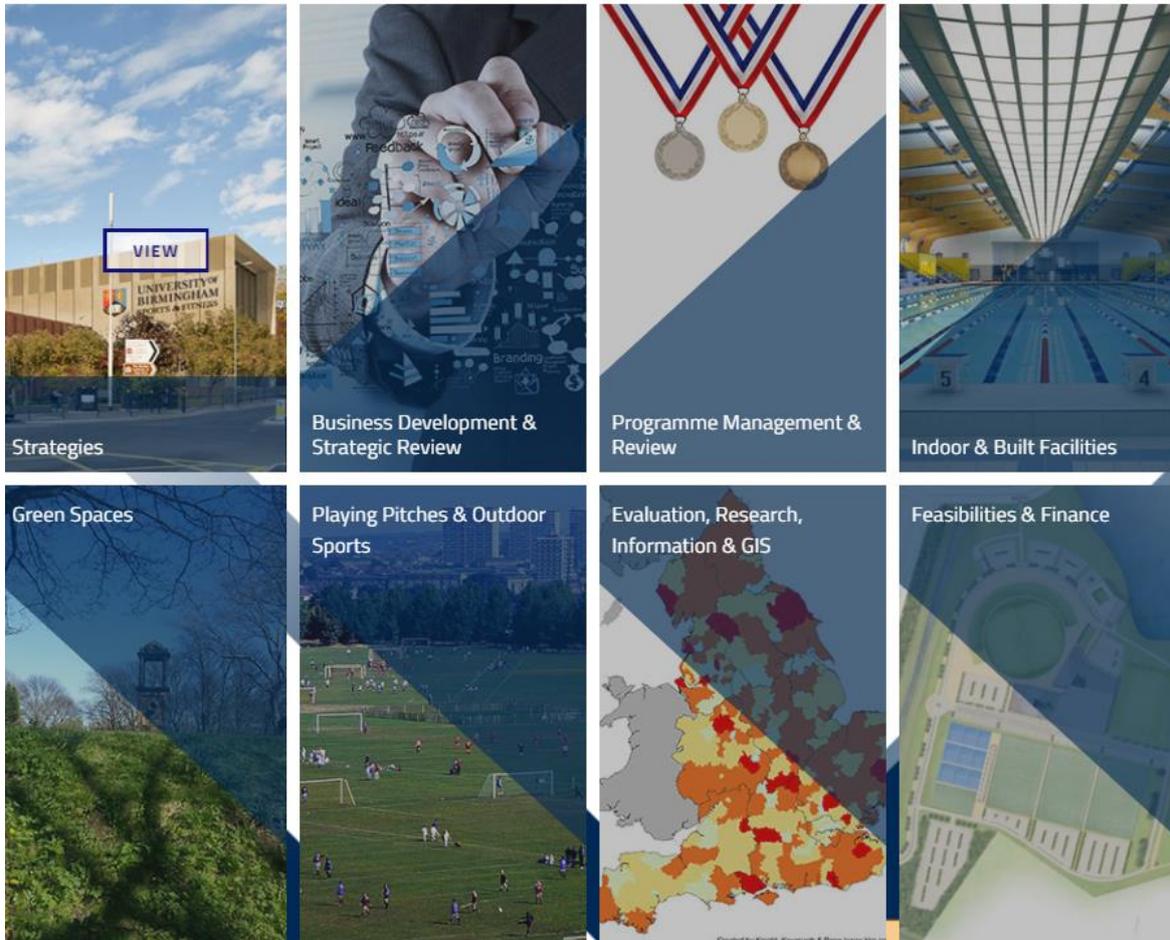


**COUNTRYWIDE PROJECT MANAGEMENT LTD
DPP UK LTD**



**COVENTRY STADIUM
3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH FEASIBILITY STUDY**

MAY 2021

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd
Company No: 9145032 (England)

MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

Registered Office: 1 -2 Frecheville Court, off Knowsley Street, Bury BL9 0UF
T: 0161 764 7040 E: mail@kcp.co.uk www.kcp.co.uk



COVENTRY STADIUM 3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

CONTENTS

PART 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
PART 2: STRATEGIC CONTEXT	3
PART 3: ASSESSMENT OF NEED	7
PART 4: DESIGN OPTIONS	12
PART 5: BUSINESS PLAN.....	14
PART 6: CONCLUSIONS	18

COVENTRY STADIUM

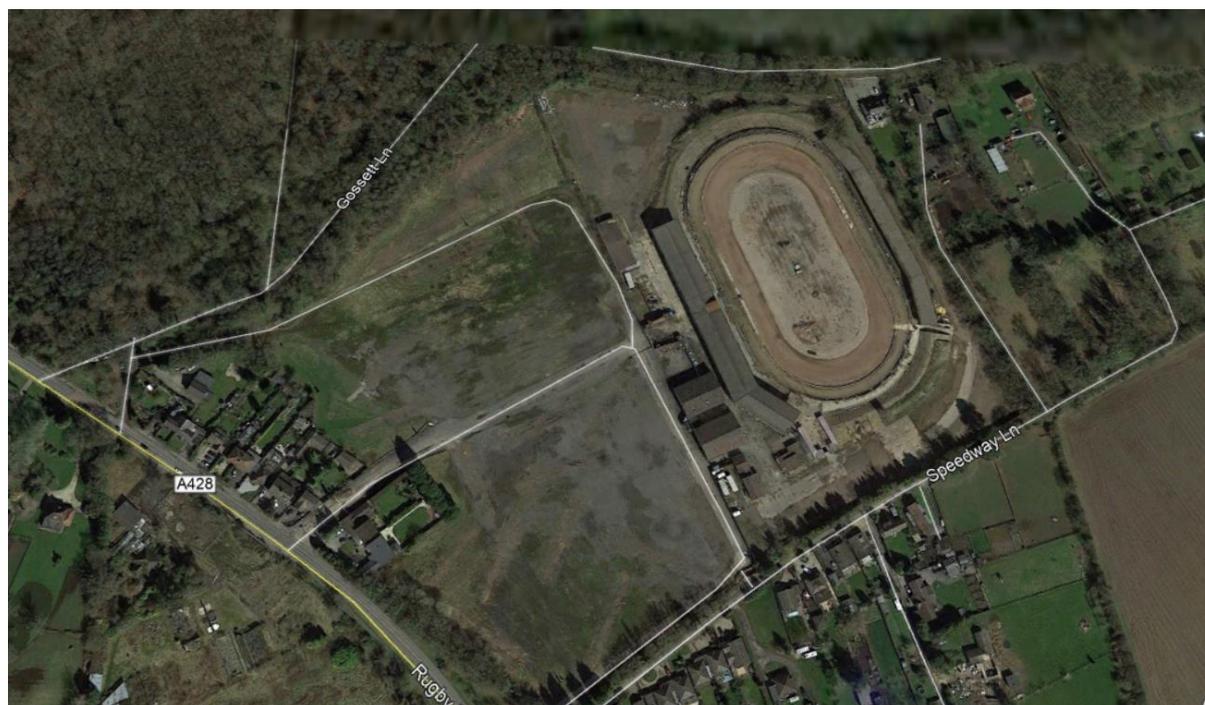
3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the feasibility study report by Knight Kavanagh & Page (KKP) for the creation of a full size third generation artificial grass pitch (3G pitch) at Coventry stadium (also known as Coventry Stadium). It has been commissioned by Countrywide Project Management Ltd and DPP UK Ltd.

