

Wickham Residents Association (WRA)

The Mill Lane Sports and Recreation Site (MLS)

WRA Committee Report in Response to the Fieldform Draft Need Assessment

Contents	Page
1. Recommendation to Wickham Parish Council	2
2. Structure of this Report	2
Report Part One	
3. Background	4
4. Summary of Findings	4
5. Conclusions and Recommendations	6
6. Next Steps	7
Report Part Two	
7. Winchester Playing Pitch Strategy (WPPS)	8
8. Winchester Local Football Facilities Strategy (WLFFS)	11
9. Fareham Borough Playing Pitch Strategy (FBPPS)	17
10. Mill Lane Draft Need Assessment (DNA)	19
Appendix 1:	
Mill Lane "Site Masterplan" April 2018	31
Appendix 2:	
Table 1.2 from WPPS: "Likely Impact of Future Football Provision"	32

WRA Committee Report in Response to the Fieldform Draft Need Assessment

1. Recommendation to Wickham Parish Council (WPC)

WRA has examined the Fieldform Draft Need Assessment (DNA) for the proposed sports and recreation site at Mill Lane, Wickham. It has also extensively examined relevant source documents that the DNA has referenced in coming to its conclusions and consulted several additional relevant documents not referenced in the DNA.

It is assumed that the DNA will be received by the Recreation Committee of Wickham Parish Council (WPC) at its meeting on December 14th, 2021 with the intention of reaching a conclusion as to whether the DNA should be forwarded to Full Council for adoption.

WRA has concluded that, as presented, the DNA is not fit for purpose. In Part One of this report is a summary of its deficiencies. In Part Two, arguments based on examination of the evidence supporting this conclusion are presented in detail.

Recommendation: The Recreation Committee of the Parish Council is urged to:

- i) reject the DNA**
- ii) require the authors to consider WRA's findings presented in this report**
- iii) require the authors of the DNA, having digested the content of this report, to re-draft the DNA and re-present it to the Committee**
- iv) halt further development of the Master Plan for the Mill Lane Site until steps i) – iii) above have been completed and the revised version accepted by the Committee**

2. Structure of this Report

The evidence base of this report comprises examination of the following principal sources:

Winchester Playing Pitch Strategy (WPPS) published April 2018
Winchester Local Football Facilities Plan (WLFFP) published November 2020
Fareham Borough Playing Pitch Strategy (FBPPS) published September 2020
The Draft Mill Lane Need Assessment (DNA) published November 2021

In addition, reference to the following has helped inform analysis of the principal sources:

Documents available on Winchester Planning Portal: Planning Application 17/02615/FUL
Winchester District Plan Part Two: Development Management and Site Allocations (adopted April 2017)
The WRA Survey of Wickham residents November 2021
North Whiteley Planning Applications (NWPA) 15/00485/OUT, April 2015 onwards
The Football Foundation's "Guide to Developing Third Generation Football Turf Pitches"
The Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator
Mill Lane Sports Facilities Feasibility Study April 2019

The volume and detail of all these documents is such that the report is presented in two parts:

PART ONE: provides an overview of the subject including the **background** to why this report has been prepared, a **summary** of the findings from the evidence base, **conclusions and recommendations** arising, and a statement regarding **next steps**.
PART TWO: provides detailed **document-by-document analysis** of the principal sources underpinning the summary presented in Part 1. Page numbers are referenced so that readers can readily consult the original documents. Issues of concern in the DNA are identified and accompanied by a “WRA Comment” in which evidence from the principal sources is presented together with the views of Wickham residents collected in the WRA Survey regarding the MLS conducted in October 2021.

As a result of this analysis it has been possible to identify divergences between what residents want and what the DNA states is “need”.

The principal focus of the DNA and this report is football, because that’s what the DNA concentrates almost exclusively upon. Football also seems to have been the principal concern of WPC if one judges by the composition of the selection panel that recommended Fieldform to the Council as the consultancy best placed and experienced to conduct the Need Assessment. WRA attempts in this report to balance that focus but inevitably it is necessary to devote much of it to football.

PART ONE

3. Background

The Fieldform DNA for the MLS has been produced at the request of Wickham Parish Council (WPC). Fieldform were recommended for the task from a shortlist of consultancies by a panel comprising two Parish Councillors (one of whom is no longer a serving Councillor), the Parish Clerk and a representative each from Wickham Dynamos FC and Infinity FC, a club with no roots in, or affiliation to, Wickham. Two other football clubs from outside Wickham were also invited to sit on the panel but were unable to attend the selection event. WRA notes that the selection group did not include representatives of any sport other than football, and that of those invited three are not local to the village. It further notes that, despite the significance of the project to residents, no Wickham representative organisation was invited

The panel met on May 15th, 2020, and its recommendations presented to WPC at its meeting on June 2nd, 2020. At that meeting, the minutes state that the appointed “manager” (presumably meaning the appointed consultancy) would provide regular reports to the Council and “a local steering group”. WRA has not been able to find minutes of such a steering group or if it even operated – but if it did then it is not unreasonable to assume that it comprised the members of the selection panel.

The criteria for choice of agency adopted by the selection panel are listed in the minutes of the June 2nd 2020, Council meeting. There were 10 criteria, the second of which was: “An understanding of the requirements of Wessex League ground grading”. It is not explained in the minutes why this was considered a prime requirement. The fourth criterion was: “Confident ability to communicate with the parish council, football clubs and the community”. Why only football clubs should be invited to participate in the process is curious because there is no planning evidence to suggest that there should be a focus on football. The definition of “Sports Facilities” (17/02615/FUL Section 106 Agreement – Part One, July 12th 2019, p14) to be located at Mill Lane is stated as “..*new public sports pitches*”. The more detailed provisions regarding the sports facilities (17/02615/FUL Section 106 Agreement – Part Two, July 12th 2019, Schedule 4 pages 35 - 36) similarly make no mention of what sort of pitches should be located at the MLS. So the clear subsequent focus on football in the draft DNA is not a condition of the planning approval.

In the absence of evidence to the contrary it very much looks from this history that even before a need assessment had been carried out the focus of the Parish Council has been football and the Wessex League – not, as it should have been, an open analysis of local opinion and the needs of all sporting interests in the village.

A further requirement of the chosen consultancy was: “Confident public consultation skills.” As we shall show in this report on the DNA it would appear that this has to date not been satisfactorily delivered by Fieldform either because they do not have the skills/experience or because public consultation was never a priority – which again, might be thought, not unreasonably, to have been because a pre-conceived plan had been decided.

Despite these concerns, WRA has adopted a positive attitude to the project and offered its services as a representative body of the Community to assist analysis and decision making. It

has gone further: whereas the Fieldform “consultation” reached a small percentage of residents, WRA has conducted a survey of resident opinion that reached approximately 25% of the genuine village population and fills the void.

4. Summary of findings

The WRA Survey of residents overwhelmingly demonstrated (91% of 653 residents defined by Wickham post code) that a Wessex League football stadium and allied facilities at the MLS are not supported. That result in itself should be sufficient for WPC to reject the recommendations of the DNA and require an alternative assessment to be made. WRA urges Councillors to reject the DNA.

The process for determining land use is not limited to local consultation, necessary and crucial though that may be. Any plan for change of land use in a Local Authority (LA) area has to consider wider issues such as those defined in local plans.

Analysis of the principal documents listed in section 2 above (“Structure of this Report”) and reported in detail in **PART TWO** has led to the following summary of WRA’s findings regarding the Fieldform Draft Need Assessment.

The Fieldform DNA:

- I. does not include Wickham residents as key stakeholders, whereas they should be regarded as the *principal* key stakeholders, whose views should be paramount in determining needs for the MLS
- II. ignores the fact that the WPPS identifies two planned 3G football turf pitches (3GFTP) in the North Whiteley Urban Extension that overcome the estimated shortfall of such pitches in the Winchester South Area (thus making one at the MLS surplus to need)
- III. ignores the fact that the WPPS demonstrates that there is excess capacity of full-size grass football pitches in the Winchester South Area making an additional one at the MLS surplus to requirements
- IV. fails to cater for the main need for football identified by the WPPS in the Winchester South Area (and, therefore, in Wickham) - **junior grass pitches**
- V. ignores the prerequisites stated by the Football Foundation for the installation of a new 3G pitch: the prime criterion is “Good access” - the MLS has neither good nor sufficiently safe access
- VI. states that Infinity FC is a local club to Wickham: it is not, and its needs are irrelevant to any planning consideration in the Winchester District
- VII. meets the declared needs of Infinity FC but insufficiently caters for local needs: there is precious little space left for much other activity (see site plan Appendix 1)
- VIII. ignores the fact that the MLS does not meet the criteria for a “football hub (3 full size football pitches of which one should be 3G)
- IX. ignores the fact that within less than a mile of the MLS is a site (Shedfield Recreation Ground) that is more likely to qualify in dimensions as a “football hub” and has access criteria that meet the standard required by the Football Foundation
- X. ignores the fact that within 4.5 miles of the MLS a new site is under development that could also qualify as a football hub (North Whiteley)

