

Ealing Playing Pitch Strategy 2022 Appendix D – Assessment of Need Report Rugby

Appendix D: Rugby - Assessment of Needs (Stages B & C)

The findings of the assessment of needs for rugby facilities in The London Borough of Ealing are summarised in this appendix.

Since the last assessment of needs for rugby union in 2016, several commercial and voluntary sector organisations have funded facility improvement projects in Ealing. Most prominently Trailfinders Sports Club Ground in West Ealing has transformed in recent years to a top-class rugby venue with excellent facilities for Ealing Trailfinders Rugby Club, including a new indoor training facility opened in 2022. Ealing Trailfinders is one of the premier clubs in Middlesex with a professional first team – previous champions of the second tier Rugby Championship - with a 50 strong squad plus an academy of 30 young players plus a large amateur club (Ealing Trailfinders 1871), with development teams at u21 and u23, three men's league teams, a veterans team, plus large youth and mini rugby sections for both girls and boys. Wasps FC, the amateur club remaining in the borough following the relocation of the English Premiership professional club to Coventry, also has a very large playing membership. This club has invested in a floodlit rugby compliant artificial grass pitch (AGP) and secured planning permission for a second AGP at its Twyford Avenue Sports Ground in Acton.

All eight rugby clubs that play their home matches in Ealing have contributed to this updated assessment by means of an online club survey and their views feed into the individual site's ratings. Site visits have been made to the home grounds used by the clubs together with follow up email consultation with club officials/site managers regarding floodlit training provision and use. A facility audit compiled from the research, consultation and site visits was reviewed by the RFU Facility Development Team and is included in this report (Figure 3.1).

1. Rugby Pitch Supply (Step 2)

There are eight rugby clubs based on playing field sites in Ealing with rugby pitches – Ealing Trailfinders RC (pro team and amateur 1871 club), Wasps FC, Actonians RFC, West London RFC, Old Priorians RFC, Northolt RFC and Hanwell RFC.

Hanwell RFC was previously displaced out of the borough for its home matches to Boston Manor Playing Fields in Hounslow. Since January 2022, this single team club has played its home matches on a single pitch at the Gunnersbury Park Sports Hub on the Ealing/Hounslow border.

Wasps FC's Twyford Avenue Sports Ground is also the home ground for two expat clubs for communities living and working in the London area -NZ Kiwis London and London Japanese.

Distribution of Rugby Sites

Figure 1.2 shows the distribution of grass rugby pitch sites across Ealing. It is evident that there is a gap in provision for rugby in the south west of the borough around Southall. For many residents in this part of the borough, rugby club facilities in Hillingdon and Hounslow boroughs are equally as accessible as the clubs in Ealing.

Figure 1.2 - Ealing Rugby Site Distribution www.continuumleisure.co.uk

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Ealing - Ru	Ealing - Rugby facilities									
	rass rugby pitches y compliant AGPs*)									
Map 1 Key	Site	Address	Postcode							
1	London Playing Fields (Greenford)	Birkbeck Avenue, Greenford	UB6 8LS							
2	Northolt RFC	Cayton Road, Greenford,	UB6 8BJ							
3	Actonians RFC	Gunnersbury Drive, Ealing,	W5 4LL							
4	Club des Sports*(1)	East Acton Lane	W3 7BH							
5	St Benedicts School	Perivale Lane	UB6 8TL							
6	Trailfinders Sports Ground*(2)	Vallis Way, West Ealing	W13 0DD							
7	Wasps FC*(1)	Twyford Avenue, Acton	W3 9QA							
8	Gunnersbury Park	Popes Lane, Acton	W3 8LQ							

1.1 Rugby Pitches in the London Borough of Ealing

In the 2020/21 season, the London Borough of Ealing had a total of 14 adult size grass rugby pitches marked out with posts in situ (two of which - at Wasps FC and St Benedict's School - are permanently floodlit to match standard). There are also four rugby-compliant floodlit artificial grass pitches in the borough (two at Trailfinders Sports Club, one at Club des Sports in Acton and one at Wasps FC's Twyford Avenue Sports Ground).

 Wasps FC, Twyford Avenue Sports Ground, Acton – This extensive sports ground in the freehold ownership of Wasps FC has a stadium rugby AGP, four full size grass pitches and two junior rugby pitches (also marked for football and other sports use by a local school). One grass pitch has match quality floodlights and another has permanent training lights to half the playing area. The club also have planning consent for a second AGP.

- Ealing Trailfinders Sports Club Ground, West Ealing This privately owned sports ground (Trailfinders Ltd) leased to the Ealing Trailfinders Rugby Club, has two rugby compliant AGPs both with match floodlights plus a small sided non-compliant AGP training pitch with lights and two grass pitches used for matches and for training using mobile lights. On occasion, the club arranges for additional playing capacity for mini rugby festivals on the Hathaway Primary School playing field adjacent to the site. The club has recently built **a** 2,200sqm indoor training facility with a rugby compliant playing surface with training capacity for up to 50 players or two squads of 25 using a pitch divider.
- St Benedict's School Playing Fields, Perivale Lane This school site has four adult pitches - one with recently installed match quality floodlights to their pitch 1 - that are used throughout the week by the school and by the St Benedict's School Old Boys club – Old Priorian's RFC, now an open community club – at weekends and on Wednesday evenings for floodlit training.
- Actonians Sports Ground, Gunnersbury Drive, Popes Lane, Ealing This council-owned site is leased on a long lease to Actonians Sports Club and is the home pitch for Actonians RFC. The site has one adult rugby pitch. Low-grade temporary training lights are used for weekly training sessions at the end of the pitch closest to the clubhouse. A former bowling green on this site is also used for training on occasions when the pitch is not playable.