The site is within the Green Belt and is located in the Rugby Borough Council authority area, albeit in close proximity to the boundary of Coventry City Council's administrative area. Its current status is shown in the figure below.

Figure 1.1: Aerial view of Coventry stadium



Source: Google Earth

Plans are in place for the development of 137 dwellings at the site in place of the existing speedway provision, which is no longer operational. However, for a proposal resulting in the loss of an outdoor sports facility to go ahead, planning policy needs to be met as per the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). An independent review into the loss of the track was undertaken in September 2019; it concluded that the track could not be deemed surplus to requirements.

This study considers the feasibility of developing a 3G facility at the site, with the developers proposing this as appropriate mitigation. It is being conducted concurrently with a viability appraisal relating to the re-development of the speedway facility, with both being required to understand which, if either, would be the best option. As such, the aim of 3G feasibility study is to:

- ◀ Determine the level of need for a 3G pitch in the area.
- ◀ Identify what supporting infrastructure would be required to support the provision.
- ◀ Provide evidence as to whether the proposal is financially viable and sustainable.

COVENTRY STADIUM 3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

Evidence of need for the facility has been informed via analysis of the playing pitch strategies and local football facility plans for both Rugby and Coventry, as well as consultation with Rugby Borough Council, Sport England, the Football Foundation, Birmingham FA, Sky Blues in the Community (SBitC) and local football clubs.

The feasibility elements have been delivered via creation of high-level site layout and cost plans, identification of potential and preferred management arrangements/ models, and the development of a revenue business plan for long-term site operation.

COVENTRY STADIUM

3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

PART 2: STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This section of the report summarises previous work that has taken place with regard to Coventry stadium as well as national and local strategies and plans that potentially relate to the wider development of the site and the creation of a 3G pitch. Due to the location of the site, local context, where appropriate, is provided for both Rugby and Coventry.

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF paragraph 97 states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land (which incorporates facilities for speedway) should not be built on unless:

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

Chapter 13 of the NPPF focuses on protecting Green Belt land. It notes that, once land has been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.

Paragraph 143 of the NPPF states that “inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances”. Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans.

Paragraph 145 details that the construction of new buildings within the Green Belt should be deemed as inappropriate. However, one of the exceptions to this is “provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt”.

Rugby Borough Council Local Plan (2011-2031)

Policy HS4 of Rugby’s Local Plan aligns to Paragraph 97 of the NPPF, stating that no existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land should be built on unless planning policy is met. It adds that planning permission will be granted for development that enhances the quality and accessibility of existing open space providing it is accessible and of high quality, and that it:

- ◀ Is appropriately maintained;
- ◀ Is secure and safe;
- ◀ Is attractive in appearance;
- ◀ Enhances the natural and cultural environment;
- ◀ Is conveniently accessed and facilitates access to other areas of open space;
- ◀ Facilitates access by a choice of transport; and
- ◀ Avoids any significant loss of amenity to residents, neighbouring uses or biodiversity.

In relation to Green Belt land, the Local Plan states that development will only be permitted where National Policy allows.

COVENTRY STADIUM

3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

Coventry stadium - Independent Review

Wyg was appointed by Rugby Borough Council to undertake a review of the sports planning case in respect of Coventry stadium by means of supporting its decision-making process. This followed submission of an outline planning application for the demolition of the speedway track to enable residential development on the site. Supporting documents were presented, including a sports needs assessment; however, a campaign group submitted separate information to counter the evidence provided. The Planning Inspector commented that the Council needed to start from the basis of safeguarding the provision in line with the general policy for sport and recreation buildings and to assess the application in the context of the NPPF.

The Independent Review concluded that there is not an “unequivocal case that Coventry stadium is surplus to requirements”, despite the Sports Needs Assessment intending to prove this. As such, point A of Paragraph 97 of the NPPF which says that “an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements” is deemed not to have been met.

Due to the above, the Independent Review suggested that the alternatives set out by the NPPF need to be considered, with the applicant instead recommended to explore point B of Paragraph 97, “the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location”, or point C, “the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use”.

National Football Facilities Strategy (2018-2028)

The Football Association’s National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS) provides a strategic framework that sets out key priorities and targets for the national game (i.e. football) over a ten-year period. It sets out aims and objectives shared with the Premier League, Sport England and the Government which are to be delivered with support of the Football Foundation. The stated vision of the Football Foundation is to “deliver great football facilities, wherever they are needed”.

