

Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance

An approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy

Appendix 5a



The Rugby Football League (RFL) 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 RFL.

This initial engagement with Sport England and subsequently the RFL 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 RFL will seek to provide the following offer of support to LAs during each stage of the work.

The RFL offer will be coordinated nationally through the National Facilities Manager (NFM) with whom contact should be made initially (see contact details below). Where appropriate, the NFM will delegate responsibility and involvement of certain aspects to the appropriate member of RFL staff.

The RFL will engage with local authorities depending on the concentration of rugby league participation in the area. This is likely to result in the following different levels of support:

1. Where there is little or no rugby league activity in the area
While unlikely to engage in such areas the RFL would still like to be made aware of when an initial scoping meeting is being held and copied into steering group minutes, relevant documentation and draft action plans.
2. Where there is significant rugby league activity in the area
The RFL will seek to provide the offer set out below along with the additional points for particular areas or where resources allow.

The initial engagement regarding the scoping meeting can be used to discuss the level of participation in the area and agree the nature of the support.

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 RFL 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
- Provide the current and potential future rugby league landscape within the area and the RFL's strategic priorities/direction
- Review and provide comments on a tailored draft brief for the work and timescales

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

- Attend and support steering group meetings (as set out above where this is not possible the RFL would still welcome being copied into relevant correspondence)

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

The RFL collates demand (and some supply) data through its standard reporting mechanisms. Data predominantly covers clubs/teams/players plus some facility related detail relating to quality (according to the club).

The following support will be provided:

- Check the details of all natural and artificial grass pitches provided by Active Places Power and LA records (to be supplied by LA)
- Provide a contact list of clubs / leagues / key local stakeholders and define key clubs for more detailed consultation (i.e. Focus Community / Clubmark clubs)
- Help to improve rugby league club survey return rates – use of RFL logo on surveys, email endorsement
- Provide guidance on which 3G AGPs are rugby league compliant (Community Standard or RFL Stadium Standard)
- Discuss whether there is the opportunity for the RFL to help with carrying out PQS assessments of particular key sites
- Check and challenge the initial pitch quality ratings

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

- Provide an enhanced level of demand data in terms of supplying information on activity and realistic and relevant targets for each site.
- Facilitate club consultation (i.e. brokering contact / dissemination of club surveys through existing communication channels, reminder emails)

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
- Review and provide comments on the draft assessment details/report

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

- Assist with identifying the key issues from the assessment work

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 RFL priorities
- Agree timescales for recommendations and actions where the RFL can assist their delivery
- Review and provide comments on a draft strategy document

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 Rugby Football League

For up to date contact details for the RFL National Facilities Manager please refer to the RFL development contacts page: www.therfl.co.uk/contact_us/development_contacts

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The Rugby League Landscape

Rugby Football League (RFL) is the governing body for rugby league in Britain and Ireland. It administers the England National Rugby League team, the Challenge Cup, Super League and the Championships which form the professional and semi-professional game structure in the UK.

RFL also manages and develops Community Rugby League through the RFL Community Board.

The RFL's Facilities Strategy was published in 2011. The following themes have been prioritised:

- Clean, Dry, Safe & Playable
- Sustainable clubs
- Environmental Sustainability
- Geographical Spread
- Non-club Facilities

Please see the RFL Facilities Trust website for further information on:

- The RFL Community Facility Strategy
- Clean, Dry, Safe and Playable Programme
- Pitch Size Guidance
- The RFL Performance Standard for Artificial Grass Pitches
- Club guidance on the Annual Preparation and Maintenance of the Rugby League Pitch

www.rflfacilitiestrust.co.uk

Further to the 2011 Strategy detail on the following specific programmes of particular relevance to pitches and facility planning are listed below and can be found via the trust link (see above):

- The RFL Pitch Improvement Programme 2013 – 2017
- Clean, Dry and Safe programmes 2013 - 2017

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The 10 Step Approach – Rugby League Specific Details

The following details should be used specifically for rugby league 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 league pitches are classified as being senior sized, with cones used to mark pitches for Under 11s downwards.

However, there may be instances (particularly on school sites and large club sites) where designated junior or primary pitches are provided. Pitch size should be looked at against the RFL pitch size dimensions, please see the RFL Pitch Size Guidance available on the Facilities Trust website at www.rflfacilitiestrust.co.uk

2. AGPs – Work with the RFL to clarify the number and size of any RFL Community Standard or RFL Stadium Standard compliant AGPs.

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 APG surfaces for rugby league (see below link).

www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/artificial-sports-surfaces/

3. Ancillary Facilities - Details should be provided about the scale and quality of ancillary facilities including changing provision and car parking.
4. Pitch Quality - The preferred RFL option for assessing rugby league pitches is through a professional technical assessment or PQS (Performance Quality Standard). Discussions should be held with the RFL to see whether they can provide any help with carrying out PQS assessments of particular key sites. The use of the example non-technical assessment form should only be used if no other information is available for a site.

If the non-technical assessments are used to determine the quality of rugby league pitches, please work with your RFL representative (in line with the offer of support) to categorise quality as good, standard or poor.

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.

Demand type	Details
Organised competitive play	<p>Differentiate between the following team types and age groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Senior (19 – 45yrs) ▪ Youth & Junior (12 – 18yrs) ▪ Primary (7 – 11yrs) <p>Play should be categorised in the following slots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Saturday AM / PM ▪ Sunday AM / PM ▪ Midweek evening
Organised training and casual play	<p>Identify other regular (e.g. weekly) usage of pitches and sites for training sessions, friendly matches plus informal casual use which will use some of the capacity of a pitch and may affect its quality.</p> <p>As a guide, 1 match equivalent session equals 90 minutes of pitch use.</p>
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"> ▪ Adult men (19-45) ▪ Adult women (19-45) ▪ Youth & Junior boys (12-18) ▪ Junior girls (12-18) ▪ Primary mixed (7-11) <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, details are provided below on the number of match equivalent sessions a week that a natural grass pitch is likely to be able to sustain, based on an agreed quality rating, without adversely affecting its current quality:

Senior Rugby League Pitches	
Agreed pitch quality rating	Matches equivalent sessions a week
Good	3
Standard	2
Poor	1

Pitches used for Tier 3 Conference League matches (which are of a higher quality standard due to specific league requirements) should have a different capacity rating of:

Pitches used for Tier 3 Conference League Matches	
Agreed pitch quality rating	Matches equivalent sessions a week
Good	2
Standard	1
Poor	Unsuitable