



# Community & Sport – A Cricket Case Study

A report from Overview & Scrutiny





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## Preface

By Cllr John Alden

**Chairman, Leisure, Sport and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee**



As the Committee was concerned about the low participation rate in sport, we decided to look at the delivery of cricket, being a sport played by all ages and all communities.

Had we chosen any other sport, it is likely that we would have come to similar conclusions.

It is appreciated that there has been a reduction in public funding for the provision of sports facilities, but research has shown that there is a substantial amount of goodwill within the population to help assist in the delivery of cricket and we therefore believe that with a combination of this effort, our cricket provision can be increased and improved.

It is worth mentioning that one of the major UK supermarket chains send their staff on cricket training days as they see this as one of the many ways that their abilities can be improved for the benefit of the business.

I hope that this Overview will help the delivery of cricket facilities within the city and as a consequence generate an increase in participation, resulting in a healthier population.

I would like to thank the Members of the Leisure, Sport and Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their support and especially the Members of the sub-group, Councillors Paula Smith, Muhammad Afzal and Des Hughes. Thanks also go to those members of cricket clubs who wrote to us or enabled us to visit their sites and to the Birmingham Sport and Physical Activity Partnership and the Warwickshire County Cricket Board who contributed to our research. We gained considerable insight into the issues around facilities for cricket from the draft Playing Pitch Strategy prepared for the City Council by consultants Scott Wilson. My thanks also goes to Sue Griffith and Baseema Begum who supported the Overview and drafted this report, and to Emma Williamson and her team who helped edit and proof read it.

*John EAlden.*



## Summary of Suggested Actions

1. That the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture support the Birmingham Sport and Physical Activity Partnership to:
  - complete their preparation of the single sport plan, the 'state of play' report for cricket in the city and submit that report to the Leisure, Sport and Culture O&S Committee for consultation by March 2012;
  - work with Sporting Equals on ways to enhance cricket participation in the city, particularly in the priority areas of Perry Barr, Erdington, Ladywood and Hodge Hill.
2. That the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture discuss with the Be Active programme coordinators the potential of cricket to increase sports participation in the priority areas of the city where sports participation rates are especially low.
3. That the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture supports the role of the Cricket Relationship Manager as a crucial link between the City Council and the local Governing Body for Cricket – the Warwickshire County Cricket Board (WCCB). A report on the success and achievements (and any difficulties) should be presented to the Leisure, Sport and Culture O&S Committee by March 2012. The report should include the views of the WCCB.
4. That the Birmingham Sport and Physical Activity Partnership should work with the Birmingham Parks Cricket League to investigate the possibility of increasing the number of clubs formed from keen informal players. The possibility of identifying mentors from affiliated clubs should be explored.
5. That the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture finalise the Playing Pitch Strategy and consider its adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document to the new Core Strategy by March 2012.
6. That the City Council corporate working group, set up to work on developing the Playing Pitch Strategy, should be retained to work across Directorates on the next stages of the strategy and to monitor its implementation. This group should report back to the Leisure, Sport and Culture O&S Committee on the



implementation of the priority action list as set out in the Strategy by March 2012.

7. That the Committee receives a report back in six months time regarding any achievements in securing funding for facilities at Perry Hall Playing Fields.
8. The Cabinet Member should submit a progress report to the Leisure, Sport and Culture O&S Committee by March 2012 on existing and proposed CAT projects for community sports facilities across the city.



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The Leisure, Sport & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee has been concerned for some time about the low participation rates in sport in the city, with less than 20% of adults taking part in active sport and recreation. Regular reports brought to this Committee by the Birmingham Sport and Physical Activity Partnership have set out the benefits of increasing participation in terms of mental and physical health, creating stronger and safer communities, benefits to children and young people and strengthening the economy.
- 1.1.2 The Committee became aware that, following the Government's June 2010 Emergency Budget, the extent of the reductions in public spending meant that the whole way we think of public services would need to change. Members appreciated that the Council's support to sports development would have to change towards an enabling, rather than providing role.
- 1.1.3 The Committee decided to take one sport, cricket, to illustrate the issues and explore the opportunities for developing new ways of delivering community sport to increase participation levels.
- 1.1.4 The key lines of enquiry that the overview sought to explore in relation to cricket were:
- What can the City Council and its Partners do to promote increased participation in sport and physical recreation through cricket, in priority areas of the city?
  - How well does the City Council work with its partners and are there ways that this partnership working can be improved?
  - How is the Third Sector supported and how can this be developed?
  - Are there enough cricket pitches in the right place and if not, what can be done?
- 1.1.5 This report sets out our findings in relation to these key questions and what this tells us about sports development in the future. We also propose some suggested actions for the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture to consider.

## 1.2 Methodology

- 1.2.1 At their meeting of the Leisure, Sport and Culture O&S Committee in September 2010, a sub-group of Members were asked to lead on collecting evidence and drawing conclusions. However some of the evidence gathering took place in the full Committee meetings, so that all Members of the Committee were involved.



- 1.2.2 Members of the sub-group were: Cllr Paula Smith, Cllr John Alden, Cllr Muhammad Afzal and Cllr Des Hughes. The Chairmanship of the sub-group was initially held by Cllr Paula Smith, but following family bereavement it was passed to Cllr John Alden. Members of the Leisure, Sport and Culture O&S Committee were, in addition, Cllr Philip Parkin, Cllr David Pears, Cllr Margaret Waddington, Cllr Roger Harmer and Cllr Mahmood Hussain.



