

**Ploszajski Lynch  
Consulting Ltd.**



**Maidstone Borough Council**

***Playing Pitch Strategy***

**January 2019**

Addendum (July 2019)

Mangravet Recreation Field has potential to contribute towards the borough's supply of sports pitches, and an appraisal of the site will be given consideration when the Playing Pitch Strategy is reviewed in 2020.

## CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	THE LOCAL CONTEXT	4
3	STRATEGIC INFLUENCES	9
4	ASSESSING PITCH NEEDS	13
5	FOOTBALL NEEDS	17
6	CRICKET NEEDS	61
7	RUGBY UNION NEEDS	83
8	RUGBY LEAGUE NEEDS	98
9	HOCKEY NEEDS	111
10	AMERICAN FOOTBALL NEEDS	127
11	LACROSSE NEEDS	138
12	APPLYING AND REVIWING THE STRATEGY	147

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

Ploszajski Lynch Consulting Ltd. (PLC) was commissioned by Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) to produce a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) for the borough. This is part of a wider assessment of sport and leisure provision in the borough which also includes indoor and outdoor built leisure facilities.

## 1.2 Strategic drivers

The primary purpose of the PPS is to provide a strategic framework which ensures that the provision of outdoor playing pitches meets the local needs of existing and future residents within Maidstone Borough. Development in the Borough has brought an increase in sports provision which is able to meet some of the needs of the area. However future development is likely to put a strain on the sporting infrastructure of Maidstone. The PPS will help to secure and safeguard sport in Maidstone now and in the future.

## 1.3 The aim and objectives of the strategy

### 1.3.1 Aim

The aim of the PPS is to provide Maidstone Borough Council with an assessment of all relevant outdoor sport facilities in the Borough. This will provide a baseline for current and future supply and demand assessments and also set out a vision with a strategic approach to sport and recreation provision in the Borough in the short, medium and long term (to 2031).

The strategy will also establish the principles to help inform where future resources should be focussed to ensure that proposed provision of pitches and related facilities will meet future demand and reflect sustainable development objectives.

### 1.3.2 Objectives

The objectives of the PPS are to:

- Provide an evidence base for use in planning, investment and sports development decisions.
- Refer to, and be in general accordance with, relevant national (including the National Planning Policy Framework), regional, sub-regional and local policies and priorities.
- Provide a clear picture of existing supply, surpluses, deficit and anticipated future demand for pitches by sport and age bracket.
- Assess the current supply of playing pitches including private facilities, with insight into the quality of these facilities and services, identifying possible future supply, including broad location and opportunities for opening up private sites for community use.

- Make reference to provision of facilities immediately adjacent to the Borough to ensure a full picture of local provision is available.
- Identify ways to increase opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity.
- Consult with key established user groups such as local teams, the local Sport and Physical Activity Alliance, the governing bodies of the pitch sports (NGB's), schools and education establishments and local key partners to apply local feedback to contextualise the results.

## **1.4 The scope of the strategy**

### **1.4.1 The sports**

The sports included in the Strategy are:

- Football.
- Cricket.
- Rugby Union.
- Rugby League.
- Hockey.
- American Football.
- Lacrosse.

## **1.5 The study methodology**

The methodology for the study follows the '*Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance*' (2013) approach to playing pitch assessments, developed by Sport England. The process involves five stages and ten steps as follows:

- **Stage A** - Prepare and tailor the approach (Step 1).
- **Stage B** - Gather information on the supply of and demand for provision (Steps 2 and 3).
- **Stage C** - Assess the supply and demand information and views (Steps 4, 5 and 6).
- **Stage D** - Develop the strategy (Steps 7 and 8).
- **Stage E** - Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up-to-date (Steps 9 and 10).

## **1.6 Strategy format**

The structure of the Strategy document is as follows:

- The local context.
- Strategic influences.
- Assessing playing pitch needs in Maidstone.
- Football needs.
- Cricket needs.
- Rugby needs.
- Hockey needs.
- American Football needs.
- Lacrosse needs.
- Strategy implementation.

## 2 THE LOCAL CONTEXT

### 2.1 Introduction

This section identifies the context within which playing pitch provision is made in Maidstone.

### 2.2 Background

Maidstone is the county town of Kent and occupies a central location in the county. It stands on the River Medway which links the town to the Thames estuary. The Borough of Maidstone is one of the most attractive areas in the country in which to live, work or to visit, lying between the North Downs and the Weald. The borough's easy access to both the attractions of rural Kent and of London means that Maidstone itself and the nearby towns and villages are highly desirable locations. Maidstone is at the centre of a good transport network with good rail and motorway access to London, the Channel ports and thence to Europe.

### 2.3 Population

The key population statistics are as follows:

#### 2.3.1 Current population

Maidstone is the most populous of the Kent districts. The 2011 census measured the population as 155,143. 107,627 people live in the town of Maidstone, with the remainder located in surrounding villages. According to Kent County Council's *'Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletin'* (2017) the population of the borough increased to 166,400 by the middle of 2016, an increase of 11,257 (7%).

#### 2.3.2 Age structure

Maidstone has a relatively elderly age structure. The borough has a slightly lower proportion of people aged under 25 years (29.4%) compared with Kent as a whole (29.8%).

#### 2.3.3 Ethnicity

Maidstone's population is comparatively ethnically homogeneous with 94% of residents classifying themselves as White. 3.2% classify themselves as Asian with 0.9% being Black African or Black Caribbean.

#### 2.3.4 Population growth

MBC's *'Strategic Housing Market Assessment'* (2015) confirmed the objectively assessed housing need for the borough over the period 2011 to 2031 as 17,660 dwellings. Of these 8,335 have already been built or granted planning permission. This scale of development will increase the borough's population by 22,380 to 177,523 people by 2031. This will represent an increase of 14.4% over the 2011 census figure.

## 2.4 Deprivation

According to the Government's 2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Maidstone is a comparatively prosperous area. It ranks 206<sup>th</sup> out of 326 English local authorities in terms of overall deprivation. However, this overall rating does hide some local inequalities. Public Health England estimates that 4,100 children (14.3%) in the borough live in poverty.

## 2.5 Health

Local health indices are recorded in Public Health England's *'Health Profile for Maidstone'* (2015). These show that in general the health of people in Maidstone is better than in England as a whole:

- Life expectancy at birth is higher than the national averages by 0.8 years for men and 0.5 years for women. However, there is a life expectancy gap of 5.4 years for men and 3.8 years for women between the most and least deprived parts of the Borough.
- 17.3% of year 6 children in Maidstone are obese, compared with a national average of 19.1%.
- Only 18.9% of adults in the Borough are obese, compared with a national average of 23%.

## 2.6 Active People Survey

Sport England's *'Active People'* surveys 9 and 10 have identified the following key measures of adult (16+) participation in sport and physical activity in Maidstone:

### 2.6.1 Overall participation

Overall rates of regular adult participation in sport and physical activity (at least one session of 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise per week) in Maidstone in 2015/16 were 39.3%, which is above the Kent average of 35.4% and above the 38.3% figure for the south-east as a whole.

### 2.6.2 Volunteering

The percentage of the population volunteering to support sport for at least one hour a week in Maidstone is 11.5% which is below both the south-east average of 13.6% and the national average of 12.6%.

### 2.6.3 Club membership

The percentage of the population belonging to a sports club in Maidstone is 26.9% higher than the south-east average of 24.5% and the national average of 22%.

### 2.6.4 Coaching

The percentage of the Maidstone population receiving sports coaching in the last twelve months was 13.1% in 2015/16, below the south-east average of 18.1% and the England average of 15.6%.



