

# Appendix A: Harrow Draft Outdoor Sports Pitch Strategy 2013-2023

## Executive Summary of Investment Priorities and Implementation Plan

### 1. Needs Evidence

Harrow Council's investment priorities for outdoor sports pitch facilities set out in this paper have been determined from a robust needs evidence base and analysis using Sport England Facility Planning Tools, notably the Towards a Level Playing Field recommended methodology including consultation with clubs and National Governing Bodies (NGBs), Sports Market Segmentation considering patterns of demand for specific sports, and Active Places Power benchmarking levels of facility supply against national and regional averages. The needs assessments take into account population change forecasts to 2017 and an increase in participation of 5%.

The needs evidence and analysis is documented in the following documents:

- Harrow Outdoor Sports Strategy Draft 2, April 2012
- The Harrow Open Space Strategy, 2011
- Harrow PPG17 Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study, 2011

The priorities link to the following strategic themes for the Borough's open spaces as set out in the newly adopted Open Space Strategy:

- Quality spaces (maintaining and improving the condition)
- Places for people (making spaces for attractive and accessible to all)
- Promoting increased activity (both formal sports and informal recreation)

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### 2. Local provision standard

The Harrow PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2011 found that a total of nearly 160 hectares of space in Harrow is given over to sports pitches, which are distributed across the Borough, but with a greater level of provision in the northwest sub-area. Residents are broadly happy with levels of provision, with a substantial minority wanting more, especially in the south of the Borough.

Quality assessments of the outdoor sports provision found that 15% of Harrow's football pitches were rated as good or excellent, but cricket pitches scores were better. Rugby, tennis and bowls have good quality pitches/greens on the club-managed sites in the borough. Generally, quality is less good (with a few exceptions) at the Council-managed sites.

Changing accommodation scores vary widely, with local authority facilities scoring poorly; facilities for women are generally very poor, or limited, and would deter participation. Half of those using sports pitches travel by car; most of the rest walk.

The agreed local quantity standard of 0.71ha / 1,000 head of population calls for a modest increase in provision of pitches by 2017, mainly for mini-football.

The quality standard highlights the need for a significant improvement in football pitch quality.

The accessibility standard for outdoor sports is a 15-minute actual walking distance. Applying this standard highlights small deficiencies in the central and southwestern subareas.

There are deficiencies across the borough for Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA's) and Synthetic Turf Pitches (STP's).

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### **3. Football - summary of findings**

There are a total of 106 football pitches accessible for community and club use in Harrow. Of these 48 (45%) are adult size football pitches; 27 (25%) are pitches for youth football and 32 (30%) are for mini soccer. Incorporating Sport England's recommended 10% contingency allowance, based on carrying capacity, the needs evidence suggests a current shortfall of 8 mini-soccer pitches and a future shortfall to meet 2017 population projections of 10 mini-soccer pitches.

The median pitch quality audit score is 66%, which equates to 'average'. All the 'below average' pitches apart from one pitch are on Harrow Council owned and managed sites. There are two pitches that were assessed as being 'poor'. One is at Newton Park and is not in a fit condition to be used for league matches. The other is at Byron Recreation Ground and is used regularly for competitive matches. This pitch had a cast iron manhole cover together with a paving slab set in the middle of the playing surface which needed to be removed, or if not feasible, matches relocated to a more suitable pitch. This work has been completed since the undertaking of the survey. The audit found a further safety issue with goalposts at some Council managed venues. In particular, there are goalposts, which had been altered from their original construction and should not be used. A need to carry out a full inspection of goalposts and replacement of those that fall below FA recommended standards was required. This has now been done and appropriate changes made.

Six of the fourteen clubs surveyed who considered their home ground to be very good, play their home games at The Hive Football Centre (the Barnet FC Centre of Excellence that opened in December 2009). Another six of these 14 clubs play in locations outside Harrow with the remaining two being private clubs within Harrow. Five out of the eight clubs that considered their main match pitch to be poor play at the Harrow Council facilities at Headstone Manor, Harrow Recreation Ground, Stanmore Recreation Ground and Roxeth Recreation Ground.

