standardised method of calculating the amount of financial contributions that developers might be required to make as part of local planning obligations.
- 3.4 For example: should a developer wish to build on a playing pitch, the local planning authority can advise whether or not the pitch concerned is 'surplus to requirements' and what the net effect to local sport might be if the pitch in question were to be permanently lost as a consequence of its redevelopment.
- 3.5 It also enables the local planning authority to establish the level of financial contribution that might be sought from developers towards the provision of new (or the enhancement of existing) sports facilities necessary to satisfy the anticipated increase in local demand that would be generated from the development.
- 3.6 Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Planning Obligations may be sought from developers (when planning conditions are not appropriate) to contribute towards the provision of infrastructure and services to enhance the quality of development and to enable developments to proceed in a sustainable manner.
- 3.7 Planning Obligations should meet the following tests, and should be:

- Necessary
- Relevant to Planning
- Directly related to the proposed development
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development
- Reasonable in all other respects (Circ 05/2005).

- 3.8 Wherever possible, planning obligations should be provided on the same site as the proposed new development. However, where it is agreed that this is not a sustainable option then a developer contribution can be requested for investment in the provision/enhancement of ‘off-site’ facilities. This can help to provide new pitches and/or their associated buildings; or it can be used towards the improvement of existing sports facilities – especially where ‘poor quality’ is recognised as being more of an issue than ‘lack of quantity’.
- 3.9 Sport England strongly recommends that local planning authorities should maximise the use of developer contributions within planning obligations, as a means of providing for the recognised sporting and recreational needs of their local communities, although there will be competing demands for contributions (e.g. affordable housing; transport infrastructure).
- 3.10 It is in support of this particular national recommendation that local ‘open space, sports and recreation strategies’ come into their own. And clearly, a local ‘playing pitch strategy’ is an important component of such an overall strategy.

### **Government policy on sport**

- 3.11 Government policy on sport and recreation is largely promoted through the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) whilst the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCFS) are responsible for curricular sport. There has been a conscious attempt in recent years to have greater co-ordination between these two departments in an attempt to encourage more young people into sport, and to persuade them to stay with sport once they have left school or further education.
- 3.12 In the Government’s policy on sport, published in 2000<sup>3</sup>, it has been suggested that many of the proposed initiatives may have implications for the use of and demand for playing pitches. For example, the proposed strengthening of relationships between schools and local clubs may lead to greater and more imaginative use of schools playing fields.

### **Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCFS)**

- 3.13 There has been particular concern in recent years over the disposal of education playing fields deemed to be surplus to school requirements.

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<sup>3</sup> A Sporting Future for All, Department of Culture Media and Sport

Section 77 of the School's Standards and Framework Act 1998, empowered the Secretary of State to protect school playing fields in England from disposal or change of use.

- 3.14 The Secretary of State's revised guidance: the "Protection of School Playing Fields and Land for Academies" issued in November, 2004 gives a general presumption against the need to dispose or change the use of school playing fields. The 2004 Guidance continues the presumption introduced by the previous Guidance that only sport pitches surplus to needs of the local schools and their communities may be sold and that all proceeds should be reinvested into improving sport or educational facilities.
- 3.15 In assessing applications under Section 77 of the SSFA the Secretary of State will need to distinguish between authorised and unauthorised uses of playing fields, as only authorised uses will be taken into account during assessment. Uses of school playing fields will need to be looked at very closely to ascertain whether they are authorised or not and schools therefore need to manage the role they play in providing an extended function to the community. Each Section 77 application will need to detail exactly the existing use of any playing fields that are to be developed. Sport England will assess the potential for additional community use of playing fields through the planning system<sup>4</sup>.

### **Sport England policy**

- 3.16 Sport England's national policy statement on the disposal of playing fields is that they will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of all or any of the playing field, or land last used as a playing field, or land allocated as use as a playing field, in an adopted or draft deposit local plan, unless in the judgment of the English Sports Council one of specific circumstances applies:
- The proposed development is ancillary to the principle use of the site as a playing field or playing fields and does not affect the quantity or quality of pitches or adversely affect their use;
  - The proposed development affects only land incapable of informing, or forming part of a playing pitch, and doesn't result in the loss or inability to make use of any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins), a reduction in the size of the playing area of any pitch, or the loss of any other sporting ancillary facilities on the site;
  - The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the

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<sup>4</sup> For further reference see 'Education sites', page 28.

development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field or playing fields;

- A carefully quantified and documented assessment of current and future needs has demonstrated the satisfaction of the English Sports Council that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport;
- The playing field or playing fields that would be lost as a result of the proposed developments would be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality, and / or of an equivalent or great quantity in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to commencement of development.”

### **School Implementation Plan 2005-2015**

3.17 Following an annual pupil census in January 2004 a full review of pupil forecasts was undertaken. The data obtained was considered alongside statistical profiles of the various areas of the City. The data was configured into new school community areas to provide a viable basis for the analysis of primary school places and organisation. The main findings included:

- An anticipated sharp and continuing decline in pupil numbers, even when taking into account planned housing development. The forecasts showed the number of primary school pupils falling by 12 percent between 2005 and 2010 and secondary school pupil numbers falling by almost 7% over the same period. A steady increase in pupil numbers was then expected post 2010;
- An increasing amount of spare capacity in Plymouth schools;
- Half of the school building stock was in poor condition and in need of replacement or significant refurbishment;
- Major and far-reaching Government initiatives on shaping the role that schools play within their local communities, as a catalyst for regeneration, emphasising the concept of extended and inclusive schools and the establishment of Children's Centres;
- School place planning focusing on school improvement playing a key role in neighbourhood regeneration.

3.18 These findings and issues raised were published with a number of potential options for each school community area for consultation under the title 'Ideas for Change'. This began the process of developing an

ongoing review of school place planning in Plymouth and to inform a strategic plan – the School Implementation Plan 2005-2015.

- 3.19 The School Implementation Plan was adopted in April 2006 and will support Plymouth City Council's Corporate Plan by helping to regenerate local communities through provision of excellent schools; investment in sport and leisure through encouraging more community use of schools; provision of better services to vulnerable children and adults and by bringing the Council closer to the people through the development of extended schools.
- 3.20 The school re-building programme has started in Plymouth. These projects provide an excellent means to enhance sports development opportunities around the city. It is recognised also that the findings of this study will have to be carefully considered when existing school playing pitches are put at risk.

### **Participation trends**

- 3.21 An analysis of participation trends in various sports will influence the decisions on future pitch provision.
- 3.22 There has been a marked decline in participation in men's football in Plymouth over the last 20 years according to local sports forum representatives.
- 3.23 By contrast there has been a dramatic increase in mini soccer participation over the last eight years or so, and locally there is a thriving junior soccer programme.
- 3.24 In addition to football, many other pitch sport clubs are now beginning to forge effective school-club links in the Plymouth area with the aim of developing new junior sections.
- 3.25 With the continuing success of the city's high profile professional football and rugby clubs and the associated 'good news' media coverage of those pitch sports supported by the 'Argyle' and 'Albion' brands – there is potential for sustained interest and for an increase in participation levels in those sports amongst local people (especially the young).
- 3.26 The recent improvements made in the quantity and quality of specialist sports pitch facilities, such as the city's new half-size and full-size synthetic turf pitches, together with the significant progress that has been made in improvements to several grass playing pitches in Central Park (the latter being grant aided by the New Opportunities Fund) have already had a very positive effect on sports participation rates. There are now more young people playing competitive hockey in Plymouth than ever before, as well as a wide cross-section of age-groups now regularly playing small-sides soccer under floodlights on the city's new synthetic turf pitches. It is also pleasing to report that three grass

playing pitches that had lain derelict for some years in Central Park have now been fenced and drained and are now back in full use by local competitive sports leagues in response to local demand.

- 3.27 Plymouth now boasts two specialist Sports Colleges (Plymstock School in the South East of the city and Sir John Hunt Community College in the North West) each hosting a School Sports Co-ordinator Partnership. Between them they now cover the whole city - delivering a strategic programme of co-ordinated sports development in secondary schools and their respective 'family clusters' of primary schools. The partnership works closely with the Council's own sports development team and joint initiatives align with county; regional and national sports development /physical activity agendas. The net effect of which is likely to be increased demand for access to sports facilities including playing pitches.
- 3.28 Sport and physical activity/recreation are now recognised by the Government as being important for many different reasons, not least for their potential cultural, health and regeneration benefits. As a consequence of the importance currently attributed to the positive contribution that active lifestyles have on the well-being of both the individual and the wider community, it is likely that there will be ongoing Governmental support for programmes and initiatives designed to get more people more active. It is hopeful therefore to assume that - linked to this agenda - there will be an overall increase in participation levels in pitch sports between now and 2016.

#### **Plymouth population:**

- 3.29 Between 1980 and 1998 the number of people living in the city appeared to be in decline. However, there was evidence that between 1998 and 2003 the population had begun to stabilise with an estimated 240,715 city residents in the Census year 2001. Evidence of growth is shown with the Office of National Statistic's resident population mid-2006 estimate for Plymouth at 248,100.
- 3.30 The age structure of the city's population in 2001 was broadly similar to that of England and Wales as a whole, but it had a greater proportion of people less than 45 years-of-age than the surrounding areas. The average age in Plymouth in 2001 was 38.5 years when compared with almost 43 years in the South Hams and West Devon.
- 3.31 It is expected that with economic growth, the population of the city will increase in future years.
- 3.32 Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10) identifies Plymouth as one of 11 Principal Urban Areas (PUA) which offer the best opportunities for accommodating the majority of development in the most sustainable way. Plymouth is also identified as having potential to play a wider strategic role as a major regional service centre providing a focus

for economic activity in the far South West. In the longer term, extending some ten years beyond the lifespan of this particular strategy, the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy 2006 – 26 sees Plymouth’s role as *‘becoming the economic hub of the far South-West’*. It makes provision, in the wider principal urban area, for higher levels housing growth.

3.33 The city’s housing requirement is set by the draft Regional Spatial Strategy, which indicates that some 1,150 dwellings per annum should be allocated within the city boundary – equating to 17,250 dwellings over the Local Development Framework period 2006 – 2021. The draft Regional Spatial Strategy also provides the following phasing guidance:

- Over the period 2006 – 2016 some 10,000 new homes should be allocated in the city;
- Beyond 2016 to 2021 - 7,250 new homes should be allocated.

