

Playing Pitches, Audit & Planning Tools

What analysis have we done?

Using a nationally recognised tool designed by Sport England, Active York have undertaken an analysis of the number and quality of team sports pitches in relation to the current and future demand for these pitches in York.

This process has provided the city with a flexible planning tool which can be used to assess the impact of planned and theoretical playing pitches on the city. City of York Council now hold a database that has information on pitch quantity, quality and accessibility.

This tool is available to be used by anyone planning new facilities, planning residential developments, raising funding for pitches or just interested in sports provision in the city. Queries on the current situation in terms of facility and pitch provision can be made to the council, who will also be able to use the tool to assess the impact of various facility development scenarios.

The following information is based on the levels of provision and the population projections in May 2006, An updated version of this chapter will be available on an annual basis.

Pitch supply.

This process has shown that the city currently has a shortage of mini and junior soccer pitches (31 and 9 respectively) and junior rugby league pitches (16). Running the system using population projections for 2015 and also assuming a 10% increase in participation over this time indicates that the deficit will increase to 64 mini soccer pitches, 17 Junior soccer pitches and 19 junior rugby pitches.

There are a number of other pitches in the city which are not currently available for community use. Many of these are on school sites.

Statistical analysis indicates that the city has a surplus of cricket pitches, the bulk of these are at community accessible school sites. There is little scope to increase usage of these on a flexible, ad hoc basis. Cricket matches need ancillary facilities, score boards etc.

However to make the most of these pitches the land should be used for cricket development work, this should include after school work to create clubs/teams.

Pitch Quality.

Despite the relatively high number of pitches in the city and the number of possible routes to securing access to more pitches the City has a significant problem with regard to the quality of the pitches available and their associated ancillary facilities. Many school sites have no community changing facilities, many community club sites have dated changing facilities often with only single sex provision. Many pitches are uneven or poorly drained in these cases usage is limited to weekly (or less) during wet weather to maintain league standards. Where pitches are in poor condition resources should be channelled into pitch improvements which will effectively serve to increase the pitch capacity in the city by allowing more matches and training on the same pitch area.

What do we need to do?

We must ensure that sports people have access to safe and secure facilities which are managed and maintained appropriately and that cater for the specific needs of the users. We can no longer expect formal sport to be played on areas of open space at risk of dog fouling and littering, with no changing and ancillary facilities.

The City's main priority must be to retain and enhance existing sites. We must invest in existing sites to improve their quality and increase their capacity.

Where clubs are already using and maintaining sites Active York will support the on-going use including where possible offering assistance with ground improvement and development.

While new pitches are clearly going to be needed to cater for the growing demand if possible this should be through extension and expansion of existing high quality sustainable sites. New facilities must only be considered if they are filling an identified gap in provision **and** if a suitable infrastructure exists or can be created to manage and maintain them.

Sports trends and participation rates do shift over time and the possibility of developing generic pitches or converting existing surplus pitches to generic ones, which could be used for soccer, rugby league and union rounders or other sports activities should also be explored.

Active York must continue to make representation to City of York Council on how developers, sports contributions can be spent in the zones to provide maximum community benefit.

South Zone

Carrying out the analysis separately for each individual zone demonstrates that the South zone currently has an under provision of approximately 4 mini soccer pitches and 1 junior soccer pitch and that by 2015, with population and sports development growth, this will have increased to a shortfall of 10 mini pitches and 4 junior soccer pitches.

The zone has an additional 6 Junior pitches and 5 mini pitches on schools sites that currently offer no community access. Making these available would greatly reduce the shortfall in pitch supply both now and in the future.

Despite the pitches on the Knavesmire being located in the South zone, they have not been included in the analysis here as their open access nature means there is little potential to improve the quality of the pitches, reduce the health and safety risks for players from dog fouling or add appropriate ancillary facilities.

The South zone development plan has identified the need for:

- ⇒ Additional junior pitches for Bishopthorpe FC
- ⇒ Additional pitch space at Heslington
- ⇒ Improved and additional pitches in Fulford to accommodate the growing population.

Delivering each of these projects would contribute significantly to reducing the shortfall in pitches and providing capacity to increase community participation.

The zone action group have also identified the opportunity to increase community provision by improving access to the sports pitches at Imphal barracks

Recommendations for pitch development in the South zone.

- ⇒ Work should be undertaken with schools to encourage community use and the development of appropriate community use agreements to benefit both the schools and the community.
- ⇒ Opportunities to improve the pitches on the Knavesmire should be explored including the possibility of isolating some pitches and limiting the access to them.
- ⇒ Assistance and support should be given to the South Zone action group and the constituent sports groups to deliver the projects set out in their development plan.

⇒ Active York must continue to make recommendations to City of York Council on how developers, sports contributions can be spent in the zone to provide maximum community benefit.