## 2 Background

### 2.1 The Need to Promote Sport and Physical Activity in Birmingham

- 2.1.1 Birmingham has one of the lowest participation rates in sport and recreation in the country with less than 20% of adults taking part in active sport and leisure. The city has the lowest participation rates of all Core Cities.
- 2.1.2 The latest available figures from the Active People's Survey 4<sup>1</sup> showed that Birmingham's rate of participation in sport was at 19.4% for the recording year October 2009 – October 2010. This was an increase from 18.1% in 2008/09 and 17.2% in 2007/08 for the same monitoring period respectively. More detailed information is available for 2008/09, which showed that whilst the national values had significantly increased from previous Active People Surveys, the levels for Birmingham had not changed.
- 2.1.3 The areas in Birmingham with the lowest levels of participation were recorded in Ladywood (12%) and Erdington (12.8%). The Birmingham Sport and Physical Activity Partnership has therefore identified priority areas across the city for promoting active sport (Ladywood, Erdington, Yardley and Perry Barr). Further research presented to the Review Group by the Birmingham Sport and Physical Activity Partnership showed that in these areas team games, such as cricket, are very popular. Team games have additional value as they promote the importance of both individual effort and responsibility to a group. The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) put forward the following view:

All competitive team sports can play a vital role in the education and personal development of young people, offering opportunities to lead healthy, purposeful lives. But we strongly believe that cricket has special attributes because it promotes leadership, teamwork and strategic awareness. It teaches respect, how to win, to lose and cope with setback; is the ultimate team game, demanding both individual and collective responsibility; insists on high standards of conduct and provides good role models; is wholly inclusive, drawing together people from all cultures and backgrounds. It gives opportunities to boys and girls, as well as to those with special needs; is able to reach all of our major ethnic communities in a way no other sport clearly can.

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<sup>1</sup> Research by Sport England: [www.sportengland.org/research/active\\_people\\_survey/active\\_people\\_survey\\_4.aspx](http://www.sportengland.org/research/active_people_survey/active_people_survey_4.aspx). The information is based on answers to the question of how many people take part in 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity on at least three days in the week. The survey asks this question by telephone of adults over 16 and the results are expressed as percentages of the total population (of adults).



- 2.1.4 Low participation in sport has been shown to have a detrimental effect on the health and well-being of residents. Evidence provided by the Birmingham Sport and Physical Activity Partnership stated that:
- Around 140,000 adults in Birmingham are estimated to be obese and about 50,000 adults suffer from diabetes. An estimated 1,400 deaths across the city each year are related to obesity and being overweight;
  - Among the Core Cities<sup>2</sup>, Birmingham has the least physically active adult population, the highest proportion of adults with Type II diabetes, and the second highest rate of childhood obesity among children in Year 6;
  - The Department of Health estimates that the total cost of physical inactivity to the Birmingham's NHS is around £13.2 million each year;
  - If an additional 23,000 people regularly exercise, there is potential to prevent up to 175 premature deaths and 1,620 cases of hypertension.
- 2.1.5 The Birmingham Sport and Physical Activity Partnership is completing an exercise to identify those sports that can have the greatest impact on getting more people, more active, more often and more people starting, staying and succeeding in sport. Cricket scores highly in this appraisal (the final strategy is yet to be published).
- 2.1.6 Further research has shown that cricket scores highly against the objective of 'benefiting the economy' as each Test Match at Edgbaston attracts £5 million income to the city. Cricket also scores highly as it widens access to sport through its popularity across Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups. Cricket also scores well against the indicator of 'increasing participation in sport'.

## Promoting Sport and Physical Activity in BME Communities

- 2.1.7 Research by the Birmingham Sport and Physical Activity Partnership states that:

Birmingham has the youngest profile of any European city and is one of the most diverse. It is therefore important to consider participation in typically under-represented groups and in the case of cricket, participation by black and minority ethnic (BME) groups is most relevant. For the profiles in Birmingham it was found that BME groups, against the national trend, were more likely to participate in at least three days of moderate intensity participation per week. Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities that show low levels of participation overall, actually present a high proportion of male participation in team sports such as football and cricket. This high participation can in part be explained by the younger age profile of BME communities.

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<sup>2</sup> The Core Cities are the eight economically most important cities outside of London and are made up of Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield.



- 2.1.8 During the December 2010 meeting of the Leisure, Sport and Culture O&S Committee, Members heard from the Head of Marketing and Communications of 'Sporting Equals', an independent charity aimed at involving people from under represented communities in sport and physical activity and operates largely in areas of high BME populations such as Birmingham, Bradford, Leicester and London.
- 2.1.9 Sporting Equals are working closely with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) in Birmingham and with local teams to increase participation in cricket across the city. This includes
- Identifying regional BME clubs and groups to capacity build and support to enhance their service delivery;
  - Brokering relations between any shadow BME leagues and formal affiliated structure;
  - Learning from existing models/good practice – buddy usage, supported access and mentoring communities clubs. For example there is already recognition that there is less participation in inner city areas, however following initial consultation, maintenance of cricket pitches has been identified as a barrier to players using local pitches. Some of those consulted by Sporting Equals were willing to travel up to approximately 10 miles (outside of the city) to access venues to practice.
- 2.1.10 Sporting Equals is furthering its work with cricket in Birmingham and will be meeting with the Warwickshire County Cricket Club Board. As a result of the discussion at the Committee, introductions were made that will hopefully lead to work in the Perry Barr Constituency, one of the priority areas for increasing sports participation.

## 2.2 The Changing Context

### Government Spending Review

- 2.2.1 In October 2010, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the Spending Review giving the headline allocations for all areas of public sector spending between 2011/12 and 2014/15. In January 2011, Birmingham City Council along with other authorities, received details of its allocation of Formula Grant for the next two financial years which showed a reduction of 10.2% in 2011/12 and 7.3% in 2012/13.
- 2.2.2 The implications of these spending reductions are considerable; their impact on the Leisure, Sport and Culture Portfolio means that the costs of maintaining sports pitches to the high standard required for cricket may not be met through mainstream budgets. Partnership working within the Birmingham Sport and Physical Activity Partnership is more than ever important and new ideas such as closer working with the community within the 'Big Society', co-production and Community Asset Transfer gain increased importance.



## Big Society

2.2.3 The Big Society is a Government agenda that seeks to shift power from politicians to people. The main themes are:

- Devolving power to communities and local government;
- A greater role in public services for voluntary and community organisations;
- Supporting the voluntary and community sector.

2.2.4 The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Human Resources presented a paper to a conference on the Birmingham Perspective on 'Building the Big Society' in November 2010, and stated that:

We need to remove the dependency culture by community groups on the City Council. This would mean that there also needs to be a change in the voluntary sector; a review of their role and how they operate in society. Capacity building is about ensuring that the voluntary and community sector have the skills, knowledge, structures and resources to realise their full potential.



## 3 Cricket – A Case Study

### 3.1 Growing Participation in Cricket

3.1.1 Support for growing sports participation is promoted at the national level through Sport England. Each recognised sport has a governing body and a “whole sport plan”. The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has a five-year strategic plan for cricket, “Grounds to Play”. County Cricket Boards steer the development of the game in local areas, they have a range of programmes to support junior and club cricket and employ Cricket Development Managers.