One of the key investment priorities of the NFFS is to deliver 1,000 3G pitch ‘equivalents’, enhancing the quality of the playing experience and supporting a sustainable approach to grass roots provision. Another investment priority is to deliver 1,000 changing pavilions/clubhouses, linked to multi-pitch or hub sites, supporting growth (particularly in women and girls football), sustainability and providing a facility infrastructure to underpin investment in coaching, officials and football development.

Rugby Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy – PPS (2015)

The Rugby PPS identifies a shortfall of two full-sized 3G pitches in the Borough, based on current demand and via the use of future demand modelling projections. It recommends that one of these should be provided at Rugby Town Junior Football Club (which has since been delivered), whilst the location of other is to be determined.

Please note that the recommended lifespan of a PPS is three years (five if regularly updated), meaning that the Strategy for Rugby is now considered to be out of date.

COVENTRY STADIUM

3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

Rugby Borough Council Local Football Facility Plan - LFFP

The Rugby LFFP identifies that there are currently two full-sized and four smaller 3G pitches in the Borough. It states that this represents a shortfall equating to two full size pitches, with projects proposed to eradicate this at Rugby Town Junior Football Club (in addition to the existing pitch) and at the proposed new school to the south west (earmarked for completion in 2023).

The rationale behind these projects is that, whilst the geographic spread of existing facilities is focused in the town of Rugby, it is the only area of high population in the Borough, with consultation indicating limited demand in other areas. As such, additional provision is required centrally to support not only current but also future demand, with two particularly large house developments proposed over the next 10 years.

Despite the above, it is also highlighted in the LFFP that local consultation with clubs raised concerns that recent investment has been aimed predominantly at supporting/catering for Rugby Town Junior Football Club and that it is hoped that future funding will also be used to support other clubs playing in or close to the Borough.

Coventry City Council Playing Pitch Strategy (2014, refreshed 2018)

The refreshed PPS for Coventry identifies an existing shortfall of four full size 3G pitches and a future shortfall of six. Whilst no specific sites are identified to overcome this, it recommends that provision is increased “to meet training and competitive demand, preferably through the creation of hub sites in strategically viable locations”. Other recommendations include a need to ensure that:

- ◀ Any existing and new 3G pitches have community use agreements in place.
- ◀ All providers put in place a sinking fund to ensure long-term sustainability.
- ◀ New 3G pitches are constructed to meet FA recommended dimensions and quality performance standards to meet performance testing criteria.
- ◀ All existing and future full size 3G pitches are FA tested to enable competitive matches to be played on the surfaces via testing every three years.
- ◀ More football match play transfers to 3G pitches.
- ◀ Pricing is not a barrier to greater access.

Working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities (i.e. Rugby), where necessary, to overcome identified shortfalls is also referenced as a strategic recommendation.

Please note that the recommended lifespan of a PPS is three years (five if kept up to date), meaning that the Strategy for Coventry is now considered out of date despite the 2018 refresh.

Coventry City Council Local Football Facility Plan

The LFFP for Coventry correlates with the refreshed PPS in identifying a current shortfall of four full size 3G pitches. To alleviate this, it recommends that two are created to the West of the City (location to be determined) in addition to one being established at President Kennedy School (work has commenced) and one at Alvis Sports and Social Club.

COVENTRY STADIUM

3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

The LFFP references the fact that the geographic spread of existing facilities is uneven, with most artificial grass pitches currently located in the centre, north east and south east of the City. There are provision gaps elsewhere, despite high levels of population. There are also low levels of availability on the current stock of pitches; a situation made worse by limited community availability on the two located at, and owned and managed by, the University of Warwick.

Conclusion

Given the findings of the Independent Review into the planned development of Coventry stadium, the creation of a 3G pitch is now proposed in order to meet point C of Paragraph 97 of the NPPF. It is believed that the creation of the 3G provision will outweigh the loss of the speedway track in terms of overall site usage and lead to an increase in participation in sport and physical activity. Emphasis is placed on the creation of a full size 3G pitch, rather than a smaller sized alternative due to the added outcomes it can enable an operator to achieve.

Creating additional full size 3G pitches is a key driver for the FA, as set out in the NFFS. In addition, there is a clear need for increased provision to service both Rugby and Coventry, as evidenced in the PPS documents in place for both local authorities. That being said, it must be noted that the strategies for both authorities are now considered to be out of date, with the Rugby PPS not being updated since being produced in 2015 and six years passing since the initial Coventry PPS was delivered. Supply and demand has changed significantly from the time when the studies were completed, meaning the information they are based on can no longer be considered robust.

The LFFPs for the authorities provide a more updated and reliable picture of the need for increased 3G provision, with significant shortfalls still identified. However, project lists are included within the plans, with Coventry stadium not referenced. This suggests that it would not necessarily be a priority location for the FA, whilst sustainability could be impacted upon if the projects that are in the plans are delivered. Nevertheless, if evidence can be provided to warrant the development, scope does exist for the site to be added given that the plans are 'live'. It could replace one of the current sites identified or be included as an additional project.

Whilst creating new clubhouses/pavilions is also a key driver for the FA, focus is generally on multi-pitch sites that require numerous changing rooms and that can benefit from being serviced by large social/community space and potentially amenities such as a bar, kitchen and function room. As such, with just one pitch proposed at Coventry stadium, a more basic ancillary offering is likely to be more suitable and effective.

When considering the development of the 3G pitch and supporting infrastructure, attention must be given to Coventry stadium's designation within the Green Belt. Whilst development is permissible for sporting and recreational use, it is imperative that the openness of the site is preserved. All facilities must therefore be established in a way that is complementary to the local surroundings.

COVENTRY STADIUM

3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

PART 3: ASSESSMENT OF NEED

The information below concentrates on the key findings from consultation, including any key issues identified, the needs and aspirations of the partners involved and any limitations in respect of those demands.

The Football Foundation and Birmingham FA

After confirming that the shortfalls identified in the LFFPs for Rugby and Coventry are still reflective of the current 3G need across the local authorities, consultation with the football bodies centred around whether or not they felt that Coventry stadium would be a suitable site for provision. To that end, both noted that they would be ultimately guided by what demand could be identified, but as a starting point they believed that the Brandon area in general may be too rural to attract sufficient demand.

