

South Tyneside Local Plan

Playing Pitch Mitigation - Site Search Methodology

June 2022



South Tyneside Council

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Introduction

- 1.1 South Tyneside Council is preparing a Local Plan which will set out the development requirements for the Borough until 2039. The Draft Local Plan 2021- 2039 will allocate sites to meet the Borough’s objectively assessed needs for housing, employment and infrastructure and seek to protect and enhance our natural environment.
- 1.2 A number of potential housing allocations are on land identified as current or lapsed playing field land and will subsequently need to be mitigated to justify their loss. This paper provides a site search methodology used to identify large suitable sites which could be considered for as options for playing pitch mitigation to support the Local Plan.

Local Context – Playing Pitch Strategy 2019

- 2.1 The South Tyneside Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) (2019) provides the most up to date evidence for sports provision and playing pitch need in the Borough. The study was undertaken in accordance with Sport England’s PPS guidance and covered the following playing pitches and outdoor sports:
 - Football pitches
 - Cricket pitches
 - Rugby union & Rugby league pitches
 - Hockey / Artificial grass pitches
 - Tennis
 - Bowls
 - Athletics
- 2.2 The study concluded that existing position for all pitch sports in South Tyneside is that either demand is being met or there is a shortfall, whereas the future position shows the exacerbation of current shortfalls and additional shortfalls in some areas and for some sports. As such, due to the identified shortfalls in the PPS there remains a need to protect all existing playing fields until all demand is met, or there is a requirement to replace any lost provision to an equal or better quantity and quality before it is lost.

Table 1. Quantitative headline findings – South Tyneside Playing Pitch Strategy (2019)

Sport	Analysis Area	Current picture	Future demand (2035)
Football (grass pitches)	Hebburn & Jarrow	Shortfall of 5.5 MES on youth 11v11 pitches Shortfall of 1 MES on youth 9v9 pitches Spare capacity on adult pitches	Shortfall of 8 MES on youth 11v11 pitches Shortfall of 2 MES on youth 9v9 pitches Spare capacity on adult pitches
	Inner & Outer South Shields	Spare capacity on all pitch types	Spare capacity on adult and youth 9v9 pitch types

			Youth 11v11 pitches played to capacity
	South	Adult pitches played to capacity Youth 11v11 pitches played to capacity Spare capacity on youth 9v9 pitches	Adult pitches played to capacity Shortfall of 0.5 MES on youth 11v11 pitches Spare capacity on youth 9v9 pitches
Football (3G APGs)	Borough wide	Shortfall of 2 3G pitch based on FA training model.	Shortfall of 2 3G pitch based on FA training model.
Cricket	Hebburn & Jarrow	Pitches are at capacity	Shortfall of 23 MES per season
	Inner & Outer South Shields	Shortfall of 30 MES per season	Shortfall of 58 MES per season
	South	Shortfall of 5 MES per season	Shortfall of 25 MES per season
Rugby Union	Hebburn & Jarrow	Spare capacity of 0.75 MES	Spare capacity of 0.5 MES
	Inner & Outer South Shields	Shortfall of 3.25 MES	Shortfall of 4.5 MES
	South	Pitches are at capacity	Pitches are at capacity
Hockey	Hebburn & Jarrow	No current demand for pitches	No demand expected
	Inner & Outer South Shields	No current demand for pitches	No demand expected
	South	Current demand being met with spare capacity	Pitch will require resurface
Rugby league	Borough wide	Pitch is played to capacity	Potential future shortfall
Bowls	Borough wide	Supply meets current demand	Supply meets future demand
Tennis	Borough wide	Supply meets current demand	Potential unmet demand at West Park, Jarrow
Athletics	Borough wide	Supply meets current demand	Future need to improve the track surface at Monkton Stadium

National Planning Policy & Sport England Exceptions

3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the national policy with regard to protecting open space and playing field land. Paragraph 99 of the NPPF states:

‘Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.’*

3.2 With regard to criterion A in the above policy; the PPS (2019) evidenced that there are currently shortfalls in provision across pitch sports (Football, Rugby and Cricket) and that all currently used playing field sites require protection and therefore cannot be deemed surplus to requirements because of shortfalls now and in the future. As a result, any proposed development of playing field land would not fulfil criterion A. Therefore, any proposed mitigation to support the loss of existing playing field land would need to comply with criteria B and/or C.

