

Torrige

Playing Pitch Strategy Update

FINAL STRATEGY DOCUMENT

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JOINT STRATEGY INTRODUCTION FOR NORTH DEVON & TORRIDGE

1 INTRODUCTION

The previous Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) for North Devon Council and Torrige District Council (then described as a PPS for Northern Devon) was adopted in 2017 and covered the period to 2031. The two councils worked together in partnership with Sport England and the National Governing Bodies for football, rugby union, cricket and hockey to develop the strategy and original data collection on supply and demand was undertaken during the 2016/17 winter and 2017 summer season.

By the early 2020s this data was out of date and an update was commissioned in late 2023 with the purpose of:

- Extending the period covered to 2033 rather than 2031 to give a forward steer to the future revised local plan
- ensuring that all data on the supply of playing pitches and the demand for them was as current and robust as possible
- ensuring that the PPS was fully compliant with S106, Sport England guidance and the Local Plan to ensure robustness in defence of any challenges at public inquiries
- establishing precisely the type – surface and size - of both grass and artificial grass provision that needs to be delivered in the future to meet the needs of all players of the pitch sports
- informing accurately where to direct off-site contributions towards new or enhanced facilities where on-site provision is not applicable or appropriate

It is encouraging that many priority projects from both local authorities have either been fully addressed or have made substantial progress since 2017. However, a number remain to be implemented and new priorities now require addressing if enough appropriate, high quality provision is to be provided in accordance with the needs of the growing populations in both authorities. The context for the pitch sports has also changed considerably, not least because patterns of participation were interrupted by the covid pandemic, whilst documented trends include a discernible rise in participation rates amongst women and girls, the continuing gradual decline in village sport with some concentration of activity within the market towns and the increasing demand for artificial grass surfaces for both training and matchplay in football and rugby.

The Strategy is supported by a detailed Needs Assessment document and an excel spreadsheet with salient details of all the pitch sports sites and teams. When the Update commenced, the two authorities were considered together as ‘Northern Devon’ but it was felt more appropriate to present the findings, issues and action plans from the updated Strategy separately for North Devon and Torrige. Many of the strategic themes are the same and so this Introductory section considers both authorities together, before it proceeds to separate reports.

What the Strategy does

The research underpinning the Strategy has analysed and recorded the quantity and quality of the current stock of playing pitches and ancillary facilities and trends in participation in the pitch sports across North Devon and Torrige. This has been in accordance with Sport England’s Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance (October 2013) under the auspices of a Steering Group comprising representatives from Sport England, NGBs and local authority officers. It provides a framework and recommendations to protect the current network of playing field provision and to ensure the development of sustainable and cost-effective facilities to meet current and future demand and to underpin funding bids and the securing of developer contributions.

Planning for and installing new facilities can take several years and it is important to be mindful of this when trying to suggest the priority recommendations going forward. The strategy can thus give a direction of travel, but should not be too prescriptive and should remain open to flexible interpretation, so that those responsible for implementing it will be able to take advantages of opportunities as they arise.

The Updated Vision for both the North Devon and Torrige Playing Pitch Strategies is:

‘To fully understand the quantity and quality of the current stock of playing pitches and demand for them now and in the future in order:

- To protect all the facilities that are used and valued by the current population
- To enhance facilities so that quality meets twenty-first century expectations and to attract new and retain existing users
- To provide appropriate and accessible facilities in the right locations to cater for increased demand from the growth in population and to encourage participation by all sectors of the community
- To help to create a more biodiverse and healthy sporting environment to support the goal of both councils to work towards net-zero carbon emissions and ensure a cleaner, greener future.

2 STRATEGIC THEMES

Based on the Needs Assessments and identification of key issues and findings, this framework for future delivery embodies a number of concepts and comments which reflect Sport England’s priority themes of PROTECT, ENHANCE AND PROVIDE and are loosely grouped under these headings below.

A PROTECT:

Protecting existing playing field sites and ensuring all playing field land is used effectively and sustainably, whilst recognising the value of playing fields for public informal open space. Working in partnership to enable effective and greater use of existing playing field sites and the sharing of skills, expertise, resources and facilities.

B ENHANCE:

Enhancing existing facilities to ensure they are fit for purpose and of high quality in order to retain existing levels of participation, improve the playing experience and encourage growth in participation. Facilities should be affordable and open at times which can encourage participation by all sectors of the community.

C PROVIDE:

Ensuring that enhanced and new facilities are provided to meet existing demand and projected demand from increases in population and participation and located at sites which are accessible within rural areas. Providing a range of appropriate facilities for both competition and training which enable pitch sport participants to improve and progress.

A PROTECT: Protecting the Opportunities

This Strategy is for grass and artificial grass pitches and the main sports which are played on them – football, cricket, rugby and hockey. There are many other pitch sports which use these facilities such as American football, archery, athletics, baseball, Gaelic football, lacrosse and rugby league. With the exception of athletics, these sports are not currently well represented on playing fields in North Devon and Torrige, but it is important that playing field spaces are protected so that they are available to meet future demand for all these sports and to accommodate other opportunities.

There are other aspects to playing pitches and the land on which they lie. Many playing fields are valuable in their own right as public open space sites for informal recreation and a wealth of informal activities – kite flying, picnics, play, environmental studies, dog walking and so on. Playing fields can offer a wonderful environment for sport for people with disabilities, being free of the restrictions of indoor facilities. They often include bowling greens, skateparks and tennis courts and of course changing rooms, pavilions and cafes, and these elements need to be planned for in harmony with the needs of the pitch based sports.

As sporting behaviours change, some playing fields may experience less use for formal sport and there is evidence of this in North Devon and Torrige – around ten playing field sites at least have been identified since the last Strategy as being no longer used for formal sport e.g. Chittlehampton Playing Field in North Devon and St Giles in the Wood Cricket Club in Torrige. Sustaining pitch sites which may not currently be fully used for sport, but provide local informal opportunities for sports participation and contribute towards people’s good health and well being and may meet future demand, is critical. If a playing field is no longer used for formal sport it should be protected and any proposals for change of use or development adhere to Sport England’s Playing Fields Policy¹.

This is particularly important as the Strategy has identified a shortage of both grass and artificial grass pitches to meet current and future demand for football, cricket, rugby and hockey across both North Devon and Torrige.

¹ https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/planning-sport?section=playing_fields_policy

B ENHANCE: High quality, appropriate facilities, affordable for all

It is becoming increasingly obvious that in order to both attract and retain players and the vast army of volunteers who maintain many facilities and administer and coach the teams that facilities must be of a high quality and affordable and accessible to all.

Some of the measures that are required include: ensuring that the requirements of younger players (both girls and boys) are fully catered for, by providing, for example: a range of age-appropriate pitch sizes at hub sites for football; suitable non turf wickets for cricket if required; sufficient access for training and matchplay for junior/mini rugby; the development of training and matchplay opportunities for junior hockey players, which may involve more, appropriate floodlighting of facilities.

Attracting new participants into pitch sports, including people with disabilities and women and girls, are key foci of all NGBs but ancillary facilities must keep pace with these aspirations. There should be appropriate age and gender specific changing facilities, which are safe and secure, with appropriate lighting of access areas and paths.

North Devon and Torrige each have particular areas of high deprivation and for participation to grow and develop, facilities and opportunities must be affordable and accessible at convenient times.

It is critical for the ongoing sustainability of new provision that: pitch and ancillary facilities adhere to appropriate NGB and Sport England standards and facilities are modern and well maintained. Suitable management is required to maximise usage and manage finances responsibly to ensure sustainability, including ring-fencing funds for maintenance and sinking funds for replacement where required. There should be sufficient funds for the purchase and upkeep of maintenance machinery and support for volunteers to undertake pitch power assessments.

Rain soaked pitches are becoming more and more of an issue each winter, with consequently an increasing demand for artificial grass pitch provision which is not so subject to the vagaries of the weather. Following an EU Directive around the cessation of the use of microplastics in the EU from 2031, there is growing concern about the environmental impact of the microplastics contained within the construction of 3G AGPs and how this can be contained and reduced in the future. There are various containment measures which can be introduced (retrofitted if necessary) which can help to keep microplastics on the pitch (up to 98% according to some independent studies²); alternative infills such as cork, Norwegian birch and corn husks etc, are also being considered and trialled on small sided pitches in Sheffield. Research is also being carried out into the social value of 3G AGPs when measured against their cost and impact on the environment. Provision of AGPs must not be at the cost of losing or not providing additional grass pitches.