## 2.6.5 Organised competition

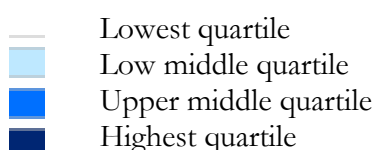
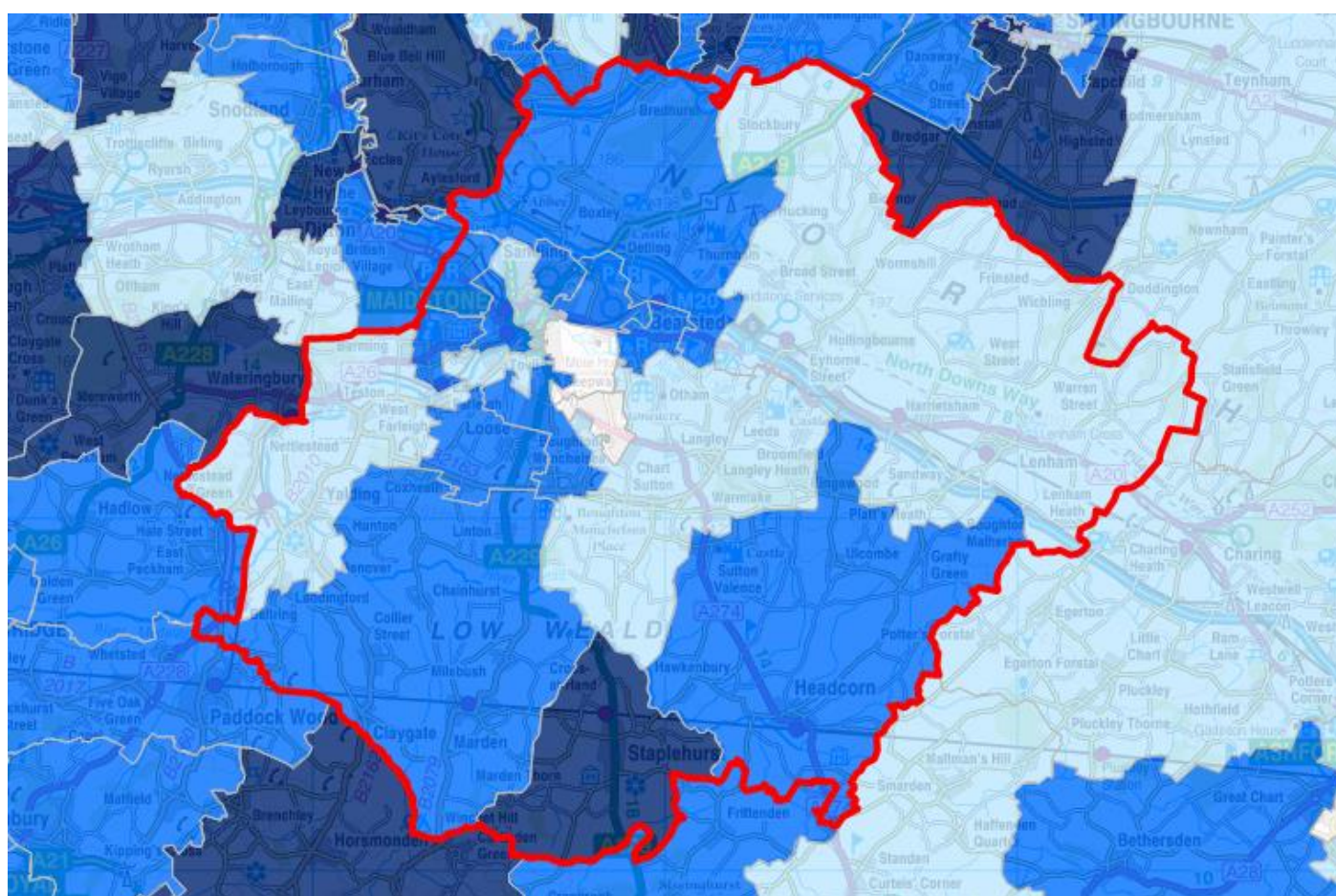
The percentage of the Maidstone population taking part in a sporting competition in the last twelve months was 16.1% in 2015/16, above the south-east figure of 15.6% and the national average of 13.3%.

## 2.6.6 Satisfaction

The percentage of adults who are very or fairly satisfied with sports provision in Maidstone in 2015/16 was 62.2%, below the south-east figure of 64.3% and in line with the England average of 62.2%.

## 2.6.7 Geographical variations

Whilst overall rates of participation in the borough are relatively high, there are large variations at Middle Super Output Area (MSOA) level, with two areas in the south of Maidstone town in the lowest quartile nationally and one around Staplehurst in the highest quartile.



## 2.7 'Active Lives' survey

In 2017, Sport England replaced the 'Active People' survey with the 'Active Lives' survey, which broadens the definition of engagement in sport and physical activity, with a greater focus on measuring inactivity. The definitions used in the survey are as follows:

- **Sport and physical activity:** This includes bouts of at least 10-minutes of moderate or higher intensity sports activities, walking and cycling for leisure or travel, fitness activities and dance.
- **Active:** The 'Active' population is defined as those doing at least 150 minutes of the above activities per week.
- **Fairly active:** The 'Fairly active' population is defined as those doing at between 30 and 149 minutes of the above activities per week.
- **Inactive:** The 'Inactive' population is defined as those doing at 30 minutes or less of the above activities per week.

The key data for Maidstone from the 2018 survey is set out below:

<i>Area</i>	<i>Active</i>	<i>Fairly active</i>	<i>Inactive</i>
Maidstone	60.7%	15.3%	24.0%
Kent	62.9%	13.3%	22.8%
South-East	65.2%	12.5%	22.3%
England	61.8%	12.5%	25.7%

## 2.8 The implications for pitch provision

The implications of the local context for pitch provision in Maidstone:

- **A relatively elderly population:** A relatively elderly age structure is typically associated with lower rates of participation in sport and physical activity, so this may reduce demand for the pitch sports in Maidstone.
- **A predominantly white population:** Physical activity participation rates amongst the white population are typically higher than for other ethnic groups. The low proportion of Maidstone residents from black and minority ethnic groups may contribute to the relatively levels of involvement in sport locally.
- **Population growth:** The borough's population is projected to increase by 22,380 people by 2031. This will create significant additional demand for the pitch sports.
- **Overall sports participation rates:** Based upon the 'Active People' survey data, general participation rates in sport and physical activity are higher than the respective county and regional averages. However, the more recent 'Active Lives' Survey suggests that rates have fallen back recently to lower than the wider geographical averages.

- ***Club membership, coaching and formal competitions:*** Involvement with formal sports structures like club-based activity and coaching in Maidstone are relatively high. This suggests that the pitch sports, which involve all of these elements, should be relatively popular locally.
- ***Geographical variations in participation:*** Analysis of participation rates at Middle Super Output Area level reveal significant differences between the urban and rural parts of the borough, which will impact upon demand patterns.

## 3 STRATEGIC INFLUENCES

### 3.1 Introduction

This section examines the influence of relevant policies and priorities on playing pitch provision in Maidstone, including the impact of national strategies.

### 3.2 Maidstone Council's Strategic Plan

The Council's work is guided by *'The Strategic Plan 2015-2020'*. The 2017/8 refresh of the plan sets out the vision for the area 'that our residents live in decent homes, enjoy good health and a pleasant environment, with a successful economy that is supported by reliable transport networks'. The vision is being delivered through several Action Areas of which the most relevant to the PPS are:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all.
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough.

These priorities are being delivered through several Action Areas of which the most relevant to the PPS are:

- Ensuring there are good leisure and cultural attractions.
- Encouraging the good health and wellbeing

Success in these areas will be measured by customer satisfaction with the council's leisure and cultural attractions and some, unspecified health indicators.

### 3.3 Maidstone Local Plan

The Local Plan sets out local planning policies and identifies how land is used, determining what will be built where. Adopted local plans provide the framework for development and must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. The Maidstone Borough Local Plan was adopted in October 2017 and sets out the spatial vision for the future as supporting the wider vision of the borough:

- The council's vision for the borough is set out in the community strategy and the strategic plan (2015) and its 2017/18 update. The Maidstone Borough Local Plan is the spatial expression of the council's vision.
- The Plan sets out standards of provision for sports pitches at 1.6 hectares per 1,000 people in line with the national standard adopted by Fields in Trust. However, as identified in the review of Government planning policy below, local authorities are required to undertake a robust assessment of local needs based upon Sport England's *'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance'* (2013) which places less reliance on per capita standards and more upon a detailed site-specific assessment of the supply-demand balance.