- Northolt RFC, Cayton Green Park, Greenford This council owned site is leased to Northolt RFC. There is one adult pitch with the space for another adult pitch to be marked out.
- London Marathon Playing Fields, Birkbeck Ave, Greenford This site is hired annually by West London RFC. There is one adult pitch and a 60x40m training area with permanent floodlights provided with grant support from the RFU to the side of the pitch.
- Gunnersbury Park The newly opened Gunnersbury Park Sports Hub grass pitches include one adult rugby pitch (no lights) used by Hanwell RFC for matches. This club trains on light evenings only in Elthorne Park.

1.2 Ownership and Security of Access

The rugby clubs based in the borough generally enjoy excellent security of access to the facilities they use for home matches and training.

The senior club in the borough with a professional arm – Ealing Trailfinders – hires its site from an individual landowner who has personally financed the development of the facilities at the sports ground.

The other large rugby club based in the borough - Wasps FC – owns the freehold of the Twyford Avenue Sports Ground.

Actonians RFC and Northolt RFC have security of access through long leases with Ealing Council on their home grounds.

Old Priorian's RFC has secured access through their former pupil link with St Benedict's School.

West London RFC has less security of access than the other clubs being reliant on a season by season hire agreement with The London Playing Fields Foundation, Greenford.

Hanwell RFC hires the Gunnersbury Park Sports Hub rugby pitch for home matches on a season by season basis.

London Japanese RC and NZ Kiwis London RC hire pitches for home matches and training from Wasps FC.

1.3 Pitch Quality – Maintenance & Drainage

Maintenance of rugby pitches in the London Borough of Ealing is generally the responsibility of the host club. The larger sites have full time ground staff and as can be seen in Figure 1.1 below, the majority of sites in Ealing are well maintained and have adequate or better drainage.



Figure 1.1 – Pitch Maintenance & Drainage Ratings from Site Visits and Club Surveys

			Maintenance							
Number	of pitches	Poor (M0)	Adequate (M1)	Total						
	Natural Inadequate (D0)		1		1					
lage	Natural Adequate (D1)		4		4					
Drainage	Pipe Drained (D2)			8	8					
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)			1	1					
	Total	0	5	9						

Two thirds of the natural turf rugby pitches are considered to be maintained to a 'Good' standard and the drainage to all the supply is considered to be at least adequate. Details on individual sites can be found in Figure 3.1.

1.4 Park Pitches

There are two maintained open access rugby pitches in parks in the borough. One, recently opened, at Gunnersbury Park Sports Hub (used by Hanwell RFC) and in Cayton Green Park, Northolt leased to Northolt RFC.

1.5 At Risk Sites

None of these sites are identified as at risk of loss of rugby pitches in the short to medium term.

1.6 Proposed New Supply

There are no current committed projects for changes to the existing supply of rugby pitches in the borough. The only pitch project identified is at Twyford Avenue Sports Ground where Wasps FC aspire to develop a second rugby compliant AGP and upgrade the car park in the short term. Planning consent is secured and implementation of this project is subject to the club securing the required funding. In the medium term, the club wish to install permanent floodlights to a second grass pitch to expand the training capacity.

With regard to clubhouse improvements, Northolt RFC has applied to the RFU for a loan towards the cost of necessary refurbishment of the kitchen and toilets to continue to attract new players and maximise secondary income from hires to football and Gaelic sports teams and for community events.

Actonians Sports Club aspire to upgrade the pavilion at its ground for the benefit of all members including the rugby, football and cricket club sections although the necessary funding and consents are not currently in place.

Wasps FC would also like to upgrade or replace their pavilion in order to better serve the changing and social needs of its members and to facilitate the further development of women and girls' rugby.

The Ealing Trailfinders RC 1st Team is considering options to more than double the spectator capacity of the main stadium pitch - current capacity 4,000 (2,200 seats) - to 10,001 as required to qualify for promotion into the English Premiership.

1.7 Rugby Supply in Neighbouring Boroughs

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The following rugby clubs have home grounds close to the Ealing borough boundary and are therefore very accessible to Ealing residents:

- $\circ~$ Barnes RFC and Richmond RFC to the east and south in LB Richmond.
- Ruislip RFC, Hayes RFC and Hillingdon Abbots RFC to the north and west in Hayes, LB Hillingdon.
- Grasshoppers RFC to the South in LB Hounslow.

All of these clubs are expected to have Ealing residents as members as they are close to the borough boundary and also provide a wide range of rugby opportunities.

2. Rugby Pitch Demand (Step 3)

Findings relating to rugby pitch demand in The London Borough of Ealing are summarised below.

2.1 Clubs and Teams

Between the eight Ealing based clubs and two expat clubs playing in the borough, there are a total of 19 regular adult men's Saturday league sides, a further three occasional men's teams and two women's teams (both at Wasps FC). Both the senior clubs – Wasps and Trailfinders – have development teams for transition between youth age grade rugby and senior rugby.

