

The Rural Cluster

The rural cluster includes the wards of Blunsdon, Highworth, Ridgeway and Wroughton and Chiseldon. Parish Councils are particularly important providers of facilities within these rural areas. These areas are also home to the highest number of teams within the borough and there are particularly good levels of junior and mini soccer participation. As may be expected in light of the high levels of participation, the total area of provision in the rural area far exceeds that in any of the more urban areas of the borough and 76% of the total area is available for community use. There is likely to be little change in the population in this area of the borough.

Table 6.4: Rural Cluster

Theme	Action	Related Objectives	Priority
<p>Ensuring that the quantity of provision is sufficient to meet local needs now and in the future. The current situation in the rural area can be summarised as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surplus of adult football pitches (9) falling to 7.2 by 2011 • Shortfall of junior football pitches (10.2) increasing to 13.3 • Shortfall of mini soccer pitches (20.5 increasing to 22.5) • Sufficient cricket pitches to meet demand – 1.5 decreasing to 0.8 • Sufficient adult rugby union provision contrasting with shortfalls of provision for juniors 	<p>Football - Closer analysis of provision across the rural area indicates that all four of the wards individually contain sufficient pitches to meet demand from adult teams. Despite this, it is important to maintain a degree of spare capacity (recommended to be 10%) for the purposes of rest and recovery. Pitches in all areas should therefore be protected. Only the surplus of adult pitches within Ridgeway ward (7.6 pitches) can be considered as an opportunity to address shortfalls in junior and mini pitch provision.</p>	1,2	Medium Term
	<p>The surpluses of adult football in Ridgeway ward result primarily from the presence of facilities at the Allied Dunbar ground, a private facility. Negotiations in order to discuss the possibility of purchasing these unused pitches for conversion into a mini / junior site should be considered. This would alleviate current pressures on pitches from junior and mini teams.</p>	2	Short Term
	<p>Should this not be possible, there are limited other opportunities for redesignation as the majority of facilities are operating on or almost at capacity. Should a new development of junior facilities go ahead at the Crosslink Centre in the eastern area, this may reduce some pressures on pitches but it is likely that shortfalls in pitch provision would remain.</p>		
	<p>Securing and enhancing access to school facilities should be considered as the immediate option for addressing these deficiencies. Nythe Primary School, Kingsdown School, Highworth School, Westrop School, Wroughton Junior School and Blunsdon School all currently permit informal use and negotiations for formal use at these sites should be prioritised.</p>	2,8	Short Term
	<p>An increase in provision in the West of Swindon may also reduce demand for pitches in the rural area, as Lydiard Youth FC highlighted that they have been unable to locate suitable pitches in their home area and therefore travel to Supermarine Rugby Club to use facilities.</p> <p>Following the above short-term actions, it is likely that new provision will still be required in the longer term to address participation. Where possible, consideration should be given to a multi pitch location accommodating several teams. The rural nature of this area may however provide constraints to this and more localised provision may be considered more appropriate. Access to all local schools should be maximised and opportunities to extend the number of pitches at existing sites should be sought.</p>	2	Medium Term
<p>Cricket - the supply of cricket pitches is currently sufficient to meet demand. All pitches should be protected through the LDF and pitches should be rotated as appropriate to maintain pitch quality.</p>	1,4	Ongoing	

	<p>Rugby - All rugby participation in the rural area is focused around Supermarine Rugby Club, where supply is currently just sufficient to meet demand. Despite this, the club has ambitions to grow, both in terms of the number of participants but also in the standard of rugby played. Any requirements for new facility provision at this site should therefore be supported in order to accommodate the long-term growth of rugby across the borough. Existing facilities should be protected,</p>	1,2, 6,	Ongoing
Ensuring the quality of facilities is sufficient for the purpose they were intended	<p>Football Sites in Blunston (Sutton Park Rec), Highworth and Chisledon were all highlighted by residents as being of poor quality by clubs during consultation. These facilities should be investigated and supported given to the providers if quality issues are uncovered. Showers and changing facilities are perceived to be poor at Kingsdown School and pitches are perceived to suffer from overuse.</p> <p>Cricket – While there is sufficient cricket provision at the current time, consultation highlighted that Hoopers Playing Field is perceived to be of poor quality. Improvements to this facility should be prioritised in order to increase the demand for cricket pitches in the rural area.</p> <p>Rugby – Supermarine Rugby club is perceived to be a high quality facility in terms of both pitches and ancillary accommodation. In light of the importance of the club for rugby in the borough, support should be provided to the club if appropriate to enhance facility quality. This may be of particular importance if participation increases and facilities consequently suffer greater wear and tear.</p>	5,6 6 6	Short – Medium Term Short – Medium Term Medium – Long Term
Maximising access to facilities	<p>In light of shortfalls of provision for football at a young age, consideration should be given to negotiating formal dual use agreements with schools providing pitches. In addition to those highlighted above as key to offsetting deficiencies, negotiations with St Andrews C of E Primary School (who do not currently permit any community access) should be undertaken.</p> <p>In order to ensure that all facilities comply with DDA regulations, the Council should ensure that providers of pitches undertake the necessary actions to ensure that the facilities they operate are accessible to all.</p>	8	Long Term

Theme	Actions and Recommendations	Objective	Priority
Ensuring the quality of facilities is sufficient to meet the expectations and needs of users now and in the future	Football – The key central venues in this area of the borough are Croft Playing Fields and Shrewsbury Road Playing Fields. Ancillary accommodation at Shrewsbury Road Playing Fields has been recently refurbished and is now of good quality. It should be ensured that the pitch quality at this site is sufficient to sustain two games per week without deterioration excluding inclement weather conditions	5	Ongoing
	Facilities at Croft are perceived to be of poorer quality. In light of shortfalls of junior and mini pitches, investment into these facilities should be considered.	5	Medium Term
	Facilities at Dorcan Technology College have received recent investment and are currently of sufficient quality.	6	Medium Term
	Liden Primary School highlighted current issues regarding their pitches, indicating that recently installed drainage has collapsed.		
	Although the pitch at Nationwide Sports Ground was perceived to be a good quality facility, the public pitch at Croft was highlighted to be dangerous by local clubs. In light of pressures on other cricket pitches in this area, consideration should be given to investment in the facility at Croft. This investment could be in the form of a leasing agreement with a local club, who will consider undertaking specialised maintenance themselves. Ensuring that only juniors use the site in future through the redesignation of adult pitches to junior should reduce the level of wear and tear on the cricket outfield.	5	Short Term
Maximising Access to facilities	Like other areas, pressure on existing facilities highlights the importance of maximising the use of facilities by the local community. Community use agreements should be negotiated with all schools containing pitches. Additionally, it should be ensured that any new provision developed as part of the SDA is accessible to the local community and is of the standard expected by clubs.	8	Long Term
	It should be ensured that all pitches comply with DDA regulations, maximising access for all sectors of the community.	9	Ongoing