- XI. ignores the fact that according to the WPPS football hubs are strategically located in city centres or major urban centres (the WPPS assumes they are in the City)
- XII. fails to state that a Local Football Facilities Plan *“should not be used as a replacement for a playing pitch strategy (PPS) and will not be accepted as an evidence base for site change of use or disposal”* (source: Football Foundation website), yet the DNA is totally dependent on the WLFFP and NOT on the WPPS
- XIII. ignores the demand demonstrated by the WRA Survey on the MLS for multi sports all weather facilities for junior football and cricket, tennis, netball and cycling
- XIV. ignores the demonstrable support at the MLS for “environmentally popular” recreational pursuits favoured by the key stakeholders
- XV. ignores the consultee comment by South Downs National Park that *“the proposed recreation ground and adult grass pitches , should avoid floodlighting.”*
- XVI. fails to acknowledge that the FBPPS does not need facilities at Wickham for football or any other pitch sport and that a 3G full size pitch is planned for Welborne
- XVII. gives the clear impression that the DNA has been written to justify the concept that Infinity FC should locate its home at the MLS
- XVIII. adds credence to widely held local suspicions that there has been an understanding between WPC (who commissioned the Mill Lane Sports Facilities Feasibility Study and the DNA) and Infinity FC to create for that non-local football club a home venue to Wessex League standards at the MLS. (Note: the composition of WPC has changed since the feasibility study was published and it is not suggested that members of the current Council necessarily support it)
- XIX. does not explain what/who influenced the Football Foundation to include the MLS as a “football hub”: the site is not part of the WPPS and doesn’t satisfy “hub” criteria

There is no doubt that a proper needs assessment should be carried out. In essence, much of the work has been done because WRA gathered over 2000 pieces of data from local residents. WRA has used this evidence to make draft recommendations for what really should be approved by the Council for provision of sports and recreation facilities at the MLS for genuinely local people. It is a better place to start than the Fieldform DNA

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Table 11 page 34 of the DNA should be revised along the following lines based upon the WRA Survey, analysis of the principal reference documents and the current Fieldform DNA.

Sport	Strategic Need	Local need identified	Facility requirements needed to meet demand
Football	Junior grass pitches identified by WPSS	Junior football only unless Wickham Dynamos move from Recreation Ground. Evidence: Survey of 25% of local population; WPPS	One 11v11 youth and one youth 9v9 and one 5v5 mini grass pitch. Changing facilities
Tennis/Netball	As per DNA	As per DNA.	As per DNA
Athletics/Running	Outdoor fitness trail and gym equipment	WPPS; Survey of 25% of local population.	Marked trails and changing facilities
Cycling	Link to Meon Valley trail. Possible BMX track	Evidence: Survey of 25% of local population	The BMX track would need to be sited well away from pitches and other users
Multi-use pitch	All-weather facility for junior football,	WPPS; Survey of 25% of local population	3G junior football turf pitch; 2G all-weather multi-use pitch

	casual tennis variants, netball, basketball		
Cricket (subject to further evaluation)	Youth development and practice facilities	Evidence: Survey of 25% of local population and no junior development provision by local club	Junior non-turf cricket pitch; all weather net facilities

The table is not meant to be definitive but subject to thorough local stakeholder consultation, demand projections and financial modelling before being drawn up into a Master Plan. In the event that demand and financial modelling demonstrates that these facilities fail to make business sense it must be understood that residents of the village will not accept a “Wessex League” solution instead. Local opinion needs to prevail.

Consideration should also be given to, and included/excluded according to local consultation outcomes, the following:

- **Bowls.** Not a strategic need according to the WPPS but scored highly on the WRA Survey. Consultation with Wickham Indoor Bowls Club or other bowls clubs in the vicinity was not undertaken by Fieldform so it has not been considered in the DNA
- Plans for **environmental recreational use** (nature trails, woodland areas, open countryside, allotments etc) that were very highly supported by local people – and may be more so if further detailed consultation is undertaken.
- **Children’s activity area:** climbing wall, adventurous physical activity equipment.

(Note: It is assumed that the table on p 35 of the DNA has been reproduced in error as it repeats (with some minor variations) the content of the table on page 34?)

6. Recommended Next Steps for Need Assessment (with reference to DNA p 36)

6.5 (a) Progress with master planning - In addition to those steps described in the DNA:

- it is essential to satisfy residents that the traffic impact of proposals is assessed. This is a real problem in a narrow country lane that has only narrow feeder roads. No plan of options should be prepared without proper estimations of peak usage
- options for car-parking and entry points need separate and detailed planning as part of the project
- safe pedestrian access should be demonstrated for all options
- several master plan options should be prepared, and draft funding sources/business plans be developed for consultation with residents and clubs before production of the final master plan. Funding partners should not be approached until there is community support for the final plan(s)

6.5(b) Progress with an appraisal of options for future management model:

- “Consultation with selected stakeholders...” must include local representatives and the village population at large and exclude those that are not relevant or local. Consultation with “governing bodies” should be only with those that may have a stake in the MLS. Proceeding as far as the plans have without key local stakeholder consultation has been a mistake and led to unnecessary controversy where what is needed is community cohesion.

PART TWO

7. Winchester Playing Pitch Strategy 2018 -2031 (April 2018) (WPPS)

Authors: Knight, Kavanagh and Page

<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/community-recreation/winchester-playing-pitch-strategy>

P13, Table 1.1

WPPS correctly “places” Wickham in Winchester District South. 2031 demand forecast in the area for cricket, rugby, bowls, hockey is stated as “no demand”

WRA comment:

The WPPS does not take into account the high score in the WRA survey for outdoor bowls on the MLS. The views of the indoor Wickham bowls club should be sought to determine the validity of this claim because it is not clear how the WPPS decision was reached.

Equally the WPPS does not differentiate between adult and junior cricket which seems to be under provided and worthy of consideration for the MLS (see also below page 24 of this Report).

The PPS offers no insights into demand for other “pitch-sports” such as netball, tennis or non-pitch sports such as fitness trails. The WRA survey should be used to determine the inclusion of these options.

P15, Table 1.2 Football (see Appendix 2)

The WPPS analyses demand in Winchester in 2031 in the context of current provision plus additional provision from planned new residential development.

The WPPS (p15) concludes regarding football across the district: *“Given that spare capacity exists overall for adult pitches, and given the shortfalls evident for youth 11v11 pitches, consideration should be given to re-configuring the design of the sites to provide more youth 11v11 pitches and less adult pitches.”*

Regarding Winchester District South specifically, Table 1.2 states that, looking out to 2031, provision for grass pitch football is estimated to be *“spare capacity of 15 adult and 5.5 mini 7v7 match equivalent sessions; shortfall of two youth 11v11, one youth 9v9 and one mini 5v5 match equivalent session”*.

Regarding 3G artificial turf pitch demand in 2031 for football the Plan identifies a shortfall of 3 in the North of the District but *“No identified shortfall”* in the Winchester South District.

WRA comment:

These data demonstrate no demand for additional grass adult pitches. The WRA Survey supports junior football provision on the MLS and additional needs for junior football in the area can be met by re-configuration of the spare capacity of existing grass pitches. That would leave the MLS free for the multitude of uses favoured by residents.

The fact that in 2031 there is forecast to be no shortage of 3G pitches in the South Area emphasises the lack of strategic need for a 3G pitch on the MLS for football. The reason the WPPS considers there will be no shortage of 3G pitches in 2031 is due to the planned new installations at a site within a ten-minute drive of Wickham. This does not necessarily eliminate the need at the MLS for all weather surfaces for other sports and for younger age-group users (the WPPS is simply silent on such questions)

P 17 Summary

“Theoretically, surpluses and shortfalls expressed for pitch sports could be largely addressed by improving pitch quality improvements at existing operational sites; however, the extent of increased capacity achievable through this route would clearly be dependent upon practical opportunities arising and funding being identified for delivering and sustaining enhancements. Given current budget restraints, significant quality improvements are considered to be unlikely, meaning other opportunities need to be explored such as greater use of sites currently unavailable for community use and pitch re-configuration.

Notwithstanding the above, for sand-based and 3G AGPs, there are clear shortfalls identified which cannot be alleviated unless new provision is created. Given this, there is a distinct need to explore the feasibility of future provision at strategic sites in Winchester to meet this demand. For the purposes of a PPS, a strategic site can be considered to be a pre-existing site which already provides a sport offering such as a school or leisure centre, and as such, there is not an express requirement to allocate new land to alleviate identified 3G and sandbased AGP (artificial grass pitch) shortfalls. With resources to improve the quality of grass pitches being limited, an increase in 3G provision could also help reduce grass pitch shortfalls through the transfer of play, thus reducing overplay, which in turn can aid pitch quality improvements.”

WRA Comment

It is clear that Winchester’s PPS does not see a need for a new site in Mill Lane Wickham to be allocated for adult football played on either a grass or 3G pitch. There is no current shortfall in adult grass football pitches in the Winchester South Area and the current shortfall of 2 3G full size pitches is regarded as eliminated by 2031 by new provision planned in the Area. There will remain a shortfall in the District, but that is all in Winchester North Area. Even junior level demand can be satisfied by re-configuration of exiting and already planned provision.

Regarding football training requirements the PPS states (p24):

“To alleviate shortfalls, consideration should be given to the rural characteristics of Winchester, meaning the creation of full size 3G pitches in more isolated towns/villages may not be a strategically feasible approach. Instead, the creation of hubs in areas of high population density is considered to be the preferred approach. That being said, the creation of smaller sided 3G facilities can provide both a solution for midweek training for isolated clubs/teams and also provide a pitch for competitive youth and mini matches (subject to FA testing).”

Wickham is not a “high density population” area and is rural in character. It is not, therefore, the preferred strategic location for a “hub”. However, in lower population density areas a 3G facility could be considered on the MLS for youth matches.