3.3 Where sites identified in the Local Plan would not be lost for alternative sports and recreational provision; these proposals would need to comply with Criterion B and mitigation would require replacement playing field land by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality.

3.4 In addition to the NPPF, Sport England, a statutory consultee on planning applications also has Exception Policy’s which should be met for a scheme to be supported. In situations where the PPS cannot demonstrate the site, is clearly surplus to requirements then replacement of the site, will be required to comply with Sport England policy exception E4:
Policy Exception E4:

‘The area of playing field to be lost as a result of the proposed development will be replaced, prior to the commencement of development, by a new area of playing field’:

- of equivalent or better quality, and
- of equivalent or greater quantity, and
- in a suitable location, and
- subject to equivalent or better accessibility and management arrangements

3.5 For disused and lapsed sites, Sport England’s playing field policy exception E1 only allows for development if a PPS shows a clear excess in the quantity of playing pitch provision at present and in the future across all playing pitch sport types and sizes. Disused and lapsed sites are defined as:

- Disused – pitches that are not being used at all by any users and are not available for community hire either. Once these sites are disused for five or more years they will then be categorised as ‘lapsed sites’.
- Lapsed - last known use was as a playing field more than five years ago (these fall outside of Sport England’s statutory remit but still have to be assessed using the criteria in paragraph 99 of the National Planning Policy Framework). Sport England would nonetheless challenge a proposed loss of playing pitches/playing field which

fails to meet such criteria. It should be emphasised that the lawful planning use of a lapsed site is still that of a playing field.

- 3.6 Therefore, lapsed and disused sites should also be protected from development or be replaced (in accordance with Sport England's Playing Fields Policy Exception E4), as there is potential need for playing field land to accommodate more pitches to meet the identified shortfalls. A feasibility assessment should be undertaken to support the loss of these playing fields and where supported, contributions sought to be invested in existing provision within the locality.

South Tyneside Draft Local Plan 2021-2039

- 4.1 The draft Local Plan provides the Boroughs housing requirements over the Plan period of at least 5,778 new homes by 2039. The draft Local Plan proposes to allocate 4 sites which are identified as playing field land; including lapsed pitches and pitches which are in current use (Table 2). These four sites which include playing field land to provide 774 units.
- 4.2 It should be noted that the Local Plan also intends to allocate lapsed playing pitches at Land at north of Cleadon Lane (Former Charlie Hurley Centre) for development. The site is the former training ground of Sunderland AFC. Sport England are happy that mitigation for its loss was included in the relocation of the Club's training facility to the Academy of Light site in Sunderland. Therefore, this site has been removed from consideration in the context of this paper.
- 4.3 In terms of land provision, Table 2 identifies the amount of playing field land which could be lost through the draft Local Plan allocations. Most proposed sites include a mix brownfield and playing field land within the site boundary; it is only the lapsed pitches at South Tyneside College Hebburn which do not include a brownfield element.

Table 2. Draft Local Plan – Proposed housing allocations on playing field land – Area (Ha)

SHLAA Ref	Site Name	Total Site Ha	Playing pitch Ha per site	Remaining Ha minus Playing pitch land
SOS001	South Shields and Westoe Sports Club	2.8	1.76	1.04
SOS009	Former Brinkburn School	7.8	5.8	2
SOS040	Land at Chuter Ede Education Centre	7.8	4.5	3.3
SHB034	South Tyneside College- Hebburn Campus playing fields	5.7	5.7	0
Total (Ha)		24.1	17.76	6.34

4.4 Table 3 identifies these sites and the provision which could be lost through the Local Plan. As stated above, the identified shortfalls in the PPS for current and future demand mean that sites cannot come forward for development without meeting NPPF and Sport England playing field policy. Therefore, there is a need to re-accommodate all current demand from any sites mitigated and replacement provision must be mitigated by playing field land area rather than by the number of pitches/ MES equivalents.