Priority when any 3G pitch is developed should be that the provision can be utilised primarily for community grassroots football, with large community clubs often key in ensuring this through partnership arrangements when it comes to training demand and, increasingly, match play demand. As such, Birmingham FA identified nine large clubs in the locality of Coventry stadium (within an approximate 5-mile radius) that may have an interest in utilising a 3G pitch were one to be created at the site. It stated that these clubs should be the focus for evidencing demand; they are:

- ◀ Alvis Junior FC
- ◀ Binley Woods Junior FC
- ◀ Chapelfield Colts FC
- ◀ Christ the King FC
- ◀ Coventry Copeswood FC
- ◀ Lawford United FC
- ◀ Mount Nod FC
- ◀ St Finbarrs FC
- ◀ Whitley Juniors FC

Notwithstanding the extent to which demand emanating from these clubs could be evidenced, the Football Foundation noted that it would be unlikely to provide funding towards the proposal. This is due to it being developer led and part of a mitigation package (with all contributions instead expected to come from the housing allocation) as well as the fact that the site does not currently feature in the Rugby LFFP. This, however, is not to say that the football partners would not be supportive of plans.

As an aside, it was also emphasised by both the Football Foundation and Birmingham FA that any 3G pitch proposal should have full floodlighting in order to maximise usage and financial viability. Without being serviced by floodlights, associated outcomes and benefits relating to 3G provision cannot be realised (e.g. the substantial additional usage over and above what a grass pitch can provide).

In addition, the importance of setting up a sinking fund and ensuring that the pitch is FA tested was highlighted. A sinking fund guarantees long-term sustainability as it enables the pitch to be resurfaced when quality deteriorates, whilst FA testing enable competitive matches to be played (a 3G pitch cannot be used for FA sanctioned matches without FA testing taking place every three years).

COVENTRY STADIUM

3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

Community football clubs

Of the nine clubs contacted, seven responded to consultation requests. It was explained to the clubs via various communication methods that the project concerned the development of a 3G pitch within the Brandon area (finer details were left undisclosed due to the sensitive nature of the work). The two that did not respond were Coventry Copsewood FC and Binley Woods Junior FC; based on their non-response, it has been assumed that neither would be interested in accessing the provision.

Alvis Juniors FC is uninterested in accessing provision in Brandon. It reports drawing the majority of its players and coaches from the vicinity of its home base and that it would not expect them to travel. Its priority is to develop its own 3G pitch at Alvis Sports and Social Club (which is included in the Coventry LFFP) or at the adjacent Finham Park School, which has contacted the Club expressing an interest in pursuing partnership arrangement. Currently, Alvis Juniors caters for its 22 teams across five different training venues only two of which providing 3G pitches. Not only is this difficult to organise, but availability across the sites is limited, meaning it often has to access provision at undesirable time slots such as 21.00-22.00, or at better times but on less attractive days of the week e.g. Fridays.

Christ the King FC also indicated a reluctance to travel to Brandon as it is very much a club that services its own area, with established links to Christ the King School and Christ the King Parish Centre. Like Alvis Juniors FC, it is exploring the creation of a 3G pitch at its own site (Winding House Lane). This would primarily be to accommodate training demand from its 29 teams, which currently access the sand-based artificial pitch (hockey surface) at Bablake School. This is an issue due to the type of carpet and because of reported quality problems.

By contrast, St Finbarr's FC reports being very interested in accessing a 3G pitch in Brandon, providing that it is affordable. It currently distributes its teams and squads across numerous venues for training and is looking for a dedicated venue at which it can cater for all of the demand it generates. Furthermore, its teams are also spread around for matches due to the fact that its main home venue, St Finbarr's Sports Ground, has a limited number of pitches. As such, it would also look to use the proposed 3G pitch for matches, where necessary. In total, the Club currently fields 16 teams but believes that it has scope to increase to at least 25 were its access to facilities improve.

Whitley Juniors FC is also interested in accessing a 3G pitch in Brandon. It currently has nine teams but has only two training slots available to it on Thursday and Friday evenings on the smaller sized 3G pitch at Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School. Its matchday requirements are mostly satisfied at Chace Avenue, although its adult team is reliant on using poor quality pitches at Council sites. As such, gaining access to a development at Brandon would not only provide an option for all of its teams for training purposes, but also for some match play demand, if pricing is realistic. As with St Finbarr's FC, the Club also has aspirations to expand and considers that access to a good quality 3G facility could enable this.

The remaining contacted clubs; Chapelfield Colts FC, Lawford United FC and Mount Nod FC report that they would consider accessing a 3G pitch in Brandon, but only as a secondary training venue as all three have relatively good access to provision elsewhere for the majority of their teams. Chapelfield Colts FC provides 11 teams, Lawford United FC fields 14 teams and Mount Nod FC has 10 teams.

COVENTRY STADIUM

3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

Sky Blues in the Community

SBitC is the official charity arm of Coventry City FC. It was contacted as it has previously reported an interest in managing the proposed pitch at Coventry stadium, meaning this was the focus of the discussion. With it already managing the 3G pitch at Coventry Blue Coat School and the 3G pitch being developed at President Kennedy School, it believes that it is well placed and experienced enough to run the site. Furthermore, it is of the opinion that the site is well placed in that it would then run three sites covering a wide area which are relatively equidistant from each other. This would enable it to service several different communities across the locality, without leaving any significant gaps.

In terms of usage, SBitC would enable community clubs to take priority bookings for training and match play; however, it would also look to use the pitch itself for its various initiatives such as walking football, disability football and Wildcats (a girl's football development initiative led by the FA). Furthermore, it would also access the provision for its Player Development Centre programme, with its grass roots club, Coventry Sky Blues FC, currently catering for 23 teams. Some of these would both train and play matches at the site.

SBitC acknowledges the importance of setting up and feeding into a sinking fund to ensure that the provision remains viable and sustainable in the long-term. Therefore, it recognises that floodlighting is a necessity in order to maximise usage and income generation. Linked to this, it also states that if availability exists outside of community club usage, its own initiatives and casual bookings, it is not opposed to looking to attract a commercial operator (e.g. Soccer Sixes or Leisure Leagues) to run small-sided leagues to ensure that capacity is reached.