² <https://www.estc.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Ecoloop-Report-Effectiveness-RMMs.pdf>

The Government has been exploring whether carbon assessments for developments could be brought in (which seem likely to be introduced anyway by many local authorities) whilst impact assessments for health, travel and transport and the environment already exist. Net gain biodiversity for development has been introduced through the Environment Act and many Local Plans have already introduced such requirements through policy. Sport England's Every Move Strategy considers the application of carbon reduction measures in sport³.

C PROVIDE: The changing Sporting Context

Sports participation and patterns of behaviour do not stand still. Since the original PPS was published, we have experienced the Covid pandemic which not only severely impacted upon patterns of sports participation (and for some sports the drop off has not been overcome) but it has also engendered a renewed interest and focus upon the importance of spaces for outdoor activity in particular. It is arguably even more important now to protect and enhance our outdoor spaces to cater for a range of activities, not just formal sport.

Social change is continuing to have an impact on the time and resources available for formal sport by way of: different working shifts and patterns; more calls on people's time; additional, new leisure pursuits and activities; rising expectations around the quality of the sporting experience, and for some sectors of the population, considerably less disposable income to spend on sport.

In North Devon, there are particular deficiencies in grass provision for football, cricket and rugby in Barnstaple, Ilfracombe, Chulmleigh and South Molton and for artificial grass pitch provision in the Barnstaple and Braunton areas. In Torrige, there are particular deficiencies for football, cricket and rugby in Bideford, East the Water, Northam and Holsworthy and for artificial grass pitch provision in the Bideford/Northam area and the rural areas of Holsworthy and Great Torrington.

The playing pitch resource needs to be managed flexibly in order to respond to changing patterns of participation and sustainably accommodating new forms of the pitch sports, such as small sided football and T20 cricket, and adapting to changing patterns of demand. Whilst youth activity in football, cricket and rugby is showing encouraging growth, particularly amongst women and girls, which it is hoped will translate into the full sided games, there has been a decline in football and cricket activity in some of the smaller settlements.

There is anecdotal evidence that adult football activity is transferring away from the 11v11 league game to small sided football on 3G AGP facilities and the Strategy has identified robust and growing demand for these facilities for both training and matchplay in football and rugby (maybe less so for matchplay in rugby). Any new AGP provision should be on sites where access for the community can be fully secured and guaranteed at all times. Addressing the deficiencies in artificial grass pitch provision, particularly the requirement for additional WR22 3G provision on non education sites in Barnstaple and Bideford is a key theme of the Strategies.

³ <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/sustainability> and Appendix 2 for a brief summary.

Pitches on secondary school sites still form an important part of the stock but there has been a decline in community usage of grass pitches on school sites since the 2017 PPS. In almost all areas where there are deficiencies, school pitches – if they have investment and support to ensure good quality playing surfaces and ancillary facilities and appropriate maintenance – could help meet identified shortfalls.

Balancing the distribution of facilities so that there are enough to serve rural areas without too much travelling, but sufficient activity to ensure sustainability, is always going to be challenging. North Devon and Torridge are overwhelmingly rural areas and, as already mentioned, there has been a drop off in sports played in some of the more rural settlements (although with some encouraging exceptions), with more activity becoming focused at ‘hub sites’ in the larger market towns. This may enable greater opportunities in larger settlements but means that more rural areas are less well served and those living there will require transport if they are to partake in sport. Active travel, including facilities for cycling, must be part of the solution to not only improving health, but also reducing reliance on the private car, especially for local journeys.

3 PLANNING CONTEXT

At a national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) clearly establishes the requirement that local plans ensure that there is proper provision of community and cultural facilities to meet local needs. Paragraphs 103 and 104 require there to be a sound (i.e. up-to-date and verifiable) evidence base underpinning policy and its application. Sport England is a statutory consultee on planning applications affecting playing pitches and has a long established policy of retention, which is the precursor to the National Planning Policy Framework guidance above. Sport England’s ‘Every Move Strategy’, Playing Fields Policy and Uniting the Movement Strategy⁴ all underpin this playing pitch assessment.

National Governing Body Facility Strategies set out strategies guiding the provision of facilities for their sport, including:

- Football Association ‘Time for Change 2020-24’ and Local Football Facility Plans
- Devon FA Strategy 2021-2024
- Devon Cricket Facilities Strategy 2023 – 2033
- England Hockey Facilities Strategy 2017-2033
- Rugby Football Union National Facilities Strategy

Locally there are several key policy documents that will inform the direction of the Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan in addition to the Local Plan. These include:

- Green Infrastructure Study for North Devon and Torridge Councils 2013-2031
- One Northern Devon for Health and Wellbeing
- The Northern Devon Culture Strategy: 2022-2027
- Neighbourhood Plans
- Active Design (Sport England, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities and Active Travel England)

⁴ www.sportengland.org/about-us/uniting-movement

The adopted local plan for the two authorities is the North Devon and Torrige Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted 2018)⁵. No new sites will be allocated through the Local Plan in the next five years although some additional sites that come forward and other outstanding sites may be added in. A review of 5-year Land supply has just been completed. There is likely to be a partial review of the Local Plan up to 2031 to give a degree of certainty, and so it was agreed to consider in this Update possible growth to 2033 to give a forward steer.

The North Devon and Torrige area comprises about 1,903 square kilometres and has a population of around 157,500 (Census 2011) people living in a network of historic market towns, rural settlements and coastal resorts. The sea and the moors define the limits of the area, and the pattern of development shows the maritime influence and the rurality of the area. Approximately half of the population of North Devon & Torrige live in the main settlements around the Taw/Torrige estuary.

Barnstaple is the sub regional centre for northern Devon. It provides a range of strategic services and facilities, including further and higher education, the District General Hospital and comparatively major shopping facilities. Bideford has a significant complementary role and is linked to Barnstaple by the A39. These settlements together provide the economic, commercial and administrative focus for many of the strategic service needs of the wider rural area. The market and coastal towns of: Braunton, Ilfracombe, South Molton and Chulmleigh in North Devon and Northam (including Appledore and Westward Ho!), Holsworthy and Great Torrington in Torrige have a range of facilities that collectively serve wider rural populations across the rest of northern Devon.

4 POPULATION TRENDS

Population growth from new housing

Analysis of the population profile provides a context for the interpretation of participation in pitch sports. Population figures in the 2017 study were based on the ONS 2014-based Sub National Population Projections (published May 2016). To give some idea of accuracy, the 2021 Census count showed 98,618 people in North Devon and 68,114 people in Torrige. This compared to population projections for 2021 (based on the ONS 2014 based subnational population projections) of 98,480 people in North Devon (a close match) and 69,942 people in Torrige (actual population slightly lower). It is concluded that the projections used to model future demand in 2031 in the original 2017 PPS remain robust. There will be some projected increase in population between 2031 and 2033 based on the ONS projections. This has been allowed for through using the population which will be generated from new housing growth (see below).

The adopted local plan set out a minimum housing delivery requirement for northern Devon of 861 dwellings per annum over the plan period 2011-2031 with much of the new housing growth in and around Barnstaple and Bideford and to a lesser extent to smaller settlements.

⁵ [/www.northdevon.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/environment-and-planning-policies/local-plan/north-devon-and-torrige-local-plan](http://www.northdevon.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/environment-and-planning-policies/local-plan/north-devon-and-torrige-local-plan)

There has been no updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment nor substantive work on a New Local Plan which would cover the period 2031 to 2033. Consequently It would be reasonable to expect that housing growth will continue roughly at the current rate so basic demographic models will remain mostly robust and can be calculated for the sub areas on a pro rata basis.

The projected population from allocated housing growth in North Devon and Torrige for the period 2011 – 2031 has been broadly based on the trajectory in the North Devon and Torrige Authority Monitoring Report 2018-2019, published in June 2020. Using information on planned and completed dwellings and ONS 2021 Census household density, the projected population change 2031- 2033 for the two local authority areas can be estimated. On this basis it is estimated that, through new housing, there are an additional **3010** people to take into account in North Devon who were not considered in the original 2017 PPS (to 2031) and an additional **1080** people to take into account in Torrige who were not considered in the original 2017 PPS (to 2031).

The Adopted Local Plan makes provision for new sports pitches to be delivered at several large scale housing development sites and there are also other proposals in the pipeline or which have being reconsidered. These are referred to later in this report. A review of the Councils’ Infrastructure Funding Statements also shows that several contributions have been collected for sports pitch maintenance and improvements. Wherever possible, provision from strategic housing allocations must be maximised either on-site or through off-site contributions

Pitch sport playing age ranges

It is helpful to look at longer term trends in the demographic structure. For the following we have to use the most recent ONS data as this is the only source data which robustly splits the population by age and gender. As stated, this is the 2018-based subnational population projections, published in March 2020.