Table 3. Proposed Local Plan allocations – Playing field sites

Site name	Total Ha* Playing fields only	Status	Current Pitch Provision	Pitch Quality	Recommend pitch capacity (MES)	Current play (MES)**
South Shields and Westoe Sports Club and Playing Fields	1.76	In use	1 x cricket	Good	50 (per season)	72 (overplayed)
			1 x senior rugby	Good	3.25	9.5 (overplayed)
			7 x tennis	Poor	-	-
Former Brinkburn School	5.8	In use	2 x adult football	Standard	4	3.5
			2 x youth 9v9	Standard	4	2
			1 x senior rugby*	Standard	2	0.25
Land at Chuter Ede Education Centre	4.5	In use	2 x adult football	Poor	2	2.5 (overplayed)
			1 x youth 9v9	Poor	1	0.5
Land at South Tyneside College, Hebburn Campus	5.7	Lapsed site	Last recorded – 3 x adult football			
TOTAL	17.76					

*Rugby pitch is marked out over football pitch

**Based on 19/20 season demand

Playing pitch land - Site Search Methodology

- 5.1 The following section outlines the criteria identified and considered in the identification of areas of land considered to be potentially suitable for new playing field land.
- 5.2 It should be noted that the identification of new playing field land will form part of a wider package of playing field mitigation to support the Local Plan. The proposals will be subject to consultation with Sport England and the sports National Governing Bodies to further identify the type of pitch provision and ancillary facilities which would be needed to deliver the proposed site.

Hierarchy of provision

- 5.3 To meet the mitigation requirements of the proposed Local Plan housing allocations, the Council considers that the identification of a new 'Sporting Hub' site would be most appropriate and sustainable means of addressing the mitigation requirements from the Local Plan.
- 5.4 The Playing Pitch Strategy (2019) recommends the development of bigger and better quality 'Hub' sites within the Borough to address existing issues with unsustainable single-pitch sites. It is also considered that the development of a 'Hub' could provide a strategic sporting site of wide importance where users are willing to travel to access the range of high quality facilities offered and are likely to be multi-sport.
- 5.5 The Playing Pitch Strategy also outlines the site criteria for 'Hub' sites:

Table 4. 'Hub' site criteria

Criteria	Hub Sites
Site Location	Strategically located in the Borough.
Site layout	Accommodates three or more grass pitches, including provision of an Artificial Grass Pitch.
Type of sport	Single or multi-sport provision. Could also operate as a central venue.
Management	Management control remains within the local authority or with an appropriate lease arrangement through a committee or education owned.
Maintenance regime	Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines.
Ancillary facilities	Good quality ancillary facility on site, with sufficient changing rooms and car parking to serve the number of pitches.

Location

- 5.6 Three of the four potential housing allocations are situated within the Inner and Outer South Shields sub-area as identified in the Playing Pitch Strategy (2019). These sites are:
- South Shields and Westoe Sports Club and Playing Fields
 - Former Brinkburn School
 - Land at Chuter Ede Education Centre
- 5.7 Furthermore, these playing field sites are currently in use and support a level of play, whereas the site at Hebburn Campus is currently unused and a lapsed playing field site. The Council

has therefore sought to prioritise the area of search for new playing pitch provision within close proximity to the Inner and Outer South Shields sub-area.

- 5.8 The urban nature of the Inner and Outer South Shields sub-area provides limited opportunities for suitable large areas of open space to provide new playing pitch provision. Therefore, the search area will also include the identification of suitable areas of the Green Belt east of the A19.
- 5.9 The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) identifies the provision of 'appropriate facilities for outdoor sport' to be an acceptable use within the Green Belt, notwithstanding any potential impacts on openness. Therefore, accessible areas within the Green Belt will also be considered as part of this site search.

Land ownership

- 5.10 In order to ensure delivery of any proposed mitigation site, at this stage the site search has been limited to Council-owned land within the suitable search location.