In terms of the facilities required, SBitC states that, from experience, at least two changing rooms are needed to support the 3G pitch to enable competitive matches to be played, as well as a minimum of 80 car parking spaces given the level of demand that can be attracted to the initiatives that it runs. In addition, it also states that a small catering/social area, office space and classroom space would be preferable albeit these are not considered to be dealbreakers. Such provision is to be provided as part of the clubhouse at President Kennedy School, so all associated resources will be focused there if provision is not provided at Coventry stadium, rather than being split across the two sites.

Conclusion

The FA's model for determining the number of 3G pitches required estimates that 38 teams can be accommodated on one full size pitch for training purposes. Therefore, it can also be considered that around 38 teams need to be willing to access a 3G pitch for regular training activity to justify development and to ensure financial sustainability, unless such usage is replaced by other forms of use or demand.

With both St Finbarr's FC and Whitley Juniors FC willing to relocate all training demand to Brandon, subject to affordability, there are already known to be at least 25 teams interested in accessing the provision. Furthermore, teams from Coventry Sky Blues FC will utilise the pitch, as could some teams from Chapelfield Colts FC, Lawford United FC and Mount Nod FC. When considering that it is also likely that there are smaller clubs in the area looking for a more suitable training venue, such as single team Sunday League clubs that were not contacted as part of this study, attracting at least 38 teams is considered to be achievable. This is especially the case when factoring in increased demand that could be generated by some clubs resulting from the development and the associated increased pitch access.

COVENTRY STADIUM

3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

Additional usage of the pitch is also likely to be quite high if SBitC is given management control based on the various initiatives that it runs. Not only that, but such initiatives also have the further benefit of targeting some of the FA's focus areas, such as women's and girls' football and disability football. Whilst 3G pitches outside of school sites often struggle to attract day-time usage, this is less problematic with an operator like SBitC given its links with, for example, walking football and Man v Fat. Such usage is not always so easily generated where management is delivered by a local authority, leisure operator or a single club.

With demand for access to the proposed pitch for match play purposes also evidenced via club consultation it is believed that sufficient need has been unearthed to warrant the development of a full size 3G pitch at Coventry stadium. Whilst the site is not included in the LFFPs for Rugby and Coventry, sufficient demand is identified and this development should not impact on the viability of any of the projects that are included in the LFFPs as none are in the immediate vicinity (and are therefore unlikely to compete for the same usage).

Furthermore, regardless of the proposal at Coventry stadium, some aspects of the LFFPs for both Rugby and Coventry indicate that additional 3G pitches are likely to be required in addition to the project lists included. For example, one of the two projects in the Rugby LFFP is for a pitch to be established as part of a new school development to the south west. As this is linked to a major housing development and is not projected to be complete until 2023, it is likely that it could generate sufficient (or close to sufficient) demand in its own right. Thus, it would not contribute to reducing the current 3G pitch shortfall whereas a pitch at Coventry stadium could.

In the Coventry LFFP, 3G pitches supplied by the University of Warwick are included within calculations, despite community availability being limited. It is recommended in the plan that discussions with the operator take place to increase non-University usage, but if this is not possible then additional provision is needed, over and above what has been identified.

As noted earlier in this report, should the development of the 3G pitch at Coventry stadium go ahead, it is imperative that a sinking fund is set up to ensure that the pitch remains useable in the long-term. Funds should therefore be set aside each year for the eventual refurbishment of the 3G carpet to ensure long-term viability. In general, the lifespan of a surface is ten years, depending on maintenance and usage levels. Moreover, regular FA testing should take place to enable the pitch to be useable for competitive matches.

In terms of supporting infrastructure, it is crucial that the 3G pitch is floodlit to an appropriate level and standard. Without this, usage is significantly limited during winter months when demand is generally at its highest. This, in turn, will make it improbable that the venue can be financially sustainable.

With regards to a clubhouse, evidence does not point towards anything more than a basic facility being needed. Two changing rooms and an officials changing area are required to enable the 3G pitch to be used for competitive matches at all levels (some leagues do not allow play without such provision), but any additional changing rooms would rarely be used given that there is only one pitch and given that younger aged teams generally do not want or need access (other than for toilets).

COVENTRY STADIUM 3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

In addition, a small community space is recommended to provide players and visitors with somewhere to congregate (indoors) before, during and after training/matches, especially during inclement weather. This space could be used to provide refreshments and a more informal food and drink offering, therefore encourage some secondary spend. It could also be utilised by SBitC (should it be the preferred operator) to accommodate some of its associated activities.

There is no considered need for any other significant amenities as these are generally more suited to multi-pitch sites that will attract greater levels of demand and warrant greater presence/staffing on site. Furthermore, some of the clubs interested in access (such as St Finbarr's FC at St Finbarr's Sports Ground) already have a home base meaning they would be more likely to travel away from the site following training and matches.

By contrast, substantial car parking provision will be required due to the nature of potential use. Both mini and youth football are likely to be heavily played at the site and it is this form of the game that can attract the most visitors with numerous family members often attending. The same can also be said for SBitC and FA initiatives such as Wildcats.

COVENTRY STADIUM

3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

PART 4: SITE LAYOUT

Based on the strategic context and assessment of need, this section presents a proposed site layout for the development of a full size 3G pitch at Coventry stadium, in accompaniment to the planned housing allocation. The table below summarises the facilities proposed for inclusion.