Changing accommodation is provided by the local authority (11 sites), private clubs (8 sites) and schools (1 site). The quality of changing accommodation varies considerably with scores ranging between 100% and 17%. The highest scoring facility was The Hive. The lowest scoring facilities are Montesoles Playing Fields and Harrow Weald Recreation Ground where the changing rooms are in a very poor state of repair and both scored 17%.

There are no changing or toilet facilities at William Ellis Sports Ground, the home ground for Belmont United Youth. This club runs 11 football teams ranging from Under 8's to Under 16s on 5 good quality pitches. The original site (4.46 hectares) was reduced to 2.25 hectares following the granting of planning permission for the

construction of a primary school in August 2007. Permission was granted subject to a S106 Agreement for a contribution of £500,000 for the formation and/or improvement of the football facilities including clubhouse facilities. Planning permission for a clubhouse was granted in May 2011 but has yet to be implemented as the club has not come with a scheme which meets the affordability level of the funds available.

#### 4. Football Priorities for investment

**4.1 Quality:** Improving the quality of football playing surfaces and of changing pavilions at specific LBH sites identified in the Outdoor Sports Pitch Strategy needs assessment audits, is the next investment priority. All the following Council sites have pitches that are either 'poor' (less than 40% audit score) or 'below average' (40-60%):

- Bannister Sports Centre – one of five pitches
- Byron Recreation Ground – one of three
- Chandos Recreation Ground – one of one
- Harrow Recreation Ground – two of six
- Harrow Weald Recreation Ground – five of six (*very poor changing*)
- Headstone Manor Recreation Ground – two of eight (*very poor changing*)
- Kenton Recreation Ground – five of eight
- Montesole Playing Fields – one of four (*very poor changing*)
- Newton Park Playing Fields – one of one
- Roxbourne Playing Fields – three of four
- Roxeth Recreation Ground – two of two
- Stanmore Recreation Ground – one of one
- Whitchurch Playing Fields – one of seven
- John Rumney Playing Fields – two of six

**4.2 Quantity:** In terms of new pavilion provision, the priority is William Ellis Sports Ground to serve the expressed demand for mini and youth soccer for both boys and girls on this site on both grass and 3G MUGA pitches.

Lack of football pitches to meet demand for grassroots mini/youth football (and suitable changing pavilions for use by boys and girls) will become a pressing issue as the FA, following its Youth Review in 2011, is proposing a range of different pitch sizes, which are considered to be better suited to the needs of children of different ages playing football, particularly the introduction of 5v5, 7v7 and 9v9 size pitches (ranging from 30mx20m to 90mx50m).

Where possible, any new provision should be co-located with other community sports facilities and management to both sustain activity and maintain standards.

In order to develop priorities for future improvements all outdoor sports sites with football pitches were assessed against a range of criteria which reflect their potential to secure the key objectives for football in the Borough. These include objectives to achieve a better balance in the supply of senior and junior pitches; their location in relation to areas of deficiency of supply of pitches and the site's position in the hierarchy of outdoor sports provision. In addition sites were graded for their potential

to increase participation generally and particularly for youth and women's football. Sites were also assessed for their potential to attract external funding in order to secure improvements.

The results and the full scoring matrix can be found in **Appendix A** of the full strategy. Sites have been given a total score and ranked accordingly; the scoring does not take account of the funding potential but this is considered as a separate measure.

The highest scoring site is **Kenton Recreation Ground** with 4 senior pitches and 6 mini pitches. This site is at Level 2 in the hierarchy<sup>1</sup> because it serves more than the local area. This site is the home ground of St Josephs 88 Youth Football Club which has full Charter Standard status. The club has 400 members of which two thirds are youth members and one third play mini soccer; the club reports that membership is increasing and plans exist to increase the number of girls teams. At present the clubs runs 10 mini soccer teams and 14 youth teams including one girls team.

The pitches at Kenton Recreation Ground are of average and below average quality based on the visual quality assessment. The changing rooms are the standard 'Harrow Model' with a flat roof, social area and four separate changing rooms each with showers. The condition of the changing block is poor. It would be virtually impossible to provide wheelchair access. It is unlikely that a refurbishment would be able to satisfy the Sport England/ Football Foundation standards.

There is good potential to reconfigure the pitches on this site to provide more youth and some mini pitches and there is additional space available which is not currently marked out for pitches. This site contains football pitches only and No cricket or rugby.