Ultimately the mix of housing (family housing vs retirement etc) will have a significant impact on demographics. In the 2030s we will be entering a period of greater mortality as the baby boom enters their 80s & 90s which may effect total populations. Also it is recognised that new homes tend to attract younger demographics in particular families with dependent children (which are likely to generate more pitch sport teams than the general population. Therefore, the following trends should be regarded with caution as it is apparent that it will be new housing which will drive population growth.

From 2024 – 2033 it is expected to see:

- a predicted slight decline in the minis and junior age ranges between 5-19 years
- a slight growth amongst adults in both the younger and older age ranges (as below).

‘Compressing’ the pitch sport playing age ranges shows the following:

Table 1: Projected Change in Pitch Sport Age Playing Ranges - 2024-2033: Summary

	Change in population 2024-2033		Change in population 2024-2033	
	North Devon		Torrige	
	Numbers	%	Numbers	%
Mini/Youth (5-19 years)	-503	-3.0%	-404	-3.7%
Adult pitch sports (20-45 years)	725	2.8%	535	3.2%
Adult pitch sports (46-69 years)	936	2.8%	520	2.0%
Overall 'active participation'(5-69 years)	1,159	1.5%	651	1.2%

The Update has considered and analysed much of the data on a sub area basis within the two authorities as follows:

North Devon

Barnstaple
Braunton
Ilfracombe
South Molton

Torrige

Bideford
Torrington
Holsworthy

5 MONITORING AND DELIVERY

The evolving context of participation in sport and active recreation means that monitoring and review of the strategy is as important as the initial preparation of the document to ensure it remains sufficiently robust to fulfil the above roles. Reflecting the importance of this phase of work, monitoring of the strategy represents Step 10 of the approach to the production of a playing pitch strategy set out in the guidance for the delivery of a playing pitch Strategy (Sport England 2013).

The ongoing monitoring of the strategy could be undertaken jointly and be led by North Devon Council and Torrige District Council and it is anticipated that it will constitute:

- Establishing a working group that meets annually to review progress by all key partners on the strategy delivery and to discuss any issues arising; and
- Setting up some method of electronic forum which will enable issues to be fed in to a central database. Local authority officers/NGBs can review and disseminate these issues to the steering group and/or discuss with key partners as appropriate;
- A full annual steering group meeting, or individual annual meetings with National Governing Bodies of Sport to inform and discuss the annual progress summary and agree next steps.

The Working Group will be committed to keeping the strategy alive through:

- Monitoring the delivery of the recommendations and actions and identifying any changes that are required to the priority afforded to each action.
- Recording changes to the pitch stock in the area and evaluating the impact of this on the supply and demand information.
- Assessing the impact of changes to participation, including changing trends and the development of new formats of the game as well as affiliation data for each of the

National Governing Bodies of Sport.

- Assessing the impact of demographic changes and new population estimates / housing growth.
- Ongoing consultation to understand the evolving needs of clubs and governing bodies, and any requirements for major facilities in the area.
- Analysis of funding sources and new funding opportunities for the provision/improvement of sports facilities.
- Reviewing growth of emerging sports, their participation rates, facilities available for them and likely facilities necessary for their support and development.

The Working Group should initially (within three months) meet to agree which of the actions should be taken forward in the short term (1-2 years); medium term (3-5 years) and longer term (5-10 years), and also agree who the main partners should be in taking the relevant actions forward. It is recommended that the Group should meet annually thereafter to review progress by all key partners on the strategy delivery and to discuss any issues arising.

Funding

The expectation is that some of the potential initiatives identified in this strategy and action plan will be funded wholly or partly by ‘developer contributions’ in the form of Section 106 agreements and/or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). It is recognised that maintenance of new pitches can be costly and any developer contributions should include a sum for ongoing maintenance over a period of years. Projects involving education sites might also be funded through separate national capital funds.

Other potential funding sources can be identified as appropriate at the Stage E meetings. Active Devon, Sport England and various NGB county and regional offices can advise on specific funding opportunities available specifically for pitch sports locally.

The remainder of this document is presented for Torrige only.

1 PRIORITIES AND SUMMARY OF KEY PROPOSALS

1A PRIORITIES *(Not in priority order)*

- Provision of proposed pitches at:
 - Winsford, Bideford - one adult 11v11 football pitch and one 9v9 or 7v7 youth pitch (Policy BID09: Clovelly Road – 750 dwellings)
 - Land South of Clovelly Road, Bideford – one adult, 11v11 football pitch and changing rooms (200 dwellings)
 - Tadworthy Road (Northam) – one adult 11v11 football pitch and two junior pitches (125 dwellings) (Policy NOR04):
 - Cornborough – small pitch (9v9) to serve Northam area with space for a changing facility

- Requirement for full size WR22 3G AGP to serve Bideford with full community use, on a non education site (such as the Cattle Market site). Additional 3G provision may be required in East the Water.

- Improvement to 3G AGP surface at Sandymere and development of site as a full scale community facility.

- New sports lighting to existing pitches and/or peak access to WR22 3G pitch provision to meet matchplay and training requirements for Bideford RFC.

- Relocation of Bideford Cricket Club to a new two pitch facility with sufficient wickets to cater for existing unmet, latent and future demand.

- To encourage and secure more weekend use by the community of 3G AGP and grass pitches at Great Torrington School

- Support for further provision in Holsworthy to meet growing activity by Holsworthy AFC, Holsworthy CC and Holsworthy Youth FC. Options for further consideration include:
 - Enlargement of pitch at Upcott Field (Holsworthy AFC)
 - Additional provision at Holsworthy Community College Pill Park, which may include football pitches and a cricket pitch
 - Resurfacing of small sided sand based AGP at Holsworthy Community College as a 3G AGP to serve Holsworthy and surrounding rural area.

1B SUMMARY OF KEY PROPOSALS – TORRIDGE

(for further detail see under following sections on individual sports, especially B: Future situation to 2033 and C: Recommendations for grass pitch provision)

Sub Area	Cricket	Rugby	Football Grass	3G/WR22 compliant Artificial Grass Pitches	Hockey Appropriate/Sand Artificial Grass Pitches
Bideford	New site for a two cricket pitch facility for Bideford CC	Peak access to new WR22 3G AGP and new sports lighting to existing pitches.	Adult and youth pitches (to serve Bideford): to be met by Winsford (1 adult and 1 x 9v9 or 7v7) and land south of Clovelly Road. Meeting latent demand from Bideford Youth will require an additional 2-3 youth pitches. May require additional adult pitch for East-the-Water	Equivalent full size floodlit WR22 3G with full SCU (i.e. not on an education site) to serve Bideford itself. Priority to be given to Bideford Cattle Market site. Additional 3G may be required for East-the-Water.	Protection and maintenance of sustainable, high quality, appropriate and securely accessible facilities for hockey to serve North Devon and Torrige.
Northam, Appledore, Westward Ho!			Recommendations from 2017 PPS to be fulfilled: adult pitch at Tadworthy Road and 9v9 pitch at Cornborough Road.	Floodlit, high quality 3G AGP with full secure community use at Sandymere (upgrade of existing facility)	
Torrington	Possibly new facility (NTW)	Peak access to existing or new WR22 3G AGP and new sports lighting to existing pitches.			
Holsworthy	NTW or grass pitch for overflow at Holsworthy Community College (HCC)		Additional adult / youth pitches to accommodate growth, possibly at Pill Field (HCC)	Floodlit, football appropriate 3G AGP with full secure community use (HCC)	

2 CRICKET IN TORRIDGE

2A Demand, supply and capacity

Teams

- There has been a more marked change in Torrige - just 2 formal cricket clubs are now recorded in Torrige - Bideford, Littleham and Westward Ho! CC (BLW) and Holsworthy CC. (Victoria Park CC, Bideford are now incorporated as a team within BLW). Together with Pub and Club teams, there are 23 teams in total – 12 adult (Including 2 ladies) and 11 juniors.
- In 2017 – there were 8 clubs fielding 21 teams, 14 of which were adult.
- The senior league for Saturday cricket is the Devon League, to which 6 clubs in North Devon and Bideford CC in Torrige belong. The Sunday league is the North Devon League which has 16 teams, previously 34, 10 of which are in the study area. A number of Sunday teams only play friendlies. Youth teams play in North Devon Youth League. The North Devon Pub and Club league has 12 teams 10 of which are based at cricket grounds and two of which are nomadic (Bratton Fleming CC and The Mavericks CC). Split between ND and Torrige

Pitches

- In 2017 in Torrige: There were 8 grass sites, 2 of which had NTWs as well. Shebbear College was the only school site in the study area which records community use of its cricket pitch.
- There have been changes in cricket pitch supply in Torrige: 4 previously recorded cricket grounds are no longer sustaining use (see below).
- Holsworthy CC at Stanhope Park is the only cricket ground where (mini) football is played on the outfield.
- Rugby share with cricket at Brimlands in Ilfracombe.
- NTW no longer in use at Great Torrington School or South Molton Community College
- Cricket pitches throughout the area are generally of acceptable quality and appropriately maintained. The good quality of the grounds is reflected in the standard of play.