### 3.4 Kent Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Maidstone Borough Council is a member of the West Kent CCG Health and Wellbeing Board. This board is responsible for delivery in that area of the wider *Kent Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2014-2017* (2014). The health vision as set out in the strategy is ‘to improve health and wellbeing outcomes, deliver better coordinated quality care, improve the public’s experience of integrated health and social care services, and ensure that the individual is involved and at the heart of everything we do’.

The strategy makes no mention of sport and physical activity is promoted only as a way of decreasing obesity. No specific targets for participation are set out.

### 3.5 The Government’s Planning Policies

In July 2018, the Government published revisions to the *National Planning Policy Framework* (2018), setting out its economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. Taken together, these policies articulate the Government’s vision of sustainable development, which should be interpreted and applied locally to meet local aspirations. The policies of greatest relevance to pitch provision and retention are as follows:

- **Sustainable development:** ‘The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’.
- **Health and well-being:** ‘Local planning authorities should work with public health leads and health organisations to understand and take account of the health status and needs of the local population, including expected future changes, and any information about relevant barriers to improving health and well-being’.
- **Open space, sports and recreational facilities:** ‘Access to good quality opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. The planning system has a role in helping to create an environment where activities are made easier and public health can be improved. Planning policies should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of sports and recreational facilities in the local area. The information gained from this assessment of needs and opportunities should be used to set locally derived standards for the provision of sports and recreational facilities’.
- ‘Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:
  - An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
  - The need for and benefits of the development clearly outweigh the loss’.



The Government also issued *Planning Practice Guidance* in 2014 and the following is of particular relevance to sports facilities and playing pitches:

- ***Open space, sport and recreation provision:*** ‘Open space should be taken into account in planning for new development and considering proposals that may affect existing open space. It can provide health and recreation benefits to people living and working nearby’.
  - ‘Authorities and developers may refer to Sport England’s guidance on how to assess the need for sports and recreation facilities’.
  - ‘Local planning authorities are required to consult Sport England in certain cases where development affects the use of land as playing fields. Where there is no requirement to consult, local planning authorities are advised to consult Sport England in cases where development might lead to loss of, or loss of use for sport, of any major sports facility, the creation of a site for one or more playing pitches, artificial lighting of a major outdoor sports facility or a residential development of 300 dwellings or more’.
- ***Health and well-being:*** ‘Local planning authorities should ensure that health and wellbeing, and health infrastructure are considered in local and neighbourhood plans and in planning decision making’.
  - ‘Development proposals should support strong, vibrant and healthy communities and help create healthy living environments which should, where possible, include making physical activity easy to do’.
  - ‘Opportunities for healthy lifestyles must be considered (e.g. planning for an environment that supports people of all ages in making healthy choices, helps to promote active travel and physical activity and promotes high quality open spaces and opportunities for play, sport and recreation)’.

### **3.6 The Government’s Sports Strategy**

The Government’s sports strategy *‘Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation’* (2015) sets the context for a national policy shift. It contains the following material of relevance to pitch provision in Maidstone:

- The Strategy seeks to ‘redefine what success looks like in sport’ by concentrating on five key outcomes: physical wellbeing, crazy wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and economic development.
- The benefit of engaging those groups that typically do little or no activity is immense. Future funding will therefore focus on those people who tend not to take part in sport, including women and girls, disabled people, those in lower socio-economic groups and older people.

### 3.7 Sport England Strategy

Sport England's strategy '*Towards an Active Nation*' (2016) contains a significant policy shift to encourage more currently inactive people to become active, with a relative move away from support for programmes aimed at existing participants. Elements of particular relevance to pitch provision in Maidstone are as follows:

- More money and resources will be focused on tackling inactivity because this is where the gains for the individual and for society are greatest.
- There will be greater investment in children and young people from the age of five to build positive attitudes to sport and activity as the foundations of an active life.
- Sport England will work with those parts of the sector that serve existing participants to help them identify ways in which they can become more sustainable and self-sufficient.

### 3.8 The implications for pitch provision

The implications of the key strategic influences on pitch provision in Maidstone are:

- ***Maidstone Strategic Plan:*** Encouraging the good health and well-being of Maidstone residents is a key action area. The key challenge for the pitch sports is to ensure that their 'offer' is sufficiently relevant and attractive to engage a wider participation base, including people who are currently inactive.
- ***Maidstone Planning policy:*** A robust, evidence-based assessment of playing pitch needs in the borough is required to inform planning policy, including the Local Plan review and this PPS will provide this.
- ***National sports policy shifts:*** The move in national sports policy towards prioritising new participants will create a challenge for the pitch sports to ensure that their 'offer' is sufficiently relevant and attractive to engage a wider participation base, including people who are currently inactive. Recent innovations such as walking and small-sided versions of the sports might prove more attractive than the more traditional models, but this will have implications for facilities needs in the future, because this type of activity does not need to be accommodated on formal grass pitches.

## 4 ASSESSING PLAYING PITCH NEEDS IN MAIDSTONE

### 4.1 Introduction

This section explains the basis upon which the current playing pitch needs in Maidstone have been identified, along with the approach for identifying the additional provision that will be needed as a result of population growth.

### 4.2 Assessing current needs

The methodology applied to assess the supply-demand balance for pitches and related facilities follows Sport England's recommended methodology, advocated in *'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance'* (2013). To assess whether the current provision is adequate to meet existing demand an understanding of the situation at all sites available to the community needs to be developed. This is achieved by providing a brief overview for each site, which comprises:

- A comparison between the carrying capacity of a site and how much demand currently takes place there. The carrying capacity of a site is defined as the amount of play it can regularly accommodate over an appropriate period of time without adversely affecting its quality and use. Demand is defined in terms of the number of 'match equivalent' sessions at each site.
- An indication of the extent to which pitches and related facilities are being used during their respective peak periods.
- The key issues with and views on the provision at a site and its use.
- The site overviews identify the extent to which pitches are
  - Being overplayed - where use exceeds the carrying capacity.
  - Being played to the level the site can sustain - where use matches the carrying capacity.
  - Potentially able to accommodate some additional play - where use falls below the carrying capacity.

The situation at individual sites can then be aggregated to identify the position at a wider geographical area, to identify the potential for excess demand at some sites to be accommodated by excess supply at others in the locality. Other factors can also be assessed such as:

- Any demand being accommodated on sites with unsecured community access.
- The impact of latent or displaced demand.
- The situation at priority sites.

This analysis then enables an assessment to be made of the adequacy of existing pitch and related facility provision.



## 4.3 Assessing future needs

### 4.3.1 Assessment methodology

The methodology applied to assess the additional future needs for pitches and related facilities arising from population growth also involves the approach advocated in Sport England's PPS guidance, namely:

- Establishing projected population change.
- Analysing sports development proposals and participation trends.
- Considering existing deficiencies or spare capacity.
- Taking account of any forthcoming changes to facility supply.

### 4.3.2 Assessed demand parameters

Analysis of the above factors influencing the future supply and demand for playing pitches in the borough has led to the following conclusions, which are reflected in the subsequent assessment of future needs:

- **Population change:** MBC's '*Strategic Housing Market Assessment*' (2015) confirmed the objectively assessed housing need for the borough over the period 2011 to 2031 as 17,660 dwellings. Of these 8,335 have already been built or granted planning permission. This scale of development will increase the borough's population by 22,380 to 177,523 people by 2031. This will represent an increase of 14.4% over the 2011 census figure.
- **Participation trends:** According to Sport England's '*Active People*' survey, participation at a national level in all the pitch sports has remained static or fallen in the period since 2005, in some cases by quite significant margins. This means that future increases in participation in the pitch sports cannot be assumed based upon historic trends and have therefore not been factored in to projected needs.
- **Sports development initiatives:** A limited range of sports development initiatives is delivered in Maidstone involving the pitch sports. There are no firm proposals to expand or amend the current programmes and an increase in participation directly attributable to these activities has therefore not been factored in to projected future needs.
- **Changes in supply:** Any known proposed gains or losses in pitches and related facilities provision will influence the ability to accommodate the additional demand arising from the increased population and this has been included in the capacity assessments.