Currently, just Wasps FC and Ealing Trailfinders have junior sections offering both youth boys age grade rugby and mini rugby for boys and girls. Between these two large community rugby clubs there are 19 boys age grade sides and 44 mixed mini rugby sides. At both clubs the junior sections have continued to grow over recent seasons despite the programme interruptions caused by Covid.

Of the other clubs in the borough, Northolt RFC has previously expressed aspirations to offer age grade rugby. However, the club recognises the competition for new young players from the established age grade structures and more extensive facilities at the Ealing Trailfinders and Wasps clubs.

With regard to women and girls, the Ealing Trailfinders has developed a pathway for female players through the mixed mini age grades to girl's youth age grade rugby, Ealing Emeralds. In the past, this pathway has provided players to the England Elite Programme.

Wasps Women 1st team compete in the RFU Allianz Premier 15th League at professional level while the amateur team - Wasps Women Amateurs - compete in Championship 2 South West.

Figure 2.1: Table of senior rugby club information

Ealing based rugby clubs and senior teams	2021/22 leagues	Home ground	Other grounds used		
 Ealing Trailfinders RC Championship squad of 50 pro players) Academy (30 elite players 15- 23yrs) 	Championship	Trailfinders Sports Ground, West Ealing	N/A		
Ealiry Trailfinders 1871 O 3 Men's teams (1871, 1871 2nds, Exiles)	Herts/Middx One/Middx Merit Table One/Middx Merit Table Four	Trailfinders Sports Ground, West Ealing	Hathaway Primary School playing field (on occasion e.g. festivals)		

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Ealing based rugby clubs and senior teams	2021/22 leagues	Home ground	Other grounds used	Ealing based rugby clubs and senior teams	2021/22 leagues	Home ground	Other grounds used
 1 Vets team (Evergreens) 1871 u23s 1871 u21s 	Middx Merit Table Vets Raging Bull Shield Friendly fixtures			Wasps WomenOWasps Women1sts(professional)OWasps WomenAmateurs	Allianz Premier 15s Championship 2 SW	Wasps FC, Twyford Avenue Sports Ground, Acton	N/A
Northolt RFC o 1 Men's team	Middx Merit Table Four	Cayton Green Park, Greenford	N/A	West London RFCo2 Men's teamsoSummers 7s	Herts/Middx Two / Middx	London Marathon Playing	N/A
Actonians RFC o 2 Men's teams	Herts/Middx One Middx Merit Table Four	Actonians Sports Club Ground, Ealing	Twyford Avenue Sports Ground/Gunnersbury Park	team o Mixed Tag Rugby Team	Merit Table Five Queens Park Wolfpack League	Fields, Greenford	
Old Priorian RFC 2 Men's Teams (Twisters, Saints) Occasional former players team (Legends) Midweek team 	London 2 NW Middx Merit Table Two	St Benedict's School Playing Fields, Perivale Lane		Hanwell RFC o 1 Men's team	Middx Merit Tables	Gunnersbury Park	Train on grass pitches alongside Elthorne Leisure Centre and summer touch rugby in Elthorne Park
 (Thundercats) Wasps FC 2 Men's teams Development (3rds) team Vets (Occies) 	Herts/Middx One/ Middx Merit Table Two Middx Merit	Wasps FC, Twyford Avenue Sports Ground,	N/A	NZ Kiwis o 1 Men's team	Middx Merit Tables One	Wasps FC, Twyford Avenue Sports Ground, Acton	N/A
 Occasional u23s (Nomads) Occasional former players team (Legends) 2 Ladies team 	Table Five Middx Merit Table Vets A	Acton		o 1 Men's team	Middx Merit Tables Three	Wasps FC, Twyford Avenue Sports Ground, Acton FC,	N/A

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2.2 Active Lives Survey

Adults: The most recently published findings of the national Active Lives Adult Survey¹ (May 2021) showed that self-reported regular participation (i.e. taken part at least twice in the last 28 days) in rugby in England by adults (aged 16+) fell 0.2% from 0.4% between May 2019 -May 2020 to 0.2% between May 2020 and May 2021.

If rugby participation in the borough were at the pre-pandemic national average (i.e. 0.4%), this would indicate around 1,060 adults (aged 16+) living in the borough play rugby out of a 16+ adult population of approximately 265,000. At the 2020/21 national 16+ rugby penetration rate of 0.2%, this would suggest circa 530 over 16-year-olds in Ealing play rugby.

With approximately 30 teams of players aged 16+ currently (including development and occasional sides), the 'adult' rugby club playing membership in the borough is close to 600 players (assuming an average of 20 squad players per team). Assuming adult rugby participation in Ealing is in line with the pre-pandemic national average of 0.4%, this suggests that as much as a third of all regular adult rugby played by adult residents of Ealing is either 'displaced' to venues outside of the borough or takes place in informal, social game formats such as Touch at clubs and in parks in Ealing and outside the borough.

2.3 Imported and Displaced Demand

The clubs reported no imported team demand, to rugby pitches in the borough - aside from the pan-London teams London Japanese and NZ Kiwis London playing at Wasps Twyford Avenue ground - and none of the clubs identified a need to use pitches outside of the borough. From the Active People Survey findings above it is likely that, despite the high-quality facilities and standard of league play available at the clubs within Ealing, clubs outside of the borough meet some rugby demand from within Ealing as, throughout London, residents will travel to play with their friends, to access higher standards of play or other reasons. Clearly, the extent of this cross-borough movement of individual players is not possible to quantify without detailed postcode data from clubs' membership records.