Update on capacity

Table 2: Summary of cricket pitch capacity by sub area: Torrige

Area/Rating of ground	Number of grounds	Number of wickets	Match equivalent capacity	Match equivalent played	Comparison: Theoretical – Estimated Use (match equivalents)
Bideford Sub Area	1	10 + 3 jnr	75	86	-11
Torrington Sub Area	1	7	35	8	27
Holsworthy Sub Area	1	11	55	67	-12

There have been some changes in Torrige since 2017 as follows:

- In the Bideford sub area, Bideford CC (formerly Bideford, Littleham & Westward Ho! CC have reintroduced a Sunday 2nd XI because of the continued success of the Junior section and new adult members joining the club; they are also fielding more junior sides

and providing a ladies team for the 2024 season. As is well documented elsewhere, the ground is at capacity given the poor condition of ancillary facilities. Club and partners including Devon Cricket and Torrige DC actively looking for new site.

- There is no longer an available facility for cricket at King George V Playing Fields. Victoria CC which did play there now plays at Bideford, Littleham & Westward Ho!'s ground and retains its own identity
- The four rural grounds in the Torrington sub area which all had spare capacity and were identified as being vulnerable are confirmed now as no longer supporting regular teams (Beaford, St Giles in the Wood, Petrockstowe and High Bickington). Other than Petrockstowe (which occasionally hosts Hatherleigh 3rd XI), the squares are no longer usable.
- The encouraging story is that Holsworthy CC activity has markedly increased. There has been a big drive within the club to get an adults ladies team and to increase the youth section by getting more coaches qualified and a big push all on all stars and dynamos. The ground is virtually at capacity and may even be being overplayed.

2B Future situation to 2033

Considerations

- The longer-term trend, from this study, therefore shows a slow decline in adult play but an increase in youth play (through All Stars and Dynamos) and a growth in women's cricket which will hopefully feed through into the adult game.
- Other things to take into consideration are that although some rural cricket clubs no longer exist, appears that the two clubs in Westward Ho! (Bideford CC) and Holsworthy CC have benefitted from increased membership.
- As with North Devon there may also be opportunities for satellite cricket clubs to form in the rural areas.
- Bideford CC in Westward Ho! is totally at capacity with no room for growth.
- Devon Cricket Board are focusing upon a strategy of retaining existing players and supporting increased participation where opportunities arise, particularly through growing more informal formats of the game and T20. They are seeking to address many of the issues currently facing cricket, including the ageing volunteer base and to support clubs to become more sustainable.

Future Numbers of Teams

It appears that numbers of adult teams may increase slightly and youth teams will continue to show encouraging growth:

- An increase of 1-2 adult teams (including Ladies)
- An increase of 2-3 youth teams (including girls)

2C Recommendations for new provision

- 4 additional wickets to be required as a minimum

Bideford Sub Area

It is likely that new teams will form in the Bideford Sub Area – both youth and adult (from new housing growth). To some extent, youth play may be able to be accommodated on

NTWs or on the outfield. The one existing ground at Westward Ho! (Bideford CC) is at capacity.

The replacement ground for Bideford CC should be capable of accommodating an additional 4 wickets; two separate pitches may be required to accommodate all existing, latent and future demand.

Torrington and Holsworthy Sub Areas

There may be potential for a ground in Torrington itself (maybe through reinstating a NTW at Great Torrington School), although former rural grounds are no longer sustaining any play.

The possibilities of reinstating a NTW or grass square on Holsworthy Community College fields at Pill Field could be investigated if further provision required and/or the reinvigorating of a rural pitch as a satellite club.

3 RUGBY IN TORRIDGE

3A Demand, supply and capacity

Teams

Currently, 24 rugby teams are recorded in Torrige (4 senior, 9 age grade boys and girls and 11 age grade mixed in two clubs). The trend since the previous study shows a decrease in the number of senior teams but an increase in youth teams, much of which is attributed to the increased popularity of rugby with girls. (Note: Type of teams has evolved since the last study into the following: Adult Male; Adult Female ; Age Grade Boys (U12s – U18s); Age Grade Girls (U12s – U18s) and Age Grade Mixed (U7s – U11s)

There are 2 rugby clubs in Torrige: Bideford RFC has the largest number of teams with 18; Torrington RFC has 6 teams. Both clubs run juniors. Bideford RFC currently run a ladies team and Torrington RFC have a small group of ladies that train once a week for fitness.

Pitches

Classification of rugby pitches has also changed since the last PPS. Only those ‘marked pitches with posts at both ends’ are included within the Stage B sheet and these are all classified as ‘Senior Rugby’ Pitches. Ages from u13s and upwards need posted pitches.

Bideford RFC uses two senior pitches – one is the club’s stadium pitch and the other pitch lies adjacent in King George V Playing Fields. There are particular issues with drainage on the pitch in King George V Playing Fields.

Torrington RFC has its main pitch at Donnacroft and also makes use of the school pitch at Hatchmoor, on the opposite side of the road, when required.

Update on capacity

The assessment process for rugby pitches has changed since the 2017 PPS (when the analysis was principally based around ratings for maintenance and drainage – now changed to PQS

scores). At present PQS scores exist for Bideford RFC only; a formal Pitch Power assessment for Torrington RFC has yet to be completed.

To note:

- Only senior pitches which have to be posted at both ends and marked and 94m x 68m in dimensions are recorded for the purposes of assessing capacity.
- Full sports lighting (floodlights) are between 100 and 200 lux both sides.
- A ‘basic’, well drained PQS pitch is capable of supporting 4 hours use per week. (A poor pitch typically would sustain 3 hours use per week and a good pitch, 5 hours use).

The RFU has supplied numbers of Match Equivalent Sessions taking place at each site in order to assess capacity and requirements for additional pitches. A ‘Match Equivalent Session’ (MES) is defined as 2 teams playing for 90 minutes.

As regards pattern of usage:

- Training: Rugby union has a strong culture of training on floodlit natural grass pitches on weekday evenings and thus assessment of capacity for training is dependent on floodlit pitches. These pitches are also used for matches at weekends.
- Matchplay: Peak time for adult men’s rugby is Saturday afternoon, whilst minis and midis tend to play on Sunday mornings.

Table 3: Match Equivalent Sessions for Training and Matchplay for Rugby Clubs in Torrige

Club	Midweek/ Training Demand (Match Equivalent Sessions MES)	Floodlit Pitches	Midweek Surplus / Deficit (MES)	Full Size Pitches (Total No. on site including floodlit)	Weekend Demand (Match Equivalent Sessions MES)	Weekend Surplus / Deficit (Match Equivalent Sessions MES)	Overall Site Capacity (Match Equivalent Sessions)
Bideford RFC	7.5	1	-4.8	2	6.9	-1.5	-9.0
Torrington RFC (Now)	1.75	0	-1.8	1	1.6	1.0	-0.7
Total	9.25	1	-6.6	3	8.5	-0.5	-9.7

The above table shows the following:

- Both clubs have midweek deficit for training, especially Bideford RFC which also shows a deficit for matchplay at weekends.
- Both clubs have an overall deficit of Match Equivalent Sessions.

If the above is analysed according to the amount of hours required for overcoming deficiencies, the following pertains:

Table 4: Analysis of Additional Rugby Pitches Required in Torrige to Overcome Deficiencies for Training and Matchplay

Club	Midweek/ Training Demand (MES)	Floodlit Pitches	Midweek Surplus / Deficit (MES)	Shortfall/Surplus in hours & pitches + options	Full Size Pitches (Total No. on site incl. floodlit)	Weekend Demand (MES)	Weekend Surplus / Deficit (MES)	Shortfall/Surplus in hours & pitches + options
Bideford RFC	7.5	1	-4.8	432 mins = 7.2 hours = 2 pitches (rounded). Options: Floodlight 2 nd pitch + an additional pitch) & access to WR22 3G & enhanced pitch maintenance	2	6.9	-1.5	135 mins = 2.25 hrs = 1 pitch (rounded). Options: access to another (new) pitch.
Torrington RFC	1.75	0	-1.8	162 mins = 2.7 hrs = 1 pitch (rounded). Options: Floodlight pitch (also has option to use Hatchmoor pitch .) & access to WR22 3G & enhanced pitch maintenance	1	1.6	1.0	Adding the option to use Hatchmoor pitch would give a weekend surplus of 3.7 MES, and the overall capacity of the 2 pitches would give a surplus of 2 MES.