## 4.4 Delivering future needs

### 4.4.1 Process

To identify the most appropriate way to meet the additional pitch and related facilities needs arising from population growth, four sequential questions were addressed:

- **Existing deficiency or spare capacity:** To what extent do existing pitches and related facilities have any current shortfalls or any over-supply?
- **Additional needs:** What additional needs will arise from population growth?
- **Accommodating needs:** Which needs can be met in whole or part by spare capacity in existing pitches and related facilities and which will need to be met in whole or part by new provision?
- **Extra pitches:** What extra pitches and related facilities of each type are required to provide for the residual unmet demand?

#### 4.4.2 Methodology

The methodology provides quantified answers to the above questions as follows:

- **Current provision:** The adequacy of current provision and any existing spare capacity was assessed using Sport England's approved methodology, adapted where appropriate to assess informal demand and facilities.
- **Additional needs:** Additional needs were calculated by identifying the existing Team Generation Rates in the borough, to identify the number of people that are currently required to form a team of various types in each of the pitch sports. These figures have then been applied to the projected population increases, to calculate the gross additional team and related pitch needs arising from an extra 22,380 people.
- **Net requirements:** The net requirement for additional provision was calculated by comparing the extra required capacity to the current spare capacity where appropriate, to identify the difference.
- **Location of provision:** The location of additional pitch and related facilities needs was established by comparing the respective levels of projected population growth in each part of the borough.

### 4.5 Sources of information

#### 4.5.1 Consultation

Information was gathered from a wide range of consultees including:

- **Sport England:** Guidance on the assessment methodology.
- **Maidstone Borough Council:** Consultation with officers from Leisure, Planning and Grounds Maintenance on their respective areas of responsibility.
- **Neighbouring local authorities:** Information on their playing pitch assessments and the impact of any cross-border issues.
- **Kent Sport:** Information on local and wider strategic priorities.

- ***Governing bodies of sport:*** Information on local and wider strategic priorities and local supply and demand information.
- ***Individual pitch sports clubs:*** Information on playing pitch usage patterns, current and future needs and opinions on quality.
- ***Parish Councils:*** Information on the quantity and quality of pitches that they provide.
- ***Schools:*** Information on playing pitch needs and aspirations and attitudes towards community use.

## **4.6 The criteria assessed**

### **4.6.1 Quantity**

The number of pitches and related facilities was established and cross checked against other sources provided by local stakeholders and consultees.

### **4.6.2 Quality**

The quality of playing pitches was assessed by visiting every pitch in the borough during the respective playing seasons and assessing quality criteria using the recognised non-technical visual assessment criteria. The ratings for each aspect of each pitch were checked and challenged via the clubs' survey and stakeholder consultation and amended where necessary.

### **4.6.3 Accessibility**

The accessibility of pitches, in particular the extent of secured community use and pricing was assessed, to identify any barriers to use that might impact on the capacity of local provision.

### **4.6.4 Access**

The geographical spread of each type of pitch was mapped, the extent of catchment coverage was then determined and any gaps established.

### **4.6.5 Strategic priority**

The assessment of need and priorities for provision was identified by the governing bodies of the respective pitch sports.

### **4.6.6 Used capacity**

The used capacity of existing pitches at each site was assessed using a bespoke supply-demand spreadsheet.

## **4.7 Summary**

The approach outlined above has been applied in the following sections to identify the playing pitch needs of football, cricket, rugby union, rugby league, hockey, American football and lacrosse.

## 5 FOOTBALL NEEDS IN MAIDSTONE

### 5.1 Key stakeholders

The key stakeholders delivering football in Maidstone are:

- **Kent FA:** Ten of the football clubs in the borough affiliate to the Kent FA.
- **FA-affiliated clubs:** There are 41 FA-affiliated clubs in Maidstone, who collectively run 56 adult teams, 106 youth teams and 70 mini-soccer teams.
- **Pitch providers:** A range of organisations provide football pitches in the borough, in particular schools and parish councils.

### 5.2 Strategic context

#### 5.2.1 Football Association

The Football Association's *National Game Strategy for Participation and Development 2018 - 2021* has a number of targets with important implications for football and its facilities needs at grassroots level (see box below).

- Increase female youth participation by 11% by 2021.
- Retain and support the 129,000 male, female and disability teams.
- Increase the number of over 16's playing every week by over 200,000, by offering a variety of formats by 2021.
- Create 100 new '3G' football turf pitches and improve 2,000 grass pitches by 2021.
- Develop Football Hubs in major centres of population.
- Ensure that 50% of youth football and mini-soccer matches are played on '3G' pitches by 2021.

#### 5.2.2 Neighbouring local authorities

Playing pitch strategies in neighbouring local authority areas identify cross-boundary issues:

##### **Ashford**

The Council is in the final stages of producing a new playing pitch strategy. Draft findings include:

- All latent demand can be met from within current provision.
- There will be a need to provide seven additional adult pitches, three youth 11v11, three youth 9v9, three mini-soccer 7v7 pitches and two mini soccer 5v5 pitches to meet the needs of anticipated population growth.
- One team from Ashford plays at Lenham School in Maidstone, but there is no evidence of any exported demand to Ashford.

### ***Medway***

The council has an adopted strategy dating from 2012 which it plans to revise in 2018. The strategy identified:

- No need for additional adult pitches or '3G' pitches.
- A shortage of up to 36 youth pitches and 11 mini-soccer pitches.
- There is no evidence of any imported football demand from Maidstone, nor any exported demand to Maidstone.

### ***Swale***

The council has an adopted playing pitch strategy dating from 2015. It identifies:

- A shortage of junior/mini football pitches, especially in the Sittingbourne area.
- This can be met through converting surplus senior pitches and increasing access to education sites that are not currently available for community use.
- There is no evidence of any imported football demand from Maidstone, nor any exported demand to Maidstone.

### ***Tonbridge and Malling***

The council will shortly be finalising a Pitch Strategy. Its most recent assessment states that:

- Football is 'favourably provided for'.
- However, there is a shortfall of 12 junior football pitches offset by a surplus of 9 adult football pitches.
- The council has plans to improve facilities at Tonbridge Racecourse and Tonbridge Farm pitch complexes.
- There is no evidence of any imported football demand from Maidstone, nor any exported demand to Maidstone.

### ***Tunbridge Wells***

The council is finalising a playing pitch strategy in 2018. However, there is no evidence of any imported football demand from Maidstone, nor any exported demand to Maidstone.

## **5.2.3 Implications of the strategic context**

The implications of the strategic context for football in Maidstone are as follows:

- ***Participation increases:*** The FA's target increases in participation amongst the over 16s need to be set in the context of falling demand locally for adult league football.
- ***'3G' pitches:*** The increased dependence on '3G' football turf pitches for youth football and mini-soccer matches by 2019 will fit well in an area where there are good levels of provision of such pitches.
- ***Exported demand:*** There is no evidence of any imported football demand from Maidstone, nor any exported demand to Maidstone.

## 5.3 Football pitch demand in Maidstone

### 5.3.1 Expressed demand

The following football clubs and teams are affiliated to the Kent FA and are based in Maidstone. The information was supplied by the Kent FA through its 'Whole Game System' database, cross-referenced to the clubs' survey. Sites outside the borough are marked in italics.