Site size (ha)

- 5.11 The emerging Local Plan seeks to allocate up to 17.76ha of playing field land which will need to be re-provided to meet the requirements of the NPPF and Sport England's playing field policy. The three sites within the Inner and Outer South Shields sub-area equate to 12.06 Ha. Therefore, the minimum site size to be considered within this search is **12Ha**.

Current Land Use

- 5.12 Identified areas of open space which currently support playing pitches, sport or other green infrastructure assets will not be considered suitable as the use of this site could be considered as a displacement of an existing resource. Furthermore, educational sites and sites including ecological designations will also be discounted.

6. Playing Pitch Mitigation Sites – Identified sites and Assessment

6.1 This section of the report details the sites identified as part of the methodology and the assessment of those considered to be suitable.

Site Search

6.2 The council undertook a search for council owned sites across the identified search area. The search included a review of existing sites identified in our Open Space Study (2015) and Playing Pitch Strategy (2019), and also additional sites submitted by the Council's Asset Management Team. The Site identified in the initial search are identified in Table 5.1. The table also includes justification as to why the site has been rejected at this stage for carried forward for further assessment.

Site Name	Site Size (ha)	Sub-Area	Ownership	Green Belt	Current Use	Include/ Reject
Cleadon Park Recreation Ground	15.14	Inner and Outer South Shields	STC	No	Park / Bowling Green/ Tennis Courts/ Children's Play facilities	Reject - existing Green Infrastructure provision
Temple Memorial Park	61.6	Inner and Outer South Shields	STC	No	Open space, leisure centre and existing playing pitch provision	Reject - existing playing pitch provision
Land south of Chuter Ede	18.8	South	STC	Yes	Open Space	Include
Colliery Wood	28.5	South	STC	Yes	Local Wildlife Site	Reject - Ecological designations
Harton Cemetery	17.91	Inner and Outer South Shields	STC	No	Cemetery	Reject - Cemetery
Frenchman's Lea	94.49	Inner and Outer South Shields	National Trust	No	Open space	Reject- land ownership
Whitburn Point	45	South	STC	Yes	Local Nature Reserve	Reject - Local Nature Reserve
Marsden Old Quarry LNR	19.32	South	STC	Yes	Local Nature Reserve	Reject - Local Nature Reserve
Station Burn LNR	15.42	South	STC	Yes	Local Nature Reserve	Reject - Local Nature Reserve
South Shields Golf Course	38.16	South	Private Ownership	Yes	Private Golf Course	Reject - land ownership
Boldon Golf Course	40.45	South	Private Ownership	Yes	Private Golf Course	Reject- land ownership
Whitburn Golf Course	37.38	South	Private Ownership	Yes	Private Golf Course	Reject- land ownership