3.1.2 The Warwickshire County Cricket Board (WCCB) covers Birmingham. Their evidence emphasised the importance of cricket to Birmingham:

We think that cricket has the ability to increase sports participation especially, amongst young people, in the inner city areas of Birmingham. Our aim is to develop cricket and clearly there is a lot of interest in the game in the city and especially in the inner city areas such as Small Heath, Saltley, Sparkbrook, Aston, Handsworth etc. We also recognise the demographics of the city and the fact that Birmingham has Europe’s youngest population. Therefore we feel that cricket is a very important part of Birmingham life.

3.1.3 Sports development relies heavily on partnership working involving the Council, sport governing bodies and the voluntary/third sector. The Birmingham Sports and Physical Activity Partnership (BSPAP), part of the Be Birmingham nest of partnerships, plays a crucial role in promoting all community sport, including cricket. Their aim is to:

Get more people, more active, more often and more people starting, staying and succeeding in sport.

3.1.4 Over the last few years, the prominence of sports development within the Council has declined in correlation with budget pressures. For example, the Council no longer employs Sports Development Officers.

3.1.5 In an effort to address these changes and to support National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of Sport to deliver their priorities the BSPAP (in partnership with the City Council and NGBs) has put in place new ways of working to support sport (including cricket) that includes:

- A multi-agency sport forum: for cricket, the Birmingham Cricket Partnership. These sport forums are led by a prominent personality drawn from any of the partners; A state of play report which is a snapshot in time of the issues and opportunities for each sport, including facilities, coaching, club development and volunteering etc;



- A relationship manager provided by the City Council to promote partnership working and ensure that links with the Council are strengthened.

3.1.6 In addition each Constituency has a Sports Partnership which brings together Council and community policies and activities within each Constituency. The partnerships produce sports plans for their areas and these are crucial in developing involvement and increasing participation.

## 3.2 Clubs and Leagues

3.2.1 There are 29 affiliated clubs in the city, including 16 in the north of the city and 13 in the south. The priority of the WCCB is to support and develop the affiliated clubs in the city:

WCCB works in Birmingham, Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire to develop cricket and invests about £700k annually in cricket development across all of those areas. We also work with partners to raise other funding. Our main work is focussed on supporting established, private affiliated clubs, schools, educating & developing coaches, disability cricket, women and girls cricket and the development of excellence – finding and developing talented players.

3.2.2 A considerable amount of cricket is played within the Birmingham Parks League (BPL). It was founded in 1893, as the Birmingham Publics Parks Cricket Association (BPPCA). It is a major provider of grass roots cricket in Birmingham consisting of 56 teams on Sunday and 24 teams on Saturday – a total of 80 teams playing cricket at the weekend. It has over 1500 players registered and playing cricket every weekend of the season, drawn from communities across the city. It is one of the few Leagues in the UK which does not require teams to have their own privately owned grounds to play cricket – matches are played on grounds owned and maintained by the Council.

### Two Tier Provision

3.2.3 The Birmingham Parks League told us that:

There is a two tier provision of cricket in the city of Birmingham. Firstly there is the organised, private pitch owning clubs who play in the Birmingham or Warwickshire League – and then there is the grass roots cricket providers like the Birmingham Cricket League who use city pitches in public parks for cricket. The needs of both of these tiers are widely divergent – for example a club may require money to build/renovate an existing pavilion, whilst we may require a toilet to be available in the city park that is accessible to the cricketers. This is just one example of the divergent needs of ourselves and private clubs.



- 3.2.4 Whilst the WCCB told us that they do not have financial resources to commit to the Parks the Birmingham Cricket League (BCL) would like to improve their contact with the WCCB:

We are looking to work more closely with the County Cricket Board in future – however we also recognise the scope of these interactions is limited as we operate in two different spheres. In some way, it is easier for the board to work with private clubs who own their own pitches than it is to work with a grass roots organisation like ourselves.

- 3.2.5 However there is one example of a group of cricket players in Birmingham who were determined to move between the two tiers. They told us:

Attock Cricket Club was founded in the early 70's by a group of friends. Attock CC was not a club as such when it started, because it did not have a ground or any of the other facilities that one would associate with a club. It was merely a “club” by name, set-up by a group of friends who wanted to get together at the weekend and play a game of cricket and socialise ... The Club is now competing at a very high level in the Birmingham and District Premier Cricket League against clubs, which have been established for over a hundred years. The club's meteoric rise to the higher echelons of premier club competition in the UK has been achieved through the dedication, sacrifice, loyalty, and very hard work of its members both on and off the field of play.

- 3.2.6 They grew from being a group of players dependant on pitches in Council parks to an affiliated club with their own ground:

After many more years of hard work and heartaches, our chairman managed to acquire our present ground located in the picturesque surroundings of Moseley School ... The facilities in the ground were not up to the club league standard when it was acquired, however with hard work and dedication of our chairman and some of the other senior members, we managed to acquire necessary funds to improve the facilities. Our facilities are now second to none.

- 3.2.7 Within the Birmingham Sport and Physical Activity Partnership there is support for both affiliated and unaffiliated clubs. However there is a tension between those who think that sports facilities should be freely available for casual play and those who think regular committed players should form associations and clubs.



## 3.3 Playing Pitches

- 3.3.1 Playing pitches are provided in public parks and open spaces by the City Council and some unattached school playing fields are available for community use. Playing Pitches have an important role to play in meeting the overall priorities and objectives for community sport: a high quality, accessible supply of facilities is key to delivering the desirable increase in sport and physical activity and to meet the development priorities of a number of sports.
- 3.3.2 Much of the evidence we received on playing pitches came from the draft Playing Pitch Strategy, presented to Members, having been drawn up by specialist consultants. The Strategy was developed to protect pitches against development pressures; identify opportunities to respond to increased demand from a growing population; provide a framework for identifying priorities for investment and provide a steer to the Council in its role as a provider and enabler of pitch provision and in particular provide a steer on leasing sites to established sports clubs.
- 3.3.3 Members of the Cricket Review Group visited several playing fields across the city in October 2010 to see some of the issues for themselves.