A questionnaire survey of clubs affiliated to the Kent FA produced responses from 17 clubs, collectively representing 182 teams or 78.8% of the 231 affiliated teams in Maidstone. The following clubs responded:

- AFC Ashford Athletic
- Bearsted FC
- Coxheath and Farleigh FC
- Castle Colts FC
- Kent Police FC
- Lenham Wanderers FC
- Loose Lions FC
- Maidstone Athletic FC
- Maidstone Tempests FC
- Maidstone United FC
- Marden Minors FC
- MPE FC
- Staplehurst Monarchs United FC
- Staplehurst Monarchs Youth FC
- Vinters FC
- Whitehawks FC
- Yalding and Laddingford FC

<i>Club</i>	<i>Match venue</i>	<i>Training venue</i>	<i>Adult teams</i>	<i>Youth (11v11) teams</i>	<i>Youth (9v9) teams</i>	<i>Mini (7v7) teams</i>	<i>Mini (5v5) teams</i>
AFC Ashford Athletic	Lenham School	Homelands Stadium	1	-	-	-	-
Barming Youth FC	Barming Primary School Barming Heath Giddyhorn Recn. Ground Gatland Recn. Ground New Barming Pavilion	Maplesden Noakes School	-	7	5	5	4
Bearsted FC	Bearsted FC Bearsted Green Chart Sutton Memorial PF	Bearsted FC Bearsted Green Lenham School	1	8	4	3	-
Blue Eagles FC	Langley Recn. Ground	Langley Recn. Grd.	1	-	-	-	-
Castle Colts FC	The Orchard Ground Allington Primary School	The Orchard Ground Allington Prim Sch	-	1	7	3	5
Castle Wanderers FC	The Orchard Ground Allington Primary School	The Orchard Grd.	-	1	-	1	2
Coxheath & Farleigh	Chart Sutton Memorial PF Beacon Playing Field	The Orchard Grd. Cornwallis Academy	1	2	2	2	1

<b><i>Club</i></b>	<b><i>Match venue</i></b>	<b><i>Training venue</i></b>	<b><i>Adult teams</i></b>	<b><i>Youth (11v11) teams</i></b>	<b><i>Youth (9v9) teams</i></b>	<b><i>Mini (7v7) teams</i></b>	<b><i>Mini (5v5) teams</i></b>
Coxheath Colts JFC	Beacon Playing Field	Cornwallis Academy	-	-	2	-	-
Cross Keys (Sunday)	KGV Playing Field, Loose	-	1	-	-	-	-
Headcorn FC	Headcorn Football Club	Headcorn FC	2	-	-	-	-
Headcorn Juniors FC	Headcorn Football Club Ulcombe Recreation Ground	Headcorn FC	-	2	1	3	2
Hunton FC	KGV Playing Field	-	1	-	-	-	-
Independent Maidstone Utd Supporters FC	The Gallagher Stadium	-	1	-	-	-	-
Kent County Squad	The Gallagher Stadium	The Gallagher Stad	1	-	-	-	-
Kings Park Rangers FC	Lenham School '3G'	-	1	-	-	-	-
Lenham Wanderers FC	William Pitt Field Lenham School	William Pitt Field Lenham School	2	4	2	-	-
Loose Lions FC	Molehill Copse Pr. School Leeds Playing Field Sutton Valance Mem. Grd.	Molehill Copse Pr. School	-	4	1	2	1
Maidstone Inter FC	Langley Recreation Ground	<i>Kings Hill Sp. Park</i>	1	-	-	-	-
Maidstone Tempests FC	Mote Park	<i>Strood Sp. Centre</i>	1	-	-	-	-
Maidstone United FC	The Gallagher Stadium	The Gallagher Stad	6	-	-	-	-
Maidstone Utd Ladies & Girls	Giddyhorn Recn Ground Cornwallis Academy	The Gallagher Stadium	1	-	2	2	1
Maidstone Utd Raiders	The Gallagher Stadium Bower Grove School	Bower Grove School	7	1	1	1	-
Maidstone Utd Youth FC	Oakwood Park School The Gallagher Stadium	Oakwood Park Sch The Gallagher Stad	-	6	2	3	4
Mangravet Utd FC	Sutton Valance Mem Ground	-	1	-	-	-	-
Marden FC	Marden Playing Field	-	2	-	-	-	-
Marden Minors FC	Pattenden Lane	Pattenden Lane	-	-	1	-	-
MPE FC	Madginford Primary School South Park Mallards Way Parkwood	-	-	2	2	3	4
Park Royal (Maidstone)	Civil Service Sports Soc. Club	-	2	-	-	-	-
Parkwood Jupitors FC	Parkwood	-	1	-	-	-	-
Roseacre Raiders FC	Elizabeth Harvie Field Parish Recreation Ground Roseacre Junior School South Borough Prim. Sch.	Valley Park School Elizabeth Harvie Field	-	1	5	1	3
Soccer Elite FA Ltd.	Maplesden Noakes '3G'	Maplesden '3G'	3	-	1	2	-
Staplehurst Monarchs United FC	Jubilee Playing Field	<i>Putlands SC, Paddock Wood</i>	2	-	-	-	-
Staplehurst Monarchs YFC	Jubilee Playing Field	<i>Putlands SC, Paddock Wood</i>	-	6	4	2	1
Sutton Valance Athletic	Sutton Valance Mem. Grd.	Sutton Valance M.G.	1	-	-	-	-
Sugar Loaves FC	Lance Memorial PF	Lance Memorial PF	1	-	-	-	-
Vinters FC	Headcorn FC Valley Park School	Valley Park School	4	12	6	-	5
Walnut Wanderers FC	Oakwood Park School	Oakwood Park GS	1	-	-	-	-

<i>Club</i>	<i>Match venue</i>	<i>Training venue</i>	<i>Adult teams</i>	<i>Youth (11v11) teams</i>	<i>Youth (9v9) teams</i>	<i>Mini (7v7) teams</i>	<i>Mini (5v5) teams</i>
Weaving AFC	Larkfield Recreation Ground	-	1	-	-	-	-
West Farleigh FC	Elmscroft Park	Elmscroft Park	3	-	-	-	-
Whitehawks FC	Lenham School 3G New Line Learning Academy	Lenham 3G	2	-	-	-	-
Yalding & Laddingford	The Kintons	Mascalls Academy	2	1	-	2	2
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>

The key demand issues are as follows:

- **Team numbers:** There are 54 adult men's teams, one adult women's team, 57 youth male (11v11) teams, one youth female (11v11) team, 38 youth male (9v9) teams, 10 youth female (9v9) teams, 35 mini-soccer (7v7) teams and 35 mini-soccer (5v5) teams that draw the majority of their membership from Maidstone.
- **Women and girl's football:** Football for women and girls is under-developed in Maidstone, with only one adult and one youth 11v11 team.
- **Club to team ratios:** On average, football clubs in Maidstone have 5.5 teams. This compares favourably with the national average of 3.3 teams per club, suggesting that clubs are better organised and more sustainable than elsewhere.
- **Charter Standard Clubs:** Of the 41 clubs in Maidstone 16 have achieved the FA's quality-assured Charter Standard status. This is 39% which compares with the national average of 27%. In terms of teams, 88.6% (156 out of 176) of youth and mini-soccer teams play within a Charter Standard club in Maidstone, compared with the national average of 81.1%. This means that the benefits of belonging to an accredited club with formalised safeguarding procedures and qualified coaches is enjoyed by the majority of youth and mini-soccer players in Maidstone.

### 5.3.2 Expressed demand trends

Adult football participation is falling across the country. 'Active People' shows that participation fell from 3.15 million adult players in 2010/11 to 2.66 million in 2015/16. This is reflected in Maidstone where there has been a decline in adult demand in recent years. For example:

- The Maidstone and District Football League, which was the grass-roots Saturday competition, reduced to 22 teams in two divisions in 2017 compared with six divisions of 12 to 14 teams at its height in the late 1980s. Following a fall to eight teams in 2018 the league folded and the remaining teams now play in the local Sunday league.
- Similarly, the Maidstone and Mid-Kent League which plays on a Sunday reduced from 72 teams in the early 1990s peak, to 32 teams in season 2016/17 and 29 teams in 2017/18.

Conversely, football participation amongst young people is strong across the country aided in part by the increase in participation by female players. Data from the FA and the survey returns from Maidstone clubs shows a strong and relatively stable position in the mini and youth leagues centred around Maidstone.



