

Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance

An approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy

Appendix 4a



The Rugby Football Union (RFU) Offer of Support

This offer of support seeks to help Local Authorities (LAs) develop and deliver a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and ensure a collaborative approach from the start.

The offer is subject to a LA reading the guidance document and then discussing any points of clarification and the key principles of the approach with Sport England prior to engaging the RFU.

This initial engagement with Sport England and subsequently the RFU should take place as soon as a LA is thinking of developing a PPS, with appropriate notice and before a brief is drafted and any external support is secured. This being the case the RFU will seek to provide the following offer of support to LAs during each stage of the work.

The RFU offer will be coordinated regionally through the Facilities Investment Team which comprises of six Area Facilities Managers (AFMs) with whom contact should be made initially (see contact details below). Where appropriate, AFMs will delegate responsibility and involvement of certain aspects to local Rugby Development Officers (RDO) or Constituent Body (CB) volunteer facility co-ordinators.

Please note the need for early engagement. Should a situation arise where a significant amount of strategies are being undertaken at the same time within the same area of the country this may lead to some capacity issues with the RFU providing elements of its offer.

Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach (Step 1)

- Attend an initial scoping meeting and help to tailor the approach
- Engage with, support and where possible attend steering group meetings
- Provide and discuss the current and potential rugby union landscape within the area and identify RFU strategic prioritisation/direction
- Review and provide comments on a draft tailored brief for the work and timescales

Stage B: Gather supply and demand information and views (Steps 2 & 3)

The following support will be coordinated through Area Facilities Managers (AFM):

- Check the details of all natural and artificial grass pitches provided by Active Places Power and LA records (to be supplied by LA).
- Provide the following reports and documents (please agree a timescale with the AFM for this information to be provided, please be aware that up to 4 weeks may be required). The reports are generated via the RFU's affiliation data and cover club contact information and supply and demand data.
 - Rugby First data
 - Schools report detailing all affiliated schools or schools that play rugby through a development team
 - University reports detailing all SRU universities and number of teams

- RFU/CB County Facilities Plan (also known as a development plan)
- RFU National Facilities Strategy
- Identify and highlight local RFU priorities through the CB County Facility Plan
- Supply guidance on which AGPs are International Rugby Board (IRB) Regulation 22 compliant
- Help to improve rugby union club survey return rates – through direct RFU contact with clubs and email endorsement
- Provide any existing agronomic intelligence for each site
- Check and challenge the initial pitch quality ratings

For particular areas or where resources allow the RFU may also be able to:

- Provide a GIS map of clubs on a county basis (including identification of flooding and other issues)
- Support local consultation (i.e. help to set up and where appropriate facilitate meetings)

Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views (Steps 4, 5 & 6)

- Provide responses to specific queries relating to the assessment work
- Check and challenge the site overviews
- Discuss the suggested nature and extent of likely future demand
- Assist with identifying the key issues from the assessment work
- Review and provide comments on the draft assessment details/report

Stage D: Develop the strategy (Steps 7 & 8)

- Assist with identifying and agreeing the recommendations and a prioritised action plan based on the key findings of the assessment work and RFU priorities
- Agree timescales for recommendations and actions where the RFU can assist their delivery
- Review and provide comments on a draft strategy document

For particular areas or where resources allow the RFU may also be able to:

- Support any consultation on the strategy document (i.e. helping the LA to present a draft strategy document to wider stakeholders)

Stage E: Deliver the strategy and maintain its robustness (Steps 9 & 10)

- Engage at agreed periods with the steering group to help review the delivery of the strategy and agree the nature and extent of any update required.

Contacting the Rugby Football Union

The RFU Area Facilities Managers cover the following geographical areas:

Area	Geographical Coverage
Area 1	Cornwall, Somerset, Devon, Dorset & Wilts, Gloucestershire
Area 2	Middlesex, Hampshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Hertfordshire.
Area 3	Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Essex.
Area 4	Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, Eastern Counties, Leicestershire, East Midlands, Warwickshire
Area 5	Lancashire, Cheshire, Staffordshire, North Midlands
Area 6	Yorkshire Durham, Northumberland, Cumbria

For up to date contact details please refer to the following RFU website page:

<http://www.rfu.com/abouttherfu/contactus/rdocontactlist>

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The Rugby Union Landscape

Rugby Football Union (RFU) is the national governing body for grassroots and elite rugby union in England.