3.34 And Policy SR35 of the draft Regional Spatial Strategy identifies a housing requirement, for the period 2006-26, for the wider Plymouth urban area of 31,500 dwellings (1,575 per annum), of which 24,500 (1,225 per annum) need to be provided within the city.

3.35 However, for the purposes of the Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy 2007 –2016 the following ‘current’ estimated and ‘future’ predicted populations have been used. The figures, produced on request by the Plymouth City Council Planning Strategy Unit in January 2006, were derived from information contained within the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Preferred Options Report (page 15) and the Urban Capacity Study for Plymouth (2003):

**Table 1**

Area	2001	2006	2011	2016
	Pop’n 6-55 yrs	Pop’n 6-55 yrs	Pop’n 6-55 yrs	Pop’n 6-55 yrs
<b>North</b>	42,163	41,655	40,770	39,736
<b>South</b>	87,052	88,741	89,461	89,666
<b>East</b>	34,752	35,216	35,307	35,209
<b>Total</b>	163,967	165,612	165,538	164,611

**Table 2**

Area	2001	2006	2011	2016
	Total Pop’n	Total Pop’n	Total Pop’n	Total Pop’n
<b>North</b>	63,536	63,763	63,250	62,936
<b>South</b>	123,952	128,354	131,144	134,193
<b>East</b>	53,227	54,790	55,674	56,681
<b>Total</b>	<b>240,715</b>	246,907	250,068	<b>253,810</b>

## Section 4 – Where are we now?

### The Playing Pitch Methodology (PPM)

- 4.1 The approved method used in the production of the Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy (PPPS) follows the one outlined in 'Towards a Level Playing Field'. **This is the most recent Sport England guidance document.**
- 4.2 'Towards a Level Playing Field' recommends an eight-stage process for each sport to be considered within any defined study area. The overall process employed was referred to as the Playing Pitch Methodology (PPM).
- 4.3 The first six stages of the PPM require the input of data that are derived from a thorough audit of playing pitches and a detailed survey of relevant local sports clubs. Whereas the final two stages review the outcome of this process in relation to the issues that emerge and the available options for resolving them.
- 4.4 The methodology is carefully employed to analyse the adequacy of current playing pitch provision and to assess possible future scenarios, in order that 'latent' and 'future' demand for access to playing pitches (identified through the use of 'Team Generation Rates') and any problems with the quality, use and capacity of existing pitches can be taken into account.

For each sport in each study area the eight stages of the PPM are as follows:

1. Identifying the teams
2. Calculating the number of home games per team per week
3. Assessing the total number of home games played each week
4. Establishing when teams play their matches (the 'temporal demand')
5. Defining the number of pitches used or required each day
6. Establishing the pitches that are available (considering quality and access issues)
7. Assessing the findings from stages 1-6 above
8. Identifying possible solutions to each of the issues that emerge

4.5 In line with the PPM the Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy focuses on the following sports:

- Cricket
- Football
- Hockey
- Rugby Union

In addition to these, the following 'minority sports' – American Football, Baseball and Softball were also considered because they too require access to Plymouth playing pitches. However, their needs were assessed outside the standard modelling process:

#### **Considering the quantity of Plymouth playing pitch provision:**

4.6 The PPM required the collection of good quality data on all teams and pitches in the city. A database was established containing key data on where and when teams played their home matches, their levels of membership, the problems they faced, their future plans, etc.

4.7 This was researched using questionnaires distributed to relevant league secretaries, clubs and key contacts for each of the pitch sports included in the study. Further telephone or direct contact was made to those sports club representatives who had not managed to respond to the questionnaire. The final response rates were as high as 98%<sup>5</sup> for some sports.

4.8 The PPM compared the supply of pitches with the demand for access to them. Detail on each of the 'Supply' parameter can be supplied on request.

#### **Considering the quality of Plymouth playing pitch provision:**

4.9 The playing pitch methodology (PPM) also required a visual quality assessment to be undertaken for every playing pitch 'in supply' together with its ancillary facilities (i.e., changing rooms and car park arrangements, etc.).

4.10 This was undertaken by using a scoring system that was available via Sport England's Internet website.

4.11 In addition to the visual quality assessments undertaken by Plymouth City Council the playing pitch methodology also incorporates within the standard club questionnaire a question that invites clubs to comment on the standard of the facilities at their home pitch location. The response summaries can be made available on request.

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<sup>5</sup> The clubs who responded to either the survey questionnaire or through telephone contact are shown in Appendix 5.

- 4.12 The vast majority of teams (83% of respondents) felt that their home pitches were either good or acceptable. The same was true for 'value for money', where 82% said that their pitch was either good or acceptable value.
- 4.13 However, there are a number of areas of concern for each sport, as well as collectively.

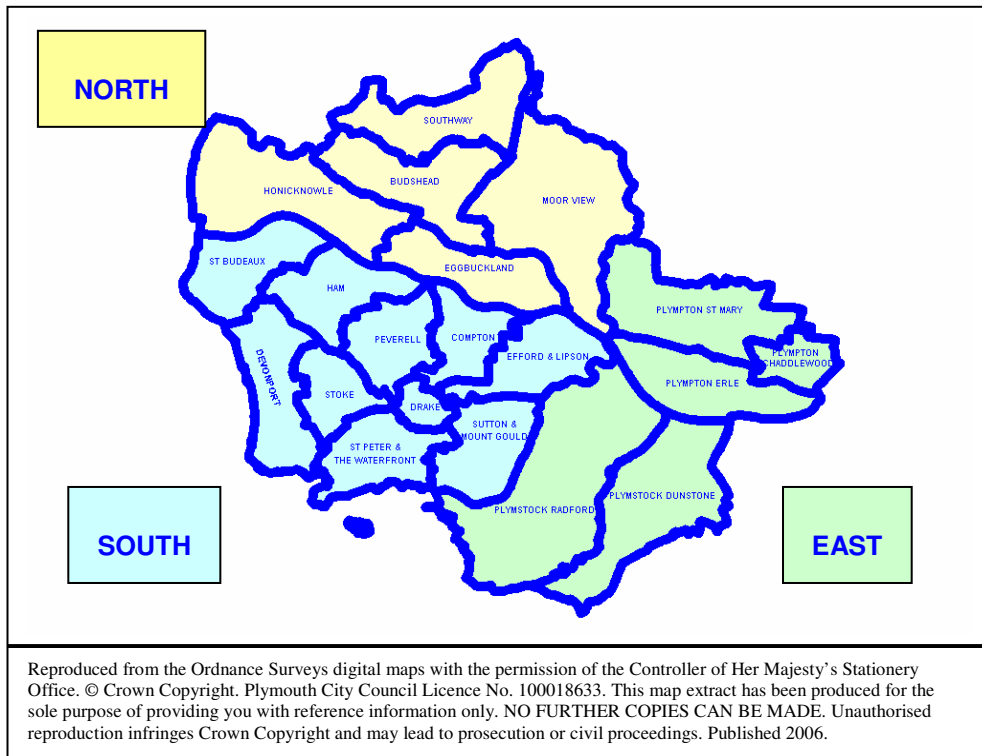
#### **The study areas:**

- 4.14 So far, when looking at the supply side of the playing pitch strategy equation the data have been considered on a 'citywide' basis with ward detail identified as appropriate (and this has been a reasonable way of looking at things to this point). But, relevant production guidance<sup>6</sup> recommends "if a playing pitch strategy only relates to a whole local authority area, it will not be clear from the results where the shortfalls and surpluses occur. The practical solution to this is to gather and process data at the ward or parish level, and then to amalgamate those wards into a number of sub-areas that share similar characteristics. The locations of shortfalls or surpluses can then be more clearly identified".
- 4.15 **The Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy has therefore has been produced by considering the strategic relationship between Plymouth as a whole and also by looking at three quite distinct city sub-areas. These sub-areas are referred to as the 'North', 'South' and 'East'. (There was no 'West' sub-area, the West of the city being included within those of the North and the South).**
- 4.16 This approach enables a focus on the effect of any major infrastructure investment such as a new multi-pitch site. In particular being able to consider the balance between sites of strategic importance against a sub-area requirement for reasonable access to facilities. The demarcation references for the sub-areas are the A38 and the River Plym. Each sub-area contained at least one focal point for future residential growth until 2016, for example - Derriford, Millbay, and Plymstock Quarry respectively. (For further information please refer to the Area Action Plans identified within the emergent Plymouth Local Development Framework).
- 4.17 Analysis by sub-area has also to take into account cross-boundary issues such as levels of car ownership, the provision of public transport and the availability of pitches that are contiguous to each boundary.

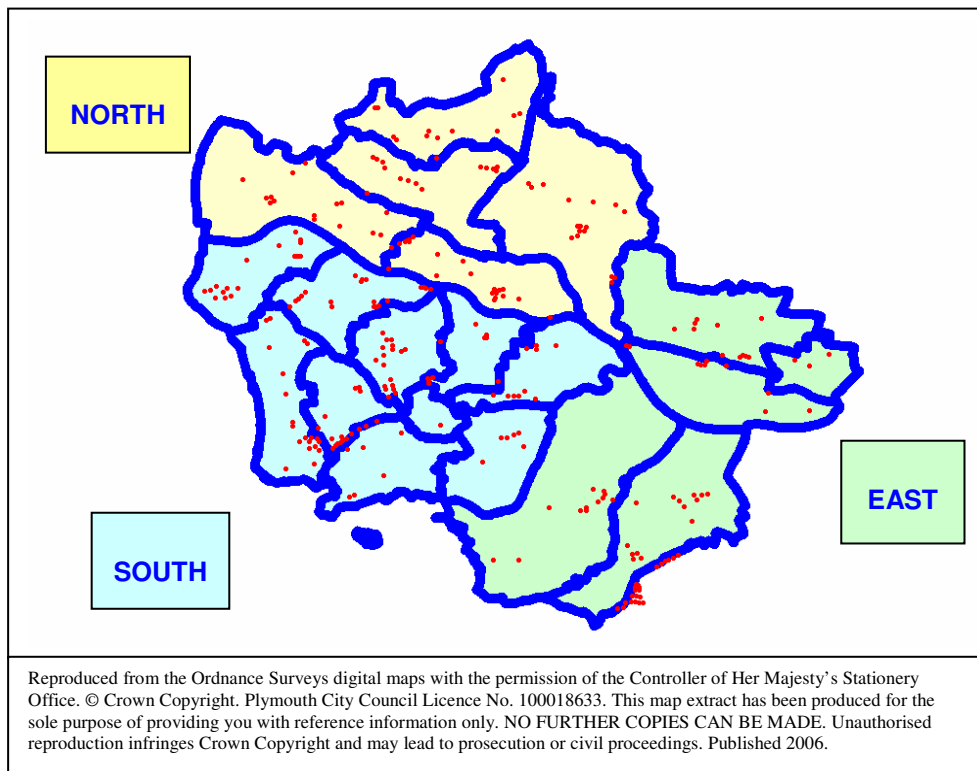
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<sup>6</sup> 'Towards a Level Playing Field'. The most recent Sport England guidance document