Recommended improvements would include the installation of drainage and the leveling of the pitch surface and the provision of a new changing pavilion. It is considered that this site should have good potential to secure external funding.

Two sites scored slightly below Kenton Recreation Ground – these are Headstone Manor Recreation Ground and Whitchurch Playing Fields.

**Whitchurch Playing Fields** – Whitchurch Pavilion has remained vacant since it was fire damaged some eight years ago. Prior to this it was used as changing facilities, in connection with the adjacent 25 acre playing fields. The playing fields are used on a much reduced basis since the closure of the pavilion and more recently the temporary portastore changing facilities. The playing fields are in poor condition requiring substantial levelling and replanting and drainage improvements.

With insufficient internal resources to carry out the necessary building and improvement works itself the Council decided to tender for a joint development partner and appointed a preferred bidder in November 2011 whose proposals are to replace the existing pavilion with a new sports and leisure pavilion of approximately 1600m<sup>2</sup> to comprise 12 changing rooms with shower facilities, a multipurpose function hall, bar, kitchen, and café. Additionally for the playing fields the following are proposed:

- 1 x full sized floodlit 3G football pitches
- 4 x small sized grass junior football pitches
- 4 x full sized football pitches

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<sup>1</sup> The hierarchy is explained in Appendix B

- 2 cricket tables/pitches
- An Eco Project on poor drainage land to the South of Edgware Brook for nature reserve and horticultural use for schools projects.

The cost, including improvements to the existing playing fields and drainage is estimated at approximately £3 million and will be borne by the Council's preferred bidder the Whitchurch Fields Consortium.

The Council will grant a lease of the completed development to the Operator and whilst the facility will be run on commercial lines there are obligations which the Operator must comply with in a Service Level Agreement providing ostensibly for free access to the playing fields and changing facilities for local schools and reduced rate costs to existing users and some voluntary sector Organisations. Subject to the outcome of a village green application and a successful planning consent for the proposal it is anticipated the facility could be completed by early 2015.

**Headstone Manor Recreation Ground** is a very large site which currently has four senior football pitches, five youth pitches and five mini-soccer pitches. In the hierarchy this is considered to be a Level 2 site i.e. a site which serves more than local need.

This site is the home ground of Headstone Manor Youth Football Club which has a membership of 400 of whom two thirds are youth members and one third are mini soccer members. The club has runs 8 mini-soccer teams and 14 youth teams of which 2 are girls' teams. The site also accommodates another youth football club, Pinner Albion which has a membership of 95 boys and runs 5 teams. Both clubs have Charter Standard status.

Headstone Manor also accommodates 3 cricket squares, 2 of which are used by Bessborough Cricket Club (a Focus Club) and one by West Harrow Cricket Club.

Overall the quality of the football and cricket pitches on the site is average. There are two main changing blocks of the 'Harrow Model' type on this site as well as two separate cricket pavilions which were built by the clubs. The standard of the main changing blocks is poor and the cricket pavilions are better and of moderate standard. One of the main changing blocks has been converted for use by a local children's nursery. The other, like Kenton, could not be converted to meet current standards.

The site has good potential for the reconfiguration of pitches to provide more youth and mini size pitches and there is some extra space which is currently unusable due to waterlogging.

Recommended improvements include the provision of pitch drainage and playing surface improvements for both football and cricket and the construction of a new changing block. Improvements to the cricket pavilions would enhance the quality of facilities for the cricket teams.

This is a multi-sport site so that this may increase the potential to attract external funding.

**Roxbourne Park** scored slightly below the previous 2 sites. It is a smaller site with one senior, one youth and 2 mini size pitches. It also has one cricket square which has recently been re-laid. This site is a level 3 site which merely serves the local area. One reason for the relatively high score is that this site lies in an area of deficiency identified in the Open Space Study.

The quality of the football pitches is below average and the cricket pitch is good. The changing block is the standard Harrow model and is of poor quality.

The site is the home ground of the Pinnstars Youth Football Club (but the club also plays at Montesoles) There are 200 members half are youth aged and half are aged under 10. The club has Charter Standard status and runs 7 mini soccer and 6 youth teams. The club rates their changing facilities as being very poor and would like to refurbish these and to have tea room facilities. The club feels that it cannot compete with clubs who have a home ground with proper facilities.