At present, usage by Torrige rugby clubs of the following AGPs in North Devon and Torrige has been recorded through the survey.

Bideford Rugby Club	Bideford College 3G	Not WR22 compliant	Club Rugby
Next season: Bideford RFC	Kingsley School (sand)	Not WR22 compliant	Club Rugby

As is apparent, neither of the 3G AGPs currently used for training by Bideford rugby clubs are WR22 compliant. There are other WR22 3G AGPs in North Devon and Torrige – at Braunton Community College (small size), South Molton Community College (small size) and at RMC Chivenor (full size; not available for secure community use). Kingsley College in Bideford is under full size; it may convert to 3G and be WR22 compliant and will apparently be hosting Bideford RFC for training when completed.

All of the above midweek training shortfalls could also be addressed by securing access to appropriate WR22 floodlit 3G training facilities. Weekly access to 10.5 peak midweek/floodlit hours on a WR22 3G AGP is required to help part solve the existing midweek/floodlit pitch deficit in Torrige.

Review of individual rugby clubs

The principal issues at each club are:

Bideford RFC

The Pitch Power assessment for the two senior pitches used by the club are basic. The assessment states: ‘Bideford RFC play at a 2 pitch site where the main pitch is owned by the club and the 2nd pitch is owned by the council. Both pitches have a drainage system but the surfaces have severe compaction so there was standing water on both of them.. The pitches are very well used but it is very important that all at the club consider the high wear areas that are occurring on both pitches and move training around the site. This is the main cause of the lack of grass cover as well as it being a very busy site’.

This is a very busy site running 3 senior, 8 x u13-u18, 1 x u12, 1 x u12 girls and 5 x u7-u11 teams off two pitches, only one of which is floodlit. Elsewhere the report refers to the identified need for WR22 3G AGP training facilities in Bideford. Whilst the refurbished small 3G AGP at Kingsley School may offer some opportunities, the outstanding need is for a WR22 3G AGP on a non education site within Bideford itself, preferably on the Cattle Market site (adjacent to Bideford RFC’s ground).

Torrington RFC

The club runs one adult, 1 x u13-u18, 1 x u12 and 3x u7-u11 teams. Over the last 3 years, same number of men’s and minis/midis teams have been run, ladies numbers have increased and juniors/colts decreased. The club is trying to grow the girls’ game and has a small group of ladies that train once a week for fitness.

Drainage on the main pitch is good (the large slope helps) and overall pitch quality is acceptable. There used to be a big problem with dog fouling but this has improved since

playing area was fenced. The local gold golf groundsman does the grass cutting. The club can use Hatchmoor pitch if required. This second pitch is 75% very good but has drainage issues on one side which prevents play in the wetter months

With only a few small floodlights the club does not have much space to train in the winter months. The local AGP is fully booked at all prime times by local football clubs throughout the winter months. More sports lighting would help create a better training offer in the winter months.

Changing rooms' overall quality acceptable. The club is currently adding 2 new changing rooms (with showers and toilets) to cater for the youth section/girls. The club would like to run more teams but shortage of facilities and volunteers currently mitigates against this.

3B Future situation to 2033

Considerations

- There may be a slight growth in rugby teams from population growth and the growth in girls and women's teams.
- The main characteristics for rugby in Torrige is a steady demand, with both clubs looking to maintain their adult sides, and introduce more juniors and female teams, especially in Bideford

Teams

It appears that numbers of adult teams may increase slightly and youth teams will continue to show steady increases:

- An increase of 1-2 adult teams (including Ladies)
- An increase of 3 age grade teams (one each in age grade mixed; age grade boys & age grade girls)

3C Recommendations for new provision

- A minimum 2 additional XV-a-side grass pitches required (if a WR22 3G AGP on non educational site is not accessible). Additional measures which are to be continually monitored include enhancing capacity of clubs existing pitches through new sports lighting to existing pitches, peak access to WR22 3G pitches and enhanced pitch maintenance.
- The 2017 report did not consider 3G AGPs for rugby training when making recommendations with regard to additional grass pitches. As analysis in this report shows, much of the deficit in midweek training capacity could be made up by securing access to appropriate 3G AGP facilities.
- With the pressure to accommodate training on grass pitches taken away (through access to 3G training facilities), the pitches at Torrington should be able to sustain the amount of matchplay and in the future.
- In Bideford, the two rugby pitches cannot sustain the amount of training or matchplay. Whilst floodlighting the second pitch may in theory overcome this, the pitch is in a public park; the preferred option is for a new full size WR22 3G AGP on the Cattle

Market site. There may in addition be opportunities to use the resurfaced WR22 3G pitch at Kingsley College.

- Once the training regime has been established, it will be possible to evaluate whether further grass pitch provision is required to meet the needs of Bideford RFC.

4 HOCKEY IN NORTH DEVON AND TORRIDGE

This repeats the hockey section contained within the North Devon PPS Strategy document.

4A Demand, Supply and Capacity

Teams

Table 5: Changes in Numbers of Hockey Teams 2017- 2024

	2017 Total Northern Devon	2024 Total North Devon & Torrige	North Devon 2024	Torrige 2024
HOCKEY				
Men	2	2	2	0
Women	2	2	2	0
Boys 11-15 yrs	0	2	2	0
Girls 11-15 yrs	1	2	2	0
Total HOCKEY	5	8	8	0

North Devon HC and Taw Valley HC have recently merged and will be playing as North Devon Hockey Club from next season. The new club will be fielding 2 adult men, 2 adult ladies, 2 boys U16 and 2 girls U16 teams for the start of the 2024 season. They currently have 35 men, 44 women, and in the region of 80 girl and boy members (5-17 years).

The number of adult teams are thus the same as recorded in 2017, but the junior section shows an increase in number of teams by two and in playing members in the region of 15%. (The 2017 PPS predicted an increase of 7 teams to 2031)

Pitches

Key points with regard to hockey AGPs in North Devon and Torrige are:

- There is only one full size floodlit sand AGP now available for community use, at The Park Community School in Barnstaple. This is the home of North Devon Hockey Club and is rated as a standard pitch.
- The Kingsley School pitch (although never used for community hockey) is being converted to a 3G AGP surface.
- There are two other full size floodlit sand based AGPs on independent schools in North Devon and Torrige. However, AGPs at Shebbear College (Torrige) and West Buckland School (North Devon) are not known to be generally available for community use and are considered on a case by case basis, subject to the schools’ requirements. There is no security of tenure.

- The nearest floodlit full size sand based AGPs to North Devon and Torrige are Exe Valley Leisure Centre, Tiverton and Budehaven Community College in Cornwall and the Ashbury Golf Hotel sand based surface near Okehampton.

Capacity

The Park Community School in Barnstaple is North Devon Hockey Club's home venue for all matches and training requirements. The club state they have a good relationship with the school and have no issues concerning access to the pitch.

However, the quality of the pitch is an issue; 'There are many rips in the pitch that have been inappropriately repaired lowering the overall quality of the pitch' and 'hockey goals are used instead of the football goals which ruin the nets and frame.'

The club is aware that this is the only accessible, appropriate surface in the whole of North Devon and are concerned of the future of hockey in the area for their growing club with the deteriorating pitch.

4B Future Situation to 2033 and recommendations

At the moment it is difficult to predict the future growth at North Devon Hockey Club. It may take a little time for the two clubs to merge successfully; new committees and personnel are in place. It appears that numbers of teams may increase slightly (1adult; 2 youth).

Population increase through new housing growth in North Devon and Torrige is predicted to bring forward demand for 0.02 of a sand based pitch in North Devon and 0.01 of a sand based pitch in Torrige.

The needs of North Devon Hockey Club, even if it were to grow considerably, could be accommodated on one sand AGP. This additional use could be accommodated on the existing sand based pitch at Park School and it is thus vital for the continuation of hockey in North Devon and Torrige that this pitch is retained with a surface suitable for hockey. However, as detailed above, the pitch at Park School requires upgrading for which there are no funds available.

England Hockey is involved in discussions with local clubs and The Park School regarding the condition of the pitch and options for its future refurbishment and maintenance, for which funding is required. One option may be to replace the sand based AGP at Park School Barnstaple with a Gen2 surface.