A full sized, FA compliant 3G pitch and a small sided 3G pitch are located at Swanmore College, only 3.3 miles from the MLS and are stated in the PPS to be available for community use, as indeed is the mini-AWP (all weather pitch) at Wickham Primary School.

Further, there are 3 standard quality football pitches in Shedfield (less than one mile from the MLS) which the WPPS states (p 70) has spare capacity. If there is to be enhanced “hub” provision for football in the Winchester South Area, it would seem that this ready-made facility so close to Wickham and much better served by transport infrastructure, should be the focus for it. The WPPS states (p 53, table 6.1) that hub sites should be large enough to “accommodate 3 or more grass pitches including provision of an AGP (Artificial Grass Pitch)”, they should be strategically located and provide sufficient ancillary (e.g. changing) facilities and car parking to serve three pitches. Shedfield meets these criteria; the MLS does not. Alternatively, a hub could be created at the ten-pitch site proposed for North Whiteley, where new 3G pitches are planned to be operational by 2025.

The WPPS recommends that the football pitch in Wickham Recreation ground should be sustained in quality in the long-term (it is graded “standard quality” in the report).

P 57, 67, 72

These pages cover the “North Analysis Area”, “The South Analysis Area” and a table detailing the Playing Pitch Strategy for the South Area.

The shortfall of three 3G pitches in the North and 2 in the South is reiterated on page 67 and the table on page 72 shows that in the plan to 2031 there are two artificial grass pitches (AGPs) planned in the North Whiteley development with a note alongside “*If the AGPs on site have a 3G surface ensure they are built to FA specifications and can be placed on the FA register*”. It is these two pitches that result in there being “*No identified shortfall*” in 3G pitches in the Winchester South District in 2031.

The 2 AGPs at North Whiteley will be included in the overall site to be occupied by a new senior school and thus fall under the responsibility of Hampshire County Council. It makes absolute sense for these pitches to be co-located with the school to maximise weekday/daytime utilisation but will have floodlights and will be available for community use beyond school/daylight hours. A telephone conversation with the planning officer at Hampshire County Council responsible for the school plan indicates that a final decision has not yet been made as to the type of artificial pitch that will be installed but he stated that one or both may not only be used for football. A further conversation with the Chair of Whiteley Town Council, however, revealed that the intention of the Council is that, in line with the WPPS, the pitches will be 3G and FA registered.

It is realised that there may be a question as to exactly what will be installed, but as Playing Pitch Strategies are considered to be the prime strategic document for guiding what is provided in a local authority it is reasonable to suppose that the requirement identified in

the WPPS will be chosen. This is further reinforced by the fact that the WPPS states that in the District there is no additional demand in 2031 for hockey pitches – hockey cannot be played on 3G pitches. There are no hockey clubs in the Winchester South Area and North Whiteley would not be deemed a suitable distance for players playing for Winchester Hockey Club to travel for training and play. Yet the demand for 3G pitches for football is clear and hence the WPPS supports 3G pitches at North Whiteley.

Although there is admittedly a possibility that despite the Town Council's preference for two 3G pitches to be installed at North Whiteley, one might perhaps not be 3G. That would then bring in to play a possible additional site for consideration. But the evidence is clear that the requirements for a 3G pitch (access) and a football hub (3 pitches, access and urban location) are not characteristics of the MLS.

8. Winchester Local Football Facilities Plan 2020 – 2031 (WLFFP) (published November 2020)

Author: Knight, Kavanagh and Page

<https://localplans.footballfoundation.org.uk/local-authorities-index/winchester/winchester-local-football-facility-plan/#tab-section-3g-football-turf-pitches-ftps>

Introductory Note:

The following quote is taken from the Football Foundation website (see:

<https://localplans.footballfoundation.org.uk/local-authorities-index/winchester/winchester-local-football-facility-plan/#tab-section-introduction>)

“A LFFP is an investment portfolio of priority projects for potential investment - it is not a detailed demand and supply analysis of all pitch provision in a local area. It cannot be used as a replacement for a playing pitch strategy (PPS) and it will not be accepted as an evidence base for site change of use or disposal.

A LFFP will however build on available/existing local evidence and strategic plans and may adopt relevant actions from a PPS and/or complement these with additional investment priorities.”

LFFPs are constructed by the Football Foundation in conjunction with local authorities. They are aspirational in concept and have no statutory authority. They have funds available for investment into facilities which are therefore attractive to local authorities. It is possible, one assumes, that the availability of funding may over-influence local authority decision-making as to what are genuine priorities for their communities.

As the introductory quote states, however, these plans are not a detailed analysis of supply and demand, cannot be taken as a replacement of a Playing Pitch Strategy and are not acceptable evidence of a change of use for a site. As such, then, the WLFFP does not supersede or override the conclusions of the WPPS. It is quite evident, however, that the DNA takes at face value that a football hub will be created at the MLS – even though this was not part of the WPPS and therefore has no authority.

P4 Demand

The WLFFP summarises the position of current and future demand as follows:

“The Winchester 2018 PPS indicated a shortfall of three full size 3G FTPs (Football Turf Pitches) with a priority to focus on development of sites around the City Centre and in the north of the Authority. The stated shortfall in the PPS was calculated using the FA demand model of 1:42 rather than the latest model (1:38). Using the latest model, current affiliation data and based upon current supply, there is deemed to be a need for four full-sized 3G FTPs.

All of the 3G FTPs listed above are available for community use and the ones at Swanmore College and Henry Beaufort School are on the FA Register (meaning that they are quality checked and can be used for football match play). It is strongly recommended that the remainder are assessed and placed on the register to enable more match play on 3G.

The geographic spread of existing facilities is uneven; with a clear provision gap to the north of the City Centre. A major issue facing the Authority as a whole when selecting sites for investment is planning restrictions due to a significant proportion of the Authority being located in the South Downs National Park. Any future sites will need to be located outside the National Park boundary”.

WRA Comment

The WLFFP states that its calculations have increased the need estimate for 3G full size pitches in Winchester District from 3 in the WPPS to 4. That in fact is not true: the WPPS states (p24) *“Taking into account future demand, the shortfall of full size 3G pitches increases to four.”* So the WPPS has been based on identifying the need in the District as a whole as needing 4 new 3G full size football turf pitches. The WLFFP states that the alleged difference in pitch need numbers arises from the use of an updated FA model: despite trying to locate a FA model surprisingly it could not be found (which is not say one doesn't exist). So it is possible that the reference should have been to Sport England that does have a playing pitch calculator, and which was used to calculate future demand in the WPPP (page 22). Regardless, the fact is that the WPPS does call for 4 new 3G full size football turf pitches so the WLFFP assertion that the demand has increased is not the case. It is important to remember also that a LFFP is not to be used *“as a replacement for a playing pitch strategy (PPS)* and so the Parish Council should take greater note of the WPPS than the WLFFP.

In terms of meeting the need for the four 3G pitches, the WLFFP outlines that it has identified 2 sites for investment in the Winchester North Area: Winchester City FC and Kings School. These score 75% on the scoring scale for deliverability and outcomes. A third site identified for a 3G pitch is the Mill Lane Site. That scores only 50% in terms of its deliverability and outcomes. Shedfield Recreation ground is identified for improvement in its three grass football pitches and refurbishment of the pavilion. These also score 50% on the deliverability and outcome scale.

Concern has been expressed by Wickham residents about the effect the sports facilities may have on dark skies, which are deemed important to the South Downs National Park. Indeed, the quotation from the WLFFP above makes mention of this issue. The MLS is outside the

boundary of the national park but immediately adjacent to it. In their consultee comment the National Park stated: *“External lighting should be sensitive to the setting of the International Dark Night Skies Reserve and harmful light spill and sky glow minimised. Where possible the external lighting plan should incorporate low level bollards rather than tall street lights, timed proximity sensors rather than bright security or flood lighting. Any street lighting that is not to be adopted must conform to a similar night dimming scheme as that of adopted street lighting; this is particularly important with lighting in areas or on the edge of urban settlements. **Any playground areas, or areas of open space, including the proposed recreation ground and adult grass pitches, should avoid floodlighting.**”* (Consultee comment to planning application 17/02615/FUL, May 5th, 2018). It is understood that modern floodlighting of sports pitches today is highly directional to avoid nuisance to neighbours but that was known in 2018 – and still the National Park warns against it.

P 4 and 10 The MLS “football hub”

Regarding the Mill Lane site (or “hub”) the WLFFP states the following:

“As part of a housing development in the village of Wickham (120 additional dwellings), a new sports hub is being developed which will comprise of a grass stadia (note: plural “stadia”) pitch plus a full sized training 3G facility. The grass pitch will accommodate Infinity FC and allow the Club to meet the standards of the Wessex League as well as accommodating training demand from local clubs.

Due to the site's proximity to Fareham it will also provide opportunities for clubs in that authority too. It is anticipated that the pitch will be in situ by the start of the 2021/22 season.”