North Zone

The North zone currently has an under provision of approximately 3 mini soccer pitches, 3 junior soccer pitch and 4 junior rugby pitches. By 2015, with population and sports development growth, this shortfall will have increased to 13 mini pitches and 6 junior soccer pitches and 7 junior rugby pitches.

The zone has an additional 12 Junior pitches and 5 mini pitches on schools sites that currently offer no community access. Making these available would greatly reduce the shortfall in pitch supply both now and in the future.

Outline planning approval has been granted for a sports complex at Clifton Moor which would include indoor facilities as well as outdoor cricket, football and 5-a-side football pitches.

The North zone development plan has identified the need for:

- ⇒ The acquisition of land to provide additional pitches in Strensall
 - ⇒ Rawcliffe recreation association to improve their pitches to raise the amount of usage the site can accommodate.
 - ⇒ New Earswick Sports Club to improve the drainage of their pitches
 - ⇒ Skelton recreation association to develop changing facilities for their pitches. This will open these facilities up to a broader audience.
- Delivering each of these projects would contribute to reducing the shortfall in pitches and providing capacity to increase community participation.

Recommendations for pitch development in the North zone.

- ⇒ Work should be undertaken with schools to encourage community use and the development of appropriate community use agreements to benefit both the schools and the community.
- ⇒ Assistance and support should be given to the North Zone action group and the constituent sports groups to deliver the projects set out in their development plan.
- ⇒ Active York must continue to make recommendations to City of York Council on how developers, sports contributions can be spent in the zone to provide maximum community benefit.
- ⇒ As development of the new facilities at Clifton Moor begins the site managers should be invited to participate in zone discussions about

increasing community access to pitches, to help make the best use of any new pitches in the North.

East Zone

The East zone currently has an under provision of approximately 3 junior soccer pitch and 4 junior rugby pitches. By 2015, with population and sports development growth, this shortfall will have increased to 4 mini pitches and 4 junior soccer pitches and 5 junior rugby pitches.

The zone has an additional 3 Senior soccer pitches, 3 Junior pitches and 2 mini pitches on schools sites that currently offer no community access. Making these available would greatly reduce the shortfall in pitch supply both now and in the future. City of York council is currently working with one of these schools to draw up a community use agreement for its current and future planned facilities.

Outline planning approval has been granted for 2 new junior pitches in the zone work will be needed to promote the opportunities these facilities will offer for community use.

The East zone development plan has identified the need to:

- ⇒ Acquire adjacent land to create new pitches at Dunnington sports club to develop cricket and football on the one site.
- ⇒ Develop new changing facilities at York St John's pitches on Hull Rd to cater for broad community use.

Recommendations for pitch development in the East zone.

- ⇒ Work should be undertaken with schools to encourage community use and the development of appropriate community use agreements to benefit both the schools and the community.
- ⇒ Assistance and support should be given to the East Zone action group and the constituent sports groups to deliver the projects set out in their development plan.
- ⇒ Active York must continue to make recommendations to City of York Council on how developers, sports contributions can be spent in the zone to provide maximum community benefit.
- ⇒ As the new pitches are developed in the zone the operators must be supported to offer community access and assisted to provide sustainable high quality facilities

West Zone

The West zone currently has an under provision of approximately 7 mini soccer pitch and 9 junior rugby pitches. By 2015, with population and

sports development growth, this shortfall will have increased to 17 mini pitches, 2 junior soccer pitches and 10 junior rugby pitches.

The zone has an additional 9 Junior soccer pitches, 7 mini soccer pitches and 1 junior rugby pitch on schools sites that currently offer no community access. Making these available would greatly reduce the shortfall in pitch supply both now and in the future. City of York council is currently working with one of these schools to draw up a community use agreement for its current and planned facilities.

A new synthetic pitch is being developed at York College, while this does not affect the number of grass pitches in the zone it will accommodate a high volume of training and 5-a-side competition. This will reduce the wear on grass pitches and potentially increase the capacity for matches.

The West zone development plan has identified the need to:

- ⇒ Create new outdoor sports facilities in Copmanthorpe, including a MUGA to accommodate team training and therefore take some of the wear off the pitches, which will increase their capacity for matches.
- ⇒ Expand the playing pitch area for Dringhouses Football Club to accommodate the increasing number of players.

Recommendations for pitch development in the West zone.

- ⇒ Work should be undertaken with schools to encourage community use and the development of appropriate community use agreements to benefit both the schools and the community.
- ⇒ Assistance and support should be given to the West Zone action group and the constituent sports groups to deliver the projects set out in their development plan.
- ⇒ Active York must continue to make recommendations to City of York Council on how developers, sports contributions can be spent in the zone to provide maximum community benefit.
- ⇒ As the new synthetic pitch is developed in the zone the operators must be supported to offer community access and assisted to provide sustainable high quality facilities which complement the existing grass pitches.