5 FOOTBALL IN TORRIDGE

5A Demand, supply and capacity

Teams

- 103 teams in Torrige – 35 adult (including 3 ladies), 42 youth (9 girls) and 26 mini.
- The situation in 2017 was as follows:
 - 83 teams recorded in Torrige (in 2017: 35 men, 1 women, 18 boys (12-15 years); 2 girls (12-15 years); 9 boys (10-11 years); 2 girls (10-11 years); 11 mixed (8-9 years) 5 mixed (6-7 years).
- The slight reduction in adult teams in Torrige mainly due to established clubs running fewer teams, rather than clubs' demise. Youth football continues to thrive, especially with girls' teams and greater proportion of girls playing in mixed sides.
- Previously, 54/58 teams in the North Devon League were based in the area, this past season it was 39 out of the 41 teams that are based in the area; youth football is covered by the North Devon Youth League.
- Static situation in senior football at best, following demise of Sunday football; some growth apparent in youth and mini football. Strong youth football clubs.
- No cross boundary movement between authorities outside of Northern Devon.

Education pitches

School pitches are considered to be an essential part of the stock even if they are not currently used or available for use by the community. In most cases, usage of school pitches is very low, due to waterlogging and maintenance issues. Scenario 2 at the end of this Report sets out the current use of education pitches at secondary schools in Torrige and how supply can be added to if community access to them could be secured. Further updates are contained within the Action Guide.

Grass pitches

There have been very few changes in grass pitch provision since 2017:

- Abbotsham Playing Field listed as junior football 11v11 - now unmarked pitch in play area;
- no longer adult pitch marked at Ashwater.

Quality

- The consultants carried out some pitch assessments; in addition 22 pitches are listed on Pitch Power.
- PitchPower rated the following grounds as either good or advanced: Bideford Sports Ground, Dolton FC, Donnacraft Fields, Halwill FC, Langtree Lions, Marshford, Appledore, Pollyfield, Shamwickshire FC, Sandymere Sports Centre and Torrington FC.
- Pitches at Bideford College (Moreton Park), Bradworthy Playing Field and Clovelly Playing field were assessed as poor. PitchPower has rated the following grounds as being either poor or basic: Clovelly AFC, Hartland Clovelly, Holsworthy FC, Northam Lions, Shebbear FC, Stanhope Park 11v11, 9v9 and 7v7, Victoria Park (Bideford) and Winkleigh FC
- Poor drainage was recorded as being the single most restrictive problem with grass pitches, noted by clubs at several sites Bideford College, Clovelly, and Upcott Park,

Holsworthy in Torrige. The mention of poor drainage and waterlogging of pitches has increased considerably from earlier studies and has coincided with the successive winters of bad weather. Climate change suggests the situation can only worsen.

- Pitches as part of public open space frequently record problems with dog fouling, notably: High Bickington Playing Fields in Torrige.
- 24 out of 31 clubs responding to the survey said they were not satisfied by the level of provision for football in the North Devon/Torrige area. 17 said the main issue was pitch quality, 15 said access to pitches and 14 said amount of pitches the right size and quality of changing rooms.
- Maintenance of pitches, which in such a large rural study area is by a variety of different parish councils and other organisations, is generally recorded and regarded as satisfactory. Torrige sites that are currently accessing the Football Foundation Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund include: Donnacroft Fields, Torrigraside (3 pitches), Halwill FC, Langtree Lions FC, Pollyfield and Sandymere Sports Centre (2 pitches).

Update on capacity

In terms of pattern of play, peak day for adult football in Torrige is Saturday afternoon and for youth, Sunday morning. The table below summarises the spare capacity for football matches during the peak period, expressed as match equivalents.

Table 6: Summary of Capacity for football in Torrige by Sub Area: Adult pitches

Sub Area	Number	Match Equivalents			
		Current Carrying Capacity for Community Use	Current Community Use	Difference	Extent of any spare capacity for community use during the peak period
ADULT PITCHES					
Bideford	13	25	18.5	6.5	2.5
Torrington	8	19	9	10	4
Holsworthy	5	11	4.5	6.5	2.5
TOTAL	26	55	32	23	9
JUNIOR PITCHES					
Bideford	2	5	5	0	0
Torrington					
Holsworthy	2	4	5	-1	0
TOTAL	4	9	9	0	1

An assessment of capacity is as follows:

The table shows that in Torrige, there is limited spare capacity for adult teams at peak time but none for youth teams or mini teams (there are very few mini pitches).

Bideford Sub Area

Bideford

The Moreton Park pitches at Bideford College are overplayed by Bideford Youth given their poor quality and accessibility issues. There is considerable latent demand (from at least 6

youth teams requiring 2-3 grass youth pitches) from Bideford Youth. Bideford FC is self-sufficient at present but may require access to additional pitch space if teams increase. There is spare capacity for an extra team at Victoria Park.

However, given expected growth in the number of teams, more pitch provision for both adult and youth teams is required in Bideford itself to 2033. This could be met by the proposals at Winsford but it is likely more will be required. Much will also depend on any increase/expansion in 3G AGP provision for training and matchplay –at the proposed Cattle Market site, at Bideford College and Kingsley School.

The Pollyfield pitch has no room for growth and an additional pitch to serve this catchment would be required to cater for an increase in teams.

Northam/Appledore/Westward Ho!

All pitches here approaching, if not at, capacity. There is no room for growth on existing grass pitches. Proposals for new pitch provision would help to meet the shortfall, but additional youth pitches are likely to be required.

Torrington Sub Area

There is spare capacity to absorb growth in Torrington itself with four adult pitches supporting 4 Saturday adult teams and 11 youth/mini teams. This would be eased by the two clubs working together to make the most of the capacity they have.

There is potential to accommodate growth in the rural villages.

Holsworthy Sub Area

- The important site here is Stanhope Park in Holsworthy which has 3 junior pitches – a new 11v11, a 9v9 pitch which is being realigned and a mini pitch. Altogether they cater for 14 youth teams playing across all 3 pitches – this suggests slight overplay which may be remedied once improvements are carried out to the 9v9 pitch. The club here is looking to grow
- The senior club (Holsworthy AFC at Upcott Park) is also looking to run a ladies side and Vets side. Capacity issues across the two sites with 3 x men's teams, older youth teams (16's and 18's) and Vets side looking to play at Upcott Field. Pitch enlargement at Upcott Field may help to cater for some increase in play but given recent and expected further expansion, access to additional pitch space is required. This could potentially be provided at Pill Field (Holsworthy Community College).

There is potential to accommodate growth in the rural villages.

5B Future situation to 2033

Teams

Future growth in the number of affiliated football teams will arise from:

- Housing growth
- Increasing rates of participation
- Latent demand

Housing growth

- Adding increase in population from housing growth 2031-2033 would in theory require one more (because of rounding up) adult, one more youth and one more mini grass pitch.

TORRIDGE <i>Increase of 1080 people through housing growth 2031-2033</i>	No of Football pitches	Sand AGPs	3G FTPs
Men	0.29	0.01	0.05
Women	Included	Included	Included
Junior	0.36	Included	Included
Mini	0.22	Included	Included

Participation Trends

- The longer term trend (borne out by changes since the 2017 PPS) suggest adult teams remaining static and increase in youth and especially mini play and a growth in girls and women’s football , which is expected to continue.
- The growth in youth and mini play may transfer forward to an increase in 11v11 adult play.

Latent demand/unmet demand

- When asked: Would you like to run more teams? around three quarters of responding clubs replied in the affirmative. Various options were given for factors which may prevent them doing so, and frequently cited reasons include a shortage of volunteers to run the teams and even a shortage of playing members.
- 5 clubs mentioned the shortage of all weather pitches for matches and 4 clubs mentioned the shortage of all weather pitches for training...7 different clubs in all: 2 in Bideford, 2 in Great Torrington and 1 each in Bradworthy, Halwill Junction and Winkleigh.
- Bideford Youth FC stated that it could run additional teams in all age groups if it had access to suitable pitches.

The growth in the number of affiliated teams for football to 2023 in Torrige has been assessed as follows:

	Adult	Youth	Mini	Total Teams
Affiliated football teams				
Through population/housing growth	4	4	2	10
Increase in participation rates		2	2	4
Latent/unmet demand	3	10	1	14
Total	7	16	5	28

5C Recommendations for grass pitch provision

Any spare capacity at existing pitches has been taken into account. It is estimated that the following is required:

- 1 adult pitch and 1 youth pitch at Winsford
- 1 adult pitch on land South of Clovelly Road
- 1 adult pitch, and possible additional youth pitch for East the Water
- Up to an additional 3 youth pitches in Bideford for Bideford Youth
- Minimum of 1 x 9v9 youth pitch to serve Northam area
- Additional football pitches in Holsworthy (up to 3 pitches - 1 adult and 2 youth)

6 ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH PROVISION

This Section begins with a number of tables which set out current information on artificial grass pitches across North Devon and Torrige to show the range of facilities there are which some teams migrate around.

