

# EXETER

# Playing Pitch Strategy

## FINAL STRATEGY DOCUMENT (STAGE D)

**Draft Version for Submission to Exeter City Council**

**October 2022**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## Rationale and scope

1.1 This is a very appropriate time for the Exeter Playing Pitch Strategy to be developed, following two years of Covid-19 restrictions and with a renewed emphasis on improving people's health and well-being. Building on the 'Live Better and Move More' Strategy, aligned with the Council's 'Physical Activity Strategy' (both published in July 2019), Exeter is at the forefront of current thinking with regard to health and well being with exciting new developments which the PPS needs to be mindful of, including:

- Its 2040 Vision for Exeter to be recognised as a leading sustainable city, to be a healthy and inclusive city and 'the most physically active city in England'.
- A 'whole systems approach' to put sustainability at the heart of being a 'great' city-region, with a focus on sport, physical activity, well being and resilience
- 'Wellbeing Exeter' which offers 'community connecting' ('social prescribing') for adults, families and young people in combination with 'community building' to provide firm foundations for individuals and communities to improve their own health and well-being, including by focusing on physical activity
- Exeter and Cranbrook together are one of twelve places supported by Sport England to build healthier, happier communities and to discover a blueprint for tackling inactivity on a local level ('Active Communities).
- The Physical Activity Target Areas as identified through Public Health Devon and set out within ECC's 'Live Better and Move More' and 'Physical Activity Strategy' (2019)
- The new Local Plan which will plan for the period 2020-2040 and for which this PPS will be an evidence based document. (The current Exeter Local Plan (Core Strategy) was adopted in 2012 and covers the period 2006 to 2026).

1.2 The Vision for the PPS is defined as:

For Exeter's playing fields and related outdoor sports facilities to lie at the heart of Active Communities, supporting Exeter to become the most physically active city in England. Facilities are to be protected as Active Environments and to provide accessible and sustainable opportunities for everyone who lives, works in, or visits Exeter to take part in the pitch sports and tennis at whatever level they require.

(An Active Environment is defined as .... 'An area or site which connects dedicated sport and activity facilities and community spaces, and makes it easy for people to walk and cycle and be more active, through better design and use of the built and natural environments around us.')

*(based on Sport England definition)*

1.3 The Exeter PPS has been prepared in accordance with Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance (see Appendix 1), which consists of 10 steps within 5 stages, viz:

**Sport England Pitch Assessment Methodology**

Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach	(Step 1)
Stage B: Gather information / views on supply of and demand for provision	(Steps 2 & 3)
Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views	(Steps 4, 5 & 6)
Stage D: Develop the strategy	(Steps 7 & 8)
Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date	(Steps 9 & 10)

1.4 The PPS considers the pitch sports – football, hockey, cricket, rugby and other lesser played sports such as baseball and quidditch - on both grass and artificial grass sites and also tennis (assessed according to the methodology set out by Sport England in its ‘Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance’). A Steering Group was set up to oversee the Strategy, comprising representatives from the Leisure, Grounds Maintenance and Planning departments of the City Council, national governing bodies of sport, Active Devon, Sport England, the University of Exeter, Exeter College and the Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust. and from educational establishments. The supply and demand information gathered pertains to the winter sports season 2021/22 (with site visits carried out in December 2021; site visits had also been carried out in March 2020 which gave useful background) and the summer sports season of 2021 (site visits carried out late summer 2021).

1.5 A variety of national policy documents set the scene for the Strategy in this report. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (revised July 2021) emphatically requires that planning policy making and decision taking should consider the role of health and wellbeing in planning and has stringent policies around the protection of playing fields<sup>1</sup>. Their disposal by development can only be considered if robust evidence can be provided to support alternative, equal and replacement provision (paragraph 99) or if other exceptions apply: namely, that the assessment shows that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment; that the proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the playing field use and does not affect their quality, quantity or capacity; that the proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and/or the proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility which would be of sufficient benefit to sport to outweigh the loss of the playing field.

1.6 Since local authorities took on new public health responsibilities in 2013, an increasing range of statutory, corporate and planning documents, including Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Sport England and National Governing Body (NGB) strategies, have reiterated the importance of creating healthy environments which can support and benefit people's wellbeing – both physical and mental. The planning practice guidance which sits under the NPPF and relates to open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and National Trails and local green space is also relevant.

1.7 Other related publications include: ‘Sport England’s Playing Fields Policy and Guidance (2018, last updated Dec 2021); and Sport England’s ‘Planning for Sport Guidance’ (2019) which sets out 12 guiding principles under the three objectives of ‘Protect, Enhance and Provide’. Its new 10 Year Strategy: ‘Uniting the Movement’ has five key themes

<sup>1</sup> A playing field is defined (in planning terms) as “the whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch”. A playing pitch may have either a natural or artificial grass surface and is defined as “a delineated area which, together with any run-off area, is of 0.2 hectares or more, and which is used for association football, American football, rugby, cricket, hockey, lacrosse, rounders, baseball, softball, Australian football, Gaelic football, shinty, hurling, polo or cycle polo.”

including ‘Positive experiences for children and young people’; ‘Connecting with health and wellbeing’ and ‘Active Environments’. The various National Governing Body Strategies have many common themes around the sustainability of pitch sport provision and focusing on participation by women and girls and young people.

1.8 The Strategy considers the demand for these sports now, over the next 3-5 years (considered the practical lifetime of the Strategy) and over the longer term to 2040 (to align with the new Local Plan). For the purposes of team generation rates, the population increase to 2028 and 2040 includes growth through new housing. From a 2022 population of 136,083, the population is forecast to increase by 8,717 to 144,800 in 2028 and by 25,850 to 161,933 in 2040. New housing in the local plan will need to make provision on-site where necessary as informed by the PPS and an off-site (£106/infrastructure levy) contribution applied where applicable.

1.9 Whilst the above figures represent growth in the population of the city as a whole, there will be areas where this growth is concentrated and the Strategy will be mindful of where particular pressure on existing facilities will be concentrated. The priority focus of this PPS is thus within the City's administrative boundary (to correspond with all local planning documents). However, Exeter shares a housing, employment and academic market with surrounding districts, often referred to as Greater Exeter. It is important to develop the PPS within this context, especially noting:

- Cross border movements for sports participation
- Work based demand, for after-work facilities and opportunities from people living outside Exeter
- Demand arising from new housing within Exeter itself and the wider area including:
  - East Devon’s ‘west end’ developments including Cranbrook New Town
  - The South West Exeter (SWE) development in the part of Teignbridge adjacent to Marsh Barton and Alphington
  - Culm Garden Village and Cullompton new developments and Crediton development on the outskirts of Exeter in Mid Devon

1.10 All of these developments have a scale of growth that will generate new teams across all sports and all of these developments include provision of sport and recreation infrastructure.

1.11 There are many different reasons for cross boundary movements, including:

- The lack of sufficient youth pitches on one site to accommodate youth football clubs. Some clubs have to play home matches on various sites including outside the city.
- Clubs coming in to Exeter to train on artificial grass pitches (AGPs) due to lack of access to appropriate AGPs in their immediate locality (primarily during Covid).
- The lack of existing capacity in the city for certain sports and teams, meaning that alternative venues outside the city are used. This affects, for example:
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> XI cricket teams
  - Exeter Ladies FC which sometimes play home matches at Cullompton Rangers FC’s ground at Speed Meadow, Cullompton
  - Hockey teams which require additional capacity for training sessions

- Clubs with their home ground lying outside the city e.g. the home ground of Exeter Athletic RFC is at Oil Mill Lane, Clyst St Mary.
- When playing fields are closed for renovation and maintenance so that teams temporarily have to find alternative venues (e.g. Station Lane Playing Fields, Pinhoe closed for the 21/22 season)

1.12 In many respects, this reflects a typical urban centre/rural hinterland type situation where Exeter is expected to meet demand from an area wider than just the city alone. However, the following is emphasized:

- Exeter cannot at present accommodate all the demand from its own residents in facilities within the city boundaries.
- facilities within the city perform a valuable role in meeting demand from outside, especially in respect of artificial grass pitches. This may change in the future as more such facilities are provided both within the city and on its fringes in areas of new housing growth. In particular, new grass and artificial grass pitch provision in Cranbrook and sports facilities at the new school – Matford Brook Academy – in South West Exeter are expected to influence participation patterns within the city.

1.12 Social, demographic, and economic factors also influence access to and use of facilities. A key driver of Exeter City Council’s ‘Live More and Move Better’ policy is to encourage young people into healthy activity, and especially those living in areas of relatively high deprivation whose ability to access facilities may be problematic for a variety of reasons, beyond just travel. The fact that Exeter is a fairly compact city results in little variation in terms of coverage of IMDs (Indices of Multiple Deprivation) within 20 minute drivetimes but for 20 minute walk-times, St James School, St Luke’s School and Wonford Sports Centre are shown to serve more IMDs in the two highest decile rankings (deciles 1 and 2 represent the most deprived rankings).

1.13 Initial analysis has highlighted areas which are poorly served by appropriate, accessible and sustainable sports facilities, which in several cases can be aligned with areas of higher deprivation within the city and Physical Activity Target Areas including Wonford/St Loyes and Whipton/Beacon Heath.

1.14 The Overarching Principle for the Strategy (Objective 1) is to Protect, Enhance, Provide as set out within Sport England’s Guidance and there are a number of other objectives developed from themes which have emerged to inform and shape the Strategy as follows:

<b>Objective 1</b>	<b>PROTECT, ENHANCE, PROVIDE: <u>To protect existing provision and proactively plan</u> for and provide sufficient and appropriate high quality facilities and opportunities (enhanced and new) to meet demand to 2040, wherever possible making the best use of facilities already available.</b>
<b>Objective 2</b>	<b>TO ESTABLISH A STRATEGIC DELIVERY FRAMEWORK: <u>To develop, maintain and value strategic partnerships</u> within the city and from neighbouring authorities and to involve all stakeholders and managing</b>

	and operating agencies in a framework which enables the sharing of skills, expertise and resources to deliver the PPS.
<b>Objective 3</b>	<b>TO DEVELOP A NETWORK OF COMMUNITY SPORTS HUBS: <u>To place new and enhanced playing field facilities at the heart of a network of community sports hubs</u>, in order to encourage participation in the pitch sports and other outdoor activities and to facilitate community involvement, management and use.</b>
<b>Objective 4</b>	<b>TO SUPPORT AND DEVELOP THE COMMUNITY USE OF EDUCATION FACILITIES: To recognise the value of educational investment in Exeter into pitches and sport in supporting community and city aspirations for a healthier city and to consolidate their offer and support them in enhancing their facilities and developing further community use and involvement.</b>
<b>Objective 5</b>	<b>TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO BECOME MORE ACTIVE BY PARTICIPATING IN SPORT: <u>To provide a diverse range of outdoor sports facilities and opportunities</u> to assist in encouraging and attracting people from all groups within the community, including those still underrepresented in sport to become more active, to the benefit of their health and well being.</b>
<b>Objective 6</b>	<b>TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE, HIGH QUALITY MAINTENANCE OF GRASS PITCH SITES: <u>To provide sufficient resources for the adequate and appropriate maintenance of grass pitch sites and their improvement</u> where identified, and to manage and maintain these facilities in such a way as to address issues around environmental sustainability and the effect on climate.</b>

## **PLAYING FIELDS AT THE HEART OF COMMUNITY SPORT**

1.15 The Playing Pitch Strategy is primarily focused on playing pitches (both grass and artificial) and the main sports which are played on them – football, cricket, rugby and hockey – and tennis courts which are often situated adjacent. There are other pitch sports which play on grass, including baseball, lacrosse, softball, American football, quidditch and rounders. In addition, there are other aspects to playing pitches and the land on which they lie. Many playing fields are valuable in their own right as public open space sites for general recreation and a wealth of informal activities – kite flying, picnics, play, environmental studies, dog walking and so on – which all contribute towards people’s good health and well being.