### Demand and Supply

- 3.3.4 The Strategy identified a significant increase in demand since the previous Playing Pitch Strategy. The 2003 Strategy identified demand equating to 850 teams (across all the sports assessed); the audit compiled for this Strategy identified in excess of 1,900 teams. However, whereas demand has more than doubled, supply has remained largely static.
- 3.3.5 The current supply of public and private sites for the use of cricket within the city is as follows:

Ownership/Management	Number of Sites	Number of Pitches	% (of sites) in Community Use
<b>Birmingham City Council*</b>	205	514	96%**
<b>Private Providers</b>	57	118	89%
<b>Further/Higher Education</b>	14	54	57%

\* includes education and leisure pitches \*\* not all sites currently have pitches operational

- 3.3.6 In addition there are indications that latent demand for cricket exists across the city. Most notably the Birmingham Cricket League (BCL) has a waiting list. In their evidence, the BCL said:

The development of new pitches would also help – as a grass root organisation we have to turn teams away due to limited number of pitches. If we had 4 more pitches, we can easily create another division of 8 teams. Similarly if we had 8 pitches we could create another division. The demand is out there, however we



realise the current harsh prevailing financial realities and so we recognise that opportunities to grow will be limited.

3.3.7 In addition to this, feedback from clubs also suggests there is some suppressed demand. Over half (56%) of all clubs responding to the survey conducted for the Strategy reported 'lack of appropriate facilities' as a key issue for them. All of these clubs have plans to recruit more members. Cricket expects a 1% year on year growth in the number of participants.

3.3.8 The Strategy reported that:

On the basis of the assessment and additional evidence collected, it is clear that current quantity of cricket pitches is at best adequate, but in reality is at capacity and showing clear signs of an inability to meet demand.

3.3.9 In addition, supply is not necessarily in areas of highest demand. The Chairman of the BCL stated that:

The distribution of pitches is not uniform. The majority of our pitches are at Perry Hall. We have no pitches in Small Heath, Bordesley Green, Alum Rock, Sparkhill and Sparkbrook. I believe that if we had access to city Education Owned Pitches (which are suitable for cricket) this could help to meet the demand as well as make the distribution of cricket availability more uniform.

3.3.10 Some private clubs make their facilities available to visiting clubs. The survey found that there may be capacity at some clubs with their own grounds who only run a limited number of teams that could be used by other clubs, but local league organisers reported issues with the cost of hiring these facilities.

### **Quality of Pitches**

3.3.11 Cricket clubs were asked as part of the survey carried out as part of the Playing Pitch Strategy to rate the quality of the pitches they use. 72% of affiliated clubs responding rated their facilities as 'excellent' or 'good' compared to only 29% of clubs/teams overall, and only three of the 46 clubs from BCL teams. Notably, the majority of pitches rated negatively by clubs were in council ownership.

3.3.12 The BCL have said that:

Most of our focus is on ensuring that we can get the best surfaces to play cricket on for our members – we recognise that we play on council pitches, however this should not serve to limit the quality of the pitches that our members play on.

3.3.13 The Birmingham & District Premier Cricket League in their evidence stated that:



We urge the City Council to support and encourage cricket in the city as much as possible bearing in mind its limited financial resources. Particular attention should be paid to improving the quality of the playing surfaces provided, which should in turn, improve the standard of cricket.

3.3.14 Two venues were specifically mentioned. Perry Hall Park, the main venue for the BCL, do not have a changing room or toilet facilities. Handsworth Cricket Club is the only club within the Premier Cricket League which plays on a Council owned/maintained pitch:

It is imperative that the quality of the ground is maintained, then improved, to enable the Club to fulfil the criteria demanded by the League and its National Governing Body and there are a variety of penalties available to the Management Board if these criteria are not fulfilled, including relegation back to a Feeder League.

3.3.15 Grounds maintenance often emerges as a key issue in any pitch assessment. However, not all the negative views are attributable to grounds maintenance specifications or quality of service. In many cases, because public pitches are often located within publicly accessible open space, there is a 'quality ceiling' i.e. they are open to unofficial sporting use and other recreational use. Informal football use for example can damage sensitive cricket pitches especially the wicket area. At the Ackers in the constituency of Yardley, a new pitch has been written off due to informal football and pitches at Ward End Park and Perry Hall Playing Fields have suffered damage.

3.3.16 The pitch at Handsworth Park is fenced off from the rest of the public park. Members visiting the site in October 2010 were impressed by the level of upkeep and met a representative from the Council's grounds maintenance contractor on site. However it is likely to be impossible in the future (for legal reasons) to fence off cricket pitches in "public open space" – the situation at Handsworth Park will remain unique.

3.3.17 The Playing Pitch Strategy has identified the priorities for improvements to Council pitches in public open space and included:

- High priority/short term work e.g. Holders Lane and Perry Hall Park;
- Long term priority work e.g. Cofton Park, Queensbridge Playing Fields.

3.3.18 Funding streams include section 106 money or other regeneration money (for example Cofton Park may receive support as part of the Longbridge Area Action Plan).

## Changing Facilities

3.3.19 Overall 48 of the 71 sites with cricket pitches across the city (both private and Council owned) are served by changing rooms. This overall picture improves when considering actual pitch numbers with community use: two out of three pitches are served by changing rooms (68%). However,



despite the presence of changing rooms at a large proportion of sites, clubs report some quality issues.

3.3.20 More than half of the clubs (heavily skewed by responses from BCL clubs) responding to the survey report access to no changing facilities, or use of provision they rate as 'average' or 'poor'. As with pitch quality ratings, affiliated clubs with their own facilities rate ancillary facilities more positively. The Birmingham Cricket League are particularly disappointed about the lack of toilet facilities in Perry Hall Playing Fields.

### **Council Owned Pitches**

3.3.21 The City Council provides 34 cricket squares:

- 25 pitches in parks funded by Leisure, Sport and Culture Portfolio;
- 7 pitches funded by Children, Young People and Families Portfolio; these are part funded by CYP&F and Leisure due to external lettings use at weekends;
- 2 Schools, funded by CYP&F.

3.3.22 The Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture's portfolio maintains these pitches through Grounds Maintenance contracts. The total costs of all cricket maintenance per annum is £236k which includes all outfield strips and minimum maintenance to artificial wickets. This breaks down as follows: Leisure portfolio £195k, Children, Young People and Families (CYP&F) portfolio £41k. Taking into account the parks funded part of CYP&F playing fields for external parks lettings, plus parks costs, the average cost per cricket square maintenance is £7.4k per annum.