On page 10 of the DNA the statement *“The Mill Lane Football Hub is identified in the (WLFFP) Plan to address shortfalls in provision.”* is underlined for emphasis

WRA Comment

Inasmuch as it is proposed to install two full size football pitches on the site, it fails to meet the standard expected of a “hub” – which is for 3 full size pitches. One of which should be 3G. The Feasibility Study conducted for the Parish Council and published in April 2019, states the site has a capacity *“... for one adult sized football pitch with the necessary infrastructure including fencing, spectator stands, floodlights, changing rooms and parking plus a floodlit all weather pitch maximum size to be determined”*. Not only will the site not deliver the number of pitches required for a football “hub”, but the two planned pitches will leave little or no room for sports activities by the local community. And as Infinity FC is not a local team or even based within Winchester District, it can be safely concluded that the beneficiaries of the site would not be local people. Even local football team, Wickham Dynamos have stated (see page 23) that they cannot afford fees for training on a 3G pitch so even they will not benefit. And a 3G pitch is not suitable for sports other than football and rugby – so, no tennis (and its variants), hockey or netball could be played on it.

It is already clear from the description of what is proposed (a Wessex league stadia) that the grass pitch will not be available for use by genuine local clubs because demand will be taken up by Infinity FC. If it is useable by local clubs, it will only be at the convenience of Infinity FC. This would be a serious blow to the aspirations of genuinely local clubs: Wickham will

have become home to a Club that has no local connection whatsoever. So the investment in the MLS that is intended for the benefit of local people will have been showered on people with no local connection whatsoever. No wonder residents are united in their opposition. Indeed it is ironic that on page 1 of the WLFFP it states that *“more (money) is needed if football and Government’s shared objectives for participation, individual well-being and community cohesion are to be achieved”*. What is absolutely clear, the overwhelming opposition of Wickham residents to the WLFFP plan for the MLS has done exactly what it hopes to achieve: overwhelming community cohesion – but in direct opposition to the proposed scheme! In that respect to proposal has already spectacularly failed.

The inclusion of the MLS as a priority site for a 3G pitch and a football hub is called further into question by the fact that the WLFFP ignores completely the WPPS plan to install 2 3G football turf pitches at North Whiteley. By adding the MLS to the mix would mean that instead of adding 4 new 3G full size pitches, the District will be adding 5, 3 of which will be in the Winchester South Area. There is no logic whatsoever in this inasmuch as the WPPS and the WLFFP both state that the *“clear provision gap”* is in the North of the District and the WPPS says that *“there is no shortfall”* in the South

It is interesting to note that the Football Foundation cites in its *“Guide to Developing Third Generation Football Turf Pitches”* (it is a pdf file that can be found via a simple Google search) states (page 1) that there are certain key requirements when considering a site for a new 3G pitch. The first requirement determining project viability is to ask: *“Does your site have good access and sufficient car parking?”* Two further questions are posed: *“Does your site have suitable changing and welfare facilities? Does your site have enough potential users?”* The answers to the first of these questions is: DEFINITELY NOT”. Mill Lane is narrow, totally unsuitable for heavy traffic and totally unsuitable for coach traffic such as would be associated with visiting team buses and travelling spectators. The answer to the second question clearly depends on what is put on the site. And to the third the answer is *“unlikely”*. Inasmuch as the WPPS states that there will be no shortage of 3G full size pitches in the Winchester South Area in 2031, introducing an additional, third one at the MLS will make the financial viability of the three that much more risky. And as Wickham is a small village with no immediate local demand, and badly constrained access, it is probable that as soon as the two North Whiteley pitches (not to mention the one planned for Welborne: see below analysis of Fareham Borough Playing Pitch Strategy) will obviously be the one to lose out.

The viability of a 3G pitch on the MLS that is utilised by one main user, Infinity FC, becomes even more questionable when one considers the target use that the Football Foundation *“Guide...”* states (page 1) that a 3G full size football turf pitch should have: *“A Foundation pitch is expected to be available for use seven days a week for at least 85 hours a week and you will be challenged to fill a high percentage of that time”*. And the WLFFP states (page 4) *“A full-sized 3G caters for an average of 1,200 participants per week”*. On the basis that Infinity FC cannot fill all that time and does not have that number of members and Wickham Dynamos say that they cannot afford the hire fees for a 3G - how is it expected that pitch usage at the MLS will satisfy those targets? According to the *“Guide....”* (page 3) a 3G pitch requires match funding (from where?) and (page 6) annual maintenance costs in the fifth year and beyond of £48 – £50K. There is a clear risk that a 3G pitch may well become a

burden too great for the Parish to sustain if, as expected, the facilities proposed do not reach viable usage levels.

P6 and 8 Shedfield Recreation Ground

The WLFFP states that there are three grass football pitches at this site and the plan for them is to be improved in quality and the pavilion refurbished

WRA Comment

The Shedfield Recreation Ground is less than a mile from the MLS (indeed on the maps included in the WLFFP the two locations are so close that they overlap each other, which makes one wonder how the authors did not note this fact and consider its implications). Both are in an area not requiring the provision of more grass pitches so the proposed MLS hub may take business away from Shedfield – which makes no sense as that site is already up and running, will need less investment than would be needed on the MLS, is not a controversial location and would be better placed to act as a hub. Additionally, the Shedfield site meets the size criteria for a hub that are laid out in the WLFFP (3 full size pitches including a 3G) – whereas the MLS does not. And it also meets the key pre-requisite of the Football Foundation for a 3G football turf pitch – good (and safe) access.

Shedfield of course is in a different civil Parish from Wickham and so it is not intended by making these remarks to presume that Wickham residents should have any role to play in determining the future of the sports pitches there, but if the Football Foundation is considering a site that does not meet its requirements for a hub it is surprising that they have not considered approaching Shedfield.

On page 8 of the WLFFP, the MLS comes sixth in the table of WLFFP deliverable priorities and Shedfield Recreation Ground eighth. They are therefore lower priority (there are 9 priority sites in all) relative to other parts of the Winchester District. In terms of “value” to the Football Foundation strategy they are not considered highly, presumably because the demand for the facilities they provide in the Winchester South Area are already catered for in the WPPS.

P9 Consultation Sources

Here are listed 11 organisations the Football Foundation consulted in creating its Plan. These comprise seven football clubs (none from Wickham, nor Infinity FC, which of course is not an Winchester District Club), two schools, Winchester City Council and “South Wickham Parish Council”.

WRA Comment

How was it that the Football Foundation in its WLFFP came to consider the MLS as a potential “football hub” when the WPPS states that the critical need for 3G pitches in the District is in the North not the South; that in the South the WPPS states that by 2031 there will be “no shortage” of 3G pitches? In addition, the MLS site does not even meet the criteria it has itself established for a “football hub”?

To cast some light on this the WLFFP states that to create the report, the Football Foundation consulted eleven individuals from eleven organisations. One of those eleven

was from “South Wickham” Parish Council - we assume that the prefix “South” is in error - the only parish council to have been consulted. Did the Football Foundation approach WPC or was it the other way round? Inasmuch as the result (a football hub at the MLS) was not signalled in any way by the WPPS it seems strange that a site not meeting the criteria for a football hub has found its way into the WLFFP at 3G full size priority number 4. WRA suggests that a clear explanation from those involved should be provided to the residents of Wickham and if one is not forthcoming the rumours and unfortunate suspicions will simply be encouraged.

On the face of it, without evidence available to the contrary, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the concept of the “hub” development at the MLS must have come from the Parish Council. Perhaps it was even presented to the Football Foundation as a “done deal” as it is not even regarded in the WLFFP plan as “speculative” but a priority site.

All this has happened in the absence of any consultation with genuine key stakeholders – local residents. Perhaps the role of Infinity FC in the panel selecting Fieldform is indicative that there was an understanding (which the Club did not disguise) that they would be the adult football beneficiaries of the “hub”. Indeed, the MLS description in the WLFFP states that “*The grass pitch will accommodate Infinity FC...*”: who said so? It gives the impression of being an already agreed arrangement, which gives rise to further suspicion that the DNA has been prepared on the basis that a deal involving Infinity FC has been done. It must be stressed again that Infinity FC is not a local Club and Wickham residents have made abundantly clear that they do not wish to see them occupy a Wessex League “stadia” on the MLS.

It is perhaps revealing, also, that no other Parish Councils were consulted in the creation of the WLFFP – only Wickham. Wickham Dynamos, the genuine local club, it seems were not among the football clubs consulted.

It is extraordinary that the authors of the WPPS and the WLFFP are one and the same: in the WPPS they stated, as we have seen, that in the Winchester South Area (that includes Wickham) there is over capacity of adult football pitches and no demand for a 3G full size pitch. Yet the WLFFP states both will be located on the MLS: how and why do these two contradictory positions translate into a “hub” plan for which there is absolutely no local support (indeed exactly the opposite) and according to the WPPS no strategic justification. Why have local residents not been informed of the existence of such a controversial plan from the outset and the WLFFP as regards the MLS been allowed to come into being with no consideration of the local community?

It is appreciated that as a result of local concern and the evidence of the WRA Survey the Parish Council has now said that the commitment of the facilities and to Infinity FC has not been agreed but the genesis of this situation leaves open unanswered questions.

There is also no discussion in the WLFFP of accessibility of transport, highways considerations, pedestrian access, environmental matters, reference to the adjacent South Downs National Park and concerns of light pollution or public consultation. These should be major elements of consideration and consultation, for example with Hampshire Highways,

as the Master Plan is being developed. This requirement is significant because public concern over traffic impacts in that area of the village led the Chair of the Winchester Planning Committee, when reviewing a recent planning application adjacent to Mill Lane, to state that “*an inordinate number of objections*” regarding traffic and parking had been received. That being so, any continued development of plans for the MLS should include traffic assessments that can be passed to Hampshire Highways for comment before they are taken further forward.