1.16 This diversity and activity should be supported; it helps to maintain the viability and sustainability of the sites and ensures that they are used all year round. Additional ancillary facilities such as toilets, changing rooms, shelters and cafes can be provided to cater for all users of the space and encourage wider participation in outdoor activities. However, the management of these various uses to ensure harmony between users can be challenging

and is complicated by the seasonality of different sports and the need to protect certain areas from overuse by recreational activities, including dog walking.

1.17 Nevertheless, the potential of the wider use of playing field spaces is clear and this PPS strives to put playing fields at the heart of Exeter City Council's and its partners' developing strategies for encouraging more people in Exeter to become active. Whilst the 'white lines' of the pitches themselves are a very important part of the city's sporting infrastructure, to be protected and maintained to a high quality, the additional potential of linking them to opportunities for walking, cycling and more informal open space use also needs to be fully embraced. In addition, there are a number of playing fields which have accommodated playing pitches in the past but which are no longer marked out or used and the Strategy contains actions for some of these, where appropriate, to be reappraised and/or brought back in to use if required.

### **DELIVERY OF THE STRATEGY**

1.18 This strategy thus provides a "direction of travel" for the necessary improvements to better cater for the needs of the pitch sports and tennis in Exeter in the period to 2040. The discussions engendered through it and the proposed actions and interventions coming forward represent an excellent starting point to enable change to take place for the benefit of Exeter's residents and sport and physical activity as a whole.

1.19 However, it will take continuing work by the Steering Group which has overseen this Strategy's development, working as a 'Delivery Group' at Stage E of the strategy process ('Deliver the Strategy and Keep it Robust and Up to Date') to develop, finalise and deliver proposed projects and options and to unlock sources of funding, capacity and expertise after the Strategy is adopted.

1.20 Education agencies in particular – the University of Exeter, Exeter College and the schools, including those within the Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust, Exeter School and other primary and secondary schools - will be key partners. Grass pitches, artificial grass pitches and tennis courts on education sites form a huge and vital part of the stock of sports facilities in Exeter and investment by these education agencies into their provision and maintenance is essential and to be supported. However, there is scope to improve and enhance them and develop further community use. As they highlight their intentions and develop proposals, the Steering Group partners - NGBs, Sport England and the City Council itself - will look to support the University, College and schools to ensure that any new facilities are adequately funded, progressed with appropriate access arrangements and complement and enhance other developments coming forward in the city.

1.21 Additional resources will be required by the Council's Parks and Open Spaces Department in order to improve the quality of poor and standard rated pitches and to ensure that these can be maintained to a high standard in the future. Additional funding will also be required to progress other proposals and action plans in this Strategy. The Delivery Group will play a key role in ensuring that these funds are forthcoming. As well as ensuring that increased resources are made available for ongoing maintenance, an appropriate mechanism will be set up to monitor the distribution of monies from S106 contributions towards pitch improvements.



1.22 Other ways of ensuring that high quality pitches are maintained may include giving greater management and maintenance responsibilities to clubs (similar to arrangements currently in place for Central FC at King George V Playing Fields), with appropriate technical and knowledge support if required. An example of this is PitchPower, a webb app for inspecting and improving grass pitches. The assessments are required twice a year and pitch administrators or groundsmen can be trained to complete the assessment, which delivers a report on their pitches' quality as well as offering support and recommendations on how to get them match fit. The aim is to improve the quality of grass pitches, reducing the number of matches cancelled, so more people can get active. Developed by the Football Foundation, it has now been extended to support cricket, rugby league and rugby union as well as football.

1.23 A primary aim of the Delivery Group will be to ensure that all key users, stakeholders, owners and managers of facilities – together with local community groups - are involved in progressing the Strategy and that the best use is made of existing partnerships, expertise, resources and facilities. It will need to have a pragmatic approach to assessing what is realistic and what is not in determining priorities. Section 4 provides further detail on the focus for this Group moving forward.

## **COMMUNITY SPORTS HUBS**

1.24 This will be a priority focus of the Delivery Group in implementing the Strategy. Objective 3 is:

- **TO DEVELOP A NETWORK OF COMMUNITY SPORTS HUBS:** To place new and enhanced playing field facilities at the heart of a network of community sports hubs, in order to encourage participation in the pitch sports and other outdoor activities and to facilitate community involvement, management and use.

1.25 For the Exeter PPS, a 'Community Sports Hub' is defined as 'an area or site with a range of sports facilities where local sports clubs and other stakeholder and management organisations connect and work together to inspire, create and improve the opportunities for the local community to become more active through taking part in sport'.

1.26 This concept sits well with the five 'Active' themes set out within the Active Communities initiative for Exeter and Cranbrook which embrace: 'Connecting People and Places' (Communities), 'Engaging families through schools' (School Communities); 'Inspiring and motivating clubs and groups' (Ambassadors); 'Inspiring employers and staff' (Workplaces) and 'Enabling more walking & cycling' (Travel).

1.27 The existing Exwick Community Sports Hub – covering the Exwick and Flowerpot Playing Fields and the Exwick Sports Hub (artificial grass pitch and tennis courts), on land owned by the City Council and leased to Exeter College - is considered to be a prime example. It is underpinned by multi sport investment from external partners and works in a collaborative way to develop facilities and increase participation by College students and the wider community. The range of organisations involved includes Exeter College, Exeter City Community Trust, the City Council, Exeter Chiefs Rugby Academy, Exwick Tennis Club and Exwick Cricket Club, plus a number of other local clubs and groups using the facilities.

1.28 This Strategy wishes to give high priority to working with other key partners and stakeholders to deliver similar hubs at other sites across the city. These sites have been identified as potential community sports hubs on the basis of several of the following:

- The sites comprise more than one type of facility and cater for several sports and/or casual and informal recreational activities (not just the pitch sports)
- A variety of owners, key stakeholders and local clubs and groups are involved in their ownership, management and use
- This PPS has identified that facilities at these sites would benefit from enhancement and additional investment
- They meet identified local needs and may also serve defined areas of deprivation
- They have the potential for development and expansion to include additional sports and activities and community uses to meet shortfalls identified in this PPS
- They are already the focus of other City Council initiatives and are well placed to be delivered in the short term

1.29 A preliminary list of Community Sports Hubs has been proposed, for further discussion at Stage E. This list may be amended and/or other sites added as the implementation of the PPS progresses. Proposals/early discussions are only an indication of possible options, with further challenges and opportunities to be considered and discussed.

Name/area covered	Current facilities	Users/Stakeholders	Proposals/early discussions relating to any/each facility
<b>King George V Playing Fields</b>	Football pitches, tennis courts and redundant non turf wickets	Central FC and other football clubs, ECCT, ECC, FA/FF, LTA, DCB, DC	Enhancement of pavilion; new 3G FTP including facility for rugby ; enhanced tennis provision; feasibility of cricket provision. Masterplanning and project group to be progressed.
<b>St Luke’s School/ Whipton/ Monkerton/ Pinhoe area</b> (could also include Station Road Playing Fields)	Netball/tennis courts; Sand based AGP; 2 x grass football pitches; 2 x grass rugby pitches 1 x non turf cricket wicket	Ted Wragg MAT; local football clubs; hockey clubs; PFI Contractor	Upgrade of sand based AGP; possible 3G FTP provision; floodlights to courts; community hub building/changing facility
<b>Exeter Arena/Exhibition Fields/St James School</b>	Synthetic athletic track & field facilities; football pitches; rugby pitches; indoor bowling centre; (School: floodlit tennis courts; sand based AGP; 2 x grass football pitches; 2 x grass rugby pitches	Exeter CC, Exeter Saracens RFC, Athletics Club, bowling clubs; Ted Wragg MAT	Upgrades to rugby pitches (drainage & floodlighting) and changing facilities; Upgrade of sand based AGP at school

<b>Name/area covered</b>	<b>Current facilities</b>	<b>Users/Stakeholders</b>	<b>Proposals/ early discussions relating to any/each facility</b>
<b>Topsham</b> (including Bonfire Field Topsham; Topsham Sports Ground (University of Exeter); Topsham FC)	Rugby pitches; cricket pitches; football pitches	University of Exeter, Topsham RFC; Topsham St James CC, Topsham Town FC; Exeter CC	Upgrades to rugby and football pitches (drainage and floodlighting); artificial grass pitch; exploring additional community access to University pitches; improved ancillary facilities
<b>Wonford</b> (and adjacent pitches)	MUGA, Community building, grass football pitches	Exeter CC; local clubs	Wellbeing hub proposals
<b>Heavitree Pleasure Ground</b>	BMX, bowls, tennis, skateboarding, basketball and play	Exeter CC; BMX Club, LTA, Bowls Club	Proposals for enhancement to tennis courts

## 2 STRATEGY FOCUS AND PRIORITIES

2.1 The Assessment Report and Key Findings Report which accompany and have informed this draft Strategy (both of which were subject to “check and challenge” by and agreement of the Steering Group) provide an extensive amount of detail about the data gathered, and specific issues relating to and options for each sport and site moving forward. That detail can be found in accompanying Stage C documents, although Appendix 2 does present a summary and sets out the predicted increases in the number of teams over the life of the Strategy. This informs the main issues, Strategy focus and priorities for action identified in this section. Each of the individual sport sections that follow set out:

- Key issues
- Assessment and future provision
- Strategy focus
- Key sites (in tables)

2.2 There are a number of acronyms used in this report and for clarity, a Glossary is given here:

<b>3G FTP</b>	3G Football Turf Pitch	<b>LFFP</b>	Local Football Facility Plan
<b>AD</b>	Active Devon	<b>LTA</b>	Lawn Tennis Association
<b>AGP</b>	Artificial Grass Pitch	<b>MES</b>	Match Equivalent Sessions
<b>Comm. Org.</b>	Community Organisation	<b>MUGA</b>	Multi Use Games Area
<b>CUA</b>	Community Use Agreement	<b>NGBs</b>	National Governing Bodies
<b>DC(B)</b>	Devon Cricket (Board)	<b>NTW</b>	Non-Turf Wicket (Cricket)
<b>DCC</b>	Devon County Council	<b>PPS</b>	Playing Pitch Strategy
<b>ECB</b>	England Cricket Board	<b>RFU</b>	Rugby Football Union
<b>ECC</b>	Exeter City Council	<b>SE</b>	Sport England
<b>EH</b>	England Hockey	<b>Ted Wragg MAT</b>	Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust
<b>FA</b>	Football Association/Devon FA	<b>VQA</b>	Visual Quality Assessment
<b>FF</b>	Football Foundation	<b>WR22</b>	World Rugby 22 compliant (relating to artificial grass pitch)
<b>Gen 2</b>	Type of artificial grass surface		

## **PITCH SPORTS**

### **A FOOTBALL**

#### **KEY ISSUES**

##### *Grass pitches*

2.3 With regard to pitch quality, due to the interruptions of the pandemic at the start of the study which meant that usage of the pitches was reduced and the fact that the winters of 2020/21 and 2021/22 experienced mild weather, most of the pitches were rated as standard and the remainder (principally those maintained by clubs) as good. However, although no pitches had a final agreed pitch quality rating of 'poor', a few were very close to this rating and could reasonably be expected to be rated as such should an assessment be undertaken next season (2022/23).