The site has some potential to reconfigure to provide youth pitches and there is some additional space which was previously used for pitches and could be brought back into use.

Recommended improvements would again focus on drainage and the need to improve the playing surface and utilization of the additional area. It is also recommended that the changing block be replaced. Roxbourne Park is in an area of deprivation and therefore would achieve higher priority for external funding. It is also a multi sport site.

The final priority site in the highest five is **Bannister Sports Ground**. The main pitch site has 2 senior, 2 youth and one mini pitch as well as an athletics track. The adjoining field is currently marked out for 2 rugby pitches which are under-used. The changing block is of a good standard and is of significantly better quality than on most sites in Harrow Council's ownership.

The site is the home ground of the Pinner Jewish Football Club which has 219 members, mainly youth players but also including 34 adult males. The club has Charter Standard status and membership has increased in recent years.

The quality of the football pitches is average and there is some capacity for reconfiguration; in addition the rugby pitches on the adjoining field are very little used and there is potential to reduce the number of rugby pitches by one and provide additional space for football.

Recommended improvements would include installation of pitch drainage and improvements to the playing surface including some leveling. The main potential of this site is the capacity to accommodate additional pitches on the adjoining field. However, it would be necessary to enlarge the changing accommodation to cater for the extra usage.

This site is not in an area of deficiency but may nevertheless attract external funding although it is more likely to be funded either through developer contributions or, in the longer term, through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

It should be noted that this site is within the Green Belt and the Harrow Weald Ridge area of Special Character.

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## 5. Cricket – summary of findings

There are 30 regular cricket clubs based within the Harrow Council area of which seven have achieved ECB 'Focus Club' status in recognition of their strategic importance and focus on youth cricket development. The clubs field an estimated total of 124 teams (74 adult teams and 51 youth teams of under 18's). 10 have junior

(Colts) teams. There is one women's cricket club, Headstone Manor Ladies, which has 3 junior teams and 1 adult team.

The playing pitch assessment found that, in general, provision of cricket facilities in the borough – in terms of quantity and accessibility - is adequate to meet current and forecast needs.

The pitch audits are incomplete (22 of 30 squares were inspected). However, all those squares audited scored in excess of 70% ('good') and 10 scored 90% or above ('excellent'). One Council-owned square – West Harrow Recreation Ground - is rated as poor. The club/league survey found that 15 clubs (65%) consider that the changing facilities are moderate to very poor. The majority (10) are referring to Harrow Council changing accommodation.

In total ten Harrow Council venues have cricket squares. Those that host both competitive club cricket and football with a changing pavilion are:

- Hatch End Playing Fields
- Headstone Manor Recreation Ground (*very poor changing*)
- Chandos Recreation Ground
- Harrow Recreation Ground
- Montesole Playing Fields
- Roxbourne Playing Fields (*poor changing*)
- Roxeth Recreation Ground (*poor changing*)

## 5.1 Cricket Priorities for investment

**Quality:** In terms of the highest scoring cricket grounds 4 out of the top 5 are private clubs. The implications for this strategy are that the Council will seek to work in partnership with these four clubs and support any proposals which the clubs may have to improve their facilities.

The **Harrow Cricket Club** scores highly because it is situated in an area of deficiency and is a Focus Club which also has ECB Clubmark status. The club already has a large Colts development programme and membership has increased over the last five years. It therefore has the potential to contribute to the further development of the game and of junior cricket in particular. The club has its own ground which has 2 high quality cricket squares and good changing facilities.

**Harrow Town Cricket Club** is part of the Harrow Town Sports and Social Club which also caters for football and tennis. The two cricket squares are of average quality and the changing accommodation is poor. This club is situated within an area of deficiency and also of high deprivation. The club plans to amalgamate with a women's cricket club and also plans to develop a disability cricket team. Half its current membership is comprised of junior players and the club has achieved ECB Club Mark status. It is therefore well placed to increase participation in junior and women's cricket. The club has plans to improve the club house including providing disabled access. Given the club's location and priorities it may well attract external funding.