WRA Conclusions re the WLFFP

- I. There is no difference between the future demand calculation for 3G pitches in the Winchester South Area between the WLFFP and WPPS despite the claim otherwise
- II. The WLFFP does not acknowledge that the WPPS states there is no shortage of 3G pitches in the Winchester South Area
- III. The MLS location does not meet the requirements of a Football Foundation hub or meet the definition of the WPPS strategic location
- IV. The “hub” plan seems to have been fabricated from a plan to accommodate Infinity FC, not answer the needs identified in the WPPS or the WRA Survey for the local community
- V. The WPPS states that there is excess full size grass football pitch capacity in Winchester so there is no justification for a Wessex League standard grass pitch at the MLS (and there are no Wessex League teams in the Winchester District)
- VI. There are better alternative sites available in the Winchester South Area if a hub is deemed by the WPPS to be required
- VII. A “hub” would crowd out other sports and recreation activities for genuinely local people and the community as a whole
- VIII. There is no local support for the WLFFP proposals
- IX. There is considerable local concern over the manner by which the MLS found its way in to WLFFP
- X. A 3G pitch at the MLS could only be used for football/football training and so the number of activities proposed by residents in the WRA Survey for use of a multi-purpose pitch would not be realisable.

9. Fareham Borough Playing Pitch Strategy 2020-2036 (September 2020) (FBPPS)

Author: WYG Environment Planning Transport Ltd

https://www.fareham.gov.uk/PDF/planning/publicationplan/PPS_combined_docSept2020-FINAL.pdf

In this analysis the Fareham wards adjacent to Wickham are Fareham North and Fareham East. But the analysis lumps these together with three other wards: Fareham North West, South and South West and so it is not easy to relate identified needs in those wards abutting Wickham. The planned Welborne development will be located in Fareham North and part of East.

The FBPPS (page 11) states that there are no adult or mini football pitch shortages in the Fareham Wards. By the end of the period, however, it is considered that there will be a shortage of junior pitch provision. The over-capacity in adult pitches is sufficient to cater for junior pitch shortfalls.

For football in the Fareham Wards the FBPPS identifies Cams Alders Sports Ground as suitable for the desired 3G pitch (table 2.6, p.35) so it would seem there is no need to lean on any facility that may exist in Wickham to satisfy 3G need.

This conclusion is supported by the following statement in an update to the FBPPS (p 40):

“A review by the Football Association and the Football Foundation indicates that the picture presented in the assessment report continues to be representative of the picture for football in across Fareham Borough.”

As for new housing developments in Fareham up to 2036, the report (p 60, 3.11.12) suggests that there is a need for 1-2 grass football pitches, 4 youth pitches and 3 mini pitches. The report goes on to conclude (p60, 3.11.13):

“Analysis demonstrates that demand for adult football and bowling can be met by the existing infrastructure (although contributions towards qualitative improvements to ensure that provision can sustain the increased demand will be required) whilst new facilities will be required to meet all other needs.”

This again suggests that there is no need for Fareham residents to resort to facilities in Wickham for their future football needs. The report goes on (p 63) to list the sites available to Fareham Borough to target additional football provision where needed. Ten sites are listed: Wickham is not among them. It is noted that a 3G pitch is planned for installation in Welborne (p64, 4.3.3). The report goes on to say (4.3.6) that *“...there are numerous other potential locations for 3G pitches (in the Borough)”*. And, also in respect of future population growth, the report states (4.3.8) that some sites might be developed as “strategic hubs”: crucially, however, the report does not say that one of these might be or is planned to be in Wickham. Clearly the FBPPS does not think a hub in Wickham is necessary in order to meet Fareham residents’ needs.

Appendix A to the FBPPS is an earlier version dated March 25th, 2019. This was conducted by a different organisation, 4Global. It would appear that the September 2020 WYG report is an update to it. Nevertheless, this report contains some key elements relevant to the MLS.

On page 31, clause 3.4.6 it states:

“Table 3.7 shows that displaced demand is principally taking place at central venues in Southampton and Eastleigh. This is due to a requirement of league entry that all games take place at the ‘central venue’ and is not due to a lack of available pitches at these times. There is little prospect of this situation changing in the near future and therefore little need for these teams to be accommodated within the Fareham supply of pitches.”

The same must also, therefore, be true of any other site outside Fareham that is not a “central venue” – and it is unlikely that any of the nearby major urban areas with district football leagues will want to make the Wickham MLS a central venue.

In terms of the Fareham Wards (those most adjacent to Wickham) an analysis of football pitch demand by 2036 shows a deficit of pitches if all matches were to be played at the same time. To play matches all at the same time might be desirable to avoid overplaying pitches but it is not practical and the increase in 3G pitches would avoid any overplaying problems that might arise. The report predicts that there will be a need for an additional 4.5 new 3G full size pitches by 2036 (page 40, 3.2.3) and identifies 5 sites as options to provide them. In its final recommendations, however, the FBPPS (P63) identifies 10 sites within the Borough that should be targeted to provide the additional 3G pitches. There is no mention of a need to find and use 3G or grass football pitches outside the Borough.

10. Mill Lane Need Assessment. November 2021 (DNA)

Authors: Fieldform

<https://1drv.ms/b/s!AsyGaOJSJcsMj6UErZqttA0jokqM7Q?e=5C5TET>

P 2; 1.5

Aims:

“To identify the need for new and improved sporting facilities in Wickham within strategic documents for community sport and leisure facility provision (including Winchester District and Fareham Borough sports and playing pitch strategies);

To understand the needs of a local community sports clubs and organisations so that these can be addressed within the development proposals.

The Parish Council recognises that the new leisure facilities should be based on need and complement other local facilities.”

WRA Comment

There is no mention of the need to consider Fareham playing pitch strategies in the s106 conditions for the MLS so why has this been included in the brief and the DNA – especially as the FBPPS shows that there is no need to look to Wickham for extra capacity?

These statements make clear that the needs of local clubs and needs - not *non*-local needs - should be addressed

P3, 1.6, Table, Rows “Section” 3 & 4

Initial stakeholder engagement

These two rows in the table refer to analysis of identified needs and consultation with key stakeholders, in order to highlight gaps in provision and opportunities for development. Key stakeholders are listed as including council officers, Sport England, National Governing Bodies of sport (NGBs) and local sports clubs.

WRA Comment

It is obviously important to consider Sport England, governing bodies and local clubs as key stakeholders. But it is extraordinary that in compiling the DNA the most important stakeholders of all, Wickham residents, are not even counted among the “key stakeholder” group. It is pleasing to see that three genuinely local sports clubs have been consulted and are rightly regarded as key stakeholders. In addition to local residents, WRA contends that

consultation with other key stakeholders should have been included: the local surgery (for their goal of improving the health and fitness of all local people young and old, firm and infirm and not just those who want to play football), the local primary school as high potential users of the MLS, local Wickham sports clubs using the Community Centre. Fortunately, WRA has stepped into the breach as far as the views of the main stakeholders, residents, are concerned. However, it is clear that the DNA does not take into account the desires of the main key stakeholders

It needs to be emphasised that NON-LOCAL sports clubs such as Infinity FC should not be considered to be *key* stakeholders so any consultation with them should be advisory only and considered of peripheral or no interest in the development of the DNA and eventual Master Plan for the MLS.

P4, Mill Lane Responses 1.13

In this section are recounted data from the limited WPC/Fieldform consultation as to what residents would like to see on the MLS. The statement is made that: *“The findings from this wider stakeholder engagement, including the results of the online questionnaire were used to inform the need assessment for proposed facility development recommendations. The process provided no obvious desire to develop alternative facilities that do not appear in this need assessment report.”*

WRA Comment

The data presented here are not based on the WRA Survey that provides quantitatively superior assessment of residents’ views compared with the consultation conducted by the WPC/Fieldform.

The WRA Survey results quoted do not confirm the findings of the DNA. It is impossible to translate the results quoted as supporting a football hub on the MLS. They do not validate the use of the MLS for a Wessex League standard football pitch or its use by Infinity FC. They do not validate the use of the site as a football hub.

This section should be rewritten in order to demonstrate the low response rate (108 -110 respondents) to the Fieldform/WPC survey. This represents only approximately 4% of Wickham’s population (compared with the WRA Survey that delivered responses from 25% of the population) and the text should also make clear that there was no guarantee that the responses to the Fieldform/WPC consultation came from bona fide Wickham residents or offered any breakdown as to age-group.

In summary, it seems likely that the Fieldform DNA was probably written before the WRA Survey was delivered and so does not take serious account of it.

P5, 1.22

This section refers to the work of the WRA Survey and states: *“The findings from this wider stakeholder engagement by WRA provided no obvious desire to develop alternative facilities that do not appear in this need assessment report”*

WRA Comment

These are exactly the same words as used in the final sentence of the summary to the Fieldform/WPC consultation. It looks like a convenient and ill-disguised copy and paste “job”. And in detail, the conclusion is invalid.

The WRA Survey demonstrates areas of difference that are developed in the remainder of this paper culminating in a set of recommendations that differ from those proposed as priorities in the DNA. To dismiss the findings by WRA as being fundamentally similar to those asserted in the DNA seems to suggest that the authors have not really taken much notice of the findings of the WRA Survey. WRA is clearly in agreement with the Chair of the Recreation Committee, however, who has stated that Wickham residents do not want a Wessex League football facility at the MLS.