2.4 Some dissatisfaction with the overall level of provision of pitches in Exeter was expressed by clubs responding to the survey, particularly in relation to there not being enough pitches (particularly for youth football) and poor quality pitches with low levels of maintenance. However, there were only three mentions of poor pitch quality being the overriding concern for clubs' dissatisfaction. The conclusion is that clubs (somewhat begrudgingly) accept the minimal maintenance of the pitches but would welcome any improvement. Dog fouling of pitches on public open space sites was the main issue.

2.5 Exeter City Council Parks and Open Spaces Department itself comments that its maintenance teams are undergoing budget restrictions and cannot maintain the pitches to the standard they would like with the limited number of staff available. As only minimum maintenance is being undertaken, pitch quality is likely to deteriorate over time. Practice sessions performed by clubs on local authority grass pitches (which are not included in their licence agreements) are impacting upon maintenance. Additional revenue is required for measures such as sand slitting and rolling and to maintain appropriate maintenance programmes for goalmouths.

2.6 No pitches are currently overplayed although a number of sites are being played to the level they can sustain. However, if sites are played to their capacity on the limited maintenance they currently receive, pitch quality is likely to reduce.

2.7 No built facilities were recorded as being of poor quality, but facilities are quite basic with limited income generating options. Issues identified included many changing rooms being unable to appropriately accommodate the different team ages and genders catered for, plus showers not always being reliable.

2.8 There are a number of playing fields (or parts of playing fields) which previously hosted pitches in the city but which are now no longer marked out and/or used. These are referred to within the Technical Appendix. Some are mentioned below as sites which could be brought back into use to meet identified demand.

## Artificial Grass Pitches

2.9 There are two x 3G FTPs within the city boundaries, both of which are on the FA 3G Register and thus suitable for training and matchplay – one owned by Exeter College (Exwick Sports Hub) and the other at the University of Exeter Sports Park (the latter has limited community use). Both are also WR22 compliant. There are a further seven full size sand based AGPs which are widely used for training and sports development by football teams, six on school sites and one at the University Sports Park). There are four smaller AGPs with community use, all 3G FTPs.

2.10 Clubs in Exeter expressed the desire for more training facilities and almost all clubs also stated that they would be happy (although not necessarily prefer) to play their matches on 3G FTPs. However, there is anecdotal evidence that the cost of hiring 3G FTPs for both training and matchplay is a critical factor for clubs. There is also demand from Community Trusts in the city for more artificial grass pitch space and from the widening social/health agenda e.g. for walking football etc.

2.11 The proportionate use of the different pitch surfaces on a percentage basis was also analysed. Key points are:

- 56% of all usage of 3G and sand based surfaces in the city is for affiliated adult and junior football and if community trust-led activity is included (which is mainly football) the total is 64%. This supports the requirement for additional bespoke provision for football i.e. 3G FTP provision.
- 5% of all usage is for rugby activity and 31% is for hockey activity.
- As expected, the large majority of 3G usage is for football (89%; the remaining use is for rugby).
- 43% of all sand based usage is by affiliated adult and junior football activity and if NGB and community trust-led activity is included (which is mainly football) the total is 54%
- 44% (i.e. less than half) of all sand based usage is by affiliated adult and junior hockey i.e. by the sports that this surface is specifically designed to accommodate.

2.12 The key points in respect of peak and off peak usage according to surface type are:

- For 3G FTPs, most community use is confined to peak times. The only full size 3G FTP with wide community use – at Exwick Sports Hub – has only a few spare peak-time slots: principally over late weekend afternoons and there are very few spare peak time slots on weekday evenings. There are more spare slots on smaller 3G FTPs principally adjacent to Wingfield Park (Heavitree FC's site).
- Sand based AGPs: as most of the full-size sand-based AGPs available for community use are on education sites, off-peak availability is limited. At peak-time, there are still many spare slots across most of the principal community-use facilities at ISCA Academy, St. James School, St. Luke's CoE School, West Exe School, and St. Peter's CoE School. It is estimated that between them the above venues offer around 80+ hours of unused peak-time capacity, much of which is in co-terminus blocks of time. Most of this is at the weekends but there is some unused time during the week at most venues, albeit on later evening slots and Friday evenings.

2.13 An important influence on the use of an AGP will be ease of access by vehicle and by foot. The Football Foundation has advised that a drivetime catchment of 20 minutes should be used to examine ease of access by car. On this basis, most of Exeter is within one or more of the key facilities' catchments, although the Topsham area and the Whipton/Pinhoe area both lie outside a 20 minute drivetime from the 3G FTP at Exeter Hub (Exwick), especially at busy times (see Maps of AGP provision). It is also acknowledged that within the city during rush hour, a 20 minute drivetime may only cover a distance of two miles.

## **ASSESSMENT AND FUTURE PROVISION**

### *Grass Pitches*

2.14 Additional demand to 2040 is predicted to be c.54 teams (if figures rounded this comprises: 13 men's, 3 ladies; 17 youth 11v11; 10 youth 9v9 and 12 mini teams). This includes displaced demand from 10 teams currently playing outside the city. These will require access to the equivalent of 6 adult pitches, 7 x 11v11 pitches, 5 x 9v9 pitches and 4 mini pitches.

2.15 Despite the decline in Sunday adult play, the Saturday league teams in Exeter are holding up well and seem to be strong. The analysis shows that demand for more adult pitches in the future (up to the equivalent of 6 adult pitches) could be met from existing pitches especially when married with improved maintenance (which will require additional resources).

### *Youth football*

2.16 There appears to be universal agreement on the buoyant state of youth football in the city. Youth football clubs express desire to run more youth teams and Exeter City Community Trust (ECCT) is looking to expand its activities. In particular there is now huge growth in interest in the younger youth age groups. Whilst there appear to be sufficient mini pitches, there is an absolute shortage of good quality youth pitches for 9-10 year olds to progress to.

2.17 There is only existing capacity for up to 6 more youth teams, with up to 27 more youth teams expected to form. Plus 46 out of the 86 youth teams in Exeter who play in 5 clubs (Alphington FC, Heavitree Youth FC, Pinhoe Spartans Youth FC, West Exe Youth FC and Whipton Youth FC) play at two or more grounds and the latter three clubs also use sites outside the city.

2.18 Therefore, access of up to the equivalent of a minimum of an additional 7 x Youth 11v11 and 5 x 9v9 pitches will be required, ideally on sites which are able to accommodate a range of pitch sizes. (It should also be noted that the provision of new 3G FTPs will help with accommodating youth games, especially at the youth 11v11 stage; the requirement is more likely to be for youth 9v9 and smaller sizes). There is no one site in Exeter capable of accommodating 7 x Youth 11v11 and 5 x 9v9 pitches. However, a number of sites could help to meet this shortfall.



### *Local Authority maintained Sites*

- Bromhams Farm is identified as a potential site for a youth football hub. It is currently out of action due to flood prevention works. It covers a grass area in total in excess of 5 hectares and is a large site capable of accommodating a range of pitch sizes. The last time Bromhams was marked for pitches (c. 2014) there were just 2x adult football pitches marked at the SE end of the site. If this site was used for pitch sports, it is estimated that it could accommodate up to 7/8 x 9v9 football pitches plus a baseball diamond. It has been identified as a possible site to rehome baseball in the city and there are currently discussions around the repurposing of the changing rooms as a multi use building catering for pitch sports, cycling and other informal activities, with a café etc.
- Improvements to pitch quality at Bettysmead could enable more youth matches to be played here. The site is currently used by Exeter Panthers for youth and mini matches but the two adult pitches have spare capacity and could be aligned for youth pitches. Cowick Barton is not regarded as an appropriate site for further youth activity as it is already being used to capacity.
- Another adult and 2-3 youth pitches (or equivalent) could be provided at sites which may be back on-stream next year (Station Road Playing Fields) and sites which have room for additional pitches (such as Wonford Playing Fields)
- All the above sites in local authority ownership will require additional resources for maintenance to meet the demands being placed upon them.

### *Other Sites*

- There is potential for greater community use of the 7 – 8 grass football pitches at the Ted Wragg MAT school sites, particularly at St Luke’s CoE School.
- Playing Fields leased by Exeter College at Exwick and Wear Barton could accommodate additional adult and youth pitches (one adult and one mini now in use at Wear Barton (Fortibus Road)).
- There is potential for greater community use at a small number of other schools, notably the new Monkerton Community Primary School and the playing field at the former Bramdean School (now closed).

### *Priority Order*

- The priority for sites to be brought back into use or expanded for youth football is thus suggested as below, based on ownership and achievability (need for additional funding, timetable for delivery etc).
  - Ted Wragg MAT school sites
  - Monkerton Community Primary School
  - Wear Barton (Fortibus Road – now being used for adult football)
  - Bettysmead
  - Bromhams Farm (local authority)
  - Station Road, Pinhoe **MOVE THIS**
  - Exwick Playing Fields
  - Wonford Playing Fields
  - Bramdean School (independent; now closed)



### *Artificial Grass Pitches*

2.19 The PPS has identified 119 community football teams that currently play in Exeter, which according to the Football Foundation would be sufficient to justify 3x 3G FTPs (including the current pitch at Exwick Sports Hub). A further 10 teams associated with Exeter clubs play outside the city, so if these were also included it would suggest the need for 3.4 pitches (including Exwick Sports Hub). Analysis of the current use of artificial grass pitches in the city, including the transference of football demand for training from sand based AGPs to 3G FTPs (estimated at around 80 hours a week), plus club aspirations and usage of grass pitches for matchplay (mostly for youth) which may transfer to 3G FTP provision, the PPS supports this analysis.

2.20 At present, there are the equivalent of 1.5 x full size 3G FTPs in the city (Exwick Sports Hub and the combination of smaller 3G FTPs at Wingfield Park (Heavitree Utd FC) and Exeter School. Thus, two additional full size 3G FTPs are needed in the short term to meet demand. A 3G FTP (WR22) is currently being constructed at Matford Brook Academy which although outside the city boundary (South West Exeter – in Teignbridge) is expected to meet some demand from the city.

2.21 The PPS estimates another 54 teams to 2040 (13 men, 3 ladies, 17 youth 11v11, 10 youth 9v9 and 12 mini). This would suggest at least another 1x 3G FTP is required in addition to the three mentioned as current requirements above, depending on whether there is any spare capacity at existing sites. (Using a different methodology, Sport England’s Playing Pitch Calculator estimates that population growth to 2040 is predicted to generate demand for 0.7 x 3G FTP).