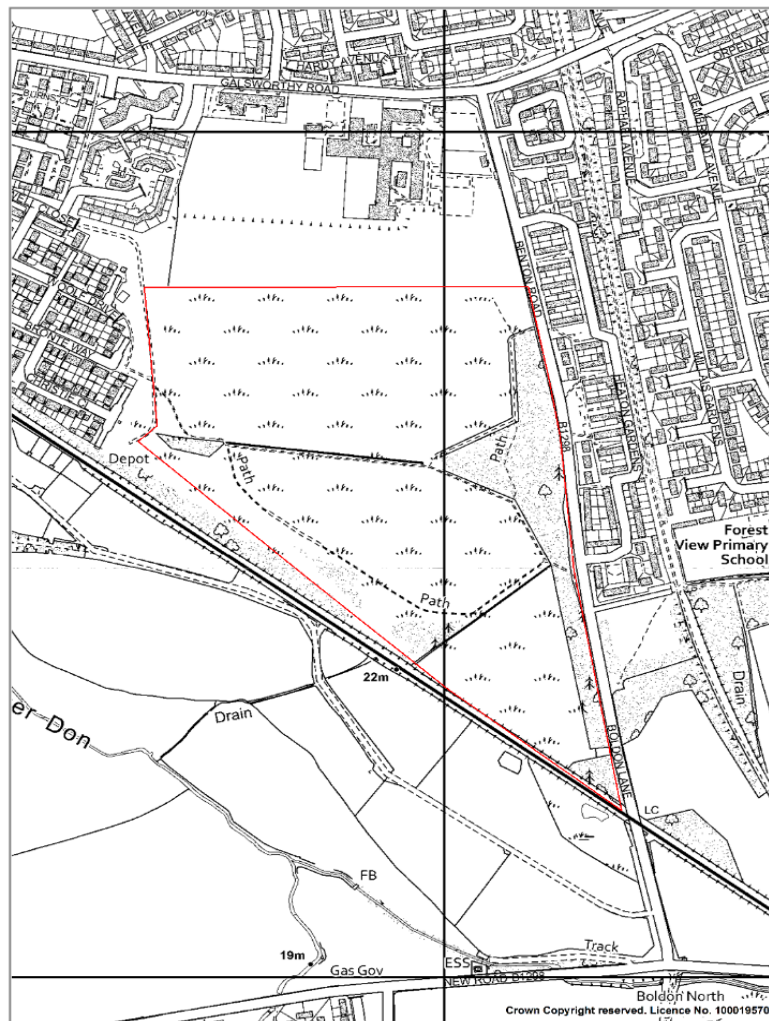
Land south of South Shields Community School	13	South	STC	Yes	Agricultural land	Include
Land at Tilesheds		South	STC	Yes	Agricultural land	Include

6.3 As a result of the initial site search the following three sites have been taken forward for further consideration:

- Land south of Chuter Ede
- Land south of South Shields Community School
- Land at Tilesheds