3.3.23 This is a relatively high cost, as the surface of the pitch must be rolled to keep it level and free from bumps and the grass (especially around the wicket) must be kept short. A higher level of maintenance is required for safe play in comparison with football and rugby pitches.

3.3.24 Income for the 2009 season was £14.7k, giving income per square averaging at a little over £500 each per annum, resulting in a subsidy level of 93%.

3.3.25 The BCL told us that:

Price of available city controlled pitches is certainly one area where the city can do more. Each and every year, without fail, the price of pitches rises by approximately 5-6% however the commensurate improvement in the facilities does not occur. As a league operating at the lowest level of cricket, there is a limit to the price sensitivity that our teams can bear - especially when they cannot see the improvement in the available pitches.

### **Community Use of School Pitches**

3.3.26 In Birmingham, 57% of playing pitch sites across the Children, Young People and Families Directorate (CYP&F) stock is currently in secured community use. Not all these pitches are of a



sufficient quality to meet the demands of community sport in addition to school use. School facilities with community use may not always be open or accessible during school holidays, a peak time for the cricket season. Some schools have converted natural wickets to artificial surfaces which potentially meets the school's own needs, but not the standards of local leagues.

- 3.3.27 The Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme would have generated significant opportunities to use the capital investment to improve playing pitches. However following the cancellation of much of the programme, opportunities are more limited. The Playing Pitch Strategy identifies opportunities at George Dixon International School, which is still within the BSF programme. It suggests that the current cricket provision should be retained as part of the school's re-development and facilities providing community use supported.
- 3.3.28 Waverley School, Small Heath is also being rebuilt under the BSF programme. The Playing Pitch Strategy suggests that the masterplan should include cricket facilities, since this is potentially a key site for additional club use in an area of high demand from the community. It has been suggested that the new school could be open for hire by community groups to use, however it would be up to the groups using the site to pay for maintenance or apply for grant funding to enable maintenance and work to be carried out. This would mean for instance a cricket square would need to meet the Birmingham Cricket League standard for groups wishing to participate in the league.
- 3.3.29 It is also suggested in the Strategy that Shenley Court Academy could include the provision of a new cricket square as a long term possibility, but this would require partnership working with the Academy sponsors. The cricket facilities here are currently used only by the school.
- 3.3.30 Many primary and secondary schools have playing fields immediately adjacent to the school, however many years ago the Council purchased additional land for the use of those schools in heavily built up areas of the city without their own playing fields. There are now 33 sites across the city owned by the portfolio for CYP&F which are classified as 'unattached playing fields'. The use of these sites by schools has diminished over the last ten years or so due to lack of changing facilities, increases in pupil transport costs, increases in the popularity of non-traditional pitch based sports and the provision of indoor sports halls.
- 3.3.31 Unattached playing fields are mostly available for community use. Information received in January 2011 from officers of CYP&F, Transforming Education Asset Management Team, stated:
- Our policy is to encourage use by community through normal booking procedure as long as schools are not adversely affected – their use must have priority. We would welcome community discussions about increasing use for any sport on our fields as long as we could protect future schools' use.
- 3.3.32 The grounds maintenance is carried out by the Leisure, Sport and Culture's Ground Maintenance Contractors, with a sum being transferred to that portfolio from the CYP&F portfolio.



3.3.33 However one of the factors affecting the future use of CYP&F land is the need to provide additional reception and primary school places due to a dramatic increase in the birth rate across the city, especially in the central areas. Cabinet approved the expansion of 24 primary schools in November 2010. The future use of CYP&F land, including unattached playing fields will be detailed in the new Land Strategy being prepared.



## 4 Community Organisation of Sport

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Sport has seen a long tradition of community organisations of different types where people come together to play and organise sport. Indeed, sport is the largest single segment in the voluntary and community sector representing 25% of all volunteering. Traditional approaches at a local level include local community sports clubs e.g. tennis, football and cricket, with most of these accessible to all, and some owning their own assets.
- 4.1.2 Community sports centres run by the Council provide support for a range of community activities especially in areas where traditional sports clubs are few and facilities and access to them is limited. Sports Centres can also organise and support activities in other community locations e.g. coaching sessions in schools, and fitness sessions in community and health settings.

### 4.2 Community Asset Transfer

- 4.2.1 Members discussed the importance of volunteering and encouraging casual cricketers to think about forming clubs which would then be eligible for more funding. Several Members referred to clubs in their area of the city and the important social role that they played, especially with regard to involving young people in healthy sporting activities. We found that, in relation to cricket, voluntary groups broadly welcome the idea but expressed concerns about how equipped they were to take on more responsibility, given that the availability of public funds has reduced.
- 4.2.2 One approach being promoted is community asset transfer, where public assets are taken out of City Council control and allocated or sold to local groups. Views on this were mixed. The Birmingham Parks League in their written evidence said that:

Transferring assets out of city control into local sports collectives (or the like) is not an avenue that we as a league would approve of. Usually, all this does is to disenfranchise the current users, either by the increase of prices, or by the decision of the sports collective to move the team into the Birmingham or Warwickshire league – in order to gain funding for any improvements they believe they require. In our opinion, if pitches are transferred out of city control to “quasi-private” organisation, this will affect the viability of our league as we need a pre-requisite number of pitches to operate a league, as well as disenfranchise those people who do not want to play in the official “club” scene. It must be recognised that we operate in a very fluid environment where teams are usually colleagues, friends or family members who want to play competitive



cricket, but without all the necessary regulations required to run as a private club.

4.2.3 However in their written evidence to the Committee, the Warwickshire County Cricket Board said:

In our facility plan for the city we recommended that community asset transfer agreements be looked at for teams to empower them to form themselves into clubs and manage grounds pitches themselves. Encouraging more clubs to form from existing Parks League players is a significant challenge and will depend on whether grounds can be made available. No grounds, no clubs!

4.2.4 Cabinet agreed the adoption of a new protocol and lease on the transfer of assets to third sector organisations in March 2011. Whilst the Council has a history of transferring land and building to the voluntary and community sector, currently this is done within each Directorate independently. A corporate way of working, which aims to ensure fairness, consistency and transparency across all service areas, has now been developed.