**Figure 1: Plymouth ward map showing three discrete study sub-areas:**



**Figure 2: Plymouth ward map showing playing pitch distribution by sub-area:**



## Demand

- 4.18 The questionnaire survey of sports clubs provided the information required for assessing demand. Specifically this covered:
- The number of senior and junior teams for each sport in each sub-area
  - The ratio of home games and temporal demand (i.e., when they were played)
- 4.19 In addition, population data were obtained for both the 'current' and 'future' active population<sup>7</sup>. The current active population data were derived from the 2001 census. And the future active population was based on population estimates for 2016 derived from the Urban Capacity Study (2003).
- 4.20 The sub-area with the greatest concentration of teams overall is the South. It has 44% of all football teams with the East sub-area having 32% and the North sub-area 24%. There is an even greater concentration of cricket teams in the South sub-area with 53% of weekend teams and 59% of midweek teams located here. This compares with 12% weekend and 15% midweek in the North sub-area and 35% weekend and 26% midweek in the East. A similar picture emerges with regard to rugby with 39% of teams in the South, 37% in the East and 24% in the North.

Description of teams by sub-area can be supplied on request.

### **The playing pitch calculator within the PPM:**

- 4.21 The playing pitch calculator is the Sport England tool that is used to:
- Analyse the local current situation using survey data on existing teams and pitches
  - Determine whether the current level of provision is adequate to meet the current level of demand as identified
  - Predict future requirements for pitches by incorporating projected changes in population levels derived from the local demographic profile for the area and the most recent local Urban Capacity Study. In addition, it allows for any growth in participation that may arise as a consequence of known or anticipated local sports development activity

In the case of Plymouth, the calculator was applied to Plymouth and to each of the three geographical sub-areas.

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<sup>7</sup> Active population is the population within the appropriate age band for each sport or sub group of that sport.

## Section 5 – Outcomes (What the data tells us)

### Analysis of current provision

- 5.1 The current aggregated data table showing the calculation of the shortfall/surplus of pitches for Plymouth and each separate sub-area is available on request.
- 5.2 It is important to understand that the data (population, pitch supply, temporal demand, adult/junior ratios, team generation rates etc) is unique to each survey area. Consequentially the data output is independent – it can be seen below that provision in the city does not reflect the accumulative total of each of the three sub-areas.

### Key issues 1

- 5.3 Key issues arising with regard to **current provision** are as follows:

#### City

- An overall shortfall of 19 junior football pitches
- An overall shortfall of 1 cricket pitch for weekend use
- An overall shortfall of 4 junior rugby pitches, however junior teams are currently accommodated on existing senior rugby pitches.

The three Plymouth sub-areas:

#### North sub-area

- An overall shortfall of 1 senior rugby pitch
- An overall shortfall of 3 junior rugby pitches, however junior teams are currently accommodated on existing senior rugby pitches.

#### South sub-area

- An overall shortfall of 10 junior football pitches
- An overall shortfall of 1 cricket pitch for midweek use
- An overall shortfall of 4 junior rugby pitches, however junior teams are currently accommodated on existing senior rugby pitches.

#### East sub-area

- An overall shortfall of 10 junior football pitches
- An overall shortfall of 1.5 cricket pitches for weekend use

- 5.4 The importance of the sub-area analysis becomes clear as it can be seen that provision in the city as a whole does not reflect the patterns of supply and demand in each of the sub-areas.

### **Analysis of future provision**

- 5.5 The future aggregated data table shows the calculation of the shortfalls/surpluses of pitches for each Plymouth sub-area in 2016. These data tables are available on request.
- 5.6 Again, it is important to understand that the data is unique to each survey area and the data output is independent – it is shown below that provision in the city does not reflect the accumulative total of each of the three sub-areas.

### **Key issues 2**

- 5.7 Key issues with regard to **future provision (2016)** are as follows:

#### **City**

- An overall shortfall of 6 senior football pitches
- An overall shortfall of 34 junior football pitches
- An overall shortfall of 3 cricket pitches for weekend use
- An overall shortfall of 7 junior rugby pitches, it is anticipated that junior teams will continue to be accommodated on existing senior rugby pitches.

The three Plymouth sub-areas:

#### **North** sub-area

- An overall shortfall of 2 junior football pitches
- An overall shortfall of 2 senior rugby pitches
- An overall shortfall of 4 junior rugby pitches, it is anticipated that junior teams will continue to be accommodated on senior rugby pitches.

#### **South** sub-area

- An overall shortfall of 17 junior football pitches
- An overall shortfall of 3 cricket pitches, two for midweek and one for weekend use (provided that the weekend pitch has an NTW for midweek use)
- An overall shortfall of 6 junior rugby pitches, it is anticipated that junior teams will continue to be accommodated on existing senior rugby pitches.

### East sub-area

- An overall shortfall of 14 junior football pitches
- An overall shortfall of 2 cricket pitches for weekend use

### Hockey citywide

- An overall shortfall of 0.75 of one hockey pitch

#### Note:

Details are constantly changing. Since the audit of playing pitches and survey of local sports clubs was completed, as part of the Playing Pitch Methodology, certain pitches have been lost to the supply chain including:

- Plymouth Sports Club (Hockey and Cricket)
- Civil Service Sports Club (Rugby, Football and Cricket)

5.8 A certain amount of spare capacity should be an integral part of future management considerations. Consequently, a surplus playing pitch requirement has been determined at 10% for all pitch types and has been built into the summaries above. See paragraph 6.14 for further detail.

### Surplus pitches: secondary analysis and access arrangements

5.9 The analysis so far is based on a numerical model, which highlights surpluses or deficits of playing pitch supply at periods of peak demand. In the case of a numerical surplus further work will be necessary to identify the surplus pitches and whether there are any quality or access issues, which might affect their potential availability.

5.10 The need for a secondary analysis determines the precise situation as the following issues can affect supply:

- **Carrying Capacity** (The number of games a pitch can absorb) because of:
  - Drainage
  - Type of soil
  - Grass cover
  - Informal use

The PPPS considers carrying capacity for grass pitches in Plymouth to be no more than one match per day and two matches per week

- **Changing accommodation** – Good quality changing is desirable for most and essential for many levels of competition.

Poor or no changing accommodation will affect availability for league use.

- **Ownership** – pitches held under a lease/management arrangement to local clubs or those that belong to the Ministry of Defence may not available for further community use.

Specific courses of action recommended to reduce the specific shortfalls outlined are shown in Appendix 2.

## How does Plymouth compare?

5.11 Tables 3 and 4 show comparisons against other Local Authority areas that have published their assessments of playing pitch provision in relation to the latest Sport England guidance. In particular, this analysis compares the sufficiency of community junior football pitch stock (junior football pitches showing the greatest deficiency in Plymouth) and of all pitches in total.

Table 3	Surplus / Deficit			
	Junior Football		All pitches	
	Current	Future	Current	Future
Authority				
Plymouth	-19	-34	-12.2	-34.7
Sheffield	-83	-125	No data	No data
Gloucester	-14.2	-37.5	-17.6	-95.6
North East Lincolnshire	-2.3	-5.0	-13.8	-34.1
Chelmsford	-14.8	-15.1	-23.1	-26.0
Basildon	-4.5	-26.4	No data	No data
Fareham	-15	-15	No data	No data
St Albans	-20.9	-26.2	-35.9	-67.3
Broxbourne	-8	-8.3	24.0	-5.4
Waverley	-20.7	-28.5	13.6	0.7

5.12 It was clear from this research that although similar methodologies are been used elsewhere, the outputs were being presented in different ways. This made comparison difficult, however it is evident that Plymouth in not unique in reporting deficits of certain types of pitch provision and also that deficits of junior football pitches around the country confirm a thriving expansion of junior football as mentioned in paragraph 3.23.

<b>Table 4</b> <b>Authority (2001 population<sup>8</sup>)</b>	<b>Current Surplus / Deficit</b>		<b>Population Ratio</b>	
	<b>Junior Football</b>	<b>All pitches</b>	<b>Junior Football</b>	<b>All pitches</b>
Plymouth (240718)	-19	-12.2	1:12669	1:19731
Sheffield (513234)	-83	No data	1:6184	No data
Gloucester (109888)	-14.2	-17.6	1:7739	1:6244
North East Lincolnshire (157938)	-2.3	-13.8	1:68669	1:11445
Chelmsford (157053)	-14.8	-23.1	1:10671	1:6799
Basildon (165661)	-4.5	No data	1:36814	No data
Fareham (107969)	-15	No data	1:7198	No data
St Albans (128982)	-20.9	-35.9	1:6171	1:3593
Broxbourne (87056)	-8	24.0	1:10882	surplus
Waverley (115639)	-20.7	13.6	1:5586	surplus

5.13 Table 4 highlights a deficit ratio (pitch / population) for each given Local Authority area. This shows an outline indication of comparative health. As an example. Plymouth has a current shortfall of one junior football pitch for every 12,669 population and a current shortfall of one pitch (all types) for every 19,731 population.

<sup>8</sup> Source: National Statistics website: [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk) Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO.

## Section 6 - The way forward

### Priorities for action:

- 6.1 Having carefully followed the PPM, the surpluses and shortfalls in playing pitch provision outlined in paragraphs 5.3 and 5.7 were identified. This provided an evidence base for the Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy that was in turn used to inform the emergent Plymouth Local Development Framework.
- 6.2 Modelling the Plymouth area as a whole allows a clearer understanding of the implications of investment into any new multi-pitch site particularly when also considering sub-area evidence of shortfall or surplus.
- 6.3 This strategy (the PPS) includes recommendations that identify tangible measures to address the issues identified.