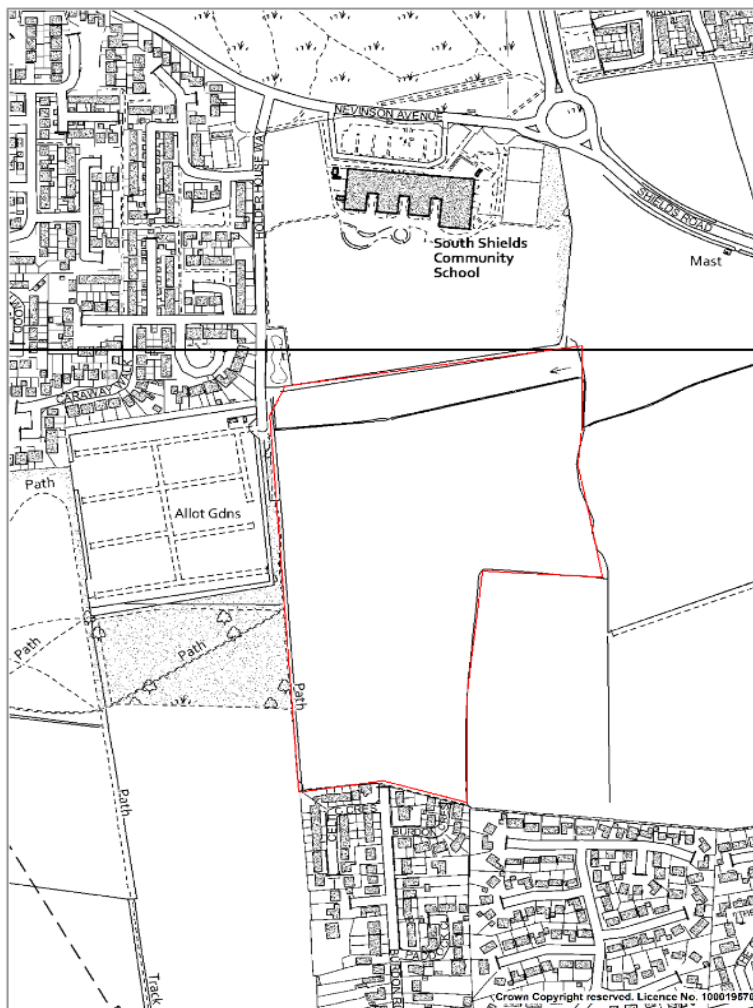
Detailed Site Assessment

Land south of Chuter Ede



Area size (ha)	18.8 ha
Is the site subject to any planning designations?	The site forms part of the Green Belt. Any additional supporting infrastructure would be assessed against Green Belt policy.
Is the area suitable?	Topography
	The site is a large area of open space with grassland areas and established vegetation. The topography of the site is undulating and slopes down towards the Metro line to the southern end of the site.
	Accessibility and Infrastructure
	The site has good accessibility. It is in a predominantly residential area which is served by existing roads and public transport networks. New changing and car parking facilities are likely to be required.
Additional considerations	<p>The area south of Chuter Ede has been subject to a Habitat survey and includes three habitat types whose areas exceed the Local Wildlife Site area criteria; these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 ha of lowland meadow and pasture; • 756m of hedgerow; • 3.3 ha of broadleaved woodland. <p>It is also noted that the site supports various wildlife and bird species particularly skylark.</p> <p>Development of this site is likely to result in the need for ecological compensation and mitigation measures.</p>
Conclusion	The site is considered to be of an appropriate size and in an accessible location; however, the use of this site for playing pitches could result in the loss of valuable habitats and have negative effects on ecology. The site is not considered suitable for playing pitch mitigation.

Land South of South Shields Community School



Area size (ha)	13.0 ha
Is the site subject to any planning designations?	The site forms part of the Green Belt. Any additional supporting infrastructure would be assessed against Green Belt policy.
Is the area suitable?	Topography
	The site is a large agricultural field used for arable crops. The topography of the site is largely flat.
	Accessibility and Infrastructure
	. There is a road to the western boundary of the site which currently provides access to Holder House Estate and Holder House Allotments; this road could also provide access to the site although some improvements may be necessary. Existing public transport links are approximately 300m to the north of the site. New changing and car parking facilities are likely to be required.

<p>Additional considerations</p>	<p>The site is situated to the south of the former South Shields Community School Playing Fields. The former school playing fields are likely to become available for community sports use and there may be opportunities to link to the existing school playing fields.</p> <p>The site is subject to an agricultural tenancy agreement which would need to be resolved prior to the site being used for playing pitches. This could have timescale implications.</p>
<p>Conclusion</p>	<p>The site is considered to be of an appropriate size and in an accessible location. The site is considered a suitable option for playing pitch mitigation.</p>

Land at Tiledsheds



<p>Area size (ha)</p>	<p>14.2 ha</p>
<p>Is the site subject to any planning designations?</p>	<p>The site forms part of the Green Belt. Any additional supporting infrastructure would be assessed against Green Belt policy. The site is also in close proximity to the Tiledshed Local Nature Reserve and a Local Wildlife Site.</p>
<p>Is the area suitable?</p>	<p>Topography</p>

	<p>The site is formed of agricultural fields used for pasture and grazing. The topography of the site is largely flat. There are areas of established vegetation and trees on site.</p>
	<p>Accessibility and Infrastructure</p>
	<p>There are road and public transport networks to the north and south of the site. A bus turning circle to the north of the site is the most likely way of accessing the site. New changing and car parking facilities are likely to be required.</p>
Additional considerations	<p>The site is subject to an agricultural tenancy agreement which would need to be resolved prior to the site being used for playing pitches. This could have timescale implications.</p>
Conclusion	<p>The site is considered to be of an appropriate size and in an accessible location. The site is considered a suitable option for playing pitch mitigation.</p>

Preferred Option and Conclusion

- 6.4 The detailed sites assessments above have identified that both Land south of South Shields Community School and Land at Tilesheds could be considered to be suitable sites for playing pitches.
- 6.5 The Council has decided to select Land south of South Shields Community School as its preferred option to be included in the Regulation- 18 Draft Local Plan. This is due to the sites proximity to existing playing field provision at South Shields Community School and the potential to create a sporting hub site.
- 6.6 The selected site will be subject to public consultation and further consideration from Sport England and sport governing bodies. The mitigation strategy adopted by the Council will also be informed by the forthcoming Playing Pitch Strategy and the outcome of the public consultation.