4.2.5 The protocol includes terms for valuing the activity at sites for market rent/lease purposes. Requirements include the need for an impact assessment to be carried out by the City Council with those community groups coming forward to create sports hubs and those wishing to volunteer. The role of City Council could then be as a “relationship manager” ensuring that legal and licensing regulations are complied with.

4.2.6 However, there is some concern within the Council about releasing assets to community groups. For example information received in January 2011 from officers of CYP&F stated:

We are nervous about long leases, as this will restrict any future school use, so we need to be minded of this. Also with this in mind, land should be retained for possible future school expansions and new build. In addition, as we expand schools on already confined sites (our population is growing fast), it will increase the need for off site sporting facilities.

### 4.3 Community Sports Hubs

4.3.1 Another reaction to this changing context is the development of the ‘Community Sports Hub’. This involves multi sport sites in the ownership of the Council which can be transferred (leased) to a community based organisation. The management organisation (the community based organisation) needs a business plan and a sports development plan; it may have sections or clubs for individual sports within it and local residents’ representation. Sites should be open to all and managed for the benefit of an identifiable local geographic area. The Holford Drive Site in Perry Barr is the most developed example of this concept in Birmingham.



- 4.3.2 Following the public meeting of interested parties in October 2010, three clubs were selected to form the Community Sports Hub in Perry Barr. These clubs will promote cricket, tennis, football and boxing. A Business Plan is being drawn up to enable the release of the capital receipt realised from the sale of part of the site. This money is likely to attract match funding from Sport England and the sport governing bodies, such as the Football Association, England and Wales Cricket Board, the Lawn Tennis Association and the Boxing Federation.
- 4.3.3 The details of the lease between the Holford Drive Community Sports Hub and the Council have yet to be agreed. The methodology of calculating leasehold payments which recognises the 'worth' to the community of the Community Sports Hub was agreed at the Cabinet meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2011. This concept of 'Valuing Worth' is crucial to enable rental levels to be set at a level that the community can afford.
- 4.3.4 Committee Members visited three other sites where groups were keen to negotiate leases with the Council to enable Community Sports Hubs to be developed. Members were disappointed at the lack of progress at Spring Lane, Erdington, Belchers Lane, Bordesley Green and Green Lane, Small Heath.
- 4.3.5 The major advantage at Holford Drive is the capital receipt available to the project resulting from the sale of part of the site. Similar capital injections are not available at the other sites, although some might be forthcoming at Belchers Lane should the car parking proposal go ahead. At all the sites, the nature and cost of the lease with the Council seems to be the key to progress. The work being undertaken on 'Valuing Worth' is fundamental here as it should enable the Council to move away from rents set at commercial rates and towards leases that recognise the importance of the sports hub projects to the life of the community.



## 5 Conclusions and Suggested Actions

### 5.1 Increasing participation

- 5.1.1 Increasing the levels of exercise of people in Birmingham must be a priority as the benefits of increasing participation are well documented in terms of mental and physical health, creating stronger and safer communities, benefits to children and young people and strengthening the economy.
- 5.1.2 We were very concerned that Birmingham's participation rates in sport and physical activity are amongst the lowest of all the Core Cities and note the costs to Birmingham's NHS. The fact that the areas of the city with the lowest participation rates correlate to the areas of deprivation is even more a cause for concern.
- 5.1.3 Research has shown that there is a demand for team sports in those areas of the city where participation is lowest. Cricket is inclusive, drawing together people from all cultures and backgrounds. Analysis suggests that across the central areas of the city, there are nearly twice as many people wishing to play cricket than the number actually playing.
- 5.1.4 Partnerships are key to increasing participation, particularly as the role of the voluntary sector increases. We were impressed by the work of the Birmingham Sports and Physical Activity Partnership (BSPAP). Not only does it co-ordinate the public and voluntary sectors at the strategic level, but also at the local level through its Constituency Sports Networks. The new structure recently put in place by the BSPAP of the Birmingham Cricket Partnership, a state of play report and a Cricket Relationship Manager, is crucial to the development of the cricket participation in the city. We welcome this new structure and hope that it is successful.
- 5.1.5 The scope and quality of the draft Strategy when it was presented to the Committee was also welcomed. It provided conclusions and suggestions for the future based on a wide ranging survey across the city (the response rate was 93% of affiliated clubs (26 of 28 identified) and 46 of the 80 (58%) Birmingham Parks League teams).

#### Suggested Actions

1. **That the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture support the Birmingham Sport and Physical Activity Partnership to:**
  - complete their preparation of the single sport plan, the 'state of play' report for cricket in the city and submit that report to the Leisure, Sport and Culture O&S Committee for consultation by March 2012;



- **work with Sporting Equals on ways to enhance cricket participation in the city, particularly in the priority areas of Perry Barr, Erdington, Ladywood and Hodge Hill.**
- 2. That the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture discuss with the Be Active programme coordinators the potential of cricket to increase sports participation in the priority areas of the city where sports participation rates are especially low.**
  - 3. That the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture supports the role of the Cricket Relationship Manager as a crucial link between the City Council and the local Governing Body for Cricket – the Warwickshire County Cricket Board (WCCB). A report on the success and achievements (and any difficulties) should be presented to the Leisure, Sport and Culture O&S Committee by March 2012. The report should include the views of the WCCB.**

## **5.2 Community Organisation**

- 5.2.1** Community involvement is key. This is evidenced by the strong involvement in cricket: there is a tremendous history of club cricket in Birmingham and the surrounding areas. Today there are 29 cricket clubs in the city affiliated to the English Cricket Board and strong grass roots cricket participation is facilitated by the Birmingham Parks League. These groups are very active not only in cricket matches, but also in training and youth development.
- 5.2.2** There is a tension here, with a perception of “two tier” provision. However, though the affiliated clubs often have more financial support, we have seen how a group of players who started within the Parks League can develop to a highly successful affiliate club with their own ground (Attock Cricket Club).
- 5.2.3** We appreciate the desire of the Birmingham Parks League to continue to have informal access to cricket facilities of a good standard. However we think that there is some merit in the long term aim of converting some of the enthusiasm of informal players to form clubs which could then access a wider range of finance and support beyond the Council.