There are three approaches to resolving the issues that emerge from the playing pitch methodology analysis:

- Protecting existing playing pitches
- Addressing shortfalls in quantity
- Addressing shortfalls in quality

Taking each of these in turn:

### Protecting existing playing pitches:

#### Local Development Framework (LDF) – Core Strategy

- 6.4 At the heart of the LDF is the overall aim of promoting sustainable development – seeking to integrate rather than balance environmental, economic and social aspirations. It also seeks to promote sustainable linked communities where people enjoy living, and where the full range of local services and facilities are provided.
- 6.5 The Local Development Framework Core Strategy, adopted April 2007, is a material consideration in the development control process.
- 6.6 In Section 11 of the Core Strategy (Natural Environment) there is a strategic objective to safeguard, enhance and promote access to Plymouth's green spaces and coastal environments that are of strategic importance in terms of defining the city's character, supporting wildlife, recreation and other benefits. There is also a policy (Policy CS18) to protect and support a diverse and multi-functional network of green space and waterscape.

- 6.7 Strategic Objective 15 (Delivering Community Well-being) – Policy CS30 aims to protect and improve the city's sport and leisure facilities through supporting the implementation of the city's Sports Plan 2020, the Sports Facilities Strategy and the Playing Pitch Strategy so as to promote healthy and active lifestyles.
- 6.8 This policy makes clear the need to safeguard and improve the provision of playing fields in light of the fact that Plymouth as a whole was under provided for. As a consequence any further erosion in provision was considered likely to be unacceptable. However, proposals to reconfigure provision through development could be acceptable provided always that such development led to substantial enhancement in the quality and distribution of playing pitches and sports facilities and improvements in accessibility for users.
- 6.9 The 'current actual' and 'future predicted' Plymouth playing pitch shortfalls, identified earlier together with consideration of the significant contribution that is made by sites in MoD and other non-Council ownership, clearly emphasise the need to protect, where practicable, all existing areas of playing pitch land whether they are in public, private or institutional ownership.
- 6.10 This strategy forms a key evidence base for the Local Development Framework in relation to all policies and proposals relating to playing pitches

**Key Action 1**

To only allow development where the playing fields that may be lost as a result of any proposed development would be replaced by a playing field or fields of equivalent or better quantity and quality and in a suitable location.

**Key Action 2**

Subject to available resources protect maintain and enhance an accessible network of playing pitch provision that meets the current and future anticipated demand from all teams that wish to play home games, on a pitch that is of sufficient quality and with suitable ancillary facilities close by

**Unsecured sites**

- 6.11 In the review period leading to this strategy there were only a handful of 'secured community use' agreements in existence for Plymouth playing pitches. This type of formal agreement will focus on community needs

and the achievement of clearly stated sporting, social and financial outcomes.

- 6.12 Such agreements are looked upon as being extremely valuable in the context of sport-specific strategic planning - and their widespread adoption is promoted and encouraged by Sport England. Grant aid for all new sports provision and enhancement projects is dependent upon the ability of the applicant organisation to secure ongoing community use for any proposed new and/or enhanced sports facilities.
- 6.13 It is taken as read that Council facilities enjoy secured community use, but that is not the case for school playing pitches, where community use is often dependent upon informal approvals reconsidered each year. As a consequence, the dual-use of school pitches is continually 'at risk'. There are school sites that do play a very significant role in supporting local sports development however; it is important that many more schools and other local playing pitch providers strengthen and formalise appropriate community use agreements with local sports clubs.

### **Key Action 3**

All pitch providers should enter 'community use agreements' with appropriate leagues and/or sports clubs. Such agreement should be linked to the achievement of social inclusion, equity of access and junior sports development targets.

## **Addressing shortfalls in quantity:**

### **Spare capacity**

- 6.14 This report so far has concentrated on identified deficiencies in playing pitch provision however, a certain amount of spare capacity (i.e., surplus playing pitch provision at periods of peak demand) has been also been identified. However, some degree of overall spare capacity is an integral part of the management considerations of a local playing pitch stock - for the following reasons:
- To accommodate latent and future demand for existing pitch sports
  - To enable the establishment and development of new pitch sports
  - To accommodate any backlog of matches at the end of a wet season
  - To facilitate periods of rest and recovery for badly worn pitches
  - To provide an opportunity to take certain pitches out of use for a season (or more) to enable improvement works to be undertaken
  - To meet the sports development needs of those groups traditionally under-represented in terms of their access to playing pitches

- 6.15 Based on estimates from the above information, local authorities should estimate a justified 'strategic reserve' of pitches required for their area. Consequently, a minimum spare capacity requirement of 10%, a standard industry approach has been determined for all Plymouth areas and for all pitch types.

### **Education sites**

- 6.16 The dual-use of school playing fields and the joint development of community pitch facilities on education sites has the potential to meet some of the identified shortfalls in current junior playing pitch provision. Schools also provide excellent host sites for floodlit playing pitches with synthetic turf surfaces that are capable of intensive use in all weathers - and beyond 4:30 p.m. in the darker winter months. In fact there is a strong case that this is potentially their greatest future contribution to local playing pitch needs. The Plymouth case studies undertaken so far suggest that usage of school grass playing pitches is already the team equivalent of three junior football teams playing on a school pitch each week. Therefore in dual-use situations where community teams also make use of school pitches there is a danger of routinely overplaying those pitches.
- 6.17 Access to appropriate changing facilities at school sites can be an issue, even in circumstances where the community is allowed to use one or more of the school playing pitches. This is because school changing facilities were historically located within larger more multi-functional school buildings that needed to be secured and which were therefore inaccessible to the general public in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays. It is often the case with older school facilities that even where public access is made possible, the provision is not always ideal due to a fundamental difference in the requirements between school and community changing facilities.
- 6.18 To illustrate, at the time of survey 42% of Plymouth's school playing fields allowed community access. This equates to an untapped resource of 75 sites across the city.
- 6.19 However looking forward, the arrangements being entered into by the Council with PFI contractors, the 'Building Schools for the Future' programme, the extended services programme and also the impact of the new school construction programmes should have a positive impact on community use for both existing and new playing field facilities.

#### **Key Action 4**

All schools, whenever possible, should have dual-use arrangements for sports facilities. New schools should have dual-use factored in to the design criteria from the onset and then constructed to national sports governing body standards. However, it is understood that when designing or managing any school facilities precedence must always be given to the curriculum use of those facilities.

#### **The use of local planning obligations (Section 106 agreements)**

- 6.20 **Planning obligations are key and have increasingly been used to address the impacts that developments can have on the infrastructure of the city.** In Circular 05/05 (Planning Obligations), the Government confirmed its support for the use of planning obligations to mitigate the impact of development.
- 6.21 The Local Development Framework Core Strategy contains a policy on planning obligations (Policy CS33) that states 'where needs arise directly as a result of development, the Council will seek to secure planning obligations or agreements pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that make a positive contribution to creating a city of sustainable linked communities.
- 6.22 Developer contributions should be used towards the establishment costs of new, and/or the enhancement costs of existing playing pitch and ancillary provision.
- 6.23 The Council may pool contributions towards more strategic service provision, such as a multi pitch sports hub. The Plymouth Core Strategy states that: "It is important that development contributes positively to the city and impacts are appropriately managed. In some cases, this may even include contributing to an "infrastructure capital pot" to ensure that cumulatively developments deliver solutions to enable the city to grow in a sustainable manner.
- 6.24 This approach is recommended in the ODPM Circular 05/2005, which states, "where the combined impact of a number of developments creates the need for infrastructure, it may be reasonable for the associated developers' contributions to be pooled, in order to allow the infrastructure to be secured in a fair and equitable way.

#### **Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD**

- 6.25 The Council has published a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Planning Obligations, which will set out a framework for the negotiation of planning agreements and the calculation of specific developer contribution.

- 6.26 The draft SPD sets out the City Council's approach to planning obligations when considering planning applications for development in Plymouth.
- 6.27 The objective of the SPD will be to provide clarity to developers, planning officers, stakeholders and local residents regarding the basis on which planning obligations will be sought. Obligations will align with several service areas including new or improved leisure infrastructure.
- 6.28 The Council may seek contributions for all residential developments from one dwelling or more by the means of a Plymouth Development Tariff, a standard charge to secure contributions in a clear, efficient and transparent way. It is considered that this tariff will provide a greater clarity and certainty for the development industry whilst securing valuable contributions to mitigate the impacts of new development.
- 6.29 Larger residential developments may make additional contributions and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- 6.30 **Developer contribution will be the catalyst for new provision and improvement to the recognised sporting infrastructure within our local communities.**
- 6.31 There will, however also be competing demands for contributions (e.g. affordable housing; new schools and transport infrastructure).

#### **Key Action 5**

Maximise Section 106 agreements under the Town and Country Planning Act for the provision and/or enhancement of playing pitches and ancillary facilities, and for subsequent maintenance, in new developments and, if appropriate, provide compensatory facilities where existing provision is under threat.

#### **Other external funding**

- 6.32 Lottery distributors such as the Football Foundation, Sport England and the *Big Lottery Fund* are potential sources of external funding, as are a number of governing bodies such as the England and Wales Cricket Board and the Rugby Football Union. In each case, such funding bodies will require a robust, strategically founded assessment of need that supports any application for funding.
- 6.33 The Playing Pitch Model provides projected data on supply and demand in a way that will substantiate why a facility is needed. It will also demonstrate that a proposal is sustainable. Such information presented will give the funder a confident basis for assessing a bid for investment.

- 6.34 The present lottery licence for Sport England lasts until 2009–10, and a diminishing spending profile has been set for the remaining years. Similarly, the Football Foundation and other lottery distributors are adjusting their funding criteria.

### **Potential locations for new playing pitches**

- 6.35 The level of new provision required to meet the identified shortfalls will depend on the amount of pitches that can be secured for community use. Shortfalls can be met through the acquirement and/or upgrading of existing facilities (such as education sites) and also through the acquisition of new land.
- 6.36 There is a potential to develop identified sites as larger multi playing pitch locations. However, as explained earlier in this document any infrastructure investment of this type has to strike a balance between the opportunities to deliver a site of strategic importance against a sub-regional requirement for reasonable access to facilities.