**Kenton Cricket Club** is also at a multi sport venue, the Kenton Sports Ground. This also caters for the Kenton tennis club. There are 3 cricket squares of good quality, a

club house and changing accommodation which is of poor quality. The club has recently been successful in their application to the Inspired Facilities Programme to improve their changing pavilion.

**RCT Sports Ground** is a multi sport site which caters for football and cricket. It is the home ground of the Lohana Cricket Club which is a Focus Club with ECB Clubmark status. The club has a membership of 120, around two thirds of whom are junior members including girls.

The club has aspirations to improve the club house and changing facilities to accommodate its increasing membership.

For Council-owned facilities, improvements to the quality of changing accommodation – in particular at West Harrow Recreation Ground and Headstone Manor as a first priority, followed by those at Roxbourne Park and Roxeth Recreation Ground.

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## 6. Rugby – summary of findings

There are three rugby clubs based in the borough of which two have extensive mini and youth rugby sections. Each has its own ground, of which one (Pinner & Grammarians RFC) leases from the Council (Shaftesbury Playing Fields). There are also two relatively poor quality rugby pitches (with access to ‘good’ changing facilities) that are used regularly by Salvatorian at the Council’s Bannister Sports Centre.

The needs analysis finds a sufficiency of adult pitches to meet current and forecast demand to 2017.

### 6.1 Priorities for investment

**Quantity:** The priority need is for junior pitches (2 minimum) to cater for demand for mini and youth rugby development by two of the three clubs based in the borough.

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## 7. Tennis – summary of findings

There are 103 tennis courts in current use in Harrow on 22 sites; 14 of these are private tennis clubs and the remaining 8 are Local Authority sites situated in Parks and Recreation Grounds, all of which are macadam and most of which are available for public access free of charge. Three quarters of all courts are in private clubs (75 courts) and the remaining quarter is Local Authority owned (28 courts). Courts at three local authority sites and one sports club have closed in recent years.

The court needs assessment and quality audit carried out to inform the Outdoor Sports Strategy found that some of the park-based courts are in need of refurbishment but there is a sufficient supply remaining of accessible courts overall, despite the recent closures.

### 7.1 Priorities for investment



**Quality:** To maximise the value and sustainability of investment in parks tennis facilities, upgrades should be prioritised at sites where there are other sports facilities and a good level of site supervision/club/coach use. The park courts that are open for use and in the poorest condition are:

- Byron Recreation Ground (2 courts)
- Kenton Recreation Ground (4 courts)
- Queensbury Recreation Ground (2 courts)

In addition, the following sites have tennis courts that are now derelict and require investment to either reinstate or meet an alternative community sport or recreation facility need:

- Pinner Village Gardens (2 courts)
- Park Drive (5 courts)
- West Harrow Recreation Ground (6 courts)

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## 8. Bowls – summary of findings

There are eight Bowls clubs in Harrow playing on 8 bowling greens. Seven of these are in Council ownership (of which six are maintained by the Council) and one is a privately owned club.

Harrow has recently lost 3 bowls greens and clubs. These are the greens at Roxeth Recreation Ground and Kenton Recreation Ground and, more recently, the green at the Kodak site. These greens are now derelict and will not be re-instated as bowls greens. Despite this, membership trends indicate there is sufficient facility provision to meet current and forecast demand.

One green was rated as very good – the only privately owned green at the Arnold House School - by its club the Lupton. Half the clubs gave their greens a good rating including the Wealdstone's green at Byron Park which is the only Council-owned green which is maintained by the club. Two clubs rated their greens as poor – both Council owned and managed; these are the Culver Bowls Club at Centenary Park and the green at Harrow Weald Recreation Ground (mal-functioning watering system).

### 8.1 Priorities for investment

**Quality:** The priority need is support to the clubs at Centenary Park and Harrow Weald Recreation Ground to improve green quality.

## 9. MUGAs – summary of findings

There are six locations across the borough with at least one Multi Use Games Area. There is a new facility under construction at Cedars Open Space as part of the multi purpose centre being built by Watford FC's Community Sports and Education Trust. A training 3G pitch with floodlights is available at Centenary Park. The remaining

MUGAs all have a tarmac surface and are used for training. The addition of a new 3G pitch with floodlights as part of the Whitchurch Playing Fields partnering arrangement may meet this deficiency.