- The Maidstone Invicta Primary League (U7 to U11) has had a stable membership of around 220 mini-soccer teams in recent years.
- The Maidstone Boys Primary League (U12 to U15) increased from 112 to 119 teams at youth level over the last four years.
- The Maidstone Minor League (U16 and U18) has increased from 38 to 48 teams over the last four years.

### 5.3.3 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to play by teams or other users of playing pitches from within the study area which takes place outside of the area. Examination of the data on where Maidstone-based teams play their home games revealed that 19 teams having to travel outside of the borough to access pitches, mostly for training. However, 80% of respondents to the football clubs survey reported a difficulty in accessing local facilities, in particular youth and mini-soccer pitches. Only 58% of clubs reported that they always played at their preferred venue. Whilst there is no displaced demand at present, this position is likely to change in the longer term.

### 5.3.4 Unmet demand

Unmet demand takes a number of forms:

- Teams may have access to a pitch for matches but nowhere to train or vice versa.
- Pitches of a particular size or type may be unavailable to the community.
- The poor quality and consequent limited capacity of pitches in the area and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement.

There is some evidence of unmet demand, although consultation with local clubs and pitch providers indicated that this has less to do with the quantity of provision than:

- **Site capacity:** Some larger clubs noted a lack of multi-pitch sites large enough to enable them to play at a single venue.
- **Accessibility:** Two central Maidstone clubs complained about having to travel to other parts of the borough to access pitches. Staplehurst Monarchs have to train on an all-weather pitch outside the borough between October and April.
- **Changing facilities:** Poor or non-existent changing rooms and showers were cited by 29% of teams as being unacceptable.
- **Cleanliness:** 39% of teams complained about dog fouling and litter.
- **Affordability:** Several of the larger clubs indicated a lack of affordable training venues. Some floodlit sites at schools around the borough, but these are perceived to be expensive particularly as most schools prefer to block book facilities.

### 5.3.5 Latent demand

Whereas unmet demand is known to currently exist, latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from a population if they had access to more or better provision. The Kent FA believes that there is no clear evidence of latent demand for football in Maidstone.

## 5.4 Football pitch supply in Maidstone

### 5.4.1 Introduction

This section summarises the detail of football facilities supply in Maidstone, including:

- '3G' football turf pitches.
- Other artificial grass pitches used for football.
- Grass football pitches.

### 5.4.2 '3G' football turf pitches

The '3G' football turf pitches in Maidstone are detailed below. All the pitches are on the FA's '3G' Pitch Register and can be used for training and matches where competition rules allow.

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Year built</i>
Lenham School	Ham Lane, Lenham ME17 2LL	105m x 65m	2010
The Gallagher Stadium	James Whatman Way, Maidstone ME14 1LQ	105m x 70m	2016
The Maplesden Noakes School	Buckland Road, Maidstone ME16 0TJ	100m x 60m	2008
Valley Park School	Huntsman Lane, Maidstone ME14 5DT	105m x 70m	2014
YMCA (Maidstone)	Melrose Close, Maidstone ME15 6BD	90m x 45m	2011

### 5.4.3 Other artificial turf pitches

The following pitches, whilst non-specialist football surfaces, have some football usage:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Surface</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Year built</i>
Invicta Grammar School	Huntsman Lane, Maidstone ME14 5DS	Sand-filled	88m x 53m	2015
Maidstone Hockey Club	Armstrong Road, Maidstone ME15 6AX	Sand-dressed	97m x 60m	2011

### 5.4.4 Grass football pitches

Provision of grass pitches with regulation line markings and goalposts for organised football are as follows. Pitches shown in brackets are overmarked onto another pitch with resultant reductions in usage capacity. The dimensions of the pitches are as follows:

<i>Pitch Type</i>	<i>Pitch length</i>	<i>Pitch width</i>	<i>Size including run-offs</i>
Adult football	100m	64m	106m x 70m
Youth football	100m	64m	106m x 70m
Youth football (U15-U16)	91m	55m	97m x 61m
Youth football (U13-U14)	82m	50m	88m x 56m
Youth football (9v9)	73m	46m	79m x 52m
Mini-soccer (7v7)	55m	37m	61m x 43m
Mini-soccer (5v5)	37m	27m	43m x 33m

- *Available for community use and used:*

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Adult 11v11</i>	<i>Youth 11v11</i>	<i>Youth 9v9</i>	<i>Mini 7v7</i>	<i>Mini 5v5</i>
Allington Primary School	Hildenborough Cres, Maidstone ME16 0PG	-	-	1	2	1
Barming Heath	Heath Road, Barming ME16 9LQ	-	1	-	-	-
Barming Primary School	Belmont Close, Barming ME16 9DY	-	-	1	1	1
Beacon Playing Field	Linden Road, Coxheath ME17 4RA	-	1	1	1	1
Bearsted FC	Honey Lane, Bearsted ME15 8RG	1	-	2	1	-
Bearsted Green	Church Lane, Maidstone ME14 4EF	-	2	-	-	-
Bower Grove School	Font Lane, Maidstone ME16 8NL	-	-	-	1	-
Chart Sutton Memorial PF	Wormlike Road, Chart Sutton ME17 3RS	1	-	-	-	-
Civil Service Sports & Social Club	Recreation Close, Maidstone ME14 5AZ	1	-	-	-	-
Cornwallis Academy	Hubbard Lane, Coxheath ME17 4HX	-	-	1	-	-
Elizabeth Harvie Field	Trapfield Close, Bearsted ME15 6TL	-	-	-	-	1
Elmscroft Park	Charlton Lane, Maidstone ME15 0PB	1	-	-	-	-
Gatland Recreation Ground	Fanta Lane, Maidstone ME16 8NL	-	1	1	-	-
Giddyhorn Recreation Ground	Poplar Grove, Maidstone ME16 0BY	-	-	-	1	2
Headcorn Football Club	Grigg Lane, Headcorn TN27 9LU	1	-	-	1	1
Jubilee Playing Field	Headcorn Road, Staplehurst TN12 0DS	1	1	1	1	1
King George V Playing Field	West Street, Hunton ME15 0RR	1	-	-	-	-
King George V Playing Field	Walnut Tree Avenue, Loose ME15 9RN	1	-	-	-	-
Lance Memorial Playing Field	Greenway Ct. Rd., Hollingbourne ME17 1QQ	1	-	-	-	-
Langley Recreation Ground	Horseshoes Lane, Langley ME17 3JY	1	-	-	-	-
Leeds Playing Field	Upper Street, Leeds ME17 1RU	-	1	-	-	-
Lenham School	Ham Lane, Lenham ME17 2LL	2	-	-	-	-
Madginford Primary School	Egremont Rd., Maidstone ME15 8LH	-	-	-	1	-
Maidstone Leisure Centre	Mote Park, Maidstone ME15 8NQ	2	-	-	-	-
Mallards Way	Murrain Drive, Maidstone ME15 8XJ	-	-	1	-	1
Marden Minors FC	Pattenden Lane, Marden TN12 9QJ	-	-	1	-	-
Marden Playing Field	Rookery Path, Marden TN12 9AZ	1	-	-	-	-
Molehill Copse Primary Academy	Hereford Rd., Maidstone ME15 7ND	-	-	1	1	1
New Barming Pavilion	Church Lane, Maidstone ME16 9HA	-	-	1	-	-
New Line Learning Academy	Boughton Lane, Loose, Maidstone ME15 9QL	2	-	-	-	-
Oakwood Park Grammar School	Oakwood Park, Maidstone ME16 8AH	1	-	-	-	-
Parish Recreation & Sports Field	Lenham Road, Kingswood ME17 1LX	1	-	-	-	-
Parkwood	Longshaw Road, Maidstone ME15 9JD	1	-	-	-	-
Roseacre Junior School	The Landway, Bearsted ME14 4BL	-	-	1	-	-
South Borough Primary School	Postley Rd., Maidstone ME15 6TL	-	-	1	-	-
South Park	Armstrong Rd., Maidstone ME15 6AZ	-	-	1	-	-
The Kintons	Vicarage Road, Yalding ME18 6DP	2	-	-	2	1
The Orchard Ground	Castle Road, Maidstone ME16 0PZ	1	1	2	-	-
Ulcombe Recreation Ground	The Street, Ulcombe ME17 1DX	-	1	-	-	-
Valley Park School	Huntsman Lane, Maidstone ME14 5DT	3	-	3	-	-
War Memorial Playing Field	North Street, Sutton Valance ME17 3HT	1	1	-	-	-
William Pitt Field	Old Ham Lane, Lenham ME17 2LR	1	-	1	-	-
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>