The RFU's National Facilities Strategy provides a framework for the sustainable development of facilities for rugby union in England, at a national, regional and local level.

http://clubs.rfu.com/Clubs/portals/lancashire/Media/File/National%20Facility%20Strategy_Final.pdf

The framework enables clubs, Constituent Bodies (CBs) the Rugby Football Union (RFU) and other partners to:

- Identify priorities for facility developments to meet the various needs of the sport.
- Identify what facilities are required to meet the needs of the Government sports policy and the RFU's Strategic Plan.
- Support the prioritisation of investment and funding through a detailed set of developmental criteria, technical requirements, management / operational structures and potential financial viability which will be critical to the provision of quality rugby facilities.
- Prioritise future investment to ensure that the right facilities are provided in the right locations and for the right reasons.
- Identify and deliver a minimum standard for all facility provision.

The strategy shows clubs what facilities are needed to provide these different programmes, from grass roots through to the professional game.

RFU Facility Investment Programmes

- ◀ Between 2003 and 2008 the RFU Community Club Development Programme (CCDP) invested £10.61m in 161 projects with an additional £6m partner funding.
- ◀ Between 2009 and 2013 The RFU Capital Investment Programme (CIP) funded via the RFU's Whole Sport Plan (WSP) has invested £11.42m in 206 projects with an additional £43m partner funding.
- ◀ Between 2003 and 2013 The Rugby Football Foundation (RFF) has granted £6.68m loans and £1.99m grants, attracting an additional £16.46m partner funding

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The 10 Step Approach – Rugby Football Union Specific Details

The following details should be used specifically for rugby union when working through steps 2 to 4 of the approach.

Step 2: Gather information and views on the supply of pitches

1. Pitch Types - As a guide all rugby union pitches are classified as senior sized. However, there may be instances (particularly on school sites and large club sites) where separate dedicated mini/midi pitches are provided.

Youth rugby (U13 to U17) and Colts rugby (U18 to U19) is played on a senior pitch and mini/midi teams play principally on half a senior pitch.

Count all competitive and training pitches and record which are floodlit.

Refer to RFU 'Grass Pitches for Rugby' for pitch dimension sizes

<http://www.rfu.com/managingrugby/clubdevelopment/facilitiesandequipment/~media/files/2009/facilitiesandequipment/facilities%20guidance%20note%202.ashx>

2. Pitches marked out over another – As set out above all play generally takes place on senior pitches. The different types of demand on a site should be recorded with all demand (Senior, Youth and Mini/Midi) then converted into senior match equivalent sessions and allocated to the relevant senior pitches where the play takes place. The exception being if a site does have some separate dedicated mini/midi pitches.
3. AGPs – The number and size of International Rugby Board (IRB) Regulation 22 compliant AGPs should be recorded. As set out in the RFU offer the relevant Area Facilities Manager will supply guidance on which AGPs are IRB compliant in a given area.

Also refer to Sport England and the NGBs 'Selecting the Right Artificial Surface for Hockey, Football, Rugby League and Rugby Union' document for a guide as to suitable AGP surfaces for rugby union (see below link).
www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/artificial-sports-surfaces/

4. Ancillary Facilities - Details should be provided about the scale and quality of ancillary facilities including changing provision, social facilities and car parking.
5. Further defining community use - As a guide, you will not need to count professional rugby union club pitches such as Sale Sharks or Northampton Saints where play is restricted to the first and/or second team only. However, in most instances you should count semi-professional rugby club pitches which generally allow greater pitch access to other community league teams within the club. If you are unsure on how to deal with such sites seek further guidance from the relevant RFU Area Facilities Manager.

6. **Pitch Quality** - The preferred RFU option for assessing the quality of grass rugby union pitches is through a technical assessment or PQS (Performance Quality Standard). However, where this is not available at the time of a PPS, the RFU recommends use of the example non-technical assessment. If the non-technical assessments are used to help determine the quality of pitches please work with your RFU representative when allocating the relevant ratings.