### **Chelson Meadow**

- 6.37 As an example, an area of land has been identified at Chelson Meadow, under Proposal NP12 (North Plymstock Area Action Plan), as a site with a realistic future use as a leisure and recreation resource.
- 6.38 Originally Chelson Meadow was part of tidal mud flats of the Plym Estuary. It was reclaimed in the 1800s and used for waste tipping from the early 1960s. The waste tipping has all but ceased and the land progressively restored.
- 6.39 The future realistic use has been assessed as essentially 'soft' such as for a leisure and recreation resource. An emerging Chelson Meadow Restoration Plan will identify the potential restoration and recreational options, opportunities and impacts.

### **Other sites**

- 6.40 The Plymouth Sustainable Neighbourhood Development Plan will show all the major sites not included in the Area Action Plan's that might change use to meet Plymouth's needs for homes, jobs, shopping and recreation as outlined in the Core Strategy.
- 6.41 To ensure that these plans help make neighbourhoods better places to live and work, community involvement at the 'Issues and Options' stage will cover every neighbourhood included in the plan and will run to June 2008.

The aim of this consultation is to:

- Work with communities and partners to access knowledge and understanding about Plymouth, and ensure this feeds into the Local Development framework and other strategic work in the city;
- Ensure that a wide range of people have an opportunity to be involved and put forward their views and ideas for how their neighbourhood may change in the future;
- Assess the accuracy of the Sustainable Neighbourhood Assessments and make amendments as needed;
- Highlight sites that should be safeguarded from development and identify potential new sites that may be developed or change use;
- Identify what each community needs to make it more sustainable and how this could happen;
- Increase awareness of the Local Development Framework and its role in creating sustainable linked communities.

6.42 The achievement of bringing any additional sites into supply would have an accumulative effect of meeting both the current and predicted shortfalls in the identified playing pitch supply.

6.43 However, concentrating pitches in key areas could also have an adverse effect on demand from other areas of the city.

#### **Key Action 6**

Whenever possible, where investment opportunities are identified for the general enhancement of local playing pitch and ancillary facilities, their use should first be considered at 'multi-pitch' locations rather than 'individual' pitch locations.

### **Addressing shortfalls in quality**

6.44 Like any local authority, Plymouth's pitches vary in quality in terms of the playing surface and ancillary facilities. The City Council has a comprehensive database assessing the quality of all public pitches in the City

6.45 Recommendations are proposed in Appendix 3 as a means of dealing with the issues of playing pitch quality and these are detailed and comprehensive.

6.46 The relevant playing pitch user groups advised that: whilst the vast majority of teams (83% of the 400 team representative responses) felt that when all things were considered, their home pitches and ancillary facilities were either good or acceptable, there were a number of categories in need of attention. And these included the evenness of the pitch, the length of the grass, the standard of the line-markings, the amount of litter and dog-fouling on pitches, the absence or poor standard

of changing facilities, the unreliability/poor quality of showers where they were provided; and car park arrangements at some hockey facilities.

- 6.47 However, this Strategy also identifies that the Council's Parks Services Team (responsible for the management and maintenance of the vast majority of city playing pitches and changing facilities) has recently been recognised by the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) as being one of just eight top performers in the country. It is likely therefore that the poor quality provision referred to by pitch user groups is the consequence of an ageing stock of facilities, a change in maintenance routine frequencies linked to budget pressures, a different type of line marking compound being used and the difficulties of maintaining high standard facilities within areas of public open space.

**Key action 7**

Invest available resources in local playing pitches and ancillary facilities in accordance with the priorities of annual action plans that will be produced between 2008 and 2016 using the PPPS for guidance

## Section 7 – Developing new Local Standards

### The Six Acre Standard

- 7.1 The 'Six Acre Standard' (2.43 hectares) produced by the National Playing Field Association (NPFA) is a national minimum standard for outdoor recreation that compares the quantity of open space that is available per 1,000 population.
- 7.2 The Six Acre Standard is broken into four separate categories: Sports Pitches; Other Youth and Adult Space; Informal Children's Play Space; and Equipped Children's Play Space. The NPFA national minimum standard for community sports pitch provision alone is 1.2 hectares per 1000 population.
- 7.3 However, this is a national standard, which does not consider local circumstances. It takes no account of population characteristics such as age structure, quality and suitability of the facility or local accessibility.

### Local Standards relevant to Plymouth

- 7.4 To develop local standards, the area of land required for playing pitch use at the end of the review period must be calculated. Only those pitches with full community access should be included. The area should be compared to the total future population of the study area to give a 'hectares per thousand population' figure. It will be necessary to develop more than one standard to reflect separate sub-areas.
- 7.5 Whilst the Playing Pitch Methodology has been able to identify current and future shortfalls in playing pitch provision, to be able to underpin strategic planning policies that seek to sustain required levels of playing pitch (and ancillary facility) provision in future years, it is essential to adopt relevant 'Local Standards'.
- 7.6 Local Standards should be determined as a consequence of robust analyses of local need in line with Government Planning Policy Guidance, for example, as contained within 'PPG17' and its companion guide.
- 7.7 A future local standard calculation is based upon the findings of this report for the year 2016. It takes into account any deficit or surplus of pitches identified, changes in population levels, sports development initiatives and an allowance of 10% for the rest and recuperation of playing pitches (background data that led to the determination of the Local Standard will be supplied on request). The results for Plymouth and for each Plymouth study sub-area provide an overall quantitative 'Local Standard' of provision as follows:

- Plymouth sub-area North – 0.61 hectares / 1000 population;
- Plymouth sub-area South – 0.63 hectares / 1000 population;
- Plymouth sub-area East – 1.01 hectares / 1000 population.

7.8 How Local Standards were determined is described in Appendix 1.

## Section 8 - Summary

### Summary

- 8.1 The Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy (PPPS), 2007-2016, assesses the 'current actual' and 'future predicted' needs of local community sports teams for access to appropriate Plymouth playing pitches in relation to: cricket, football, hockey, rugby union; American football, baseball and softball.
- 8.3 The PPPS follows the Sport England Playing Pitch Methodology (PPM) throughout its production process. It analyses the overall stock of playing pitches, their availability for public use and their quality. It goes on to use Team Generation Rates<sup>9</sup>, predicted future population levels (informed by the local Urban Capacity Study) and anticipated increases in local sports participation, to provide an estimation of predicted future surpluses and shortfalls of Plymouth playing pitches at periods of peak demand that might occur by the year 2016 if no action were taken between now and then. And the Strategy therefore makes recommendations for actions that are believed to be necessary to help to provide as many of the right number of pitches of the right quality in the right places as possible within the next decade.
- 8.4 The predictions for Plymouth were made for the city as a whole and with reference to three distinct study areas, sub-areas: North, South and East.
- 8.5 The purpose of the PPPS is to support the priorities of Plymouth's 'Sustainable Community Strategy' and Plymouth City Council's 'Corporate Plan' with policies and recommended actions designed to guide the management of the city's stock of playing pitches and ancillary facilities.
- 8.6 The PPPS is one of a series<sup>10</sup> of sport-specific local strategies that help to inform and in turn be informed by the Local Development Framework. They specifically help with the attainment of two of the Plymouth Sustainable Community Strategy's eight strategic objectives: 'Improving health and well-being', and 'Stimulating culture and leisure activities'
- 8.7 The PPPS clearly identifies its relationship to the wider sports agenda and its local role. Playing pitches are provided by institutions, the Ministry of Defence, Private Companies and the City Council. And the pitch sports requirements of the local community can only be met by access to and improvements in the stock of pitches that is collectively managed by all such local providers. A strategy of this type enables

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<sup>9</sup> Team Generation Rates are the numbers of people in the relevant active age-ranges of the study area population required to generate one team for any given sport.

<sup>10</sup> The series includes the adopted 'Sports Plan 2020' and the emergent 'Plymouth Sports Facilities Strategy'.

each provider to recognise the relevance of its own contribution and to make informed decisions in reference to its tacit partnership responsibilities - rather than making decisions in isolation.

- 8.8 Mindful of all those priorities carefully designed to govern how Council business is conducted locally with its partners, the PPPS also defines some more specific lower-level points of reference to help to determine those actions necessary for the successful future management of the Plymouth playing pitch stock. These locally set targets, or 'key objectives' for the Strategy are identified below.

**The Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy key objectives for the period from 2007 – 2016 are identified as seeking the achievement of:**

- A position (within geographical limitations) where Plymouth is recognised as having the right number of playing pitches, of the right quality, in the right places.
- A higher standard of playing pitch changing accommodation provision than currently exists (2007) to better meet the needs of local sports participants.
- An adopted series of sub-area local standards for Plymouth in relation to the playing pitches it should seek to provide for its local residents.

- 8.9 By undertaking a careful assessment of local needs for playing pitch provision following an approved method this Strategy complies with Government guidance contained within its Planning Policy Guidance note 'PPG17'.
- 8.10 The PPPS has been written in line with the modern agenda for sport set by Central Government and being delivered by Sport England, the South West Regional Sports Board, County Sports Partnerships and local activities guided by Plymouth's own sports policies as originally outlined in 'Sports Plan 2020'.
- 8.11 The current agenda that guides the sector is governed by the desire to have more people more active because of the health benefits. And for active lifestyles involving sport the agenda is specifically designed to encourage more people to start, stay and succeed in their chosen sport.
- 8.12 The PPPS used a Sport England calculator within the standard playing pitch methodology as the means to determine three new 'Local Standards' for playing pitch provision from now until 2016.

- 8.13 These 'Local Standards' can now be used to help to identify levels of developer contribution. This will assist any negotiations that are undertaken to determine the magnitude of any Planning Obligations.
- 8.14 Financial contributions of this type, secured under Section 106 of the Town and County Planning Act (as amended) can then be used to pay for, or help to pay for, the off-site provision (and/or enhancement) of formal playing pitches (and their ancillary facilities<sup>11</sup>) associated with the increase in local demand that is generated by any new residential development in Plymouth.
- 8.15 Wherever possible, planning obligations should be provided on the same site as the proposed new development. However, where it is agreed that this is not a sustainable option then a developer contribution can be requested for investment in the provision/enhancement of 'off-site' facilities.
- 8.16 Sport England strongly recommends that local planning authorities should maximise the use of developer contributions within planning obligations as a means of providing for the recognised sporting and recreational needs of their local communities, although there will be competing demands for contributions (e.g. affordable housing; transport infrastructure).
- 8.17 The PPPS is a valuable strategy. It has clear measurable objectives and it provides recommended actions and policies designed to guide the future management of Plymouth's stock of playing pitches from now until 2016.