### **STRATEGY FOCUS**

2.23 For the FA and the FF, community engagement is at the heart of any project to drive forward additional provision. Both the FA and FF are focused on tackling inequalities (particularly reaching diverse ethnic communities, low-social economic groups and people with disabilities), with equal access for girls (female growth is a key area for the FA). There is also a focus to deliver 'on the pitch' projects to improve the quality of grass pitches and increase the provision of 3G FTPs. The FF funding partners also wish to invest in projects where England Accredited clubs and community organisations directly benefit from its investment, through the ‘multi-sport’ offer - encouraging more people to be more active, more often - and supporting sustainability.

2.24 The strategy for football, carried through into the Action Plans, comprises:

- Improving the quality of grass pitches through better maintenance of existing local authority pitches, through increased resources for manpower and equipment.
- Enhancing ancillary facilities (changing facilities, toilets, car parking, shelters) to create more welcoming and age and gender appropriate provision at selected sites and meet aspirations for improved facilities.
- Providing more pitches to cater for both adult and youth football – especially on sites where a range of pitch sizes for youth football could be accommodated (hub sites).

- Providing the equivalent of two full size 3G FTPs, in addition to the pitch at Matford Brook Academy (WR22). One immediately/in the short term (site identified at King George V Playing Fields) and one in the medium term (up to 5 years) potentially at a secondary school site in the city.
- More 3G FTPs may be required in the longer term to 2040 to meet a growing demand for training and matchplay facilities for football, but this will need to be accurately reassessed given the amount of football use currently on sand AGPs in the city and if school 3G FTPs come into play.
- Depending on such factors as timescales and hire costs, this may reduce the need for grass football pitches to accommodate matches. (The cost of matchplay on 3G FTPs will need to be comparable to that for grass pitches if pitches are to be truly substitutable, but this is an area over which there may be limited control unless the 3G FTPs are FF funded). Exeter City Council is currently reviewing all its services with a view to income generation.

## KEY SITES

2.25 The following table sets out, in priority order, a summary of site-specific key projects for football, based on the above analysis. For further detail of these and all other sites, please see the Action Plans.

**TABLE 1** *KEY PROJECTS FOR FOOTBALL – SITE SPECIFIC (Includes recommendations from Local Football Facilities Plan with commentary) The Table has been substantially changed since the meeting; all sites revised.*

LOCATION	PROJECT
<b>Youth Pitch Provision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The priority order for sites to be brought back into use or expanded for youth football are:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ted Wragg MAT school sites</li> <li>• Monkerton Community Primary School</li> <li>• Wear Barton (Fortibus Road – now being used for adult football)</li> <li>• Bettysmead</li> <li>• Bromhams Farm</li> <li>• Station Road, Pinhoe</li> <li>• Exwick Playing Fields</li> <li>• Wonford Playing Fields</li> <li>• Bramdean School (independent; now closed)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>King George V Playing Fields</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site forms potential community sport hub site embracing football, tennis and cricket and rugby.</li> <li>• Prioritising Masterplanning of site. Community engagement and consultation regarded as key to help inform and develop the Masterplan.</li> <li>• Consideration ongoing and includes: realignment of pitches; 3G FTP provision (including provision for rugby); cricket facilities; tennis facilities and enhanced built facilities (multi purpose community hub building). Possible site to prioritise women and girls' football.</li> <li>• Investigate changes to maintenance regime, equipment and remedial work to help improve drainage (LFFP) (additional resources required)</li> </ul>
<b>Ted Wragg MAT sites: St Lukes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Trust are keen to encourage use by local youth football (and rugby and cricket clubs) on their grass pitches, in partnership with the PFI management</li> </ul>

LOCATION	PROJECT
<b>CoE; West Exe; St James and Isca Academy</b>	contractors and the City Council, and this could be actioned to meet present demand.
<b>Monkerton Community Primary School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The School is keen to encourage community use and the site will comprise at least one large youth 11v11 pitch.</li> </ul>
<b>Wear Barton (Fortibus Road)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect remaining playing field (adult and mini pitch)</li> <li>Encourage sports development and marketing (via the College) to secure regular usage of the site and create a local community club (Update: adult team playing 2022/23 season).</li> </ul>
<b>Bettysmead</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate changes to maintenance regime, equipment and remedial work to help improve drainage (LFFP) (additional resources required)</li> <li>Potential for additional youth provision/matches and development as a youth hub</li> </ul>
<b>Bromhams Farm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress reinstatement as pitches. Could meet need for youth football hub with range of youth pitch sizes. The total grass area at Bromhams is in excess of 5 hectares. If this were all used for pitch sports, it could host 7/8 9v9 football pitches plus a baseball diamond.</li> <li>It is a priority to rehome Exeter Spitfires Baseball team to Bromhams Farm</li> <li>Support further investigation into repurposing of the changing rooms as a multi use building catering for pitch sports, cycling and other informal activities, with a café etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Station Road, Pinhoe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attention and protection needed in the short term for the developing grass surface (Season 2022/3)</li> <li>Once reopens will have space for one adult pitch and a youth pitch</li> </ul>
<b>Exwick Playing Fields</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure community access for football teams to the site and consider more effective ways to manage public access to prevent fouling by dogs.</li> <li>Investigate changes to maintenance regime, equipment and remedial work to help improve drainage (LFFP) (additional resources required)</li> <li>Possible base for youth football; the site could accommodate 2 to 3 additional pitches if required.</li> <li>Provision of on site pavilion to serve football and cricket. (LFFP). (This is proposed as part of the rebuild of the pavilion/changing facilities by Exeter College in association with the proposal for a floodlit 3G AGP (WR22 compliant) or carpet hybrid pitch at Flowerpot playing fields.</li> </ul>
<b>Hamlin Lane</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drainage has been improved. Consider renovation of goalmouths with additional resources (LFFP - natural grass pitch improvements).</li> <li>Manage public access to prevent fouling by dogs</li> <li>Encourage users to cycle to the site rather than using cars.</li> </ul>
<b>The Chronicles, Alphington</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced maintenance regime essential to manage this level of use</li> <li>Upgrade showers etc (support grant applications) to stay in Devon League ('regional feeder league')</li> </ul>
<b>Cowick Barton</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommended for new or refurbished pavilion (LFFP)</li> <li>Investigate changes to maintenance regime, equipment and remedial work to help improve drainage (LFFP) (additional resources required)</li> </ul>

## **B CRICKET**

### **KEY ISSUES**

2.26 The lack of good quality local authority operated public access sites for cricket in Exeter means there is a heavy reliance on education provision (viz, Exwick CC on Exeter College leased site and Topsham CC on University ground) and a lack of long term security of tenure.

2.27 Over the last 7-8 years there have been a number of changes in the distribution and use of pitches in the city including the merging of Countess Wear and Alphington CC and the movement of Topsham CC from Bonfire Field (Topsham RFC) to the University ground. This suggests some instability and lack of security of tenure.

2.28 There are concerns about the wicket at Exwick Playing Fields which is fairly close to the river, which, in the view of some cricket agencies, has not been constructed to an appropriately high standard. Damage occurs to the pitch from travellers and public access. Some facility for changing/clubhouse is required at Exwick Playing Fields. This is proposed as part of the rebuild of the pavilion/changing facilities by Exeter College in association with the application for a floodlit 3G AGP (WR22 compliant) or hybrid pitch at Flowerpot.

2.29 The NTW at Coaver Club performs a valuable function as a venue for informal casual play for various ad hoc teams in the city and is patched, but appears adequate; however, it could be improved.

### **ASSESSMENT AND FUTURE PROVISION**

2.30 It is predicted that up to another 13 cricket teams could form to 2040, comprising 6 men's, 2 ladies, 4 junior boys and 1 junior girls. Consideration must also be made for a possible increase in the number of junior teams arising from ECB's successful initiatives that have focused on different formats of the game, especially the All Stars and Dynamos programmes.

2.31 Exwick CC, Exeter CC and Topsham St James CC each said they would like to run more teams – all women's and junior girls and boys. A shortage of coaches or volunteers and suitable indoor training facilities together with poor quality changing facilities and a shortage of girls in each age group were reasons inhibiting these developments.

2.32 In summary, across Exeter there are 56 grass wickets, with a theoretical capacity of 280 match equivalent sessions (MES). In total, 304 MES are played, showing a deficit of 24 MES. There are three non turf wickets with a theoretical capacity of up to 180 MES – at present we have estimated about 55 MES are played/trained here, suggesting they have spare capacity, but there are some quality issues and these are not generally available for league adult play; moreover play cannot take place at the same time as on the grass squares.

2.33 The County Ground is considerably overplayed (according to the figures submitted) and its 3<sup>rd</sup> XI play outside the city at Winslade Park. (However, Exeter Cricket Club itself has not identified that its ground is at capacity). The main pitch at the University's Topsham Sports Ground is assessed as being overplayed, due to use by both the University and Topsham St James CC.

2.34 There is limited capacity to accommodate growth. Exwick cricket pitch is operating at a sustainable level due to the low number of wickets and poorer quality. If its pitch was improved it could accommodate more play and potentially find it easier to regularly field a 2<sup>nd</sup> XI. There is some spare capacity for additional play outside of peak times at The Chronicles Alphington and also apparently at the University's 2<sup>nd</sup> pitch at Topsham Sports Ground.

2.35 Assessment to 2040 shows that teams generated by the growth in population, club aspirations and local trends and initiatives could require up to 16 wickets. Future demand for cricket would certainly require additional pitch space, in or close to the city to support growth of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> XI adult Saturday cricket, as well as additional junior and women's match play. At present Exeter CC's 3<sup>rd</sup> XI play outside the city boundary at Winslade Park (East Devon).

## **STRATEGY FOCUS**

2.36 Exeter is taking on a regional significance for cricket with The Western Storm (one of the six elite women's domestic teams that play in the ECB Kia Super League) and Somerset CCC all interested in training and playing opportunities in the area.

2.37 The strategy for cricket comprises:

- Protecting existing provision.
- Ensuring security of access and tenure and appropriate maintenance of pitches on public open space sites within the city.
- Creating greater capacity by improving existing grounds (only realistically possible at Exwick Playing Fields).
- Upgrading the non turf wicket (NTW) at Coaver (Devon County Council) to cater comfortably for growth in midweek cricket and informal formats of the game.
- Opening up facilities for cricket on school sites, both grass and NTWs, for example at St Peter's School and St Luke's CoE School, but quality may need to be addressed.
- Developing a site for community cricket at King George V Playing Fields.

2.38 There is very little capacity for accommodating any further growth. Analysis points to the need for additional cricket provision and wherever possible, this should be grass to cater for the predicted growth of adult cricket in 5+ years' time. The south and west of the city is fairly well provided for but the north east, around St Lukes CoE School (where there is a non turf wicket) and Whipton/Pinhoe has less provision.

2.39 Increased use and the development of facilities and capacity are planned at Winslade Park and a new pitch is being provided at Inghams Park in Cranbrook. , Although both of

these lie in East Devon, they could assist in serving demand generated in the north and east of the city, including a permanent secure home for growth in adult men’s teams (i.e. when 3rd and 4th XIs need a pitch for Saturday fixtures).