Table 4.1: Summary of facilities included within site layout

Provision	Description
Full size 3G pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Adhering to FA technical guidance, the area encompasses 112 x 76 metres, with the playing area covering 106 x 70 metres - this will make it suitable for all levels of community football as well as training demand. ◀ Over markings will provide two 9v9, two 7v7 and four 5v5 pitches, in addition to the full-sized adult pitch. ◀ Full match floodlighting provided – as per FA technical guidance. ◀ Enclosed by 4.5-metre high ball fencing, as per FA technical guidance, with 1.2-metre high rebound panels. ◀ Goal recess areas, spectator areas and dugouts included. ◀ Pitch orientation is close to Sport England’s best practice guidance (11-5 o’clock). ◀ Mounding and screen planting via trees to add an extra layer of separation from the proposed housing development.
Clubhouse/ pavilion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Designed to complement its Green Belt setting, covering just one storey and with grass covered, mounded roofing. ◀ Enclosed are two changing rooms (home and away or male/female) each measuring 16 square meters and each incorporating toilet (two cubicles) and shower (four cubicles) areas - this represents suitable dimensions to accommodate adult matches and therefore all forms of the game. ◀ Also enclosed are two official changing rooms measuring five square metres, each with a toilet (one cubicle) and shower (one cubicle). ◀ Two separate toilets for visitors/spectators. ◀ Kitchen area to provide refreshments and provide an added income source. ◀ Small community hall space for players/visitors which could be used to compliment the kitchen and double up as a function area. ◀ DDA compliant.
Car parking/ access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Permanent car park with a bitmac surface providing 80 car parking spaces (including disabled parking), plus storage areas for motorbikes and bicycles. ◀ A separate “overflow” car park with a gravel/stone chip surface (with reinforced grass) providing 24 additional spaces. ◀ Vehicle access road and a separate pedestrian/cycle access path provided. ◀ Car park lighting.

Please see figure 4.1 overleaf for the proposed site layout, followed by figure 4.2 which shows the clubhouse layout.

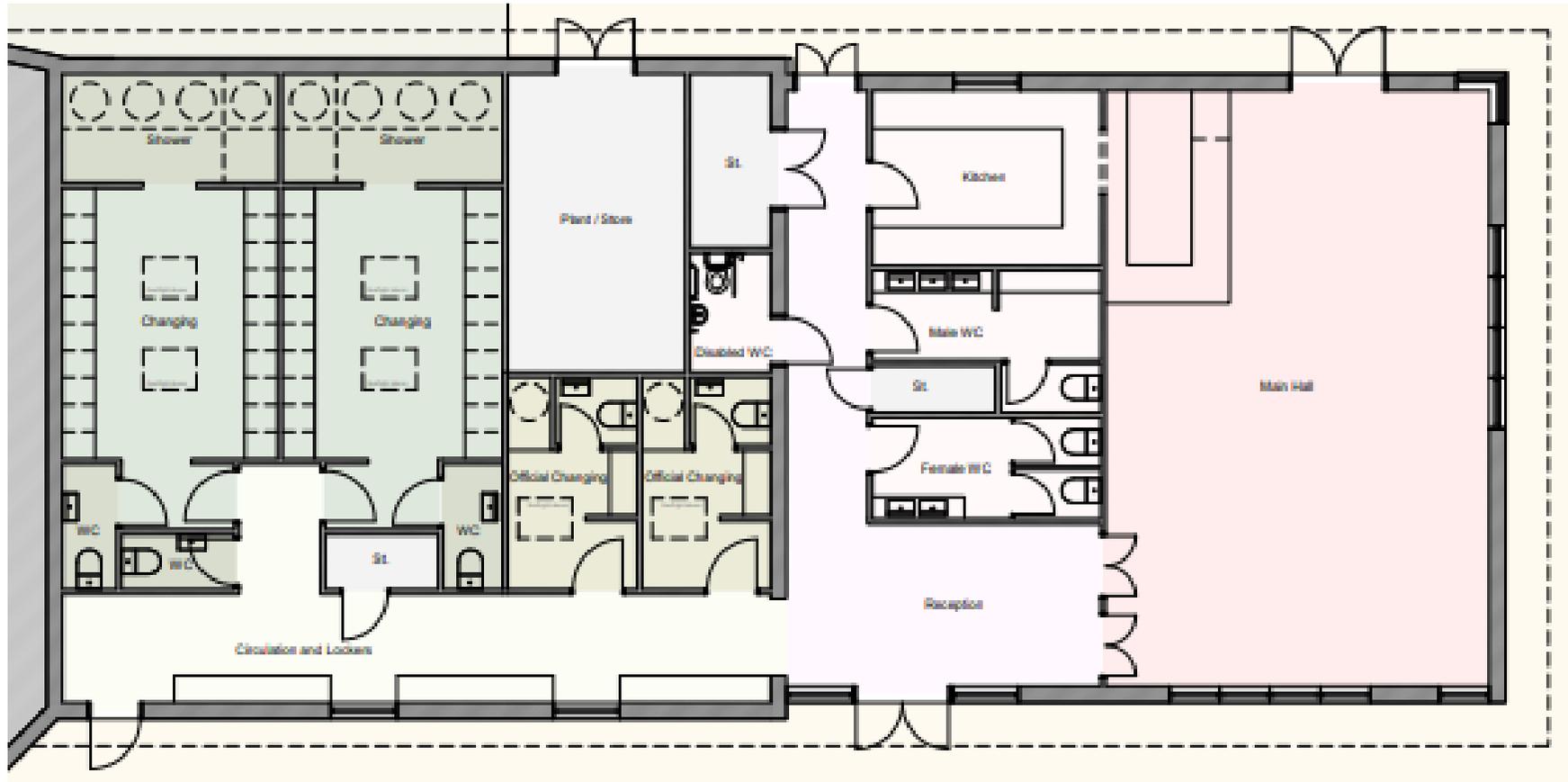
COUNTRYWIDE PROJECT MANAGEMENT LTD COVENTRY STADIUM FEASIBILITY STUDY

Figure 4.1: Proposed site layout



**COUNTRYWIDE PROJECT MANAGEMENT LTD
COVENTRY STADIUM FEASIBILITY STUDY**

Figure 4.2: Proposed clubhouse layout



COVENTRY STADIUM 3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

PART 5: BUSINESS PLAN

With it being considered that a full size 3G pitch is warranted at the site, this section details a revenue business plan to firstly ensure that the proposal is financially viable and also to showcase how such viability can be achieved. The plan has been developed based on known running costs from other similar 3G pitches throughout the country and via projects that KKP has delivered in partnership with the Football Foundation. It takes into account assumed staffing costs on the assumption that SBitC operates the facility.