P8, Table 1

This table illustrates what shortages have been identified by Local Authority (LA) Playing Pitch Strategies (PPSs) in Winchester South and Fareham Sub-Areas for different outdoor pitches. Winchester South includes Wickham. Fareham Sub-Areas are in a different LA area and include 3 wards (East, South and West) not adjacent to Wickham. The table shows that in Winchester as a whole there will be a shortage of 4 full size 3G pitches by 2031 and in Fareham a shortage of 6 3G pitches. The table states that in Winchester South Area there will be a shortage of 2 3G full size pitches.

WRA Comment

The “facts” set out in this table are misleading. What they provide is a translation from Table 1.1 (p 14) and the left-hand column of Table 1.2 (p 15) of the WPPS, but they ignore the content of the right-hand column of Table 1.2. Table 1.2 (see Appendix 2 below) of the WPPS is headed “Likely impact of future pitch provision”. The left-hand column of Table 1.2 states that **if nothing else changes** there will be a shortage of 2 3G full size pitches in Winchester South Area in 2031. The DNA chooses to present that as justification for a 3G full size pitch at the MLS. But the right-hand column of Table 1.2 of the WPPS states that **new provision** to be installed between now and 2031 will result in there being no shortfall in Winchester South Area. Page 14 of the WPPS states that 2 new 3G full size pitches will be installed in North Whiteley thus eliminating any shortfall.

It is not known why Fieldform have chosen to ignore this important piece of evidence. At no point in the WPPS is it stated that a third 3G full size pitch will be needed in Winchester South Area, in Wickham or anywhere else. On the assumption that the WPPS projection is right, a business case for a full size 3G in Wickham will be difficult to make. One obvious possible reason for this partial reporting is to make a case for a pitch on the MLS that suits the needs of Infinity FC. WRA hopes that this is not a valid interpretation, but, regardless, the WPPS makes clear that for the inhabitants of the Wickham South Area a 3G full size pitch is not required on the MLS.

Table 1 of the DNA also shows the need for football pitches in Fareham Borough. It states that by 2036 the borough will have a shortfall of 2 3G full size pitches. The FBPPS (pages 40 and 41), however, states that the draft Fareham Local Football Facilities Plan claims the shortfall is higher, at 4.5 3G full size pitches. So it seems that the DNA may be

underestimating the need. On the other hand, the DNA should (but doesn't) go on to state that the FBPPS names five potential sites within the borough that have been identified to eliminate the shortfall. The FBPPS goes on to state (p60) that "Analysis demonstrates that demand for adult football....can be met by the existing infrastructure". On page 63 the FBPPS states that additional capacity to the football infrastructure can be delivered by 4-5 new adult pitches plus a further pitch to meet future demand by focusing on no fewer than 10 sites within the borough. One of these is Welborne, where a 3G full size adult pitch is planned. At no point in the FBPPS is there mention of a need to access 3G full size or adult grass football pitches outside the borough. In conclusion the FBPPS states (p64, 4.3.6) "there are numerous other potential locations for 3G pitches" and on the same page it states (4.3.8) that these locations should be explored as potential hub sites. It is quite clear that Fareham will be self-sufficient and needs no help from a 3G full size pitch in Wickham.

In summary, then, regarding the future demand that the DNA promotes for a 3G full size pitch on the MLS:

- **In Winchester the deficiency in 3G pitches is in the North of the District**
- **There is not a forecast deficit of 3G full size pitches in the South of the District**
- **There is a forecast shortfall of 3G full size pitches in Fareham**
- **The Fareham Playing Pitch Strategy identifies no less than 10 different sites within the borough targeted to meet their 3G pitch shortfall.**
- **There is no mention of any need for Fareham to outsource 3G requirement to Wickham or anywhere else.**
- **Only the needs of Winchester South need be considered for the purposes of "need" that might be satisfied by the MLS.**
- **There is shortage only of junior pitches in Winchester South**

In conclusion, then, the case for a 3G full size pitch on the MLS and locating a Wessex League football facility at the MLS is contradicted by the evidence of need.

P8, Table 1 (continued)

Shortages of **grass** football pitches are summarised from the WPPS and the FBPPS.

WRA Comment

There is no forecast shortage of adult or mini grass pitches. There is a shortage of junior pitches but as analysis of the WPPS shows this could be made up by re-configuration of the adult grass pitches.

P10, 2.16

This is the point in the DNA where the first reference to a football hub at the MLS appears: "The Mill Lane Football Hub is identified in the Plan to address shortfalls in provision". "The Plan" in this case is the WLFFP not the WPPS.

WRA Comment

The WPPS (pages 14 and 15; table 1.2) identifies that in 2031 in Winchester South there is estimated to be a shortage of junior grass pitches which might be appropriate for MLS but there is over capacity of adult sized grass football pitches. There is no anticipated shortage of 3G pitches.

As there is no shortage in the Winchester South Area of adult grass football pitches either now or in the future the only grass provision at Mill Lane should be for juniors unless it is decided that the local football club, Wickham Dynamos, moves from the Recreation Ground to Mill Lane. If a 3G football turf pitch were to be installed at the MLS it would be at a cost of around £500,000 and that would likely prove too expensive for the Dynamos to hire (they have stated that in the DNA consultation with them). Thus it is unrealistic to imagine that a 3G football turf pitch could be installed unless it was to be available for use by other clubs who could afford the hire fees. But such clubs would not be local.

Examination of the WPPS demonstrates that throughout the LA that in 2031 there is expected to be an over capacity of adult grass football pitch sessions. The future provision of 10 new adult sized pitches in the North Whiteley development will take excess adult grass pitch provision to 21.5 sessions by 2031 (source: WPPS). It is clear that this is a better location for a football hub and obviates the need for additional grass adult pitches in Wickham. The WPPS also states that by 2031 a shortage of 2 full size 3G pitches will have been made up by planned developments in the area, so that by 2031 there will no such shortage. In addition, it is obvious that the solution to shortfalls is to re-purpose the LA's spare full sized pitch capacity first, and deliver new capacity as planned and stated in the WPPS in, for example, North Whiteley. Thus it is clear that the only football needs, if any, that should be contemplated for the MLS should be junior grass pitches.

These conclusions are supported by the following quote from the WPPS (page 5):

“Given that there is substantial future spare capacity on adult pitches, there is scope to reconfigure these to better suit the needs of the Winchester District. If pitch configuration takes place moving forward, it is likely that this will result in shortfalls being mainly alleviated. As previously stated, remaining 3G shortfalls are not the responsibility of WCC to address.” (Note: the WPPS states that this is the responsibility of FA and the Football Federation).

Further, the WPPS makes clear that the Winchester South Area is not one of the areas of Winchester LA that is poorly provided for in terms of football pitches (page 5). None of the key reference documents (WPPS, FBPPS and WLFFP) support the need for a Wickham Football Hub. In short, and to be blunt, it would appear that the concept has been developed as a result of Wickham Parish Council putting the idea to the Football Foundation who are keen to pursue any opportunity offered without necessarily considering the wider issues surrounding such a development.

These conclusions are in fact supported by the summary on page 9, Table 2 of the DNA. This makes clear that the problem of pitch capacity in Winchester is in the North Area, not the South, and that Fareham have plans and sites sufficient to meet their future needs.

P12 Summary 2.24

“From this section, we can see that there are shortfalls in current and future provision of 3G AGPs and grass football pitches for juniors in Winchester district and Fareham borough. A detailed assessment of AGPs and grass football pitches was produced through the council's PPS' and LFFP, and the Mill Lane site is recommended as a new

Football Hub site to address shortfalls in provision of AGPs and grass football pitches.”

WRA Comment

As stated, this applies to the North Area of Winchester, not the South. And does not apply to Fareham at all. In neither the WPPS or the WLFFP is there an analysis of current provision and future need that leads to a “recommendation” that there be a football hub at the MLS: it can only be assumed that it has become part of plans because the site was actively put forward by the Parish Council and accepted by the WLFFP without consideration of local (or wider) need. The site is not **recommended** by anyone.

It has already been demonstrated that the only shortage requiring attention in the Winchester South Area is for junior play and the forecast for adult 3G pitches is that there is no shortage. Wickham is not foreseen in the WPPS to be a target for a hub or for 3G. So the summary in the DNA is invalid.

Section 3: Data Analysis P 13, 3.1

“The strategy review in the previous section has highlighted shortfalls in provision which could be addressed in Wickham such as a 3G AGP and grass football pitches for juniors.”

WRA Comment

The point here is that the document says “could” - not “should” or “must” be provided. In that respect the statement is true but not decisive. As pointed out above the need in Winchester South Area is not a priority in the WPPS and nor is it in the FBPPS. So, the option remains “could” (i.e. a possibility but not an imperative) and so the future of the MLS should be assumed to be more open than the proposed Football Hub. The WPPS (p 70) states that Shedfield has “*Three standard quality adult football pitches with capacity available in the peak*”. It would seem, therefore, that to create further grass adult football pitches in Wickham just a 3-minute journey away would reduce usage at Shedfield even further.

The WPPS view on 3G has been stated already: there is no predicted shortage of 3G in Winchester South (see Page 15 Table 1.2 of the WPPS). That being the official case, investing in a 3G adult football pitch for local club use at the MLS would seem to be a very risky business strategy. And as the only likely user of such a pitch (Infinity FC) is not a Club from within the Winchester South Area or even the whole of the Winchester District, it is unreasonable to expect major investment on the MLS to be made only to benefit an organisation from outside the area. Investment that will be made should be directly to benefit the people for whom the MLS has been created.