- *Available for community use and not used:*

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Adult 11v11</i>	<i>Youth 11v11</i>	<i>Youth 9v9</i>	<i>Mini 7v7</i>	<i>Mini 5v5</i>
Bearsted Woodland Trust	Church Lane, Bearsted ME14 4EE	-	-	-	1	-
Bell Wood Primary School	Brishing Lane, Bell Wood ME15 9 EZ	-	-	-	1	-
Boughton Monchelsea Rec. Grd.	Church St., Boughton Monchelsea ME17 4HN	-	1	-	1	-
Coxheath Primary School	Stockett Lane, Coxheath ME17 4PS	-	-	-	1	-
Coxheath Recreation Ground	Stockett Lane, Coxheath ME17 4PY	-	-	1	2	-
Headcorn Primary School	King's Road, Headcorn TN27 9QT	-	-	1	-	-
Kingswood Primary School	Cayser Drive, Kingswood ME17 3QF	-	-	-	1	-
Lenham Primary School	Ham Lane, Lenham ME17 2LL	-	-	-	1	-
Loose Primary School	Loose Road, Loose ME15 9UW	-	-	-	1	-
Kent Police HQ	Sutton Road, Maidstone ME15 9BZ	2	-	-	-	-
Maidstone Leisure Centre	Mote Park, Maidstone ME15 8NQ	-	-	2	1	-
Marden Playing Fields	Rookery Path, Marden TN12 9HL	1	-	-	-	-
Penenden Heath	Heath Rd., Maidstone ME14 2DA	1	-	-	-	-
Senacre Community Centre	Titchfield Road, Maidstone ME15 8FX	1	-	-	-	-
Senacre Wood School	Graveney Rd., Maidstone ME15 8QQ	-	-	-	1	-
South Park	Armstrong Rd., Maidstone ME15 6AZ	1	2	-	-	-
The Maplesden Noakes School	Great Buckland, Maidstone ME16 0TJ	4	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>

- *Not available for community use:*

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Adult 11v11</i>	<i>Youth 11v11</i>	<i>Youth 9v9</i>	<i>Mini 7v7</i>	<i>Mini 5v5</i>
Archbishop Courtenay Prim. Sch.	Eccleston Rd., Maidstone ME15 6QN	-	-	-	1	-
St. Augustine Academy	Oakwood Park, Maidstone ME16 8AE	2	-	-	-	-
St. John's Primary School,	Provender Way, Maidstone ME14 5TZ	-	-	-	2	-
St. Simon Stock School	Oakwood Park, Maidstone ME16 0JP	-	2	-	-	-
Sandling Primary School	Ashburnham Rd., Maidstone ME14 2JG	-	-	-	1	-
Sutton Valance School	North St., Sutton Valance ME17 3NH	2	1	-	-	-
Sutton Valance Prep. School	Chart Rd., Sutton Valance ME17 3RF	-	-	-	2	-
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>

#### 5.4.5 Artificial turf pitch quality

The quality of all '3G' football turf pitches in Maidstone was assessed from site visits by applying the Non-technical Visual Assessment criteria developed for use in conjunction with the *Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance*. The assessment generates an overall 'score' by evaluating the playing surface, fencing, floodlighting, disability access and changing provision. The scores equate to ratings of 'Good' for 80% or more 'Standard' for 79% - 51% and 'Poor' for 50% or below:

- *'3G' football turf pitches:*

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pitch</i>	<i>Changing</i>
Lenham School	Standard	Standard
The Gallagher Stadium	Good	Good
The Maplesden Noakes School	Standard	Standard
Valley Park School	Standard	Standard
YMCA (Maidstone)	Standard	Standard

- **Artificial grass pitches:**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pitch</i>	<i>Changing</i>
Invicta Grammar School	Standard	Standard
Maidstone Hockey Club	Standard	Standard

#### 5.4.6 Grass pitch quality

The quality of all formal grass football pitches in Maidstone was assessed from site visits during the playing season by applying the Non-technical Visual Assessment criteria developed by the FA for use in conjunction with the *Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance*. The criteria assessed are as follows. A percentage score and associated ratings are generated as an overall measure of quality:

- **The playing surface** - This includes grass cover, pitch dimensions, gradient, evenness, length of grass, drainage and evidence of any unauthorised use.
- **The changing facilities** - This includes the availability of changing rooms, kitchen and/or bar, the interior and exterior appearance, showering and toilet provision, medical room, disability access and parking arrangements.
- **Grounds maintenance** - This includes the frequency of grass cutting, seeding, aeration, sand-dressing, fertilising, weed killing and chain harrowing.

The ratings for each grass football pitch in Maidstone are below. The percentage scores generated equate to ratings of 'Good' for scores of 100% - 75% (highlighted in green below), 'Standard' for scores of 74.9% - 50% (highlighted in yellow below), 'Poor' for scores of 49.9% - 25% (highlighted in red below) and 'Unsuitable' below 25%:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pitches</i>	<i>Pitch</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Allington Primary School	Youth (9v9) pitch Mini (7v7) pitch 1 Mini (7v7) pitch 2 Mini (5v5) pitch	Standard Standard Standard Standard	-	A larger school site with no available changing for community users.
Barming Heath	Youth (11v11) pitch	Standard	-	'Standard' quality pitch with no on-site changing.
Barming Primary School	Youth (9v9) pitch Mini (7v7) pitch Mini (5v5) pitch	Standard Standard Standard	-	A larger school site with no available changing for community users.
Beacon Playing Field	Youth (11v11) pitch Youth (9v9) pitch Mini (7v7) pitch Mini (5v5) pitch	Standard Standard Standard Standard	Good	'Standard' quality pitch with changing in the village hall.
Bearsted FC	Adult pitch Youth (9v9) pitch 1 Youth (9v9) pitch 2 Mini (7v7) pitch	Good Good Good Good	Good	A high-quality, well-maintained facility with a stadium pitch.
Bearsted Green	Youth (11v11) pitch 1 Youth (11v11) pitch 2	Standard	-	Pitches on cricket outfield. No changing facilities.