### **Suggested Actions**

- 4. That the Birmingham Sport and Physical Activity Partnership should work with the Birmingham Parks Cricket League to investigate the possibility of increasing the number of clubs formed from keen informal players. The possibility of identifying mentors from affiliated clubs should be explored.**



## 5.3 Council Pitches

- 5.3.1 The availability of facilities is an issue. As we saw in our case study of cricket, demand exceeds supply. With regards to cricket, the Cabinet Member for Leisure's portfolio maintains 34 cricket squares (25 in parks and 9 through schools) through the Grounds Maintenance Contracts - the total costs of all cricket maintenance per annum is £236k. The total income from lettings for the 2009 season for all the pitches was £14.7k. The average cost to maintain each cricket square is £7.4k a year. The current subsidy level stands at 93%.
- 5.3.2 At a time of unprecedented reductions in local authority spending, there are those who might argue that the Council cannot continue to maintain public pitches to the standards that are required. However these costs need to be balanced against the importance of cricket in increasing physical activity levels in our city and the advantages of 1,500 players being able to play in a relaxed environment with friends and family on Council owned pitches.
- 5.3.3 Where pitches in parks are used solely by particular clubs, then there are opportunities for the Clubs to take on an increasing share of the maintenance. This is particularly the case in Handsworth Park and discussions are taking place with the local club regarding the pitch at Aston Park. Where clubs are directly involved, there is potential for them to apply for sources of funding that the Council alone cannot access, for example through the English Cricket Board and the Sports Lottery Fund.
- 5.3.4 The reconfiguring of the Council's golf service and the possibility of golf courses being run by an organisation outside the Council, could provide opportunities. A further opportunity suggested by the Playing Pitch Strategy is to change the use of existing recreational open space to provide more pitches.
- 5.3.5 However protecting the well maintained pitches in public parks is a problem, as fencing off the pitch compromises the concept of "public open space". The legal interpretation of this requires further investigation.
- 5.3.6 Members were particularly concerned about Perry Hall Playing Fields. They heard that at the weekends the Birmingham Parks League has many of their over 1500 registered players playing cricket. Members felt that the provision of changing rooms and toilets are a priority at this site. They noted that the draft Playing Pitch Strategy lists this site as a priority for investment.
- 5.3.7 There has been much debate about the government's Big Society policy with many supporting the idea of a greater role in public services for voluntary and community organisations, but also there has been considerable criticism that the voluntary sector cannot take on a greater role at the same time as having serious cuts in funding.
- 5.3.8 Community Asset Transfer is a key tool in supporting the voluntary sector to take on this greater role. However it can only be appropriate for Council owned land which is not classified as public open space. There is also clearly some nervousness from within the City Council about giving long



leases to community organisations, as this will restrict any future use. For example, some school land may need to be retained for possible future school expansions.

- 5.3.9 However, we hope that the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families will continue to support the community use of school playing fields and we recognise that to enable cricket to be played at a high standard, additional resources will need to be found to maintain the pitches. We feel that specific sites can be looked at in more detail within the context of the Playing Pitch Strategy and we urge the Cabinet Member to continue the involvement of his directorate in the corporate working group already referred to.
- 5.3.10 Where there are unattached playing fields that are not required for school expansion, we strongly support the development of community sports hubs with Community Asset Transfer (CAT) where appropriate. This is especially important in the central areas of the city where sports participation is low, demand for cricket is high and public open space scarce.

## **Suggested Actions**

- 5. That the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture finalise the Playing Pitch Strategy and consider its adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document to the new Core Strategy by March 2012.**
- 6. That the City Council corporate working group, set up to work on developing the Playing Pitch Strategy, should be retained to work across Directorates on the next stages of the strategy and to monitor its implementation. This group should report back to the Leisure, Sport and Culture O&S Committee on the implementation of the priority action list as set out in the Strategy by March 2012.**
- 7. That the Committee receives a report back in six months time regarding any achievements in securing funding for facilities at Perry Hall Playing Fields.**
- 8. The Cabinet Member should submit a progress report to the Leisure, Sport and Culture O&S Committee by March 2012 on existing and proposed CAT projects for community sports facilities across the city.**



# Appendix 1: Site Visits

## Introduction

Councillors P Smith, J Alden, M Afzal and D Hughes - Members of the Cricket Review Group of the Leisure, Sport and Culture O&S Committee, accompanied by officers, visited the following sites in October 2010:

- Handsworth Park;
- Holford Drive, Witton;
- Perry Hall Playing Fields;
- Spring Lane, Erdington;
- Belchers Lane, Bordesley Green;
- Green Lane, Small Heath

## Handsworth Park

Handsworth Cricket Club (HCC) and Handsworth Cavaliers Cricket Club (HCCC), share the pitch in Handsworth Park, off Hinstock Road. The pitch is fenced off from the rest of the park and there is a cricket pavilion. The HCCC have exclusive use of the pitch on Sundays when they play community and exhibition matches. HCC is the more active club with four senior teams, four junior teams and a women's team. The club is affiliated to the ECB and will become a member of the Birmingham and District Premier League in 2011 after earning promotion from the Warwickshire Cricket League. According to the General Manager of the Birmingham and District Premier League:

It is imperative that the quality of the ground is maintained, then improved, to enable the Club to fulfil the criteria demanded by the League and its National Governing Body and there are a variety of penalties available to the Management Board if these criteria are not fulfilled, including relegation back to a Feeder League.<sup>3</sup>

Discussions are underway between the clubs and officers from both Strategic Sport and Events and the local Constituency. The intention is to develop a type of agreement that would transfer the management of the pitch the clubs.

## Holford Drive, Witton

This site is within a predominantly industrial area off the A453 in Witton and in the ownership of Children, Young People and Families Portfolio (CYP&F). Back in 2001 part of the site was sold for commercial development on the understanding that the Capital Receipt would be used for improving the pitches,

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<sup>3</sup> Letter to Cllr Paula Smith from the General Manager of the Birmingham and District Premier Cricket League dated 28<sup>th</sup> September 2010.



creating access and parking and constructing a pavilion, enabling the site to be fully used by the community. At present the site is used by five youth and kids' football teams in the winter, the Birmingham Parks Cricket league in the summer and some school use. The eastern edge of the area suffers from some contamination. There are no public changing rooms – the local school use a container located in the north east corner of the site, which is unavailable for community access despite requests for community access by the users.