Section 3: Data Analysis P15, 3.1.2

The point is made that activity levels in rural populations generally (not necessarily applicable to Wickham but indicative) have decreased in recent years. The report states:

“This highlights the need to provide provision for informal and recreational activities in Wickham, particularly to target the high levels of inactivity identified in rural areas over recent years and in Fareham district”

WRA Comment

This statement does not necessarily apply to Wickham. But if the assumption is made that it does, then the WRA Survey of what residents would like to see on the site should be the first port of call. All the answers are there. As to Fareham, if the right facilities were provided for Wickham residents it is possible that Fareham residents would come out to our rural location to use the facilities. But it must be stressed, these uses are certainly not adult football.

Section 3: Data Analysis P 17, Summary 3.21

“The supply of and demand for relevant sport facilities within a 10-minute drive time of Wickham has been summarised in this section. Desktop research and consultation with facility managers has highlighted that the two 3G AGPs in the catchment area are operating at full capacity.”

WRA Comment

The claim made here cannot be substantiated as there is no reference material provided and it ignores provision planned elsewhere in the Winchester South Area. The statement is at odds with the WPPS which states (p15): “No identified shortfall”. It continues:

“Furthermore, the requirement for 3G pitches is significantly reduced, with shortfalls in the South Analysis Area alleviated entirely. That being said, this is based on the surface type of the AGPs created both being 3G, whereas, at present, the surface types are unspecified (although 3G is recommended given the lack of hockey demand in the locality of North Whiteley).”

The plans for North Whiteley include two 3G pitches. The site is 4.5 miles from Wickham, about 9-10 minutes by car (the distance and time used in the DNA to determine reasonable travel time to a sports location). So, the provision of 3G pitches is covered by plans elsewhere in the area. The absolute need for a 3G pitch on the MLS is thus redundant – unless local residents see a need and demand for such a facility. It must be stressed, again, that nowhere in the WPPS does it suggest that a 3G pitch is needed in Wickham – so an additional one there would be surplus to requirements. Not a good position to be in when building a business case for such an investment. (See also earlier discussion on pages 7 and 10, 11)

Section 4: Initial Stakeholder Engagement P19 4.4

The Need Assessment gives a list of “key” stakeholders.

WRA Comment

WRA provided responses to what local people want to see on the MLS from 25% of the population of the village. Yet WRA (or even residents generally) was not one of the stakeholders. Indeed, no local representative body was consulted. This was an inadvertent omission at best and politically and democratically wrong at worst. Amazingly, the list contains 4 sports clubs from outside the village and only 3 with village connections.

Section 4: Initial Stakeholder Engagement P20 4.5

“Local Authority officers were consulted and confirmed that the latest playing pitch and sports facility strategy work carried out by Winchester City Council (2017 and 2018), Fareham Borough Council (2020) and Winchester’s LFFP (2020) reflect the current need for new sports facilities in Wickham and the surrounding areas.”

WRA Comment

That being the case it is difficult to see how the conclusion has been drawn that there should be a Football Hub in Wickham. None of the official PPSs state the need. Only the WLFFP includes it: and that is not supported anywhere in the PPSs. The reason there is a plan for new sports and recreation facilities in Wickham arises from approval of two new housing developments, one of which included a lease to the Parish Council of the Mill Lane site for the benefit of village residents. The “hub” concept arose for some reason unknown, but it was never part of the WPPSs. As a result its validity in the WLFFP and the DNA is open to question. It unfortunately looks as if it is a project borne not out of consideration of local need but something else altogether that has not been disclosed.

To allay suspicions that inevitably arise from this situation it would be helpful to have access to exchanges that have taken place between Wickham Parish Council and the authors of the WLFFP in order to see how the idea of a hub on the MLS arose and was pursued.

Section 4: Initial Stakeholder Engagement P20 4.6

“The 3G AGPs planned for Cams Alders Sports Ground and Fareham Leisure Centre (both in Fareham) would help to meet demand from Fareham borough. Even with these planned developments, Hampshire FA would support the need for a new 3G AGP at Mill Lane as there is high demand for 3G pitch space in the areas of Wickham, Winchester and Fareham borough”.

WRA Comment

This statement might be plausible – except for the fact that it is not supported by either of the PPSs. The WPPS states that a 3G pitch in the Winchester South Area is not required. The FBPPS makes no mention of such a requirement and that required provision can be made within the borough. The statement ignores the planned provision of three 3G pitches in North Whiteley and Welborne. It is understandable that the FA supports football hubs it is anxious to create them all over the country – but any plan should be subject to genuine need and local conditions such as associated infrastructure. As pointed out elsewhere, Hampshire FA would be better advised to seek to create a hub, if it is keen to do so, in Shedfield (fulfils the 3 or more pitches criterion and access) or in North Whiteley.

Section 4: Initial Stakeholder Engagement P20 4.8

Consultation response from local football club Wickham Dynamos

WRA Comment

Wickham Dynamos and local residents would like a better surface on which to play (ideally 3G) but would find such a facility too expensive to hire (whether provided in Wickham or elsewhere). Perhaps when the new 3G pitches planned within a 10-minute radius of the village they will be able to afford the hire charges.

Section 4: Initial Stakeholder Engagement P20 4.9 - 4.17

Consultation responses from Infinity FC, Whiteley Wanderers and Waltham Wolves.

WRA Comment

From the information given it is clear that Infinity are ambitious and are keen to find a venue capable of supporting their ambitions. The ambitions they express would potentially see the MLS dominated by supplying a Wessex League grade pitch and stadium. The response of residents of Wickham to this idea has been overwhelming. The details are to be found in the WRA Survey report. It is not a welcome proposal, the Club has no local connections and the reason it has been unable to find a site in Southampton or its surrounding area should be a matter for them to solve in the locality from which they come. The fact that Infinity was consulted at all in the MLS project is cause for some concern: there seems no reason at all why they should have been.

Whiteley Wolves would only have a use for a 3G pitch at Wickham until 2025/6 when new facilities at North Whiteley are due to become available – not a long-term business opportunity for the MLS.

Waltham Wolves are a vibrant and growing youth football Club. They play at numerous venues and according to the DNA are concerned mostly about availability of grass pitches for junior matches. They use the Swanmore College 3G pitch and would like more access to 3G. This can be fulfilled as stated in the WPPS by the addition of the 3G pitches at North Whiteley and there is no mandate for a 3G at the MLS.

Section 4: initial Stakeholder Engagement: Other sports included in the Need Assessment

P 22 Tennis

There is clear opportunity and desire for expansion of facilities and improvement of off-court assets for the Wickham Community Tennis Club. WRA has demonstrated in its survey that there is resident support for inclusion of tennis and variations of tennis at the MLS, especially utilising different court markings for the variations for junior use.

P 23 Netball

The DNA indicates that netball teams in Fareham need additional court venues and England Netball would support a court(s) at the MLS. Although netball did not feature very highly in the preferences proposed by residents in the WRA survey, there is clear support for multi sports to be included on the site and this could include accommodation of netball. There is significant potential for Wickham residents to participate in a sport that is currently not played in the village, but which would be of particular attraction to young girls, an important demographic segment to serve.

P 23 Cricket

The DNA concludes that there is no logical demand for additional cricket facilities in Wickham. Wickham CC are content with their current ground arrangements but it is not clear from the DNA whether they have adequate practice facilities at the ground. The DNA states that there is no planned provision for cricket in the village for junior play and that

there is no non-turf wicket provision adequate for competitive play in the area. It is a pity that there are no opportunities in Wickham for schoolboys and girls to play cricket and Wickham CC does not feel able to foster cricket among young people, but it is acknowledged that finding qualified coaches is not easy.

It is a bit surprising to read in the DNA that despite Hampshire Cricket Board to be reportedly keen to support the development of cricket facilities in Wickham...

“.....Elsewhere in the county, non-turf wickets provide an opportunity to develop junior cricket by offering coaching sessions to pupils of local schools and formalising a player pathway between the school and the club to create new junior teams. There are potential benefits of a non-turf wicket and practice nets at Mill Lane, however it has been advised by Hampshire Cricket Board and the ECB that improving existing provision at Wickham Cricket Club is a more logical approach.”

It would appear, however, that Wickham CC does not see these positive developments as attractive on their ground and so an opportunity may be missed to develop the game among junior players, boys and girls altogether. That is indeed a pity for the game, for the children and for residents who might like to see cricket played near the centre of the village.

The WRA Survey demonstrated to some extent that residents would appreciate cricket activity at the MLS and perhaps there is scope for provision for juniors with coaching provided from other Clubs. Thought might also be given to the provision of all-weather net facilities and a non-turf wicket that could be used for junior play. The lack of ambition expressed in the DNA for cricket in the village and for its youngsters (particularly those at the nearby primary school) seems an opportunity missed (especially as the cricket plans at Knowle are reported now to be in some doubt?).

P24 Cycling

There were only a handful of respondents to the WRA Survey supportive of a BMX/Pump track and so it is feared that installing one would not be of high value except for a few users. However, if such a facility could be located in an area away from the main amenities it might be considered. The demand for safe, off-road cycling, however, is not in question and so a link from the MLS to the Meon Valley trail should be encouraged.