2.4 Casual Demand

Wasps FC and Ealing Trailfinders engage in a variety of initiatives in partnership with RFU development officers, schools, the local council **leisure team** and private coaching organisations aimed at encouraging returning players and introducing newcomers to the game of rugby, both male and female and for income generation or to raise funds for local charities. These include:

- o Children's Rugby / Multi sport Camps in the school holidays
- Satellite club projects with local schools
- Touch rugby evenings aimed at parents of mini and junior club players
- Hosting minis festivals, adult 7s and Tag festivals (men and women)
- Sponsored runs and bike events

Hanwell Rugby Club has also run free summer touch rugby sessions in Elthorne Park on Tuesday evenings in association with a coaching organisation.



¹ Active Lives Adult Survey May 2020/21, Sport England, (October 2021)

3. The Situation at Individual Sites for Rugby (Step 4)

The pitches were assessed during November in the 2020/21 season. These assessments were reviewed in discussion with the RFU and ratings for each agreed as a basis for comparison of the amount of play each site could accommodate (its carrying capacity) against the amount of play that takes place.

Carrying capacity is a measure of the number of match equivalent sessions per season for community use each pitch can take without adversely affecting its quality and use.

It was agreed with the RFU representative to adopt the following pitch carrying capacities according to each quality rating to be consistent with the approach adopted in similar assessments across the country:

Figure 3.1: Rugby Pitch Carrying Capacity

		Maintenance							
Mate	ch Equivalent Sessions a week	Poor (M0)	Adequate (M1)	Good (M2)					
	Natural Inadequate (D0)	0.5	1.5	2					
Drainage	Natural Adequate (D1)	1.5	3	3					
Drai	Pipe Drained (D2)	1.75	2.5	3.25					
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	2	3	3.5					

To clarify, a rugby pitch assessed as having inadequate natural drainage (D0 in Fig. 1) but an adequate maintenance regime (M1), has a capacity of 1.5 sessions a week (either match play or training) in the rugby playing season.

A pitch with a good maintenance regime (M2) and a pipe drainage system installed (D2), has a capacity of 3.25 sessions a week of either match play or training.

Figure 3.2 below summarises the situation at each rugby site with regard to:

- 1. *Pitch supply* (including the quality ratings) and conclusions reached as to the amount of play a site can accommodate (i.e. its carrying capacity for community use);
- 2. The amount of play that takes place at each site (i.e. the expressed demand) adjusted to reflect any casual or education use in addition to club use for matches and training;
- 3. *The comparison* (shown as a RAG rating) as to whether, for each pitch type it contains, a site is:
 - **RED** Being overplayed (current use exceeds the carrying capacity)
 - AMBER Being played to the level the site can sustain (current use matches the carrying capacity), or
 - **GREEN** Potentially able to accommodate some additional play (current use falls below the carrying capacity)



Figure 3.2: The Situation at Individual Sites

The main characteristics of the current rugby facility supply and demand balance at each site are summarised as follows:

Site	Pitch	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Pitch capacity (see Fig 3.1)	Use 21/22 MES	RAG	Comments/assumptions
Actonians Sports Ground, GUNNERSBURY DRIVE, W5 4LL	Grass pitch - temporary training lights to half the pitch at the clubhouse end. Also temporary lights to former bowling green used for minisoccer and	D2/M2	The main building is old with two well-used large bar/social areas. The secondary building (containing, sports hall, squash and changing rooms) is in poor condition and is in need of replacing. The toilets are in poor condition. The 4 changing rooms (2 on ground floor and 2 smaller cricket change rooms on 1st floor) need to be bought up to modern standards. The club aspire to redeveloping the building.	Council lease to sports club (multi-sport with a rugby club section)	3.25	MATCHES 2 (Saturday match plus Sunday football)		Actonians Rugby Club (2 adult male teams, 60 members). The main Actonians rugby pitch is in good condition and is maintained by Turf Doctor. 7v7 and 5v5 minisoccer pitches overlap the rugby pitch and are used for football matches on Sundays. The rugby club plays its home matches on Saturday afternoons on the pitch with the second team hiring a pitch elsewhere on occasion when both teams are scheduled to play at home. Training under temporary lights (not match quality) takes place either at this ground (at clubhouse end of pitch or on the



Site	Pitch	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Pitch capacity (see Fig 3.1)	Use 21/22 MES	RAG	Comments/assumptions
	occasionally for rugby training to preserve main pitch in wet weather.					TRAINING 2 (Mon & Weds training)		former bowling green) or on a non- compliant floodlit hockey AGP at the Sports Club's second site nearby in Boddington Gardens. Improved full pitch floodlighting on site is not achievable due to the positioning of the cricket square along one touchline. The club's playing membership has grown by approximately 20% over the past 3 seasons. The club has no current plans for further growth. The club rates the playing and floodlit training facilities 3/5 (average) and the changing as 2/5 (poor) and in need of improvement. The club does not consider it feasible to provide a second pitch on the site and therefore is focused on sustaining its current playing membership.
Club Des Sports, East Acton Lane, London, W3 7BH	AGP - match lights	n/a	High quality changing and social facilities	Unsecured - Commercial (health & sports club)	Weekday s 6am - 10.30pm, Weekend s 8am - 10.30pm. Peak = 38hrs/wk			Most capacity in the peak period is taken up by the commercial provider for use by its membership (small sided football primarily and possibly some tag rugby). Although rugby compliant, no current formal rugby use identified.