### **9.1 Priorities for investment**

The needs assessment finds a deficit of one MUGA in the borough to meet a standard of 1:20,000 head of population. The addition of a new 3G pitch with floodlights as part of the Whitchurch Playing Fields partnering arrangement may meet this deficiency.

Converting and refurbishing derelict tennis courts with some of the Borough's parks could readily achieve this.

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## **10 Synthetic Turf Pitches – summary of findings**

The Harrow Hockey Club are and currently playing at the Jewish Free School in The Mall in Kingsbury within the London Borough of Brent where they hire the sand based STP. The club has 'ClubFirst' accreditation from English Hockey and approximately 125 members from the Harrow area of whom half are female and 50 are juniors. Currently the club runs ten teams. Membership has been in decline in the last five years. Training slots are hired at the Kingsbury STP and at Slough Hockey Club.

Whilst Active Places Power indicates that there are seven full size STPs in Harrow, those at Orley School and Whitmore School are not floodlit and both are only for private use. The STP listed under Broadfields Country Club is a sand based five-a-side facility with 8 pitches in a poor condition. This site is now owned by The Mumbai Gardens Restaurant and, although these pitches are available for community use, there is now no other sport on this site. Two of the STPs are located at and managed by Harrow School and are available for community use but only on a limited basis. The remaining two pitches are 3G STPs at The Hive. These are available for hire for community use for football (albeit at a relatively high fee) but are not suitable for hockey.

In addition to the full size STPs, there is a training 3G rubber crumb pitch (60m x 40m) at Krishna-Avanti School in Camrose Avenue. This is adjacent to the Belmont United FC pitches at William Ellis Sports Ground. Again, the surface makes this facility unsuitable for hockey.

On the basis that only two of the seven STPs listed in Active Places Power are fully available for community use as a full size pitch, the actual Capacity Ratio per 1000 is 0.10, which, relative to other neighbouring local authorities and London as a whole, is a very low level of provision. The Sports Facility Calculator indicates a current requirement for 7.34 STPs. Even if the two STPs at Harrow School are included in the current supply, there is still a shortfall of 3 STPs with community access.

### **10.1 Priorities for investment**

The priority need is to plan for a further floodlit STP in the borough suitable for use for competitive hockey (i.e. sand filled or sand dressed) alongside other sports and on-site management to ensure financial viability and maintain quality.

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## 11. Strategic Priorities

In the context of Harrow Council's priorities for its open spaces – i.e. improved quality, better access and more activity - and the findings of the recently completed strategic needs assessments, the following are the investment priorities for outdoor sports facilities in the borough:

**11.1 Improve the quality of grass pitches (drainage, goal mouth areas etc) and support ancillary provision such as changing facilities at Council-owned sites** - Prioritise multi-sport sites with potential for strong sports development outcomes and with on-site management/supervision to minimise risk of vandalism. A new pavilion at the William Ellis Sports Ground is the immediate priority.

There is a major opportunity to create a sports hub at Bannister Stadium through the provision of quality pitches with good drainage; an all-weather training area; increased changing capacity and a reconfiguration of pitches.

Similarly there is an opportunity to substantially upgrade the pitches at Headstone Manor Recreation ground as well as improve the changing rooms.

**11.2 Consider location options to address deficiencies in provision for small sided football and rugby (grass and/or 3G MUGA)** - As a priority, consider the suitability of upgrading existing disused or low grade facilities on Council-owned sites where there is potential for high demand and sports development outcomes and a good level of on-site management/supervision

**11.3 Consider options to provide a further Synthetic Turf Pitch in the borough** – this should be suitable for competitive hockey (i.e. sand filled or sand dressed) with floodlights and on-site management and in an accessible location

**11.4 To deliver sport-specific quality improvements in parks and open spaces (tennis, bowls etc)** – e.g. those park-based bowling greens and tennis courts in need of improvement and on sites with potential for strong sports development outcomes and with on-site management/supervision to minimise risk of vandalism.

**11.5 To deliver safe, fit-for-purpose pitches to meet the needs of residents** – As a priority to improve 'goal mouth' areas of pitches where they are currently very worn.