2.40 Due to pressure on land to accommodate housing growth, it is unlikely that the Exeter Local Plan could identify a playing field site on its own or sufficient space within a housing allocation. Additional capacity will need to be met through increasing the capacity of existing sites or providing new cricket facilities at existing park and playing fields and schools. Some of the expected growth in demand could potentially be met by a developing a cricket facility at King George V Playing Fields. It is a key action for the PPS for potential sites to be explored, possibly as a future Local Plan allocation.

## KEY SITES

2.41 The following table sets out, in priority order, a summary of site-specific key projects for cricket based on the above analysis. For further detail of these and all other sites, please see the Action Plans.

**Table 2 KEY PROJECTS FOR CRICKET – SITE SPECIFIC**

LOCATION	PROJECT
<b>King George V</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of masterplanning of the site, potential to support a community cricket facility within Exeter to complement existing club based provision</li> </ul>
<b>Exwick Playing Fields</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect site for cricket.</li> <li>Investigate changes to maintenance regime and remedial work to help improve quality of the cricket wicket (with additional resources).</li> <li>Provision of on site pavilion to serve football and cricket This is proposed as part of the rebuild of the pavilion/changing facilities by Exeter College in association with the application for a floodlit 3G FTP (WR22 compliant) or hybrid pitch at Flowerpot.</li> </ul>
<b>Coaver Club</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider replacement of strip within next 3 years.</li> </ul>
<b>Topsham Sports Ground (University of Exeter)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect security of tenure within the licence agreement for Topsham CC.</li> <li>University priorities re investment into Topsham Sports Ground, working with ECB and Topsham St James Cricket club to provide upgraded facilities and pitches of benefit to the university and wider community, including a hub for women’s and girls’ cricket</li> </ul>
<b>The Chronicles, Alphington</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cricket is operating at peak time capacity on a restricted site. Enhanced maintenance regime essential to successfully manage this level of use.</li> <li>Upgrade showers and WCs (support club grant applications)</li> </ul>
<b>Winslade Park (outside Exeter)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently exploring potential to develop site as a hub facility for County Age group performance teams. Site could assist in meeting demand for 3rd &amp; 4th XIs in the city).</li> <li>Pavilion is in need of improvement or possible replacement.</li> </ul>
<b>New site for cricket</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis points to the need for additional cricket provision and wherever possible, this should be grass to cater for the predicted</li> </ul>

LOCATION	PROJECT
	<p>growth of adult cricket in 5+ years' time. Additional capacity will need to be met through increasing the capacity of existing sites or providing new cricket facilities at existing park and playing fields and schools. Some of the expected growth in demand could potentially be met by a developing a cricket facility at King George V Playing Fields. It is a key action for the PPS for potential sites to be explored, possibly as a future Local Plan allocation.</p>

## **C RUGBY**

### **KEY ISSUES**

2.42 As far as community rugby in Exeter is concerned, the provision that is accessible is not of appropriate quality. Exhibition Fields (home of Exeter Saracens RFC) experiences poor drainage on a clay soil and is often very boggy and the main pitch at Bonfire Field (home of Topsham RFC) is particularly poorly drained. Maintenance of the pitches, particularly at Exhibition Fields, is recognised by Exeter Parks and Open Spaces Department as being poor due to lack of appropriate equipment and resourcing for maintenance and requires improvement.

2.43 In addition, the pitches at both these sites are overplayed for both matchplay and training demands.

2.44 A principal issue for rugby is the lack of facilities for training under lights. This could be addressed by the use of site lights to enable midweek play (although the increased use of the pitches would require improvements to enhance capacity) and/or access to a 3G FTP (WR22 compliant) or in part by both.

2.45 The changing facilities at Exhibition Fields would benefit from upgrading in line with the growth of the female game at the rugby club.

### **ASSESSMENT AND FUTURE PROVISION**

2.46 It is predicted that up to 16 new rugby teams (3 men's, 2 ladies, 5 juniors and 6 minis) may form by 2040, mainly generated through the existing clubs. These would require access to the equivalent of at least four rugby pitches (either by improving existing capacity or through new provision), according to Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator.

2.47 Within Exeter, all three rugby clubs (Exeter Saracens RFC, Topsham RFC and Exeter Athletic RFC) have stated that they wish to develop more teams, particularly for women and girls. However, there are various constraining factors, notably the suitability and availability of pitches and changing rooms.



2.48 Exeter College is currently considering various surfaces for an upgraded rugby pitch at Flowerpot Playing Fields. These include a floodlit 3G FTP (WR22 compliant) or a floodlit hybrid pitch. (Hybrid grass or reinforced natural grass is a product created by combining natural lawn grass with reinforcing synthetic fibres.)

2.49 This proposal is still under consideration by the City Council. It is understood that it will primarily be for use by Exeter College and Exeter Chiefs Academy teams and training squads. Exeter College have committed fully to allocating evening usage on three evenings a week to community partners and a slot on Saturday and Sunday (tbc). One high quality grass pitch and training grid area are also to be maintained at Flowerpot.

2.50 The analysis has estimated for Exeter Saracens RFC and Topsham RFC the number of MES (match equivalent sessions) required to accommodate all the matchplay and training demand, is as follows:

- Topsham RFC: 9.0 MES in total are required. At present, the two adult pitches on site can accommodate 3 MES; thus there is a shortfall of 6.0 MES. The main pitch is being overplayed by 0.5 MES for training during the week and the second, floodlit pitch is being overplayed by 2.5 MES for matchplay at weekends and a further 3.0 MES for training in the week.
- Exeter Saracens RFC: 9.5 MES in total are required. At present, the three adult pitches on site can accommodate 1.5 MES; thus there is a shortfall of 8 MES. In total, the three pitches are being overplayed by 5.5 MES for matchplay at weekends and a further 2.5 MES for training during the week.

2.51 There are not enough accessible (grass) pitches to accommodate the predicted growth in the number of teams, estimated at requiring access to up to 4-5 pitches. However, the enhancements to pitch quality above will increase capacity

## **STRATEGY FOCUS**

2.52 The strategy for rugby comprises:

- Addressing inadequate quality (drainage and maintenance) which contributes to the overplay of pitches. Improved maintenance and the provision of pipe and slit drainage can increase capacity.
- Providing additional pitches – either grass and/or artificial grass – to meet training needs. Access to proposed upgraded provision – floodlit 3G FTPs at Matford Brook Academy and Treasbeare (Cranbrook Phase 2) and a floodlit carpet hybrid pitch or 3G FTP at Flowerpot may assist. All 3G FTPs are proposed as World Rugby 22 Compliant surfaces.
- Other training opportunities could be developed through temporary lights on existing pitches (although the increased use of the pitches would require improvements to enhance capacity)
- Securing access to grass rugby pitches on education sites; in particular the potential for use of Ted Wragg MAT school grass pitches.
- Upgrading of changing facilities where appropriate
- Providing new sports lighting and upgrading of floodlighting where appropriate



- Support, in principle, for a 3G AGP (World Rugby 22 compliant) with sports lighting (floodlit), if a proposal comes forward from a potential provider/host, should improvements to existing club pitches and any additional grass pitches not be sufficient to accommodate training needs or should such a 3G provide a solution to existing overplay at club sites
- The RFU is a club based organisation and therefore will primarily look to protect, enhance and provide for its existing club sites in the first instance. Reviewing both the current shortfall of supply at rugby club sites and the predicted growth in number of teams the RFU would adopt the below prioritized site based action plan:
  1. Topsham RFC (Bonfire Field)
  2. Exeter Saracens RFC (Exhibition Fields)
  3. Flowerpot Playing Fields (Exwick Sports Hub)

## KEY SITES

2.41 The following table sets out, in priority order, a summary of site-specific key projects for rugby based on the above analysis. For further detail of these and all other sites, please see the Action Plans.

**TABLE 3 KEY PROJECTS FOR RUGBY - SITE SPECIFIC**

LOCATION	PROJECT
<b>Bonfire Field, Topsham</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New changing facilities</li> <li>• The provision of pipe and slit drainage</li> <li>• Upgrading of floodlighting.</li> </ul>
<b>Exhibition Fields</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved maintenance</li> <li>• The provision of pipe and slit drainage</li> <li>• Addition of sports lighting</li> <li>• Upgrading of changing facilities</li> </ul>
<b>Flowerpot Playing Fields</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposal for upgrade of rugby pitch to either a 3G AGP (WR22 compliant) or a carpet hybrid pitch with sports lighting (floodlit) with associated changing pavilion on Exwick Playing Fields to replace existing pavilion.</li> </ul>
<b>University Sports Ground, Topsham</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration to be given to negotiating access to rugby pitches – either grass or artificial - for Topsham RFC midi/mini rugby teams currently using pitches at the adjacent Bonfire Field.</li> </ul>

## D HOCKEY

### KEY ISSUES

2.42 Heavy use is made of the good quality sand and water based pitches at Exeter University for high level hockey by the University teams and Isca Hockey Club. Exeter School’s pitch is also of good quality and accommodates overflow activity for Isca Hockey Club. The two community based clubs – Exe Hockey Club and East Devon Hockey Club - carry out their training sessions at St Peter’s CoE School. Exe Hockey club plays its matches

at St Peter's; East Devon Hockey Club plays the majority of its matches at St Luke's School pitch (although club is moving to St Peter's this coming season).

2.43 Whilst pitches at the University of Exeter Sports Park and Exeter School are recorded as good, some of the sand based pitches on secondary school sites require improvement to meet standards required for hockey matchplay (particularly St Luke's CoE School, St Peter's CoE School and St James School). Issues have also been raised in connection with the quality of the maintenance of the carpets and equipment such as floodlights and goals.

2.44 Demand for hockey matchplay and training cannot currently be met within the city. Two clubs travel outside the city to meet demand for junior training and matchplay. Exe Hockey Club also require additional training hours for adults.

2.45 All three clubs are thus dissatisfied with the provision of facilities for hockey in the city – with comments focusing on poor pitch quality, insufficient (good quality) pitches to accommodate matchplay and a lack of time for training on the school sand based AGPs due to usage by football.

2.46 The five sand based AGPs at the five state secondary schools in the city are under a PFI contract which is due to expire in c.9 years' time. Four of these pitches belong to schools in the Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust.

## **ASSESSMENT AND FUTURE PROVISION**

2.47 All clubs are looking to expand, particularly junior sections, but this is constrained by lack of pitch availability (of the required standard) for both training and matchplay. Growth in population plus growth in the sport could result in up to 8 adult and 12 junior teams in total forming during the strategy period.

2.48 There is currently no informal hockey activity in the city (Walking Hockey, Back to Hockey etc). Access to facilities for informal hockey activity is required in order to meet the Wellbeing Exeter agenda and the ageing population. More friendly and cup matches are taking place, and there is a growth in summer leagues (mixed and Ladies), so there are many more matches requiring pitches.