For the purposes of definitions as to full size and small size AGPs, these are in accordance with Sport England’s Active Places Database where all AGPs larger than 88m x 53m are categorised as full size and all AGPs this size and under are categorised as small size.

6A List of AGPs in North Devon and Torrige

Table 7: List of Artificial Grass Pitches in North Devon

NORTH DEVON/ Sub Area	Name	Built/ Refurbished (R)	AGP type	Size (according to Active Places)	FA/FIFA Reg. for Matchplay	WR22 Rugby	Ownership/ Managemt	Floodlit	AGP Length	AGP Width	Indicative playing size (Football)	Community Use	Overall Pitch Quality Rating
Barnstaple	Tarka Leisure Centre	2019	3G	Full size	Yes	No	Local Authority	Yes	107	70	Senior	A	Good
Braunton	RMB Chivenor	2014	3G	Full Size	Yes	Yes but not on RFU list	MOD		120	74	Senior	C	n/a
Barnstaple	Pilton Community College	Original 2003 (2020R); new carpet 2024	3G	Small size	Yes – to be applied for	No	Education Academy	Yes	60	50	7v7	A	Good
Braunton	Braunton Academy	2006; 2021R	3G	Small size	Yes	Yes	Education Academy	Yes	66	46	7v7	A	Good
Ilfracombe	Ilfracombe Academy	2014/Refurbished 2024	3G	Small size	Yes	No	Education Academy	Yes	55	37	5v5	A	Good
South Molton	South Molton Comm. College	2023/Refurbished 2023	3G	Small size	Yes	No	Education Academy	Yes	60	50	7v7	A	Good
Barnstaple	Park School	2007R	Sand dressed	Full size	No	No	Education Academy	Yes	100	60		A	Good
South Molton	West Buckland School	2004	Sand filled	Full size	No	No	Indep. Education	Yes	100	60		C	n/a

NORTH DEVON/ Sub Area	Name	Built/ Refurbished (R)	AGP type	Size (according to Active Places)	FA/FIFA Reg. for Matchplay	WR22 Rugby	Ownership/ Managemt	Floodlit	AGP Length	AGP Width	Indicative playing size (Football)	Community Use	Overall Pitch Quality Rating
South Molton	Chulmleigh Sports Centre	2006	Sand filled	Small size	No	No	Education Academy	Yes	36	18		A	Good

Table 8: List of Artificial Grass Pitches in Torrige

TORRIDGE / Sub Area	Name	Built/ Refurbished	AGP type	Size (according to Active Places)	FA/FIFA Reg. for Matchplay	WR22 (Rugby)	Ownership/ Managemt	Floodlit	AGP Length	AGP Width	Indicative playing size (Football)	Community Use	Overall Pitch Quality Rating
Bideford	Bideford College	2011; R 2024; shorter pile	3G	Full size	Yes	No	Education Academy	Yes	91.4	55	11v11	A	Good
Torrington	Great Torrington School	2005; 2021R?	3G	Small size	Yes	No	Education Academy	Yes	60	40	7v7	A	Good
Bideford	Sandymere Sports Centre	2010R; patched	3G	Small size	Expired May 24	No	Sports Club	Yes	60	40	7v7	A	Poor
Holsworthy	Shebbear College	2010	Sand	Full size	No	No	Indep. Educ.	Yes	100	60		C	Good
Bideford	Kingsley School	2016	Sand; change to 3G?	Small size	Yes – intends to.	Yes – will be?	Independent Education	Yes	84	51		C	n/a
Holsworthy	Holsworthy Comm. College	2006	Sand	Small size	No	No	Education Academy	Yes	61	50		A	Poor
Torrington	Clinton Hall Merton	1999	Sand filled	Small size	No	No	Community Org.	Yes	36	18		C	Standar d

Table 9: List of nearest AGPs outside North Devon and Torrige

LA	Name	Built/ Refurbished	AGP Type	FA Reg. for Matchplay	WR22	Ownership/ Managemnt	Floodlit	AGP Length	AGP Width	Indicative playing size (Football)	Community Use	Overall Pitch Quality Rating
West Devon	Ashbury Golf Hotel	2017	Full size 3G	Yes	Yes	Commercial	No	120	71	11v11	A	
Mid Devon	Exe Valley Leisure Centre, Tiverton	(2009R)	Full size sand filled			Local Authority	Yes	97	60		A	n/a
Cornwall	Budehaven Community School	(2009R)	Full size sand dressed			Education Academy	Yes	100	60		A	n/a
West Devon	Ashbury Golf Hotel	2013	Full size sand			Commercial	No	101	60		A	n/a

6B Usage of and demand for 3G AGPs in Torrige

In order to assess the situation with regard to 3G AGPs going forward to 2033 we need to consider demand and usage now and what demand and usage is likely to be in 2033.

A 9v9 pitch is equivalent to 0.5 of an 11v11 pitch and a 5v5 or 7v7 pitch is equivalent to = 0.25 of an 11v11 pitch). There are currently the equivalent of 1.5 full size 3G AGPs in Torrige, as follows:

- One full size at Bideford College, recently FA Registered;
- Small size, 7v7 FA registered at Great Torrington School
- Small size, 7v7 AT Sandymere

None of the above are WR22 compliant.

Existing Usage

As per North Devon, this is made up of a huge variety of activities and is a mixture of NGB affiliated and unaffiliated use. A suggested typology may be:

- Affiliated Play – formal clubs and teams (as set out above)
- Other Football Groups (mostly affiliated/sports development):
 - Sports Governing Body sessions
 - youth football academies
 - football club outreach/community Trust led activity
 - Disability sessions
 - Central venue play
 - Small sided leagues
- Casual bookings for football
- Recreational Play:
 - Holiday activities
 - Health and Fitness sessions including Walking Football and Rugby
- Other sports (rugby)

The usage of AGPs where data is available has been analysed. In Torrige, 29 different users groups/teams were recorded: of these, 11 were using sand based AGPs and 18 were using 3G AGPs. The split according to type of user was:

- 17 (58%) are affiliated clubs/teams (men's, ladies & youth & disability)
- 3 (10%) are casual/recreational football bookings
- 6 (21%) are 'Other Football' (Exeter CCT; NGB booking; Football/Youth Academies; football leagues or small sided football)
- 2 (7%) are rugby
- 1 (4%) school

This is not the same as the percentage of play on 3G AGPs by each 'type' of user as one individual 'user' may book a third of a full size pitch for half an hour whilst another 'user' may book a whole pitch for an hour. The information obtained from booking records and site operators does not enable an analysis at this level of detail.

Current occupancy rate and spare capacity

Training: There is a slightly under full size 3G FTP in Torridge at Bideford College which is well used (but still has spare capacity on Monday and Friday evenings) for football training. The pitch is now FA registered and will be able to host matchplay (it is currently not used very much at weekends. The College intend to start a steering group involving local clubs and Devon County FA. Kingsley School was quite busy last season (as a sand surface) and apparently will be hosting football and rugby activity every evening once converted to 3G and appropriately registered. Sandymere small sided 3G is well used for training by its resident club but may have some availability during weekday evenings. Great Torrington School's small 3G AGP is apparently fully booked all weekday evenings. Holsworthy Community College sand based AGP is full up for training during weekday evenings and also weekends (not able to be used for matches).

Matchplay: There is nominally spare capacity at weekends at Bideford College which at the time of writing this report was often not perceived as being open; however, this situation may change. If the proposed new 3G AGP at Kingsley School is registered for matchplay it may be able to host some age grade (but not XV-a-side) matches. Sandymere small 3G AGP is not currently accredited for matchplay. Great Torrington School small 3G AGP not open at weekends but to do so has been identified as a priority by the school.

The desire for more 3G AGP facilities and difficulties in obtaining facilities for training especially was supported by other comments made by responding clubs, representing up to 20 teams particularly:

- The perception, by several football teams in Bideford that the 3G AGP at Bideford is not widely available at weekends and full on weekday evenings. The situation may now change pending the setting up of a group to oversee the community use of the facility.
- Shortage of facilities in rural areas such as Great Torrington (School AGP perceived as being full) and settlements such as Halwill, Bradworthy and Holsworthy.

These comments are borne out by an analysis of the availability and capacity as shown by booking records and conversations with site operators.

Almost all clubs responding to the direct question said they would use approved 3G football turf pitches for matches but there was no follow up question relating to whether this would be dependent on cost, times of usage etc.