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<sup>11</sup> 'Ancillary facilities' include items such as car park arrangements, changing accommodation, toilets, equipment stores, social and office areas, bus stops etc. – any or all of which may be identified as being necessary to support specific formal playing pitches.

## Appendix 1 – Determination of new Local Standards

### Local Standards (Plymouth sub-areas)

- 1 Local Standards for each Plymouth study sub-areas were determined as follows:
- 2 **Firstly**, Local Standard calculations (undertaken by using the playing pitch methodology throughout) initially identified the total numbers of each sports pitch type ‘in supply’. Next, having assumed that each of these conformed to national governing body playing pitch dimensions, by multiplication, determined the total areas (expressed in hectares<sup>12</sup>) of playing pitch that were ‘currently’<sup>13</sup> available in order to meet the main match day (or ‘peak’) demands for access to the city’s playing pitches. **(In Plymouth there are approximately 236.1 hectares of land currently designated as playing pitches (various types) of which an approximate total of 143.7 hectares have dedicated community access.)**
- 3 These were the demands of the total number of sports teams that played in each sport within each specific study sub-area. And therefore to these were added the total areas of ‘current’ shortfall for each sports pitch type (obtained from previous modelling calculations). Those ‘current’ shortfall figures effectively represented the total areas of playing pitch that were used for each pitch sport by Plymouth teams whose ‘demand’ might be referred to as having being ‘displaced’ at that point in time - and who, in other words, were required to play their home matches on pitches located beyond the city boundary.
- 4 **Secondly**, ‘Team Generation Rates’<sup>14</sup> for the ‘current’ situation (as informed by local survey data) together with predicted future population levels (derived from the most recent local ‘Urban Capacity Study’) plus an anticipated increase in local participation levels (of 10%<sup>15</sup>) collectively provided the means of predicting the anticipated future numbers of teams for each pitch sport type within each city study sub-area. From that, and by applying standard usage rates<sup>16</sup>, it was possible to predict

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<sup>12</sup> **One hectare = 10,000 square metres.** (And, for reference purposes: the total size of a typical junior football pitch, with national governing body approved safe run-off areas, is the equivalent of one-half of one hectare, or 5,000 square metres).

<sup>13</sup> **The PPPS actually uses 2003/2004 data** that was current at the time, but unfortunately the strategy itself took a further eighteen months or so to write.

<sup>14</sup> The ‘Team Generation Rate’ or ‘TGR’ as it is more commonly known, is a remarkably valuable statistic. It identifies **the number of people** within (the specific active age-range of) a population (within any given study area) that is **required to generate one team** for any particular sport.

<sup>15</sup> A 10% increase in participation levels across all pitch sports over the next ten years is an outcome that is reasonably expected to occur as a consequence of ongoing local sports development initiatives designed to help to meet identified Sport England targets and is a figure that concurs with assumptions made by other local authorities elsewhere in the country.

<sup>16</sup> Standard usage is considered to be a maximum of two teams playing a home match (on different days) on any given pitch in any given week.

the total number of new pitches that it was anticipated would be required. And, as previously, assuming that all the new pitches would conform to standard governing body playing pitch dimensions it was possible to estimate the total area of playing pitches that it is likely will be required in Plymouth in order to satisfy the periods of peak demand by the year 2016.

- 5 **Thirdly**, to that area and for each pitch sport (except 'minority sports') was added a contingency figure of 10% (i.e., to make allowance for the occasional need to replace some pitches from within the supply list with others not in supply, but held within the overall stock - to enable the most worn pitches to be taken out of use for appropriate periods of rest and recovery, etc.
- 6 **Fourthly**, having produced a series of figures for the total levels of future predicted playing pitch requirements for each sport (based on some very reasonable assumptions), these were added together to identify the total areas that would be required for all pitch sports (excluding hockey) within each independent sub-area by the year 2016.
- 7 **Fifthly**, each of those figures (i.e., the Plymouth study area, sub-area, 'predicted' future playing pitch requirement figures) was then compared to the specific total future 'predicted' population figure for each sub-area concerned in order to determine the relevant 'Local Standard' for playing pitch provision (excluding hockey) in each respective case. The Local Standard was arithmetically calculated in each case and the result was expressed as: the number of hectares of playing pitch that it is anticipated would be required for every one thousand residents in the year 2016.
- 8 **Sixthly**, the citywide Local Standard for hockey then needed to be added to each sub-area Local Standard for the provision of the other pitch sports (see page 39).
- 9 **Seventhly**, the results of the additions referred to in the paragraph above in each Plymouth study area provided the overall quantitative Local Standard of provision for each sub-area as shown

## **A Local Standard**

- 10 A future local standard calculation is based upon the findings of this report for the year 2016. It takes into account any deficit or surplus of pitches identified, changes in population levels, sports development initiatives and an allowance of 10% for the rest and recuperation of playing pitches. The Local Standards calculated outline the required area per thousand population<sup>7</sup> (the background data that led to the determination of the Local Standard will be supplied on request). The

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<sup>7</sup> The figures were derived from information contained within the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Preferred Options Report (page 15) and the Urban Capacity Study for Plymouth (2003).

results for each Plymouth study area provide an overall quantitative 'Local Standard' of provision as follows:

- Plymouth sub-area North – 0.61 hectares / 1000 population;
- Plymouth sub-area South – 0.63 hectares / 1000 population;
- Plymouth sub-area East – 1.01 hectares / 1000 population.

## Appendix 2 - Recommendations for addressing pitch specific shortfalls:

Results obtained by using the Sport England calculator as part of the playing pitch methodology, see paragraph 5.7, show a number of specific shortfalls in the quantity of Plymouth playing pitches and predicts further falls by 2016 if no remedial action were taken between now and then. As a consequence the following Tables (5 to 7 inclusive) contain specific courses of action that are recommended as a means of reducing the likelihood of those predictions ever becoming a reality.

**Table 5 (Plymouth North)**

Plymouth: North sub-area	
Shortfall	Recommended action
<p><b>Football:</b> Rounded up to <b>2 junior football pitches</b></p>	<p><b>Preferred option:</b> construct a new floodlit ‘third generation’ synthetic turf pitch. These are known to be at least the equivalent of two grass pitches. <b>Local teams and leagues should be encouraged to share pitches and stagger kick off times so that intensive use can be made of these STPs and such facilities might even be the local playing pitch equivalent of 6 grass pitches.</b></p> <p><b>Alternative option 1:</b> whenever possible all schools in Plymouth should cater for community dual-use.</p> <p><b>Alternative option 2:</b> use any surplus or under-utilised provision of local senior football pitches for junior football purposes on a short term measure</p>
<p><b>Rugby:</b> Rounded to <b>2 rugby pitches</b></p>	<p><b>Preferred option:</b> should the opportunity arise - to seek to acquire a field or fields suitable for the establishment of at least 2 new rugby pitches at a single location plus their ancillary provision. This to be either in the North sub-area or in its immediate rural fringe. As part of the process to enter an appropriate lease arrangement – in preference, with a well established and suitably accredited local rugby club.</p>
<p><b>Hockey<sup>17</sup>:</b> Rounded to <b>1 full-size hockey synthetic turf pitch for Plymouth as a whole</b></p>	<p><b>Preferred option:</b> seek to construct a new floodlit sand-dressed synthetic turf pitch suitable for hockey at an appropriate secondary school location somewhere in the <b>East sub-area</b> of the city (see the note above), or possibly in the ‘Sherford fringe’</p> <p><b>Alternative option:</b> encourage the hosting of the required additional hockey facility at an existing non-school multi-pitch location somewhere in this sub-area.</p>

<sup>17</sup> Hockey needed to be modelled on a citywide basis as a consequence of there being ‘no pitches’ and therefore ‘no teams’ in Plymouth sub-area East within the review period).

Table 6 (Plymouth South)

Plymouth: South sub-area	
Shortfall	Recommended action
<p><b>Football:</b></p> <p>Rounded up to <b>14 junior football pitches</b></p>	<p><b>Preferred option:</b> construct one or more new floodlit 'third generation' synthetic turf pitches. These are known to be at least the equivalent of two grass pitches. <b>Local teams and leagues should be encouraged to share pitches and stagger kick off times so that intensive use can be made of these STPs and such facilities might even be the local playing pitch equivalent of 6 grass pitches.</b></p> <p><b>Alternative option 1:</b> whenever possible all schools in Plymouth should cater for community dual-use.</p> <p><b>Alternative option 2:</b> use any surplus or under-utilised provision of local senior football pitches for junior football purposes on a short term measure</p>
<p><b>Cricket:</b></p> <p>Rounded up to <b>1 grass wicket cricket pitch weekend use</b></p>	<p><b>Preferred option:</b> establish a new cricket pitch with a grass cricket square and supporting ancillary provision at a location as close to the South sub-area as possible (because there is nowhere within it to provide a new facility of this type). A possible location within the city large enough for the purpose is the privately owned green space adjacent to the Manadon Football Development Centre. (Also, there may be a need to include a new non-turf wicket alongside the square at such a proposed new facility in order to allow for one of the required pitches identified below).</p> <p>(NB: The Council are currently in discussion with Plymouth Cricket Club about a lease to cricket facilities on the lower Stonehouse Creek site (adjoining Devonport High School for Boys). This subject to provisions for a club – school - community partnership).</p>
<p><b>Cricket:</b></p> <p>Rounded up to <b>2 non-turf wicket cricket pitches midweek use</b></p>	<p><b>Preferred option:</b> replace at least one worn out (or underutilised) non-turf wicket at an appropriate school location in the South sub-area in return for the pitch and its associated ancillary facilities being made available for community use beyond school hours. Invite expressions of interest for this course of action from all the local schools. Choose at least two for delivery.</p>