2.49 Excluding Isca Hockey Club's use of the University pitches and Exeter School (where there is no further capacity for community hockey), the current demand for hockey which has to be accommodated in Exeter from Exeter based hockey clubs is in the order of 17.5 hours per week for training and 12.5 hours per week for matchplay. This includes:

- existing use of the five secondary school AGPs
- use which currently has to take place outside of Exeter (at Exmouth Community College and Blundell's in Tiverton)
- latent demand for training and matchplay which cannot be realised as there are not enough spare slots for hockey at the moment.

2.50 If we allow for 12 hours use per weekday evenings (i.e. 4 nights a week (excluding Fridays) for 3 hours) and 6 hours on Saturdays for matchplay, this use could be accommodated on two sand based AGPs (if there was no other use e.g. by football for training). However, this does not allow for growth in demand over the Strategy period – which is calculated by the Sport England Pitch Facilities Calculator to be at least 0.8 of a sand based AGP and possibly up to 1.5 AGPs.

2.51 Therefore it is concluded that in order to accommodate current training and matchplay requirements for the four hockey clubs in Exeter, plus growth in numbers of teams generated by an increasing population and including growth in informal formats of the game, at least three sand based AGPs (suitably enhanced) are required in Exeter in addition to the two hockey appropriate surfaces at the University and the sand based pitch at Exeter School.

2.52 A watching brief should be kept on the effect on the viability of the sand based pitches depending on the amount of football usage which transfers to new 3G FTPs.

## **STRATEGY FOCUS**

2.53 The strategy for hockey comprises:

- Upgrading three of the existing sand based AGPs at secondary school pitches in Exeter. Discussions are currently taking place within the framework of this PPS to consider the options and opportunities with the Ted Wragg MAT for enhancement and upgrading of the sand based pitches. (Any upgrades of hockey appropriate AGPs should consider replacement surfaces such as Gen2 surfaces (short pile, dense artificial grass surfaces supported partially with sand infill, which are particularly suitable for hockey, netball and tennis) to improve their viability)
- Protection of these renovated good quality AGP surfaces for hockey.
- Protection of community access to the existing high quality artificial grass pitches at the University (x 2) and at Exeter School.

2.54 To note also: the provision of additional 3G FTP space may help to ensure continued sufficient access to sand-based pitches for hockey by moving demand for football training from them to the new 3G FTPs. However, much will depend on the extent to which this is achieved, which itself is dependent on many factors including the cost of hire and availability of sessions. In addition, the viability of the sand based pitches will need to be assured.

## **KEY SITES**

2.55 The following table sets out, in priority order, a summary of site-specific key projects for hockey based on the above analysis. For further detail of these and all other sites, please see the Action Plans.

**TABLE 4 KEY PROJECTS FOR HOCKEY – SITE SPECIFIC**

LOCATION	PROJECT
<b>Schools under PFI contract: St Lukes CoE; St Peters CoE; West Exe; St James and Isca Academy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an urgent need to provide additional capacity for hockey training and for good quality matchplay facilities. AGPs at St Luke’s CoE School, St Peter’s CoE School, St James School and Isca Academy require upgrading.</li> <li>• Analysis demonstrates that at least three of these pitches are required to remain as sand based AGPs to meet current and future demand.</li> </ul>
<b>University of Exeter</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key provision and only opportunity in the City for elite community hockey.</li> <li>• Ensure community use agreements are robust and long term.</li> </ul>
<b>Exeter School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of community use of sand based AGP</li> </ul>

## **E TENNIS**

### **KEY ISSUES**

2.56 There is a range of provision for tennis in Exeter, including the Community Indoor Tennis Centre (and 4 outdoor courts) at the University of Exeter Sports Club, a number of open access courts on park sites, some flourishing tennis clubs, notably Exwick Tennis Club and Victoria Park Tennis Club and commercial club facilities at the David Lloyd Centre and Exeter Golf and Country Club. There are also a number of courts on secondary school sites, many of which would benefit from floodlighting to increase community usage.

2.57 The largest issue highlighted in the Strategy is that the quality of park courts needs addressing. The operational model, the customer journey and the financial sustainability of all park facilities in the city is poor. This restricts usage and impacts on participation and accessibility of tennis across the city.

2.58 The assessment of outdoor court provision also suggested that there is underprovision of outdoor club courts and therefore potential to create additional capacity for member clubs (either through more courts or greater access to existing courts).

2.59 Exeter is a priority area for tennis in the SW region due to its high number of courts and high population.

### **ASSESSMENT AND FUTURE PROVISION**

#### **Park Courts**

2.60 Table 5 below highlights the potential demand for tennis across all five priority park sites. The analysis is taken from the LTA’s Geographical Report for Exeter, compiled for the LTA by external consultants, based on Periscope mapping software.

2.61 Regarding the anticipated number of unique users of a park in a 12 month time frame (the ‘Penetration’ figure), anything close to 1000 is considered to indicate a strong demand for tennis at that park, particularly where more than four courts exist. Topsham tennis courts are included as they are a strategic priority for Exeter City Council and the court surface is deemed ‘very poor’. According to capacity analysis, current park courts could accommodate 3500 unique users if they are all of good quality, which supports a phased upgrading of all courts.

2.62 The LTA believes that Smart Access Gate Technology would ensure that the courts are bookable and the customer experiences a good online journey to court. Implementing a mix of charged and free tennis would create financially sustainable tennis courts that can be maintained to a high standard for generations to come, changing the perception of tennis across Exeter.

**Table 5: SUMMARY TABLE OF DEMAND AND CONDITION OF PARK COURTS IN EXETER**  
(Source: LTA)

Venue	Anticipated number of unique users of a park in a 12 month timeframe ('Penetration')	Classification LTA Use Scale of (Excellent through to Unplayable)	Summary of Condition Survey (conducted by independent technical consultant) and action points
<b>Cowick Barton</b> (3 courts)	815	Good	No capital intervention needed
<b>Heavitree Pleasure Ground</b> (6 courts)	1398	Average to Poor	Courts need a re-bind and a repaint with some remedial work to fencing
<b>King George V Playing Fields</b> (2 courts)	1203	Very Poor	Courts need full resurfacing.
<b>Topsham Tennis Courts</b> (2 courts)	323	Very Poor	Courts need full resurfacing.
<b>Summerway Park</b> (2 courts)	892	Unplayable	Courts need resurfacing and fencing needs reinstating.

For all the above courts, consideration to be given to exploring an operational model that combines charged and free access, to help ensure the financial sustainability of the courts and protect their future quality and ongoing use.

### Club Courts

2.63 The analysis demonstrates that there is overall an underprovision of club courts in Exeter, although some clubs do have spare capacity (Tunnels LTC). Exwick LTC in particular is keen to increase the number of courts it has to accommodate growing demand (including for padel tennis) and is working in partnership with Exeter College to explore the options available.

## Community Indoor Tennis Centre

2.64 Being a Community Indoor Tennis Centre there is considerable opportunity to improve community access to all courts within the University. In addition the quality and accessibility of the four outdoor courts should be considered in terms of operational model and customer journey to court. The LTA believe that SmartAccess gate technology and an online booking system such as ClubSpark would benefit these courts, enabling more people to access the outdoor facilities with ease.

## Education courts

2.65 There is also scope to increase community usage of school court facilities, if quality and access can be guaranteed. According to the Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust, the courts at St Luke’s School, Isca Academy and West Exe School in particular, if floodlit, could further support provision for netball and tennis in the city.

## Other sites

2.66 Pynes Hill (EX2 5SP) is a four-court site that is currently derelict. It is leased from Exeter City Council (ECC) by a private company called Wesleyan which is keen to reopen the courts for the local community.

## STRATEGY FOCUS AND PRIORITY SITES

2.67 The Strategy for tennis facility provision in Exeter thus focuses on:

- Upgrading of key park court sites (including resurfacing works and enhancement as set out and floodlighting and ancillary provision (toilets/pavilions) if required), in order to provide accessible community tennis to a significant percentage of Exeter’s population. These priority sites are identified as King George V Playing Fields, Summerway, Cowick Barton, Heavitree Pleasure Ground and Topsham Tennis Courts.
- For all the above courts, consideration to be given to exploring an operational model that combines charged and free access, to help ensure the financial sustainability of the courts and protect their future quality and ongoing use.
- Other possible developments such as an extension to the number of floodlit courts at Exwick Sports Hub (Exeter LTC) to meet the increase in tennis participation and demand for club courts.
- Opening up and floodlighting of school tennis facilities and improvement of access to meet community demand, particularly at St Luke’s School, Isca Academy and West Exe School (Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust).
- 
- Improving the quality, operational model and accessibility of outdoor courts at the University, by considering the use of SmartAccess technology and appropriate online booking system.
- Future demand might also be met through the provision of tennis courts in new housing growth areas.

## **F OTHER SPORTS**

2.68 The Playing Pitch Strategy for Exeter has sought to gather information on other sports and activities taking place on playing fields in the city, but further knowledge is required. The following pertains:

### *Baseball*

- It is a priority to rehome Exeter Spitfires Baseball team to Bromhams Farm and to accommodate this alongside youth football (baseball is played in the summer).
- Consideration is also being given to repurposing of the changing rooms as a multi use building catering for pitch sports, cycling and other informal activities, with a café etc.
- Baseball has recently started at St Luke's CoE School on the grass playing pitches.

### *Quidditch*

- The Exeter Patronum (Exeter Quidditch Club) uses the area currently marked as grids beyond the rugby pitch at Flowerpot Playing Fields, by the skatepark. At present, the club comprises about 18 members. The club aims to play all year but finds that due to poor drainage, the area at Flowerpot is sometimes out of action and so they tend to avoid December. Although they have used various other sites in the city, apart from the drainage, they find Flowerpot is ideal as a central location with a car park nearby
- Quidditch can be played on a 3G FTP but the club have found it difficult to find a slot within Exeter. It has similar requirements pitch-wise to rugby. Exeter Patronum started off as a University team but they want to form a community teams for players to move onto once they are no longer at University and to also widen its appeal and playing membership.

### *Other Sports*

- There are University of Exeter teams for rugby league, Ultimate Frisbee, lacrosse, American Football (the Exeter Demons) and Rounders (at Ducke's Meadow)
- There was a local Rounders team that played at Exwick Playing Fields but no record of this group operating since Covid has been found.
- Ultimate Frisbee: a club has been recorded in the past playing at Flowerpot pre-Covid, but no further information is available.



## **3 DELIVERY OF THE STRATEGY**

### **ACTION PLAN**

3.1 This Strategy is accompanied by an Action Plan, setting out the site-specific actions for each sport and strategic and priority projects. Following consultation on the draft Strategy and Action Plan, and any changes made as a result, this Strategy's Action Plan should be monitored periodically, making the Action Plan a 'live' document. Members of the PPS Steering Group (which will become a 'Delivery Group') will have a responsibility to update the Action Plan and work collaboratively (with others including clubs, teams, providers and owners of facilities and pitches) to implement projects. The delivery stage will also confirm options for change presented in this strategy as further work during implementation is done on feasibility, viability and implications of other actions.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MONITORING AND DELIVERY**

3.2 Alongside the priority and strategic actions for sports and their sites, pitches and facilities identified above, the principles set out in Section 2 provide a structure for further, additional recommendations and actions, which will help enable appropriate delivery of the PPS, and which apply across Exeter (rather than being for individual specific sites).