Site	Pitch	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Pitch capacity (see Fig 3.1)	Use 21/22 MES	RAG	Comments/assumptions
Gunnersbury Park Sports Hub, Popes Lane, Acton, W3 8LQ	Grass pitch	D2/M2	New sports hub pavilion	Secured - GLL (for Ealing & Hounslow Councils)	3.25	1		Hanwell RFC (single men's team) moved to this site as its home match ground in January 2022. The club trains pre-season only on Saturday mornings in Gunnersbury Park. The club also runs social touch rugby and fitness drills sessions on light Tuesday evenings in Elthorne Park. At present, the club has not indicated a need for floodlit training provision. The Gunnersbury Park grass rugby pitch is maintained under contract by Greener Ealing. The Hanwell Rugby Club uses the Globe pub in Brentford as its social base.
London Marathon Playing Field, Birkbeck Avenue, GREENFORD UB6 8LS	Grass pitch - permanent training lights to small area to side of the pitch	D2/M2	Changing rooms in good condition (rated 4/5 by the club). 10 team changing rooms and 2 officials changing rooms (football, rugby, cricket shared use). Design allows for simultaneous use by males and females, adults and children. Pavilion has a bar and function area in good condition and fully accessible via a lift. the	Charity (rugby club has long	3.25	MATCHES 1 (Saturday match)		West London RFC (2 adult male teams, 50 members). Rugby pitch in good condition, good grass coverage with some small undulations across pitch but not a major concern. Line markings visible and posts in good condition. Pitch has a drainage system in place which was installed approx. 8 years ago. The training area and permanent lights to the side of the pitch are considered adequate for the club's needs. They are the sole users for weekly



Site	Pitch	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Pitch capacity (see Fig 3.1)	Use 21/22 MES	RAG	Comments/assumptions
			rugby club is the primary user of the social facilities.			TRAINING 2 (Mon & Weds training)		training on Monday and Wednesday evenings in season. Pitch maintained by full-time groundmen (x2) one of whom lives on site. Pitch serves as cricket outfield in summer so good evenness. Rated 5/5 by the club. The club reports largely static membership numbers over the last 3 seasons although short term impact from Covid restrictions. There is an aspiration to develop an u18 side in the medium term.
Northolt RFC Ground, Cayton Green Park, CAYTON ROAD GREENFORD UB6 8BJ	9.5 acres of sports field usually divided in the winter into 1-2 rugby pitches (one partially floodlit with permanent lights to training standard) and up to 6 small sided football pitches.	D0/M1	2 team changing rooms, officials change and clubhouse social facilities rated 4/5 by the club. The club has applied to the RFU for a loan towards the cost of necessary refurbishment of the kitchen and toilets to continue to attract new players and maximise secondary income from hires to football and Gaelic sports teams and for community events.	Secured - Council (clubhouse site leased to Northolt RFC)	1.5	MATCHES 0.5 (Sat match)		Northolt RFC (1 adult male team, 30 playing members). Matches on a Saturday, training on Tuesday evenings. A single rugby pitch was marked out at the time of the visit and in reasonable condition. Although grass coverage is good across the majority of the pitch, there are localised worn areas (under posts) with some ponding of rainwater. Line markings are clear but there is some rust apparent on the posts. The groundsman on site reported no major issues. Some use of the sports field is made by a Gaelic football and minisoccer teams although this is not generally on



Site	Pitch	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Pitch capacity (see Fig 3.1)	Use 21/22 MES TRAINING 0.5 (Tues training)	RAG	Comments/assumptions the main rugby pitch. Whilst the clubhouse improvements and completing the car park resurfacing are the club's facility priorities in the short term, in the longer term, access to a rugby AGP north of the A40 for training is desirable although a low priority in view of existing training lights. Development of age grade rugby has previously been an aspiration although the club acknowledge the competition for players from the much larger Ealing Trailfinders club with high quality facilities and established junior section and volunteer coaches.
St Benedict's School, TENNIS PAVILION ST BENEDICTS PLAYING FIELDS, PERIVALE LANE, PERIVALE, UB6 8TL	P1 (closest to the AGP) - new regional match quality lights (200 lux)	D3/M2	Pavilion and changing rooms in good condition rated as 4/5 by the club. 2 x officials changing rooms, medical room and 10 x open plan changing rooms with showers. Changing rooms are fully accessible with fully accessible provision.	Unsecured - Independent School	3.5	3 (matches and training)		Old Priorian RFC (3 adult men's teams, 60 members). The club report growth from 45 playing members three years ago with circa 30 regularly attending the weekly training sessions and the development of a competitive Vets team this season and midweek games in the NW Floodlit Cup. The club reports that the addition of the match quality floodlights has had a transformative impact. Pitch in very good condition no issues reported. Pitch has a full drainage system in place and regular, full time maintenance schedule carried out on pitch by full time groundsman. Playing facilities rated at 5/5 by the club.