**Table 7 (Plymouth East)**

<b>Plymouth: East sub-area</b>	
<b>Shortfall</b>	<b>Recommended action</b>
<p><b>Football</b></p> <p>Rounded up to: <b>12 junior football pitches</b></p>	<p><b>Preferred option:</b> construct one or more new floodlit ‘third generation’ synthetic turf pitches. These are known to be at least the equivalent of two grass pitches. <b>Local teams and leagues should be encouraged to share pitches and stagger kick off times so that intensive use can be made of these STPs and such facilities might even be the local playing pitch equivalent of 6 grass pitches.</b></p> <p><b>Alternative option 1:</b> whenever possible all schools in Plymouth should cater for community dual-use.</p> <p><b>Alternative option 2:</b> use any surplus or under-utilised provision of local senior football pitches for junior football purposes on a short term measure</p>
<p><b>Hockey<sup>9</sup>:</b></p> <p>Rounded to <b>1 full-size hockey synthetic turf pitch for Plymouth as a whole</b></p>	<p><b>Preferred option:</b> seek to construct a new floodlit sand-dressed synthetic turf pitch suitable for hockey at an appropriate secondary school location somewhere in the <b>East sub-area</b> of the city (see the note above), or possibly in the ‘Sherford fringe’</p> <p><b>Alternative option:</b> should local planning advice preclude the use of a school site in that area - to encourage the hosting of the required additional hockey facility at an existing non-school multi-pitch location somewhere in this sub-area; for example at the University College Plymouth St Mark and St John Sport facility.</p>
<p><b>Cricket</b></p> <p>Rounded up to: <b>2 grass wicket cricket pitches weekend use</b></p>	<p><b>Preferred option:</b> Establish two new cricket pitches with grass cricket squares and supporting ancillary provision within or adjacent to the sub-area. There may be potential for one of these at Staddiscombe and another within the Sherford fringe just beyond King George Vth playing fields as part of a new set of playing fields to support the new Sherford community and the new residents of the Plymouth, East study area sub-area.</p> <p><b>Alternative option:</b> None at this stage</p>

<sup>9</sup> Hockey needed to be modelled on a citywide basis as opposed to a sub-area because there were no data available for the East sub-area (a consequence of their being ‘no pitches’ and therefore ‘no teams’ in that area within the review period).

### Appendix 3 - Recommendations for addressing shortfalls in the quality of pitches:

The recommended actions summarised in Table 8 below are proposed as the means of dealing with the major areas of concern identified by those user groups who responded to the questionnaire<sup>18</sup>. These emerged from an analysis of the sport-specific customer satisfaction levels reported within various categories in relation to the quality of the club's/team's 'home pitch'. All the survey results can be supplied on request.

The recommendations however, need to be delivered within the context of a difficult financial position and strictly within current, medium and long-term financial frameworks.

**Table 8**

Looking at Plymouth as a whole:	
Shortfall	Recommended action
The control of litter and dog fouling on all grass playing pitches	<p><b>Preferred option:</b> The dog control provisions of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act came into force on 6 April 2006. A simpler system for local authorities to introduce Dog Control Orders. The Dog Control Order Regulations provide for offences that may be prescribed in a dog control order.</p> <p>It is recommended that the offence of "<i>not keeping a dog on a lead</i>" should be extended to all council owned sports facilities and the offence of "<i>failing to remove faeces</i>" should extend to the whole of Plymouth the same as exists under Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996.</p>
The absence of changing facilities at certain locations	<p><b>Preferred option:</b> work progressively towards the provision of (at least) basic changing facilities at all playing pitch locations used by adults. And the provision of (at least) an adequacy of toilet provision and a securable equipment store at all junior playing pitch locations</p> <p><b>Alternative option:</b> review changing provision policy with the local sports forum and clubs to ensure adequate provision for the appropriate level of use</p>

<sup>18</sup> 'The Questionnaire' = The Sport England questionnaire that was used by Plymouth City Council in the data collection stage of the playing pitch methodology.

**Table 8 continued**

<b>Looking at Plymouth as a whole:</b>	
<b>Shortfall</b>	<b>Recommended action</b>
<p>The generally poor standard of the ageing changing facility provision that is to be found at most of the city's playing pitch locations</p>	<p><b>Preferred option:</b> sequentially invest a set annual budget in a phased remedial action programme to improve existing changing facilities - the priority order for which, and the precise nature of the works required - to be agreed annually, in advance, with all relevant user groups via the auspices of the city's sports forums</p>
<p>The poor standard of the showers, or the unreliable availability of hot water for the showers at changing room locations</p>	<p><b>Preferred option:</b> for relevant changing room providers to enter a standardised lease agreement with each user group, at each location, outlining agreed standards of provision. The user groups then to pay the necessary commercial rate that would be required to guarantee that level of service, i.e., because no additional cost must fall to the public purse as a consequence of entering this type of arrangement at any publicly-operated facilities</p> <p><b>Alternative option:</b> review changing provision policy with the local sports forum and clubs to ensure adequate provision for the appropriate level of use</p>
<p>The unevenness of the playing surface at many grass playing pitch locations (too many dips, holes and hollows)</p>	<p><b>Preferred option:</b> for pitch providers to enter a standardised lease agreement with pitch user groups to invest in a minimum of one playing pitch each year seeking to rectify the worst of the uneven areas on the pitch in accordance with the standards proposed by the Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG).</p> <p><b>Alternative option:</b> maintain current arrangements but take appropriate enforcement action against any people who deliberately damage playing pitches, or who negligently allow their dogs to damage playing pitches</p>
<p>The length of grass on the pitches can be too long</p>	<p><b>Preferred option:</b> for the Council to enter a standardised lease agreement with relevant user groups to undertake the current frequency of routine grounds maintenance operations at the current standard annual cost. But for user groups to then be able to purchase additional individual maintenance operations from the Council, at short notice, as and when required and at an annually pre-agreed cost. For example, additional operations to be ordered from time to time on a one-off basis might include the following: a grass cut, a refreshed line marking service, or an additional changing room cleansing visit</p>

Table 8 continued

Looking at Plymouth as a whole:	
Shortfall	Recommended action
<p>The length of grass on the pitches can be too long sometimes</p>	<p><b>Alternative option 1:</b> public playing pitches should only be maintained as if they were amenity areas of public open space (with say 13 -16 grass cuts each year on average i.e., according to the prevailing budget limitations for the Council) and all other pitch-specific maintenance costs should then be met by the sports user groups concerned.</p> <p><b>Alternative option 2:</b> Certain public playing pitch locations - generally not those in the major parks could be leased directly to relevant sports user groups or accredited sports clubs who could then undertake their own maintenance regimes and/or buy in Council services.</p>
<p>The poor quality or the occasional absence of the line markings</p>	<p><b>Preferred option:</b> for the Council to enter a standardised lease agreement with relevant user groups to undertake the current frequency of routine grounds maintenance operations at the current standard annual cost. But for user groups to then be able to purchase additional individual maintenance operations from the Council, at short notice, as and when required and at an annually pre-agreed cost.</p> <p><b>Alternative option 1:</b> public playing pitches should only be maintained as if they were amenity areas of public open space (with say 13 -16 grass cuts each year on average i.e., according to the prevailing budget limitations for the Council) and all other pitch-specific maintenance costs should then be met by the sports user groups concerned.</p> <p><b>Alternative option 2:</b> Certain public playing pitch locations - generally not those in the major parks could be leased directly to relevant sports user groups or accredited sports clubs who could then undertake their own maintenance regimes and/or buy in Council services.</p>
<p>Poor car parking arrangements – an issue specifically identified by local hockey players</p>	<p><b>Preferred option:</b> for hockey and other players to attend their respective practice sessions and competitive league matches using sustainable methods of transport. Where public transport, walking or cycling is not a genuinely viable option - for consideration to then be given to using a team minibus and/or a car sharing system in an attempt to reduce the demand that is made on space for the parking of large numbers of motor vehicles</p> <p><b>Alternative option:</b> none proposed</p>

## Appendix 4 – Medium term sport specific issues

### 1. Cricket

There is a strong argument in favour of the provision of a specialist pitch dedicated to the highest level of play for each pitch sport in the city. There are already facilities for professional football at Home Park, professional rugby union at the Brickfields, and semi-professional football at Manadon Football Development Centre. Baseball has a new home at Knolly's Terrace in Central Park. Hockey has a number of new sand-dressed synthetic turf pitches on which a reasonable standard of the game can be played over the next few years by the city's elite players - but cricket currently lacks a specific facility of the required standard.

The problem is that a facility of this type (by its very nature) would need to be elitist, it would need to exclude the general public by means of fencing, and as a consequence of its specialist nature it would be unable to share its ground with any other sports. Also, as a consequence of the higher standards of league play that would be expected to take place there the ground criteria (including pavilion facilities) would be required to meet quite a high level specification.

Whilst readily acknowledging this 'latent' or 'unmet' local demand in relation to semi-professional cricket - the challenge for Plymouth will be to identify a suitable area of level ground of at least two hectares (20,000 square metres) that could be made available.

All the existing cricket grounds with the exception of the former Plymouth Sports Club site have public access. Many share the outfield or at least a part of their outfield with winter sports (though this is by no means ideal for either sport concerned). And each has an existing cricket club already using it as its home pitch.

#### **Proposal:**

It is proposed that the West Devon Cricket Development Group should be the body responsible for leading in the matter. The Group should get together to map all the relevant issues that are likely to affect the development of cricket in Plymouth and West Devon over the coming years. It should then produce a number of realistic 'preferred options' for their resolution and this could include a hierarchy of local cricket grounds; their relative locations and the need to match the relevant standard of league play with the required standard of cricket facility.

With the Mount Wise cricket facility about to be brought back into play, there may be some potential for the establishment of new cricket pitches at Staddiscombe; Sherford and/or the Sherford fringe; as well as Manadon (i.e., within an area of privately-owned green space adjacent to the Manadon Football Development Centre). With the exception of Mount Wise those sites can only offer the potential of a 'medium-term' solution because any one of

them would take a minimum of three years to establish and then become playable.

## **2. Hockey**

**1.** The local situation for hockey was far more difficult to interpret than those for the other pitch sports. Hockey needed to be modelled on a citywide basis as opposed to a sub-area because there were no data available for the East sub-area (a consequence of their being 'no pitches' and therefore 'no teams' in that area within the review period [2003-2004]).

The playing pitch methodology [PPM] deals with hockey in relation to its demand for 'pitch unit equivalents'. This is because league hockey is now played almost exclusively on synthetic turf pitches [stps] rather than on grass. And in the case of the Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy one [sand-dressed] stp for hockey has been reckoned to be the 'pitch unit equivalent' of two grass hockey pitches).