3.3 Once the Strategy has been agreed by the Steering Group it will be adopted by Exeter City Council and will form part of its evidence base for future development plan documents.

3.4 The Strategy Steering Group should provide the basis for membership of a Exeter PPS Delivery Group, the purpose of which is to oversee the implementation of the strategy and to monitor progress towards the identified Action Points. Other organisations and individuals may be invited on to the Delivery Group as needed to oversee certain projects. It is recommended that membership should include representatives from the University of Exeter, Exeter College, the Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust and the other secondary and primary schools.

3.5 If there are other such Delivery Groups already operating to deliver other PPSs in the south west of England, possibilities for merging or co-running these groups should be investigated, to make the process more efficient and save officer and stakeholder time (e.g. Plymouth, Torbay). Delivery Group meetings could also be arranged to coincide with NGB meetings or Sport England led seminars.

3.6 The evolving context of participation in sport and active recreation means that monitoring and review of the strategy is as important as the initial preparation of the document to ensure it remains sufficiently robust. There are considerable time and cost implications of monitoring and progressing the Strategy and a way needs to be found to make it efficient and effective.

3.7 Initial features of the group's terms of reference may include:



- The Delivery Group to meet initially (within three months of adoption) to agree which of the actions should be taken forward in the short term (1-2 years); medium term (3-5 years) and longer term (5-10 years), and also agree who the main partners should be in taking the relevant actions forward. Various criteria can be used to assess priorities from within the many projects proposed. Following this to meet at agreed intervals.
- The Delivery Group should meet periodically to inform and discuss the annual progress summary and agree next steps, and ideally provide a conduit to improve coordination with work on the agreed actions.
- The Council should maintain the PPS database underpinning the Strategy (Stage B database) and ensure data is kept up to date and communicated through the steering group to relevant bodies.

3.8 The Delivery Group will be committed to advancing the strategy and keeping it up to date through:

- Monitoring the delivery of the recommendations and actions and identifying any changes that are required to the priority afforded to each action.
- Recording changes to the pitch stock in the area and evaluating the impact of this on the supply and demand information.
- Assessing the impact of changes to participation, including changing trends and the development of new formats of the game as well as affiliation data for each of the National Governing Bodies of Sport.
- Assessing the impact of demographic changes and new population estimates/ projected planned housing numbers.
- Analysis of funding sources and new funding opportunities for the provision/improvement of sports facilities.
- Reviewing growth of emerging sports, their participation rates, facilities available for them and likely facilities necessary for their support and development.

## APPENDIX 1: THE PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY “TEN STEP APPROACH” TO DEVELOPING A PPS



## APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF PITCH SPORT DATA

### A FOOTBALL

#### *Grass pitches*

##### 2.1 Supply of pitches as follows:

- 86 football pitches are recorded of which 57 are currently marked out for play and used by the community (A). The only instance of pitch overmarking was recorded at Hamlin Lane where two of the adult pitches were overmarked for 9v9 play.
- 2 pitches are available for use by the community but are not currently used (B). These are the junior 11v11 grass pitches at West Exe and St James Schools.
- 14 pitches are recorded as being unavailable for community use. The bulk of these, 9, are at The University sites of Ducke's Meadow and Topsham Sports Ground.
- There are a number of sites which have been marked as (or had additional) pitches in the past; these include Bromhams Farm, Exwick Playing Fields and Wear Barton.

2.2 Exeter City Council owns 60% of adult pitches (26 out of 43). Approximately a quarter (22 out of 86) of all football pitches are on education sites, although only 6 out of the 22 are known definitely to be available for community use. The City Council manages the local authority grounds at Wonford Playing Fields, Cowick Barton, Bettysmead, Station Road Pinhoe (out of action this year due to reseeding) plus Exhibition Fields (mainly rugby). Other local authority grounds are leased to clubs who effectively control usage of the site: King George V (leased to Central FC); Hamlyn Lane (leased to Stoke Hill FC); Alphington Sports Ground, The Chronicles (leased to Alphington FC) and Exwick/Flowerpot (leased to Exeter College)

##### 2.3 With regard to the assessments of pitch quality, due to the interruptions of the pandemic at the start of the study:

- all football pitches received visual quality assessments twice; in March 2020 and again in December 2021.
- pitches had not sustained as much use as might have been expected and there was also mild weather in both winters. This contributed to 85% of the pitches being rated as 'standard' with the remainder (principally those maintained by clubs) being assessed as 'good'.
- although no pitches had a final agreed pitch quality rating of 'poor', a few were very close to this rating and could reasonably be expected to be rated as such should an assessment be undertaken next season.

##### 2.4 With regard to general levels of satisfaction seven out of eleven clubs responding said that they were not satisfied with the overall level of provision of pitches in the Exeter area:

- Five clubs commented generally on not enough pitches and/or poor quality
- Poor drainage at Bettysmead and also Hamlin Lane (now addressed) was highlighted

- Two of the youth football clubs highlighted lack of good quality pitches, especially in the Whipton/Pinhoe area, the cost of hiring mini pitches and a lack of pitches of the right size
- Three clubs said either that artificial grass pitches are expensive to hire and/or there are not enough
- The club using Hamlin Lane commented on the need for renovation work to goalmouths and goalposts and the reduced capacity in the car park now cycleways and bollards have been put in (but praise for improvement to drainage following renovation works)
- However, there were only three mentions of poor pitch quality being the over riding concern for clubs' dissatisfaction.

### *Artificial Grass Pitches*

2.5 The following is noted:

- Ten full size floodlit artificial grass pitches in Exeter – two x 3G FTP, both of which are on the FA 3G Register and thus suitable for training and matchplay – one owned by Exeter College (Exwick Sports hub) and the other at the University of Exeter Sports Park (the latter has limited community use).
- There are a further seven full size sand based AGPs which are widely used for training and sports development by football teams (six on school sites and one at the University Sports Park).
- There are four smaller AGPs with community use, all 3G FTPs (at Wonford, Heavitree Social Club, Exeter School and the University Sports Park)
- In addition to provision within Exeter, there are two 3G FTPs in East Devon, within an approximate 30-minute drive of the centre of Exeter – one full size at Cliff Hill (Exeter City FC's Training Ground and base for considerable ECCT activity but not wider community use) and one under full size at Cranbrook School, with inadequate fencing which has thus been discounted from capacity assessments.
- Full size floodlit 3G AGPs are proposed at Cranbrook and Matford Brook Academy (World Rugby 22 compliant)

### *Demand*

2.6 As regards demand, the study records 120 teams in total in November 2021 – 32 adult male; 2 adult ladies; 50 youth boys (U11 – U16), 6 youth girls and 30 mini teams generated within Exeter. This represents a decline of c20 teams over the last 7 years, principally due to the contraction of Sunday league play (now only 2 Exeter teams playing). However, it is acknowledged that peak demand is still consistent on a Saturday and will drive the quantum of pitches and quality required.

2.7 The study only recorded one team coming into Exeter from outside to play its matches - Kenn Valley United FC at King George V Playing Fields. 11 Exeter teams are playing their home matches outside the City (see Table 3 above), for various reasons, as follows:

- Newtown FC - 2 teams - a city based club, have a long established connection playing at Newton St Cyres and would not return to Exeter
- Whipton Youth FC - 4 teams at Clyst Valley Community College (lack of pitch site to accommodate youth teams in the city)

- Pinhoe Spartans Youth FC at Barley Park, Tedburn St Mary (home ground at Station Road Pinhoe currently closed)
- West Exe Youth FC – U8s and U15s playing at Barley Park, Tedburn St Mary (lack of pitch site to accommodate youth teams in the city)
- Pinhoe Hearts FC, currently playing at Barley Park, Tedburn St Mary. They hoped to play at Monkerton Primary School, but the pitch was not ready.
- Exeter City Women FC 1st XI play at Cullompton CCA Fields due to pitch availability and league requirements, although some home matches are now being played at the Exwick Sports hub 3G.

*Projected growth in numbers of teams*

**Table 6: PROJECTED GROWTH IN FOOTBALL TEAMS IN EXETER**

Reason for more teams	Men's	Ladies'	Boys 11v11	Girls 11v11	Boys 9v9	Girls 9v9	Mixed 7v7	Mixed 5v5
<b>Population growth to 2040</b>	9.5	1.3	6.1	0.8	3.4	0.6	3.0	2.5
<b>Pitch space based on above</b>	4.3		3.4		2.0		1.5	1.2
<i>+Latent/displaced demand</i>	1	1	6		2			
<i>+Aspirations/trends (TBA)</i>	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	3
<b>TOTAL TEAMS to 2040</b>	12.5	3.3	14.1	2.8	7.4	2.6	6.0	5.5
<b>Estimated requirement for GRASS pitches (or equivalent)</b>	6		7		5		2	2

## **B CRICKET**

### *Supply*

2.8 The main findings are:

- There are 8 sites containing facilities for cricket in Exeter and one site just outside the city boundary at Winslade Park (which is used by an Exeter team). One site has two grass pitches (University Ground at Topsham).
- Of the remaining seven sites – one (the County Ground) has a grass pitch only and four sites (The Chronicles, Alphington; Exwick Playing Fields; Exeter School and Winslade Park) have a grass pitch and a non turf wicket (Exeter School has at least one grass pitch and two NTWs).
- St Luke's CoE School and St Peter's CoE School have been recorded as having NTWs.
- The Coaver Club NTW is regularly used by two local teams which play competitive, friendly cricket. The pitch also hosts ad hoc tournaments and teams from local solicitors and the Met Office. It is an important central venue within the city providing this type of facility.
- There are thus no local authority operated public access sites for cricket in Exeter. Two pitches on local authority ground – Devon County Council's facility at Coaver and The Chronicles, Alphington – are leased or rented to clubs. The County Ground is owned by Exeter Cricket Club. Cricket provision thus relies heavily on education provision (either the University, Exeter College, two secondary schools and an independent school).

*Demand*

2.9 With regard to demand:

- There are 4 cricket clubs: Alphington and Countess Wear CC (A&CW CC) – (The Chronicles, Alphington); Exeter CC (The County Ground); Exwick CC (Exeter Playing Fields) and Topsham St James CC (Topsham Sports Ground (UoE). There are c.3 additional teams: Exeter Erratics (which has no home ground) and Sunset and Coaver Gerries (who use the NTW at the Coaver Ground).
- In total across the city there are 15 adult teams, 15 junior boys, 2 Ladies and 2 girls’ teams, making 34 teams in total.
- Since 2014 there has been an increase in the number of youth teams.
- Junior cricket is offered by Exeter CC and Topsham St James CC. It is an area A&CW CC are also establishing. Exeter CC are the only club in the city currently fielding girls’ cricket teams.
- The three main clubs also offer All Stars and A&CW CC offers Dynamos as well.