Site	Pitch	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Pitch capacity (see Fig 3.1)	Use 21/22 MES	RAG	Comments/assumptions
	P2 (closest to river)	D2/M2			3.25	3.25 Used by school and 2-3 x per week for club matches and training.		Pitch quality was very good at time of visit. Pitch has a full drainage system in place and regular, full time maintenance schedule carried out on pitch by full time groundsman. However pitch sits on a flood plain for river that flows adjacent to the site and therefore regularly floods. Water often takes between 24-48 hours to full subside so pitch can be used again. School has tried to put fencing up along the river but this has not made much difference. Small section is used as cricket outfield in summer.
	P3 (next to cricket square)	D2/M2			3.25	2		Flood plain issue as above
	P4 (bottom of site - viewed from pavilion)	D2/M2			3.25	2		Flood plain issue as above



Site	Pitch	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Pitch capacity (see Fig 3.1)	Use 21/22 MES	RAG	Comments/assumptions
Trailfinders Sports Club, Vallis Way West, Ealing, W13 ODD home to Ealing Trailfinders FC		5	A large pavilion with changing areas, communal spaces, canteen, fitness centre, hospitality suites and bar area. Rated as 5/5 by club. The club has recently completed and opened an Indoor Training Centre with a 3G training space of 2,207sqm with a training capacity for 50 players (2 squads of 25), toilets, changing, office and storage areas. There is also a three lane indoor cricket training space (436sqm) at the rear of the indoor 3G with a first floor viewing balcony.	Sports Club	38 peak hours - 6- 10pm weekday s, 9am- 6pm weekend s.	40/50 hours a week in total - some unused capacity in the peak period		Ealing Trailfinders Rugby Club (pro squad of 50 and 30 academy players) and Ealing Trailfinders 1871 (amateur club). Ealing Trailfinders is the largest in the county with development teams (u23, u21) plus, 270 youth players (11 boys teams, aged u12-u18), 260 mini rugby players (34 mixed teams, aged u7-u11) and 100 adult male players (5 teams). The club estimates player numbers have grown by approximately 10% over the past 3 seasons. The club has no current plans for further growth and considers it is at optimum size with capacity in existing squads and facilities for 5-10% future growth. The club has a high quality AGP primarily used by the first team competing at the top end of the Rugby Championship. The surface was laid approx. 8 years ago but still in good condition. There is a regular planned maintenance schedule which includes sweeping, brushing a replacement of rubber crumb. Playing and training facilities rated as 5/5 by the club with the opening in December 2021 of a new build indoor 3G training pitch. The pro club requires enhanced spectator seating capacity to secure future promotion to the Rugby Premiership.





Site	Pitch	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Pitch capacity (see Fig 3.1)	Use 21/22 MES	RAG	Comments/assumptions
	Second AGP - match lights	5			38 peak hours - 6- 10pm weekday s, 9am- 6pm weekend s.	75/80 hours a week in total - some unused capacity in the peak period		High quality rubber crumb AGP with floodlights around perimeter of pitch. Carpet was laid approx. 5 years ago but still in good condition with regular planned maintenance. Extensive community use including schools, football and rugby teams. The addition of the new indoor training space since December 2021 has increased the training capacity of the site freeing up space on the outdoor 3G pitches.
	Small sided AGP (not rugby compliant) - training lights					40/50 hours a week in total - some unused capacity in the peak period		Small sided 5/7 a side floodlit 3G pitch, in good condition with no reported issues. Football use.
	P1- mobile training lights	4 D2/M2			3.25	3		Full sized grass rugby pitch primarily used as a training pitch and for football on alternate Saturdays (ETFC 1sts), and some Wednesday afternoons (UWE FC). One end of the pitch is over-marked 7v7 and used by ETFC minisoccer teams on Sunday mornings. Grass Coverage good and pitch is well maintained. Pitch was relayed approx. 3 years ago. Some issues reported during wet weather with quality of pitch. Local schools use the pitch on an ad-hoc basis during the summer months.



Site	Pitch	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security o access	Pitch capacity (see Fig 3.1)	Use 21/22 MES	RAG	Comments/assumptions
	P2 - mobile training lights	4 D2/M2			3.25	3		Over-marked for ETFC u11 and u12s football on Sundays
Wasps FC Twyford Avenue Sports Ground, Acton, W3 9QA	Stadium AGP - match lights (also on FA Register for affiliated league play) built in 2020.	5	The changing rooms and main building are in poor to average condition (approx. 150 yrs old) and rated 3/5 by the three user clubs. The building needs major refurbishment or replacement with larger changing capacity (and gym/rehab facilities) to facilitate growth particularly of the women and girl's game. This is a long-term aspiration for the club in view of the restricted space available for expansion and the significant costs.		7am to 10pm daily. 38 peak hours - 6- 10pm weekday s, 9am- 6pm weekend s.	Monday to Thursday 100% of peak evening slots booked out for rugby (50%) and football (50%). Playfinder shows unused capacity in the peak period on Friday evenings (2hrs available), minimal use on Saturdays (6 hrs available) and Sunday early evenings 2 hrs available).		Wasps FC community rugby and sports club (pro rugby club relocated to Coventry in 2014). AGP installed at the end of 2020 but only came into use early 2022. The AGP is used for matches and training primarily by Wasps teams but also for training by London Japanese (40 playing members) and New Zealand Kiwis London (single men's team). It was noted that the provision of the AGP should support maintaining the grass floodlit pitch (P3) to a higher quality. The club have planning permission to build a second AGP onsite and see this as the short-term priority (along with upgrading the car park) and provision of lights to another grass pitch as a medium-term priority. There are other occupants on site including a running school and physio. A former rugby player runs a charity/academy including summer camps for children. The Wasps club currently has 200 mini rugby players (10 mixed teams, aged u6-u11), 200 youth players (8 boys' teams, aged u12-u18), 55 adult male players (2 women's teams, one Premier 15s pro team and one amateur social team). The junior and women's