The income profile for the site centres on the proposed mix of uses including SBitC programmes and activities, club training, club fixtures and commercial 5-a-side bookings; each of these bookings will have a different hourly rate applied to their usage based on their commercial nature, time of booking and size of pitch required. It is based on the latest 3G pitch design guidance which enables the full size pitch to be split into four designated areas to maximise use for club training and maximise income from commercial bookings.

Programme

The following programme of use is anticipated for the pitch:

Day	Time													
	9-10	10-11	11-12	12-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	
Monday	Predominantly closed, but with some SBitC delivered sessions (e.g. walking football, etc)							SBitC Wildcats	SBitC PDC	5-a-side leagues/block bookings				
Tuesday	Predominantly closed, but with some SBitC delivered sessions (e.g. walking football, etc)							SBitC PDC		Community club training				
Wednesday	Predominantly closed, but with some SBitC delivered sessions (e.g. walking football, etc)							SBitC Wildcats	SBitC PDC	Community club training				
Thursday	Predominantly closed, but with some SBitC delivered sessions (e.g. walking football, etc)							SBitC PDC		Community club training				
Friday	Predominantly closed, but with some SBitC delivered sessions (e.g. walking football, etc)							SBitC Wildcats	5-a-side leagues/block bookings	SBitC Youth engagement				
Saturday	Mini soccer and community club fixtures					Adult club fixtures								
Sunday	Mini soccer and community club fixtures								5-a-side leagues/block bookings					

A full complement of 38 community teams can be accommodated within the three evenings set aside for community club training (Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays are the most desirable training days for clubs), with additional provision for commercial 5-a-side bookings outside of this (although some Monday evening and Friday evening slots could also be taken up by clubs if demand exists).

This plan also allows times for SBitC to deliver Wildcats and Player Development Centre sessions, whilst key times for community clubs to use the facility to accommodate their fixtures at weekends is built in. It is assumed this will include Saturday and Sunday morning kick-offs as well as Saturday afternoon matches.

Income generation

The income generation modelling takes into account the potential occupancy of the facility during peak and off-peak periods and throughout the traditional football season. It is based on the pitch being sub-divided into four smaller pitches to accommodate training as well as commercial small-sided bookings and variable rates of hire depending on the type of use.

COVENTRY STADIUM 3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

Club bookings are charged at 50% of the commercial charge for quarter pitch bookings, whilst the charge for fixtures is set at a similar price to grass pitch hire).

No income from the daytime use of the facilities has been accounted for at this stage. It is unknown exactly to what extent SBitC will use the pitch to deliver some of its community programmes and what, if anything, it would charge for such demand.

The income generation profile is as follows:

Community club training								
Day	Sessions per day	Weeks per year	No of pitches	% occupancy	Price per pitch	Income £	Usage	
Tuesday	4	36	4	85%	20.00	9,792	8,323	
Wednesday	4	36	4	85%	20.00	9,792	7,344	
Thursday	4	36	4	85%	20.00	9,792	7,344	
Total						£ 29,376	23,011	
Block bookings - peak time								
Day	Sessions per day	Weeks per year	No of pitches	% occupancy	Price per pitch	Income £	Usage	
Monday	4	40	4	90%	40.00	23,040	8,064	
Friday	2	40	4	50%	40.00	6,400	2,240	
Sunday	3	40	4	30%	40.00	5,760	2,016	
Total						£ 35,200	12,320	
Fixtures								
Day	Hours per day	Weeks per year	No of pitches	% occupancy	Price per pitch	Income £	Usage	
Saturday	5	30	1	90%	40.00	5,400	4,050	
Sunday	5	30	1	90%	40.00	5,400	4,050	
Sunday (Adult)	2.5	30	1	90%	40.00	2,700	2,025	
Total						£ 13,500	10,125	
Special events and festivals								
Event days	Number of events	Price per event	Income £					Usage
Saturday	3	300	900					900
Sunday	3	300	900					900
Total			1,800					1,800
TOTAL						£ 79,876	47,256	

The above is in line with the approach to pricing for Football Foundation funded 3G pitches and reflects a football development approach to pricing and operation.

COVENTRY STADIUM

3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

Staffing

Away from SBitC sessions (where facility staffing will not be required), it is assumed that the facility will generally be used regularly through external demand from 5pm until 10pm weekdays and throughout weekends, equating to circa 46 hours per week. An allowance has been made for a member of staff for all of this period, although in reality this could be reduced once the programme of activities is established. As an example, anchor clubs could become key holders to the facility, reducing the staff costs during their access periods.

Table 6.1: Assumed staffing requirements

Day	Community usage	Hours
Monday-Friday	17:00-22:00	25
Saturday	09:00-18:00	9
Sunday	09:00-21:00	12

The total cost of staffing the facility, including 25% on costs, is projected in the table below. This includes maintenance aspects as well as additional staffing requirements for any large events that are held. There is likely to be less need for staffing during the off-season and summer months when clubs do not train, or when they are more likely to train on grass pitches due to lighter evenings.

Table 6.2: Assumed staffing costs

Designation	Hours	Weeks	Rate	Total	On cost (25%)	Total cost
Attendant	30	40	£10.00	£12,000	£3,000	£15,000
Pitch sweeping	5	50	£10.00	£2,500	£625	£3,125
Causal/event staff	20	6	£10.00	£1,200	£300	£1,500
Total	55	-	£10.00	£15,700	£3,925	£19,625

Trading account

Income in Year 1 is based on 80% of expected demand being achieved as the facility builds up its external userbase. The trading account for this period therefore identifies that the pitch will generate an initial deficit of almost £10,000 before moving into a surplus of circa £5,000 from Year 2 onwards.