*Projected growth in numbers of teams*

*Table 7: PROJECTED GROWTH IN CRICKET TEAMS IN EXETER*

Reason for more teams	Men’s	Ladies’	Boys	Girls
Population growth to 2040	4.4	0.8	2.8	0.4
Pitches based on above 2040	1.7 (1 pitch = 8 wickets; thus c13 wickets)			
+ Latent/displaced demand	1			
+ Aspirations/participation trends	1	1	1	1
<b>TOTAL TEAMS to 2040</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>1.4</b>
<b>Requirement for pitch space 2040</b>	<b>c 16 wickets (2 pitches)</b>			

**C RUGBY**

*Supply*

2.10 The main points regarding supply are:

- Discounting Exeter Chief’s complex at Sandy Park, there are 17 senior rugby pitches which are marked out and with posts within Exeter. Rugby pitch provision is overwhelmingly within the education sector. 13 of the 17 senior pitches are on education sites, 5 on school sites Exeter School (3) and secondary schools (2).
- The University has two pitches at its Topsham Sports Ground and 4 at Ducke’s Meadow . The rugby teams also have access to the 3G World Rugby compliant artificial turf pitch at Exeter University Sports Park. (Although we do not know the detailed usage of this, it is understood that it is not used for matchplay).
- Exeter College has two rugby pitches (one with a barrier around) and a training grid area at Flowerpot Playing Fields, on a long lease from Exeter City Council.
- The remaining pitches recorded within the City are at two sites and are where the majority of community rugby in Exeter takes place. Exhibition Fields (leased to Exeter Saracens RFC) has two adult pitches and Bonfire Field, Topsham

(owned by Topsham RFC) has two adult pitches. 2 midi pitches and 3 mini pitches are marked out as required at Exhibition Fields and Bonfire Field Topsham.

- There are a further three adult pitches at Oil Mill Lane, Clyst St Mary, just outside the boundary, the home ground of Exeter Athletic RFC. They are included here as the site is the new home ground of Exeter Athletic RFC which is an amalgam of Wessex RFC and another rugby club which used to play at Flowerpot Playing Fields.

*Demand*

2.11 As regards community use:

- There are now two community clubs playing in the city: Topsham RFC, based at its own ground at Bonfire Field and Exeter Saracens FC, based at Exhibition Fields. Although Exeter Athletic RFC plays outside the city at Oil Mill Lane, the majority of its members come from the city.
- Each of the three clubs runs the full complement of minis and juniors up to U16s. As regards community teams, there are seven men’s teams (including one from the University), three Colts, two Ladies and one Vets team. There are a further 3 girls’ teams, 9 youth teams (U14-U17) and 18 midi/mini mixed (U8 – U13).
- Exeter College links with Exeter Chiefs in the running of the Exeter Rugby Academy and it runs many other rugby based squads and initiatives (e.g. Devon RFU pathway, 20 elite rugby students, Women’s rugby and Exeter College student teams). Teams also make use of the 3G FTP at Exwick Sports Hub.
- Facilities at Ducke’s Meadow and the rugby pitches at Topsham Sports Ground (University facilities) are used by the University teams and there is understood to be some use by Exeter Women’s Rugby of the latter. There are around 8 competitive teams run by the University – a Saturday league team and 5 BUCS Men’s teams and 2 BUCS Women’s teams,
- No regular community use of the school pitches for rugby has been recorded, although these are available.

*Projected growth in numbers of teams*

*Table 8: PROJECTED GROWTH IN RUGBY TEAMS IN EXETER*

Reason for more teams	Men’s	Women’s	Boys	Girls	Mixed
Population growth to 2040	2.3	0.8	2.3	0.4	4.0
Pitches for 2040	3.3 pitches				
Latent demand	May result in larger squad sizes or existing players playing more often.				
Aspirations/Unmet demand	1	1	2	2	2
<b>TOTAL TEAMS to 2040</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>6.0</b>
<b>Requirement for pitch space</b>	<b>4 -5 pitches</b>				

**D HOCKEY**

*Supply*

2.12 There are 8 full sized floodlit pitches with approved surfaces for hockey in Exeter: two at the University of Exeter Sports Park – one water based, one sand dressed; a sand dressed

pitch at Exeter School, and five sand filled surfaces at the five state secondary schools managed under a PFI contract via Fusion Lettings – Isca Academy, St James School, St Luke’s CoE School, and West Exe School. St Peter’s CoE Aided School. All but St Peters CoE Aided School are within the Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust. There are quality issues with the school AGPs, referred to in the main report.

2.13 Heavy use is made of the good quality sand and water based pitches at Exeter University for high level hockey by the University teams and Isca Hockey Club. Exeter School’s pitch is also of good quality and accommodates overflow activity for Isca Hockey Club. The two community based clubs – Exe Hockey Club and East Devon Hockey Club - carry out their training sessions at St Peter’s CoE School. Exe Hockey club plays its matches at St Peter’s; East Devon Hockey Club plays the majority of its matches at St Luke’s School pitch. Other venues outside the city are used for junior training and matchplay.

*Demand*

2.14 There are four hockey clubs playing in the city: Exeter University Hockey Club running 8 men’s Teams, 1 Intra Mural team and a Ladies team (jointly with Isca Hockey Club); East Devon Hockey Club (4 men’s teams, 6 youth teams; Isca Hockey Club running 6 men’s, 7 ladies and 16 youth teams and Exe Hockey Club running 6 ladies’ teams and 5 junior teams.

2.15 There is something of a mixed picture in terms of trends, with juniors generally increasing but some fluctuations in adult membership and numbers of teams (both up and down). East Devon and Exe Hockey Club are now planning a number of joint activities and looking to work more closely together next season, with the ultimate aim of merging the two clubs.

*Projected growth in numbers of teams*

*Table 9: PROJECTED GROWTH IN HOCKEY TEAMS IN EXETER*

<b>Reason for more teams</b>	<b>Men’s</b>	<b>Women’s</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>
<b>Population growth to 2040</b>	3.4	2.7	1.5	1.9
<b>Pitches for 2040</b>	0.8 AGPs			
Latent demand			2	2
Aspirations/Unmet demand	1	1	2	2
<b>TOTAL TEAMS to 2040</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>5.9</b>
<b>Requirement for pitch space</b>	<b>1.5 AGPs</b>			



## E TENNIS

### Facilities

Table 10: TENNIS COURTS IN EXETER

Site Name	TOTAL No. of outdoor courts	No. of Floodlit courts	LTA Registered	Built/ Refurbished	Access & Management
<b>PARK COURTS</b>					
Cowick Barton Playing Fields	3	0	N	2017/18	Local Authority/open access
Heavitree Pleasure Ground	6	0	N	2002/2014	Local Authority/ open access
King George V Playing Fields	2	0	N	1970	Local Authority/open access
Summerway Park	2	0	N		Local Authority/open access
Topsham Pleasure Ground	2	0	N		Local Authority/open access
<b>Total Park Courts</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>			
<b>CLUB COURTS</b>					
Tunnels Tennis Club	4	0	Y	1992	Club: Offer P&P
Victoria Park Tennis Club	4	4	Y	2003/2019	Club: members only
David Lloyd Club (Exeter)	3 (3)*	3	Y	2010	Commercial
Exeter Golf & Country Club	6	4	Y	1997/2006	Commercial/Members only
<b>Total Club Courts</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>			
<b>EDUCATION COURTS</b>					
University of Exeter Sports Park	4	0	Y	2013	Public access available P&P
University Of Exeter Sports Park	10* (6 + 4 acrylic)	0	Y	2013	Public access available Pay & Play
Exeter College (Exwick Sports Hub)	2	2	Y	2014	Education: Reduced rates + P&P available; Exwick LTC control bookings after college hours; also P&P
Exeter School	5	0		1970/1990	Education; some community use
The Maynard School	3	0		2004	Education; no community use
St James School	4	4		2006	Education; available for community use
St Luke's CoE School	4	0		2006	Education
Isca Academy	4	0		2006	Education
West Exe School	4	0		2012	Education
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>6</b>			
<b>OTHER COURTS DISUSED</b>					
Pynes Hill	4			Disused	Local authority leased

\*Indoor courts

*Activity*

2.16 There is very little information available on tennis activity in Exeter as all the local authority courts are open access and no records are kept of their use. Club details are as follows:

*Table 11: TENNIS CLUB MEMBERSHIP DETAILS*

Club/Site	<16 yrs	Adult	Total	Male	Female	
<b>Exwick Tennis Club</b>	50	90	<b>140</b>	90	50	Membership increasing because have opened up to non members & payp and LTA Youth Start Scheme
<b>Victoria Park TC</b>	100	325	<b>425</b>	265	160	Senior Men & ladies increasing; junior membership capped as full.
<b>University of Exeter TC</b>	44	80	<b>124</b>	73	51	No of players accessing the programme this academic year has increased due to the reopening of the University's facilities following the pandemic. We expect to see more growth as we head into the next academic year, via the introduction of more session types and the arrival of new development coaches. We currently have 1,289 student members accessing our university programme; however, we do not offer a stand-alone tennis membership for adults or juniors. Instead, they block book sessions with us at the start of each term. The numbers here are based on the attendance within each session offered on the adult/junior programme
<b>Exeter Golf &amp; Country Club</b>	N/A					
<b>David Lloyd Centre</b>	N/A					
<b>Tunnels TC</b>	N/A					

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND PITCH SIZES

Partners to deliver action and other acronyms used as follows:

<b>3G FTP</b>	3G Football Turf Pitch	<b>LFFP</b>	Local Football Facility Plan
<b>AD</b>	Active Devon	<b>LTA</b>	Lawn Tennis Association
<b>AGP</b>	Artificial Grass Pitch	<b>MES</b>	Match Equivalent Sessions
<b>Comm. Org.</b>	Community Organisation	<b>MUGA</b>	Multi Use Games Area
<b>CUA</b>	Community Use Agreement	<b>NGBs</b>	National Governing Bodies
<b>DC(B)</b>	Devon Cricket (Board)	<b>NTW</b>	Non-Turf Wicket (Cricket)
<b>DCC</b>	Devon County Council	<b>PPS</b>	Playing Pitch Strategy
<b>ECB</b>	England Cricket Board	<b>RFU</b>	Rugby Football Union
<b>ECC</b>	Exeter City Council	<b>SE</b>	Sport England
<b>EH</b>	England Hockey	<b>Ted Wragg MAT</b>	Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust
<b>FA</b>	Football Association/Devon FA	<b>VQA</b>	Visual Quality Assessment
<b>FF</b>	Football Foundation	<b>WR22</b>	World Rugby 22 compliant (relating to artificial grass pitch)
<b>Gen 2</b>	Type of artificial grass surface		

For reference, playing pitch areas (including run offs, excluding ancillary facilities) are:

*Glossary Table 2 AREA AND DIMENSIONS OF PLAYING PITCHES BY SPORT*

	Type	Age Range	Overall Space	Hectares
Football	5v5	U7, U8	43m x 33m	0.14
	7v7	U9, U10	61m x 43m	0.26
	9v9	U11, U12	79m x 52m	0.41
	Youth 11v11	U13, U14	88m x 56m	0.49
	Youth 11v11	U15, U16	97m x 61m	0.59
	Adult	U17 upwards	106m x 70m	0.74
	Cricket	Full pitch	All	111.56m x 115.84m
Rugby Union	Youth	U12 and below	80m x 53m	0.42

\*Source: Comparative Sizes of Sports Pitches & Courts (OUTDOOR) September 2015 Update – Sport England