Site	Pitch	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Pitch capacity (see Fig 3.1)	Use 21/22 MES	RAG	Comments/assumptions
								sections have reduced in playing members over the last three seasons. The club attributes this in part to RFU rules impacting on the player pathway for female age grade rugby and maintains an aspiration to overcome these issues and grow girls age grade teams. London Japanese RFC has grown its membership since entering the Merit Table Leagues. NZ Kiwis has not grown in recent seasons but has modest growth aspirations. There is a section of the site that is hired to Twyford School (2x full size pitches (marked for both rugby and football) and 3x mini soccer pitches.



Site	Pitch	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Pitch capacity (see Fig 3.1)	Use 21/22 MES	RAG	Comments/assumptions
	P1	3/4 D1/M1			3	1.5		Four full size grass pitches on the site are used extensively by Wasps FC as well as by two single team London clubs (London Japanese and New Zealand Kiwis London) for home fixtures. The main grass pitch (pitch 1) is used for matches. This pitch has a fenced perimeter, small dugout areas, and a scoreboard. The pitch was in good condition at the time of the site visit with good quality posts and pads. Other regular programming includes Try Tag Rugby and Middlesex CB. The Wasps club rates the quality of the grass pitches as 4/5 (NZ Kiwis as 3/5) although drainage improvements are identified as needed to reduce cancellations in prolonged periods of wet weather.
	Ρ2	4 D1/M1			3	1.5		The second pitch is located to the left of the new AGP. The posts need straightening but the pitch appeared in good condition with good line markings and cut well.
	P3 - match lights	4 D1/M1			3	2		The third pitch (right of the AGP) appeared generally in good condition but with a number of localised holes requiring attention. This pitch is floodlit and was used heavily for training before the AGP was installed in 2020. The inclusion of a second AGP would further help preserve the quality of the grass pitches on site and enable expansion of the social rugby



Site	Pitch	Rating	Ancillary facilities	Security of access	Pitch capacity (see Fig 3.1)	Use 21/22 MES	RAG	Comments/assumptions
								programme including walking rugby sessions for older people.
	P4 - training lights (to half pitch)	4 D1/M1			3	2		The fourth pitch is located behind the AGP and is in good condition with good line markings and is well cut and well maintained. In addition, there are two junior rugby pitches on the playing field that are also marked for football use by a local school.



4. The Current and Future Picture of Provision for Rugby (Step 5)

4.1 Current

Overall, there are sufficient rugby pitches in Ealing to meet current demand. Trailfinders Sports Ground has the greatest demand; the professional and amateur club have between them well over 700 playing members (an increase of nearly 200 since 2016) and to address the growing imbalance between pitch supply and demand has, since 2014, provided two floodlit AGPs plus a smaller floodlit training area at this site and a large indoor training centre opened in 2022.

Wasps FC has also further grown its playing membership since the last PPS now with over 500 regular players including professional and amateur women's teams. The club has capacity for further growth having recently opened a new floodlit AGP. The club has a planning consent for a second AGP which, if provided, would provide capacity for further growth and, potentially, additional training capacity for Actonians located close by.

Geographically, there are no opportunities for rugby currently in the south-west quarter of the borough around Southall. Grasshoppers RFC, a large club with a new top quality ground, is just over the borough boundary and is the closest option for players from this part of the borough. Ealing Trailfinders is very centrally located making it reasonably accessible from all parts of the borough. For age grade rugby, only available at Trailfinders (central) and Wasps (east), there is also currently a gap north of the A40.

Actonians RFC have a training capacity issue and are constrained from growth on their shared site with football and cricket although with the recent reopening of the Gunnersbury Park pitch with a new pavilion, there is an opportunity to develop Sunday morning mini rugby in future at this site in response to expressed demand from those of their adult members who are parents, although it would be better for the club if mini rugby activity took place at the club rather than off site. Alternatively, the Hanwell RC, could potentially develop Sunday age grade opportunities at Gunnersbury Park complementing their use of the pitch for home league matches on Saturdays. Gunnersbury and Actonians are in very close proximity to Wasps FC, an established large junior/youth rugby club.

The quality of supply is good with the standard of maintenance being, overall, very good. Improvements to drainage at Old Priorian's RFC home pitch at St Benedict's School and the provision of match quality floodlights since the last PPS have improved the situation for this club significantly by providing much enhanced capacity for training and reducing the number of match cancellations.

Similarly, the addition of a rugby compliant AGP at Wasps FC's ground has alleviated pressure of demand on the grass pitches at Wasps FC and provided capacity for further growth of this key club. The club aspires to add a second AGP to support its further development.

4.2 Future

Planned growth - Both the senior clubs - Trailfinders and Wasps - consider they have capacity with their existing facilities to accommodate further growth and perceive substantial latent demand particularly in age grade girl's rugby. In the past, Northolt RFC has also indicated an aspiration to develop opportunities north of the A40 for children to play age grade rugby.

Potential effect of population change - To estimate the potential impact of population growth over the strategy period to 2031 on the need for rugby pitch capacity in the peak period, Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC) tool has been used.