### **Proposal 1:**

It might be argued that the identified shortfall in relation to the overall quantity of hockey provision citywide needs to be addressed by the construction of new provision in the East sub-area of Plymouth since, as pointed out above, it was (and still remains) an area devoid of full-size synthetic turf pitches that can be used for competitive league hockey. And it should, in theory at least, contain the highest levels of 'latent' and/or 'unmet' demand for the sport. The reason for also including some options for the remediation of the 'citywide shortfall' in the 'North sub-area' was to identify alternative options that could be pursued if new provision in the 'East' proved difficult or impossible to deliver (for whatever reason).

**2.** The highest standards of play for hockey (i.e. those at national and international level) take place on water-based synthetic turf pitches rather than sand-dressed types because the former provide the fastest, truest playing surfaces. Quite understandably there is a local aspiration amongst hockey enthusiasts that one-day the city might be able to host a facility of this type supported with appropriate spectator seating and covered stands.

### **Proposal 2:**

The Plymouth Hockey Development Group should undertake a feasibility study, identifying indicative costs and a preferred location for such a facility. The study should also provide a robust business plan identifying how a facility of the type proposed would manage to achieve financially independent sustainability within the South West. Provided always that all necessary criteria can be met, it may become possible to plan more definitively for the provision of such a facility in the longer term; i.e., towards the end of, or even beyond the Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy lifespan (2016).

### **3. Small-sides soccer**

Facilities that are capable of supporting the small-sides game invariably hold the potential to meet the needs of:

- Veterans who no longer wish to play 11-a-side Association Football
- Groups of individuals who value the freedom and reliability that the small-sides game now has to offer
- The squad training needs of players involved with the 11-a-side game
- 'Turn-up and play' Street Leagues
- The introductory level of the game and the learning of core skills
- Groups currently under-represented in respect to their current use of the city's stock of existing grass playing pitches

For these reasons alone the proliferation of small-sides soccer centres within the city should be cautiously welcomed. But this needs to be set in the context of their establishment possibly replacing existing playing pitches; affordability/accessibility; and wider local planning authority considerations. Thought should also be given to the size of the market and the likely financial sustainability of a high number of floodlit synthetic turf facilities in Plymouth.

- By identifying existing and future needs, identify provision shortfall by sport and pitch type
- Identifying a local standard which allows for the planning of section 106 contributions
- to identify the total available pitches" across the city not presently available to community use, and maximise their potential
- By establishing new sites
- By improving and protecting what we all ready have

### **4. Minority Sports:**

Quantitative shortfalls of playing pitch provision for Plymouth in relation to this category, and specifically: American football, baseball and softball are very difficult to determine. There are signs of increasing uptake but it is difficult to be sure of how sustainable these might be. For the first three years of the strategy (i.e. until 2010) it would be prudent to make an allowance of say: the equivalent of one full-size football pitch being made available for the shared use of minority sports in each of the sub-areas.

This situation to be reviewed in light of any developments that may occur within that time.

## **Appendix 5 – Consultees**

### **Sport England**

Gary Parsons (Planning Manager, Sport England – South West)

### **Plymouth Sports Forum**

Nigel Rowe MBE (Chairman)

### **Devon County Football Association**

Hannah Buckley (County Development Manager)

### **Devon Cricket Board**

Matt Theedom (Devon County Cricket Development Officer)

### **Plymouth Hockey Development Group**

Jamie Oxley (Chairman)

### **Clubs who responded to survey questionnaire or telephone contact:**

#### **Junior Cricket Boys 11 - 17yrs**

Ford Park CC  
Plymouth CC  
Plymouth Civil Service CC  
Plympton CC  
Plymstock CC

#### **Junior Cricket Mixed 11 - 17yrs**

Mount Wise CC

#### **Men's Cricket 18 - 55yrs**

Devon Fire & Rescue CC  
Fortesque Hotel CC  
Land Registry CC  
Mount Wise CC  
Plymouth CC  
Plymouth Civil Service CC  
Plymouth Electricity CC  
Plympton CC  
Plymstock CC  
Royal Mail CC  
The Newmarket  
Vivid Vagabonds  
Waterfront CC

Woodland Fort CC

### **Mini Soccer U7 - U10**

Activate Youth FC  
AFC Plympton  
AFC Southway  
Chaddlewood Miners FC  
Efford Youth FC  
Elite DC FC  
Elm United FC  
Hooe Rovers Youth FC  
Lipson United Youth FC  
Morley Rangers FC  
Plymouth Kolts Junior FC  
Plymouth Rangers Youth FC  
Railway Beacon Youth FC  
SB Frankfort  
Staddiscombe Colts FC  
Tamarside Junior FC  
Tamerton Foliot FC  
Weston Mill Oak Villa FC  
Woodford Colts FC  
Woolwell Junior FC  
YMCA Kitto Parkway FC

### **Junior Soccer Boys 10-15yrs**

Activate Youth FC  
AFC Plympton  
AFC Southway  
Chaddlewood Miners FC  
Efford Youth FC  
Elite DC FC  
Elm United FC  
Goosewell Rangers FC  
Hooe Rovers Youth FC  
Lipson United Youth FC  
Mayflower Football Coaching Club FC  
Morley Rangers FC  
Old Suttonians Youth FC  
Plymouth Falcons FC  
Plymouth Kolts Junior FC  
Plymouth Predators  
Plymouth Rangers Youth FC  
Plymstock United Colts FC  
Railway Beacon Youth FC  
Saint Judes Utd  
SB Frankfort  
Second Battery Kolts FC  
Sparkwell Rangers FC  
Staddiscombe Colts FC  
Tamarside Junior FC  
Tamarside Kings FC  
Tamerton Foliot FC

Weston Mill Oak Villa FC  
Woodford Colts FC  
Woolwell Junior FC  
YMCA Kitto Parkway FC

### **Junior Soccer Girls 10-15 yrs**

Activate Youth FC  
AFC Southway  
Chaddlewood Miners FC  
Efford Youth FC  
Lipson United Youth FC  
Staddiscombe Colts FC  
Tamarside Junior FC

### **Men's Football 16 - 45yrs**

29 Commando FC  
AA Taxis  
Activate Youth FC  
AD Electrical FC  
AFC Southway  
Alex Horner Plastering  
Alpha Plas FC  
Austin FC  
Brookside Social Club FC  
Café Puccino  
Chaddlewood Miners FC  
City Police  
Civil Service Sports And Leisure FC  
Clear-View Cleaning  
Cornwall Gate Rangers  
Dean Wood Plastering FC  
Devonport Dreams FC  
DML Sports And Social Club FC  
Drakes Drum  
Efford Youth FC  
Eggbuckland Community College  
Elburton Car Sales FC  
Elburton Hotel FC  
Elburton Villa FC  
Eurodash  
Falcon FC  
Friendship Inn FC  
Greenbank Wanderers  
Grenville Hotel FC  
HM Naval Base FC  
Hooe St John FC  
Hoppy's Sports  
Indian Inn  
Keltec Rovers  
Kings Arms Tamerton FC  
Kings Tamerton Community Association FC  
Lakeside Athletic  
Lamorna FC

Lewis Ashley Decorators  
Lipson CC  
Lipson United FC  
Lopes Arms Rangers  
Mainstone Sports And Social Club  
Maritime Social Club  
Marjon FC  
Mermaid  
Morley Cars FC  
Mount Gould NRG FC  
Newmarket FC  
Octagon Social Club FC  
Old Suttonians FC  
Orange  
Plymouth CFE FC  
Plymouth City FC  
Plymouth Civil Service  
Plymouth College Of Art And Design  
Plymouth Dukes  
Plymouth Hassra  
Plymouth Parkway FC  
Plymouth Rangers FC  
Plympton RBL FC  
Plymstock United FC  
Positano FC  
Princess Yachts International  
Queens Arms Tamerton FC  
ROK FC  
Royal Mail MDEC FC  
Saint Judes Utd  
Select Vending  
Shakespeare FC  
St Johnston S & SC FC  
St Levan Inn  
Staddiscombe Colts FC  
SWEB FC  
Tamarside  
The Mortgage Shop  
The Number  
Tideford  
University Of Plymouth  
Vospers Oak Villa  
Vospers Oak Villa  
Wembury Rovers  
Wessex Lopes Arms Rangers FC  
Western Kings Wanderers FC  
Windmill FC  
Woodford Wanderers FC  
Woodside FC  
YMCA Kitto Parkway FC

### **Mini Mixed Rugby Union 8 - 12yrs**

Devonport Services  
Plymouth Argam Tigers

Plymstock Youth

### **Junior Rugby Union Boys 13 - 17yrs**

Devonport Services  
Plymouth Argam Tigers  
Plymstock Youth

### **Men's Rugby Union 18 - 45yrs**

Devonport Services  
DHS Old Boys  
Marjons  
Old Public Oaks  
Old Technicians  
OPM  
Plymouth Argam  
Plymouth Civil Service  
Plymouth University  
Plympton Victoria  
Prince Rock And Woodland Fort  
Tamar Saracens

### **Women's Rugby Union 18 - 45yrs**

Marjons Ladies  
Plymouth University Ladies

### **Junior Hockey Boys 11 - 15yrs**

Eggbuckland Juniors  
Lipson Lions  
Manadon Saints  
Marjons  
Plymstock Juniors

### **Junior Hockey Girls 11 - 15yrs**

Lipson Lions  
Plymstock Juniors

### **Junior Hockey Mixed 11 - 15yrs**

Devonport Juniors

### **Men's Hockey 16 - 45yrs**

Marjons  
OPM  
PGSOB  
University of Plymouth Men  
USHC Plym

### **Women's Hockey 16 - 45yrs**

Eggbuckland Ladies  
Hele's Ladies FC  
Tamarside Ladies  
University of Plymouth Ladies  
Mannamead Ladies  
Plym Valley Ladies Hockey Club  
Plymouth & Marjons Ladies Hockey Club  
United Services (Ladies)  
University Of Plymouth

### **Mixed Hockey 16 - 45yrs**

United Services

### **Plymouth City Council Officers**

Steve Snooks (Community Leisure Manager)  
Nick Jones (Principal Parks Manager)  
Olivia Wilson (Policy Officer – Planning Team)  
Pete Kelley (Research & Database Manager)