6C Future situation to 2033

Scenario Testing

The FA recommends scenario testing for 3G AGP capacity on the basis of 38 teams for training per 3G AGP. Note that this is a starting point for analysis for the future situation and not intended to be used for the current situation as there are many other local conditions and characteristics to take on board. However, at present there are 103 teams which would equate to three (2.7) 3G AGPs in Torrige. There are the equivalent of 1.5 full size at present so if this measure is applied there is an existing shortfall. The FA stress that local conditions and circumstances are of paramount importance.

Growth in demand for AGPs

As well as taking into account the estimated growth in the number of affiliated teams (as set out above before the recommendations for grass provision), the estimated growth in demand for AGPs needs to take into account increases in activity in the other categories as set out in the preceding typology i.e. Other Football (mostly affiliated/sports development); Casual bookings for football; Recreational Play and Other sports (predominantly rugby although demand from other sports could develop e.g. quidditch, lacrosse). Research for the Update has revealed much anecdotal evidence of increasing demand for training slots for rugby clubs/teams and a growing market for soccer academies, talent development squads etc ('Other Football'), casual football and recreational play.

Other Categories

According to the analysis of 'user groups' of 3G AGPs in Torrige, around 40% are made up of categories other than affiliated football clubs and teams. However, there are only three 3G AGP surfaces in Torrige and, unlike North Devon, this 'secondary market' has not developed to the same extent due to restricted availability and spare capacity. Once another registered 3G AGP with full community access is provided in Torrige (such as at Bideford College), there will be some unlocking and development of this 'secondary market'. However, in the meantime, it is felt reasonable to assume that the increase in these other 'user groups' will at least equal, or maybe even slightly exceed, the increase in the numbers of affiliated teams. The caveat of course is that this is numbers of 'user groups' and not the amount of usage of 3G AGPs by these user groups, but it is at least comparing like with like ('user groups').

Demand from rugby

There is also expressed demand now for training facilities from Bideford RFC. It appears it may be able to use the new Kingsley School 3G AGP (if it is suitably accredited by the RFU) which may act as a part solution to the current midweek deficit whilst the Cattle Market site is progressed. Torrington RFC is also keen to gain access to training facilities. All teams from U12s upwards will train midweek and therefore this demand informs the midweek capacity analysis.

Scenario Testing

The FA also recommends scenario testing for the number of 3G AGPs which would be required if all matchplay was to be transferred to that surface. This shows the need for a considerable number of 3G AGPs as adult men's games for example will require a full size pitch and most

will require to be played at the same peak time. In the Bideford/East-the-Water, it is estimated that up to the equivalent of 3.10 (3) full size 3G AGPs would be required to accommodate all matchplay, with up to an additional 3.19 (3) full size 3G AGPs to meet demand from the Northam, Appledore and Westward Ho! area.

Summary assessment of future growth in teams/‘user groups’ using 3G AGPs

The assessment for future number of teams/user groups for football, rugby and for recreational play for 3G AGP surfaces for training and matchplay has been carried out conservatively and the following is regarded as a minimum level of growth. This is in addition to current use.

Type of User Group	Increase in numbers of teams/‘user groups’
Growth in number of affiliated football teams to 2033	28
Estimated no.of existing football teams wishing to access 3G AGPs	c 14
‘Other Categories’ (mainly football)	c 8
No. of rugby teams for which peak time access to WR22 3G AGP could provide solution for training	16
Total Increase	66

The following table summarises the situation:

TORRIDGE No. of current Teams	Additional teams / groups	No. of current 11v11 3Gs	(Total potential number of teams /groups in 2033)	Required equivalent 11v11 3Gs	Shortfall
103	66	1.5	(169)	4-4.5* (Min of 4)	2.5 – 3.0 (Min of 2.5)

The above methodology takes into account the 1:38 ratio of football teams to a full size 3G AGP, but also allows for demand from other football users (casual, recreational and informal) plus rugby training (not matchplay) during weekday evenings. Weekly access to 10.5 peak midweek/floodlit hours on a WR22 3G AGP is required to help part solve the existing midweek/floodlit pitch deficit for rugby in Torridge. The methodology also takes into account latent demand for 3G AGP provision which exists in both authorities; research has shown that all existing 3G AGPs are virtually at capacity for weekday training.

The analysis demonstrates that Torridge is currently underprovided for by 3G AGPs and the existing shortfall (up to the equivalent of one full size WR22 3G AGP in the Bideford area) needs to be addressed as soon as possible. The spatial dimension of demand, existing catchment areas and the settlement pattern has also to be taken into account. It is also recognised that some ‘user groups’ currently using sand based AGPs may continue to use these and not transfer to 3G AGPs.

On the basis of the above analysis, the research demonstrates that over the period to 2033 there will be sufficient demand for a minimum of 2.5 (and up to 3) full size 3G AGPs in Torridge, giving rise to the following recommendations:

- Recommendation for at least one full size 11v11 3G AGP to serve Bideford/East the Water on a non education site
 - Recommendation for the equivalent of at least two 3G AGPs across the rest of Torridge:
 - to serve Northam/Appledore/Westward Ho!
 - to serve East the Water, Bideford
 - to serve the market towns and rural areas in the Holsworthy/Torrington sub areas
- New provision should be capable of meeting the requirement for a minimum of 10.5 peak midweek/floodlit hours on a WR22 compliant pitch for rugby training and therefore the option for WR22 compliancy should be considered in all proposals for 3G AGP provision.

Options

The following options are proposed for further consideration as the PPS progresses at Stage E:

- Requirement for full size WR22 3G AGP to serve Bideford with full community use, on non school site (Cattle Market site).
- Additional 3G AGP may be required for East-the-Water, Bideford.
- Improvement to 3G AGP surface at Sandymere and development of site as a full scale community facility
- To secure and encourage more weekend use by the community of 3G AGP and grass pitches at Great Torrington School (NB playzone being proposed for Torrington)
- Consider resurfacing of small sided sand based AGP at HCC as a 3G AGP to serve Holsworthy and surrounding rural area.

6D Future Sites for 3G AGPs in Torridge

The full Needs Assessment Report sets out some of the issues with regard to sites for 3G AGPs, to help inform a discussion of what may be required, options and priorities.

Bideford Sub Area

Given the current spatial distribution of 3G AGP provision and known shortfalls or issues in grass pitch provision (waterlogged pitches etc), the study concludes that there is an existing shortfall of one full size WR22 3G AGP to serve Bideford/East the Water on a non education site, preferably the Cattle Market Site. The upgraded Bideford College pitch (registered with the FA), and the resurfaced WR22 3G pitch at Kingsley School will also be able to accommodate demand particularly in the short term, which will ease the situation locally for youth matchplay and football and rugby training (and potentially youth matchplay).

Depending on growth rates agreed, additional 3G provision may be required around the East-the-Water area (small size 3G AGP minimum).

Additional provision to serve Northam/Appledore and Westward Ho! (another small size 3G AGP) may also be required.

Torrington Sub Area

If the 3G AGP at Great Torrington School could be available for weekend matchplay this would help address needs for youth matchplay; however there still appears to be a shortfall in weekday training capacity.

Holsworthy Sub Area

The current situation and growth in footballing activity in Holsworthy and surrounding areas leads to a recommendation to consider the provision of at least a small size 3G AGP within the town (possibly on the Community College site) to meet demand for training and youth matchplay.

Playzones

The location of Playzone sites may also have an impact. Sites in Holsworthy, Torrington and East-the-Water have been agreed.

7 SCENARIO TESTING

7A Scenario 1: Taking AGPs on non public sites (i.e. on educational sites) out of use

In Torridge, two out of 3G AGPs are on education sites (a small 3G AGP at Sandymere is not). The two sand based surfaces which meet demand for community football (not for hockey) are also both on school sites. A minimum of two full size 3G AGPs would be required to meet displaced demand from football from both 3G and sand based AGPs.

7B Scenario 2: Use of Grass Pitches on Secondary School sites

Type of School/ Torridge	Name	Adult football	Junior 11V11	Junior 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Rugby	Cricket	Community Use	Notes
Secondary	Bideford College (Moreton Park)	3							A	Football pitches used by Bideford Community AFC & Bideford Youth
Indep. School	Kingsley School								C	No available grass pitches
Secondary	Great Torrington School	1		1			1		A	A little community use of grass pitches; could be increased if improved?
Secondary	Holsworthy Community College: Pill Field	2		1				1 NTW	B	No recorded community use but potential if pitches provided (space but not yet laid out)
Indep. School	Shebbear College							1	C	Extensive grass pitches but no community use other than one cricket team from outside Torridge
GRAND TOTAL		6		2			1	2		
Available for community use & used (A)		4		1			1			
Available for community use & not used (B)		2		1				1		
Loss of pitches if schools restrict access further		6		2			1	1		
Potential additional pitches if schools allow/encourage access		3		2			1	1		