To meet rugby demand from 38,306 additional borough residents (as currently forecast²) and assuming current levels of rugby demand by age group for matches and training in the peak period, the PPC indicates that the equivalent capacity of +2.71 additional natural turf full size equivalent rugby pitches for matches will be needed in the borough with sufficient floodlit provision to accommodate an additional 3.3 hours a week of training use.

The provision of a second AGP at Wasps FC's ground would provide this additional capacity which would help meet new demand generated by the Acton housing and population growth area; but would likely not meet new demand in the Southall growth area. However, rugby activity and development within Ealing remains very largely focused on secured club sites as opposed to in public parks and school playing fields. It would therefore be best to focus on improving and investing in future new capacity on existing secured club sites with good accessibility by public transport.

 $^{^2\ {\}rm GLA}$ 2018-based housing-led population projections (Released February 2020)





5. Key Findings and Issues for Rugby (Step 6)

	Rugby
The main characteristics of the <u>current</u> supply of and demand for provision	Since the last assessment of needs for rugby union in 2016, several commercial and voluntary sector organisations have funded facility improvement projects in Ealing. Most prominently Trailfinders Sports Club Ground in West Ealing has transformed in recent years to a top-class rugby venue with excellent facilities for Ealing Trailfinders Rugby Club, including a new indoor training facility opened in 2022.
	Ealing Trailfinders is one of the premier clubs in Middlesex with a professional first team - current champions of the second tier Rugby Championship - with a 50 strong squad plus an academy of 30 young players plus a large amateur club (Ealing Trailfinders 1871), with development teams at u21 and u23, three men's league teams, a veterans team, plus large youth and mini rugby sections for both girls and boys.
	Wasps FC, the amateur club remaining in the borough following the relocation of the English Premiership professional club to Coventry, also has a very large playing membership. The club has invested in a floodlit rugby compliant artificial grass pitch (AGP) and has planning permission for a second floodlit AGP at its Twyford Avenue Sports Ground in Acton.
	Between the eight Ealing based clubs and two expat clubs playing in the borough, there are a total of 19 regular adult men's Saturday league sides, a further three occasional men's teams and two women's teams (both at Wasps FC). Both the senior clubs – Wasps and Trailfinders – have development teams for transition between youth age grade rugby and senior rugby.
	Currently, just Wasps FC and Ealing Trailfinders have junior sections offering both youth boys age grade rugby and mini rugby for boys and girls. Between these two large community rugby clubs there are 19 boys age grade sides and 44 mixed mini rugby sides. At both clubs the junior sections have continued to grow over recent seasons despite the programme interruptions caused by the Covid pandemic.
	With regard to women and girls, the Ealing Trailfinders has developed a pathway for female players through the mixed mini age grades to girl's youth age grade rugby, Ealing Emeralds. In the past, this pathway has provided players to the England Elite Programme.
Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet <u>current</u> demand?	Security of access to rugby grounds in the borough is good, particularly for the largest clubs, and current demand is met by current supply. There is enough secured supply for league rugby (senior and youth) home fixtures (played mainly on Saturday afternoons) and with the provision of an AGP at Wasps, indoor training at Trailfinders and floodlights at Old Priorian's home ground since the last PPS, there is now sufficient capacity for midweek evening training at most of the club grounds. Both clubs with large age grade sections - Wasps and Trailfinders - report sufficient capacity on Sundays for junior matches and training.
	Actionians is the only club with a training capacity issue as it trains two evenings a week on one half of its only pitch under temporary floodlights. Lack of pitch capacity has also meant that, until recently, the Actonians club has been unable to meet demand for age grade rugby from its members with children. However, there is an opportunity to address this using the restored pitch and new sports hub pavilion and sports hall facilities at Gunnersbury Park.

	Rugby
Is the provision that is accessible of sufficient quality and appropriately maintained?	The pitches are considered to be maintained to a good standard and have at least adequate drainage. Improvements have been made since the last PPS particularly at St Benedicts.
	In terms of ancillary facilities, a priority is to improve the changing facilities at Actonians Sports Ground, particularly if mixed mini rugby is to be offered at the site in future, although this activity could be located at the new facilities in Gunnersbury Park, it would be better if mini rugby activity took place at the club.
	Similarly, refurbishing or replacing the pavilion at Wasps FC will be required to support the further development of women and girls' rugby in particular.
	Northolt RFC in Cayton Green Park is also looking to improve aspects of its pavilion to encourage more diverse use and to support income generation.
What are the main characteristics of the <u>future</u> supply and demand for provision?	To meet rugby demand from 38,306 additional borough residents (as currently forecast ³) and assuming current levels of rugby demand by age group for matches and training in the peak period, the equivalent capacity of +2.71 additional natural turf full size equivalent rugby pitches for matches will be needed in the borough with sufficient floodlit provision to accommodate an additional 3.3 hours a week of training use.
Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet <u>future</u> demand?	The provision of a second floodlit rugby compliant AGP at Wasps could provide the additional capacity needed to accommodate future demand from borough population growth. Whilst new housing and population is likely to be greatest on the west side of the borough, rugby activity and development is very largely focused on secured club sites as opposed to in public parks and school playing fields. It will therefore probably be best to provide any future new capacity on existing secured club sites with good accessibility by public transport.





 $^{^3}$ GLA 2018-based housing-led population projections (Released February 2020)