However the local community have worked hard to promote community use of the site and Members met on site representatives of a local charity working with young people who are often marginalised and considered by others hard to reach. They heard that a charity wants to run kids and youth football teams at the site, if improvements to it can be made. Other clubs want to join a partnership to run a cricket club and a tennis club at the site. They were told that the community were been dismayed that it was taking so long to facilitate community access, despite a portion of the site having been sold. They found the bureaucratic processes and procedures very frustrating.

The concept of a Community Sports Hub for several sports was proposed for this site about two years ago and has been supported by both the Cabinet Members for Leisure and Children, Young People and Families. Members heard that an advertisement had just been placed in the local press by the Perry Barr Constituency Office:

Invitation to submit Expressions of Interest in forming a Community Sports Hub to manage, operate and promote the use of the Holford Drive Playing Fields for sporting, school and community activities. The Council is interested in the idea of working together with local groups and interested parties and to hear their views on how to establish a local organisation to manage, develop and promote the long term use of the site. Interested parties and local organisations that wish to express an interest to be part of the future set up at Holford Drive should register an Expression of Interest with Perry Barr Constituency Office.<sup>4</sup>

More information about this site and the Community Sports Hub is included in the main part of this report.

## **Perry Hall Playing Fields**

This is a large area of playing fields south west of the A34 Walsall Road. There are currently thirteen cricket squares and eighty cricket teams from the Birmingham Parks League play at the site. This is the major site in the city for the Parks League and people travel from many parts of the city to play here. There is no cricket club and no changing facilities or toilets. Members heard from local councillors that they felt it unacceptable that so many people used the site, but there are no toilets, leading to hygiene difficulties. The difficulty of providing facilities at the site is compounded by the lack of services such as water and electricity to the site. The cost of putting in these services is estimated at £50-60,000 and a large amount of money would be needed for a clubhouse and toilets.

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<sup>4</sup> Birmingham Post Newspaper, early October 2010.



This site appears high on the list of priorities for funding applications within the Playing Pitch Strategy (for example to the Cricket Foundation the funding arm of the English Cricket Board) to secure capital to provide changing rooms and toilets. However running costs may be a future difficulty for the Council.

### **Spring Lane Playing Fields, Erdington**

This site is owned by CYP&F Portfolio. It is used by Birmingham Parks Cricket League and is the home of many local football teams, mostly youth teams 14-21. There is still some use by a school. There was a rugby club on the site at one time with changing rooms in the south east corner of the site, but these were demolished. There are no changing rooms at the current time. Members were met on site by representatives from a local, very successful football club who want to use the site for their junior football teams in the winter and cricket in the summer. They want to develop a community sports hub and secure a long lease to enable funding applications - they have drawn up a business plan. The club has undertaken a skills audit and has a significant number of practical trades that support the building of a clubhouse. However they were frustrated by the bureaucracy of the Council and have been quoted by CYP&F the commercial rental value which they cannot afford.

The Asset Management Team of CYP&F report that: Spring Lane playing field is a very large field and at 37 acres is by far the biggest in our portfolio. There were recent improvement to pitches to improve playing surface and drainage and this was funded by s106 money, the cricket pitch was upgraded to. If a team were interested in the field they possibly would not be interested in the whole field as it is just too big, for one team. Birmingham Property Services could look into the possibility of letting half of the field. One advantage of such a large field is that if a team wanted a particular type of pitch laid out there is plenty of room for this and thus in the bottom half of the field there are Gaelic football pitches, however these are no longer used .

### **Belchers Lane Playing Fields, Bordesley Green**

This site is located next to Heartlands Hospital and is owned by the CYP&F Portfolio. The only entrance to the site is in the south west corner. The site was declared surplus to education requirements a long time ago and was transferred to the Regeneration Portfolio. Planning permission was granted, and has subsequently lapsed, for a medical park in conjunction with the adjacent Heartlands Hospital. Planning discussions are now being held regarding the hospital's desire to use part of the site for car parking. This development if agreed would lead to planning gain which could be used for a sports pavilion. However there are problems with access. The site would be ideal for cricket and junior football. Members heard that there is significant community interest from local groups in using the site, including local cricket leagues, an Asian led sports organisation and the local schools. No community access is available at the moment and the site is just mown by the Council. The site is on the priority list for action.



## Green Lane, Small Heath<sup>5</sup>

Members were met on site by a local Community Development Co-ordinator who runs an incorporated social enterprise "The MEB Hub". The site is owned by the CYP&F Portfolio. A few years ago the Hub explored the possibility of a 25 year lease agreement with CYP&F, which was a condition of their bids for grants from Barclays Spaces for Sport and the Peoples Lottery for cricket nets/bays, drainage and the cricket square. The Council agreed the proposal for lease and negotiations were underway to agree the terms of the lease. The pitches were still being marked out for football and cricket by the city for schools use. However the local cricket club had difficulties and closed, so the cricket facilities were unused for a few years.

There is now a temporary licence for cricket and the Warwickshire County Cricket Board's Development Officer has been supporting the Small Heath Community Cricket Club who use the site and want to develop their cricket training further. The local community want to develop a community sports hub, including junior cricket and Parks League cricket. Obviously grant applications are more likely to be successful where there is a long lease. Discussions are ongoing with CYP&F officers regarding the nature and length of lease required by the community - the tenancy is now being negotiated with "The MEB Hub". A condition of the lease is to protect the rights for school access during term time, as this site makes up the deficiency for statutory playing field requirements in the area. The site is marked out by the City Council for cricket and football, however the Hub has also provided a cricket practise area and "all weather wicket" and also undertakes some grounds maintenance. The actual playing areas are in good condition however the boundary fencing, perimeter areas and access ways are in need of repair/ cut back.

The local suggestion is that the site is unsuitable for building a school because of contamination due to the previous use of the site for landfill. Surveys have indicated that although considered suitable for playing field use, any building works would require extensive/substantial foundation works. The Hub has presented proposals to Development Planning with regard to developing a pavilion/café/community centre using £250K funding received from grant aid. Planning were of the opinion that the site (which has only one pedestrian entrance and vehicular accessible via private road through factory units) was not suitable for such a development and planning permission would probably be refused. There is no current usage by any local schools

Negotiations for the lease are on going, CYPF are insisting on a break clause in a 25 year lease to protect their position in case of additional space requirements.

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<sup>5</sup> Additional information on this site received from CYP&F, Transforming Education, Asset Management Team, January 2011.