Step 3: Gather information and views on the demand for pitches

Alongside the guidance provided under Step 3 within the main Playing Pitch Strategy guidance document the table below sets out rugby league specific information. Identify all clubs and teams, schools (state and private), colleges and universities.

Demand type	Details
Organised competitive play	<p>Differentiate between the following team types and age groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Senior teams (19 to 45 yrs) ▪ Youth teams (U13 to 17yrs), ▪ Colts teams (U18 to U19yrs) and ▪ Mini/Midi teams (U7 to 12) <p>As youth rugby is played on a senior pitch it should be categorised as equivalent to a senior match.</p> <p>Please note that youth teams tend to play on senior pitches. Where this occurs the play will have some impact on the quality of, and therefore use some of the carrying capacity of, the senior pitches. As they are senior pitches the youth play needs to be quantified as match equivalent sessions of a senior pitch.</p> <p>If a mini/midi team plays on half a senior pitch every week for half the time of a senior match then it may be appropriate to record the use as a quarter (0.25) of a senior match equivalent session a week against the senior pitches on a site. This would enable the demand to be captured against the senior pitches on a site where the play takes place while reflecting the limited impact on the quality and capacity of the pitches compared to the senior play.</p> <p>The peak periods for Rugby Union are provided below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Senior mens rugby union takes place Saturday pm ▪ Womens rugby union takes place Sunday pm ▪ Youth rugby union takes place Sunday am ▪ Mini/midi rugby union takes place Sunday am ▪ U18-U19 yrs 'Colts' rugby union takes place midweek, Saturday PM or Sunday PM
Organised training	<p>Rugby union has a strong culture of training on floodlit natural grass pitches on weekday evenings; these pitches are also used for matches at weekends. As a guide:</p> <p>2 teams training on one pitch on one evening = one match equivalent session.</p> <p>A typical floodlit pitch may be used on 3 evenings per week for training. The number of training sessions per week per pitch should be established.</p>

Demand type	Details
Casual Play	The extent of other use e.g. casual play and friendly matches, should be established along with pre-season training (normally July – August) and other forms of the game that may take place on a site i.e. Rugby 7s, Touch Rugby and TAG Rugby (may also take place usually predominantly in the summer months May – August).
Population projections and future demand	<p>Population projections will be required for the following age and gender categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Senior Men (19-45) ▪ Senior women (19-45) ▪ Youth boys (13-18) ▪ Youth girls (13-18) ▪ Mini/midi rugby union mixed (7-12) <p>The projections by these categories should be used to calculate the Team Generation Rates (TGRs) in Step 5 to help develop the likely future demand.</p>

Step 4: Understand the situation at individual sites

1. Pitch carrying capacity – As a guide (see the table below), the RFU has set a standard number of match equivalent sessions that natural grass pitches should be able to sustain without adversely affecting their current quality (pitch carrying capacity). The RFU believes that it is most appropriate to base this calculation of capacity upon an assessment of the drainage system and maintenance programme afforded to a site. This information can be ascertained through a combination of a technical or non-technical assessment and consultation with Rugby Clubs who use the site. Where the club does not own/manage its own site this information can also be sought from the relevant provider of the site.

This guide should only be used as very general measure of potential pitch carrying capacity and does not account for specific circumstances at the time of use, assumes seasonally average weather conditions and an appropriate end of season rest and renovation programme.

The figures for pipe and slit drained pitches are based upon a pipe drained system at 5m centres that has been installed in the last 8 years and a slit drained system at 1m centres completed in the last 5 years.

Standards may be adjusted to better reflect individual sites which are of a higher quality. However, you should seek to agree the pitch carrying capacity figures with your RFU representative.

Suggested number of senior match equivalent sessions a week based on maintenance and drainage details:

		Maintenance		
		Poor (M0)	Standard (M1)	Good (M2)
Drainage	Natural Inadequate (D0)	0.5	1.5	2
	Natural Adequate (D1)	1.5	2	3
	Pipe Drained (D2)	1.75	2.5	3.25
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	2	3	3.5