The above deficit and surplus is delivered after a sinking fund of £20k per annum has been accounted for; this sinking fund will seek to replace the 3G pitch carpet every 10 years. The creation of the sinking fund needs to be a contractual requirement between the developer and operator of the facility and should potentially be held in a separate account to ensure that it is ringfenced for its intended purpose.

The five-year business plan is detailed overleaf, which also identifies all the operating costs for the facility (i.e. maintenance, utilities, repairs, pitch markings, etc).

COVENTRY STADIUM 3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

INCOME	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Community club training	23,501	29,376	29,964	30,563	31,174
Block bookings - peak time	28,160	35,200	35,904	36,622	37,355
Fixtures	10,800	13,500	13,770	14,045	14,326
Special events and festivals	1,440	1,800	1,836	1,873	1,910
Other					
TOTAL INCOME	63,901	79,876	81,474	83,103	84,765
EXPENDITURE					
Employees					
Operational staff	19,625	20,018	20,418	20,826	21,243
Total	19,625	20,018	20,418	20,826	21,243
Pitch					
Pitch maintenance purchases / materials (includes quarterly sweeping/decompaction and rubber crumb top up)	5500	5,610	5,722	5,837	5,953
Pitch repairs (including seam and patch repairs)	2500	2,550	2,601	2,653	2,706
Pitch marking (i.e. for younger game formats)	5000	5,100	5,202	5,306	5,412
Equipment replacement (e.g. goals, nets, pitch brushes, etc)	100	102	104	106	108
Floodlight servicing/repairs/replacement bulbs:	1500	1,530	1,561	1,592	1,624
Utilities - floodlights	6000	6,120	6,242	6,367	6,495
Marketing and promotion	4000	4,080	4,162	4,245	4,330
Other costs - insurance, phone, postage, uniforms, cleaning, etc	2000	2,040	2,081	2,122	2,165
Booking system	2000	2,040	2,081	2,122	2,165
Pitch certification - FA requirement - £1,500 every 3 years	500	510	520	531	541
Total	29,100	29,682	30,276	30,881	31,499
Pavilion					
Equipment - new	500	510	520	531	541
First aid equipment	200	204	208	212	216
Clothing and uniforms	200	204	208	212	216
Utilities	2000	2,040	2,081	2,122	2,165
Cleaning	1000	1,020	1,040	1,061	1,082
Printing and stationery	500	510	520	531	541
Telephones	500	510	520	531	541
Total	4,900	4,998	5,098	5,200	5,304
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	53,625	54,698	55,791	56,907	58,045
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	10,276	25,179	25,682	26,196	26,720
3G carpet - sinking fund	-20,000	-20,000	-20,000	-20,000	-20,000
NET SURPLUS DEFICIT	-9,724	5,179	5,682	6,196	6,720

Although the facility moves into surplus from Year 2, it should not be assumed that this will enable the developer to enter into a commercial agreement (i.e. where there is a commercial lease to operate) with SBitC as the operator. Profit margins are minimal and there is also a drive by the FA and Football Foundation to increase the supply of 3G pitches throughout the Country, meaning that the developer needs an operator which will develop football for the future and build a customer base for the longer term that can be retained. As such, it is not uncommon for this type of development to require the operator to re-invest surpluses into local football development activity (e.g. disability football and charitable activity).

COVENTRY STADIUM

3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

PART 6: CONCLUSION

There is a clear shortfall of 3G pitches across Rugby and Coventry and it is considered that enough demand has been identified through the consultation phase of this study to warrant the development of provision at Coventry stadium. Furthermore, it is projected that the facility will generally generate a surplus of income to ensure long-term viability, providing that it is established as set out in this report i.e. as a full size pitch and with appropriate supporting infrastructure. Management of the site is also vital to this, with a structure that sees SBitC operate the pitch considered to be a workable approach.

Notwithstanding the above, there are some key challenges that need to remain under consideration as the proposal proceeds. Perhaps most significantly, this includes the fact that Sport England could still object to the development if it does not consider the proposal to be sufficient mitigation for the loss of the speedway track, as per NPPF point C. This report does not make a comment on this, although it does identify usage levels of the 3G pitch that could be used to help guide the planning policy decision.

In addition, support is not guaranteed from either the FA or the Football Foundation given that the project was not identified as part of the LFFP process, albeit this report has attempted to provide sufficient evidence to ensure that this is not the case. Sustainability may be somewhat impacted upon if the pitches that are in the LFFP are delivered over its ten-year lifespan; however, the location of Coventry stadium in relation to these proposals will likely make this negligible.

Another planning issue to consider is the greenbelt status of the site, with the development needing to be complimentary to this setting to ensure that it can be approved. Further work may be necessary in relation to this and also in relation to issues such as engineering works and emergency access. Planning officers from Rugby Borough Council should be kept in regular dialogue to ensure that its requirements are met.

A final factor to consider is that it is not unusual for clubs to say that they will use a pitch for the purposes of a study like this only for them not to access it when it is established. As such, to limit this possibility, it is imperative that the relevant clubs are kept informed of the project as it develops and made to feel like important partners. Moreover, peak time availability must be kept reserved for such users, with pricing also kept at an affordable level and competitive with other facilities.

Other considerations

As this study has progressed, it has been identified that there could be demand for the 3G pitch to be World Rugby compliant (full contact rugby cannot be played on a 3G pitch that is not World Rugby compliant), specifically in relation to Broad Street RUFC which has previously explored the creation of its own pitch. This is something that could be further explored, with such usage likely to bring both positives and negatives. The positives include increased usage (and therefore increased income and sustainability) and a broader community appeal, whilst the negatives include increased project costs (a World Rugby compliant 3G pitch is more expensive) and a potential need for more space as the pitch requirements for senior rugby are larger than that of adult football.

COVENTRY STADIUM 3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

Another consideration identified during the study is there is thought to be high demand for bowls in the Brandon area due to its older population, potentially warranting the creation of a bowling green as part of the development. However, this is only thought of as possible if it could be created in addition to a 3G pitch as a bowling green instead of a 3G pitch would see the site receive much lower usage levels. This means that it would be far less likely to be considered as appropriate mitigation for the speedway facility.