P25 Athletics

There is no support for an athletics or running track at the MLS. An option that might be considered is a “park run” route but is not mentioned in the DNA and would need further consultation among local people. The very strong support for a fitness trail/outdoor gym in the WRA Survey suggests that there is a demand that needs to be satisfied as top priority. The DNA does not address this need at all and so it should be added to the mix of eventual options.

Section 4: Initial Stakeholder Engagement P25: Summary

WRA Comment

- **3G and junior grass football pitches. P25**

The conclusions here are inaccurate. There is only one Wickham football club and the consultations with those from outside Wickham are not relevant, particularly those with Infinity FC. The WRA Survey has overwhelmingly rejected Infinity's use of the site. The claim that there is a demand for adult 3G from Clubs outside the village refers only to Infinity and must be discounted. The WPPS states that 3G demand will be fulfilled by planned developments outside the village and does not include the MLS as a location for such a facility. There is a need for junior pitches and this, and this alone, should be the focus for football provision. The concept of a Football Hub is flawed as the site is not large enough to meet the criteria (3 pitches including one 3G and good access). If there is to be an all-weather pitch then it should be considered as a facility for multi-use not just junior football (e.g. netball, tennis and its variants, basketball). And any lit pitch facility must secure approval of Southdowns National Park in respect of light pollution.

- **Tennis. P26**
WRA's Survey supports the conclusions stated. In addition should be stated the provision of variants of tennis that are growing in popularity and that will attract new adult and young users to the site.
- **Netball. P26**
Need supported
- **Cricket. P26**
WRA is not satisfied that this has been fully or sufficiently imaginatively analysed. See comments under cricket on p27 of this Report. There are options for cricket that should be explored
- **Cycling and Athletics**
See comments on p24 of this Report

Section 5: Potential Funding Sources P27

This section describes potential sources of finance and the criteria needed qualify for them. The criteria are described as

"..need to demonstrate the wider community benefits of the proposed project (e.g. increase in participation, reduction in antisocial behaviour and increased community pride).

The DNA has identified a number of options for the MLS that have support from the community as demonstrated by the WRA Survey. However, the community has amply demonstrated that adult football on the MLS is not one of them unless for the use of Wickham Dynamos. The correct way to approach the question of funding is to determine first the facilities that should be included on the site and then analyse how they can be funded and the plan adapted according to the likely success of the funding applications. There is no doubt that support for a Football Hub (not part of the WPPS) will not secure the necessary community support and so should be removed before moving on to create the Master Plan.

The DNA states that Winchester is among the 20% least deprived areas of the country, and this will be a hurdle to overcome when considering funding opportunities. However, the Winchester Indices of Multiple Deprivation shows that Wickham is the most deprived rural ward in the District and is in the 5th percentile of most deprived locations in England. This surely will help any application for funding. (source: <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/data/index-of-multiple-deprivation-2010>).

Reference is made in the DNA to the possibility of grant funding from the Football Foundation at 5.18 page 29 and 5.33 p 32 for “local” football team Infinity FC. This cannot be supported due to overwhelming local opposition (91%) and the authors of the DNA must make clear to its target audiences that this is NOT a “local” football club. It draws its players from across the Solent area and is not local to Wickham. All future plans for Infinity and or a football hub must not be carried over into the Master Plan for the MLS. It is recommended that the Parish Council proposes to the Football Foundation that it turn its attention for a “hub” to the playing fields at Shedfield or prospectively in North Whiteley that could meet the necessary pitch criteria.

Wickham Residents Association, December 2021

For enquiries contact:

Robert Broad, Chairman

Robert.broad@icloud.com

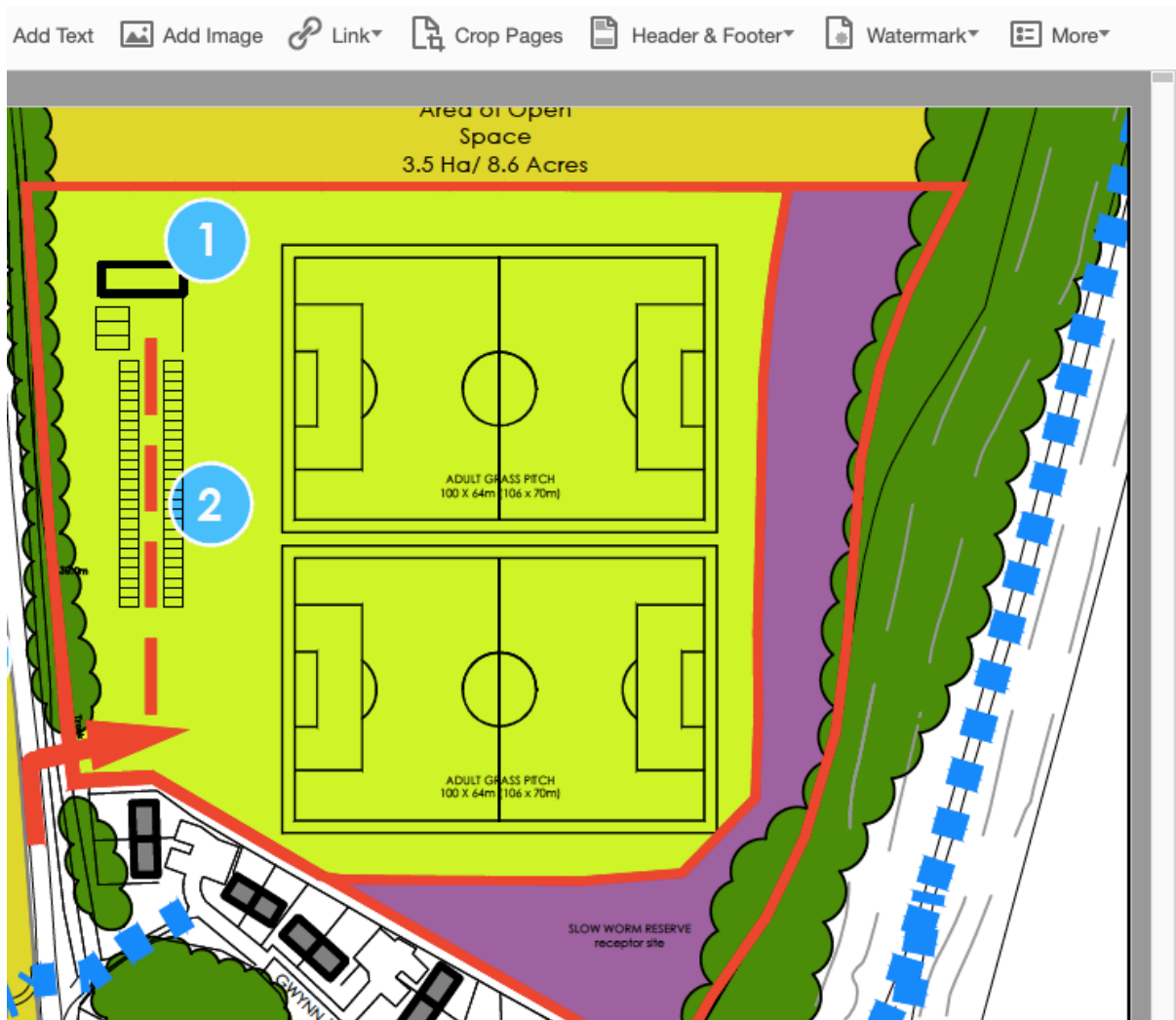
01329 835542

07518 678425

Appendix 1

Mill Lane Sports Site

Site Plan taken from Planning Application 17/0261/FUL "Site Masterplan" March 23rd, 2018



Key: 1= Changing facilities
2= Car parking for 50 cars

NOTE: this plan drawing is indicative only. There is no planning commitment given to the land being use for football pitches

Appendix 2

Table 1.2: Likely Impact of Future Football Provision
(source: Winchester Playing Pitch Strategy, page 15)

Table 1.2: Likely impact of future pitch provision

Sport	Analysis area	Future demand (2031)	Impact of new pitch provision
Football (grass pitches)	Winchester District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Spare capacity of 12.5 adult and seven mini 7v7 match equivalent sessions. ◀ Shortfall of 8.5 youth 11v11, four youth 9v9 and two mini 5v5 match equivalent sessions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Spare capacity of 21.5 and eight mini 7v7 match equivalent sessions. ◀ Shortfall of 6.5 youth 11v11, four youth 9v9 and two mini 5v5 match equivalent sessions.
	North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Spare capacity of 5.5 match adult and 4.5 mini 7v7 match equivalent sessions. ◀ Shortfall of 6.5 youth 11v11, three youth 9v9 and one mini 5v5 match equivalent session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Spare capacity of 6.5 match adult and 4.5 mini 7v7 match equivalent sessions. ◀ Shortfall of 4.5 youth 11v11, three youth 9v9 and one mini 5v5 match equivalent session.
	South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Spare capacity of seven adult and 4.5 mini 7v7 match equivalent sessions. ◀ Shortfall of two youth 11v11, one youth 9v9 and one mini 5v5 match equivalent session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Spare capacity of 15 adult and 5.5 mini 7v7 match equivalent sessions. ◀ Shortfall of two youth 11v11, one youth 9v9 and one mini 5v5 match equivalent session.
Football (3G pitches) ⁷	Winchester District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ A shortfall of four full size 3G pitches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ A shortfall of two full size 3G pitches
	North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Shortfall of three full size 3G pitches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ A shortfall of three full size 3G pitches
	South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Shortfall of two full size 3G pitches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ No identified shortfall