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pitches</i>	<i>Pitch</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Bower Grove School	Mini (7v7) pitch	Standard	-	'Standard' quality with no available changing for community users.
Chart Sutton Memorial Playing Field	Adult pitch	Poor	Poor	'Poor' standard rutted pitch with rusty goalposts and 'poor' changing.
Civil Service Sports & Social Club	Adult pitch	Standard	Good	Pitch at the higher end of the 'standard' rating. 'Good' changing.
Cornwallis Academy	Youth (9v9) pitch	Standard	Standard	'Standard' quality provision.
Elizabeth Harvie Field	Mini (5v5) pitch	Standard	Standard	'Standard' quality provision.
Elmscroft Park	Adult pitch	Standard	Standard	'Standard' quality pitch with remote changing facility.
Gatland Recreation Ground	Youth (11v11) pitch Youth (9v9) pitch	Poor Poor	-	'Poor' quality pitches with no changing
Giddyhorn Recreation Ground	Youth (9v9) pitch Mini (7v7) pitch Mini (5v5) pitch 1 Mini (5v5) pitch 2	Standard Standard Standard Standard	-	Key site for youth and mini play, with 'standard' quality pitches and no changing facilities.
Headcorn Football Club	Adult pitch Mini (7v7) pitch	Good Good	Good	'Good' quality pitches and changing provision.
Jubilee Playing Field, Staplehurst	Adult pitch Youth (11v11) pitch Youth (9v9) pitch Mini (7v7) pitch Mini (5v5) pitch	Poor Standard Standard Standard Standard	Good	Football Foundation funded site with 'good' changing facilities, but one 'poor' quality adult pitch and other pitches at the lower end of 'standard' quality.
King George V Playing Field, Hunton	Adult pitch	Standard	Poor	'Poor' quality changing on a multi-sport site (also cricket and bowls).
King George V Playing Field, Loose	Adult pitch	Standard	Standard	'Standard' quality provision, with some evidence of dog fouling.
Lance Memorial Playing Field, Hollingbourne	Adult pitch	Good	Good	'Good' quality, well maintained facilities.
Langley Recreation Ground	Adult pitch	Standard	Standard	Pitch and changing at the higher end of the 'standard' rating.
Leeds Playing Field	Youth (11v11) pitch	Standard	Standard	'Standard' quality provision.
Lenham School	Adult pitch 1 Adult pitch 2	Standard Standard	Good	'Hub Site' with a '3G' pitch and 'good' quality changing provision.
Madginford Primary School	Mini (7v7) pitch	Standard	-	'Standard' quality with no available changing for community users.
Maidstone Leisure Centre	Adult pitch 1 Adult pitch 2 Youth (9v9) pitch 1 Youth (9v9) pitch 2 Mini (7v7) pitch	Standard Standard Standard Standard Standard	Good	'Standard' quality pitches, with 'good' quality changing in the Leisure Centre. Some car parking issues at peak times.
Mallards Way	Youth (9v9) pitch Mini (5v5) pitch	Standard Poor	-	'Poor' quality mini-pitch with no changing facilities. Poor road access.
Marden Playing Field	Adult pitch	Standard	Standard	'Standard' quality provision.
Marden Minors FC	Youth (9v9) pitch	Good	Poor	'Good' quality pitches with 'poor' quality portacabin changing.



<i>Site</i>	<i>Pitches</i>	<i>Pitch</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Molehill Copse Primary Academy	Youth (9v9) pitch Mini (7v7) pitch Mini (5v5) pitch	Standard Standard Standard	-	'Standard' pitches with no available changing for community users.
New Barming Pavilion	Youth (9v9) pitch	Standard	Good	'Standard' pitch with 'good' quality new changing facilities.
New Line Learning Academy	Adult pitch	Standard	Standard	'Standard' quality provision.
Oakwood Park Grammar School	Adult pitch	Standard	Standard	Pitch at the higher end of 'standard' quality.
Parkwood	Adult pitch	Standard	Standard	Site shared with a Rugby Club
Roseacre Junior School	Youth (9v9) pitch	Standard	-	'Standard' pitches with no available changing for community users.
South Park	Youth (9v9) pitch	Standard	-	Pitch at the lower end of 'standard' quality and no changing facilities.
The Kintons	Adult pitch 1 Adult pitch 2 Mini (7v7) pitch 1 Mini (7v7) pitch 2 Mini (5v5) pitch	Standard Standard Standard Standard Standard	Poor	Pitches at the lower end of 'standard' quality, 'poor' quality changing in a cricket pavilion.
The Orchard Ground	Adult pitch Youth (11v11) pitch Youth (9v9) pitch	Standard Standard Standard	Standard	'Standard' quality provision, well managed by a Community Association.
Ulcombe Recreation Ground	Youth (11v11) pitch	Standard	Standard	'Standard' quality pitch on a cricket outfield.
Valley Park School	Adult pitch 1 Adult pitch 2 Adult pitch 3 Youth (9v9) pitch 1 Youth (9v9) pitch 2 Youth (9v9) pitch 3	Good Good Good Good Good Good	Standard	Key site for football with 'good' quality pitches and changing at the higher end of the 'standard' rating.
War Memorial Playing Field	Adult pitch Youth (11v11) pitch	Standard	Poor	'Standard' quality pitches with very 'poor' changing facilities.
William Pitt Field	Adult pitch Youth (9v9) pitch	Standard	Standard	'Standard' quality provision.

#### 5.4.7 Summary of grass pitch quality

The number and percentage of pitches in each quality band is tabulated below. The summary shows that almost 16% of pitches are rated as 'good' quality, with fewer than 6% being assessed as 'poor' quality.

<i>Pitch type</i>	<i>Good</i>		<i>Standard</i>		<i>Poor</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Adult 11v11	6	21.4%	20	71.4%	2	7.1%
Youth 11v11	0	0.0%	9	90.0%	1	10.0%
Youth 9v9	6	28.6%	14	66.7%	1	4.7%
Mini-soccer 7v7	2	15.4%	11	84.6%	0	0.0%
Mini-soccer 5v5	0	10.0%	11	91.7%	1	8.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16.7%</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>77.3%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6.0%</b>

The number and percentage of pitches of each type that are served by ‘poor’ quality or no changing facilities is tabulated below. Whilst youth and mini players frequently do not use changing facilities even where they are provided, it is concerning that almost 40% of pitches are served by ‘poor’ quality changing facilities. The adverse impact on user experiences makes it more difficult to recruit and retain new players, particularly women and girls.

<b><i>Pitch type</i></b>	<b><i>Number</i></b>	<b><i>%</i></b>
Adult 11v11	5	17.9%
Youth 11v11	4	40.0%
Youth 9v9	8	38.1%
Mini-soccer 7v7	9	69.2%
Mini-soccer 5v5	7	63.6%
<b><i>TOTAL</i></b>	<b><i>33</i></b>	<b><i>39.3%</i></b>

#### 5.4.8 Grass pitch maintenance

Grass football pitches in Maidstone are provided and maintained by a range of organisations including the borough council, parish councils, schools, community organisations and those football clubs who own or lease the grounds they use. As a result, the quality of pitch maintenance is highly variable across the borough ranging from high quality, well maintained pitches at Bearsted and Valley Park School through to the very poor pitch at Chart Sutton. There is a great deal of informal use of public pitches by dog walkers and joggers and by groups of friends for kickabouts. Also, damage is caused at some open sites by unauthorised activities such as bicycles and golf. Sport England Guidance in its publication ‘*Natural Turf for Sport*’ (2011), specified a need for a £5,000 to £10,500 per annum budget for undrained or pipe drained football pitches. This figure was increased in its ‘*Protecting Playing Fields*’ (2015) guidance, to £11,700 for an adult football pitch and £9,600 for a youth football pitch. Consultation with pitch providers indicates that current expenditure is typically in the range of £4,000 to £5,000 per pitch, with several sites relying on volunteer labour to maintain standards.

#### 5.4.9 Pitch hire charges

- ***Grass pitches in Maidstone:*** Because there is a wide range of pitch providers hire charges vary across the borough. Prices also vary with regards to the size of pitch and the quality of changing. Prices for a single booking are higher than for bookings on 10 or more occasions as the latter is exempt from VAT. The table below gives examples of current pricing and show that hire charges for Maidstone Borough Council pitches are generally higher than those levied by schools and parish councils.

<b><i>Pitch Provider</i></b>	<b><i>Pitch Size and Description</i></b>	<b><i>Price per Match</i></b>	<b><i>Price per 10 or more Matches</i></b>	<b><i>Comments</i></b>
Maidstone BC	Adult with Changing	£74.40	£64.80	Use of changing rooms is optional and has a standard charge of £16.80
Maidstone BC	Adult no changing	£57.60	£48	
Maidstone BC	Junior/Mini with Changing	£39.60	£35.80	
Maidstone BC	Junior/Mini Pitch No Changing	£22.80	£19	
Valley Park School	Adult	-	£49	Includes changing
Valley Park School	Junior	-	£19	Includes changing
Chart Sutton PC	Adult	-	£35	Includes changing
Marden PC	Adult	-	£50	Includes changing
Headcorn PC	Adult	£300 per month		Includes changing



- **Grass pitches in neighbouring areas:** For comparison, the table below provides information on charging in some neighbouring local authority areas. For ease of comparison the table refers to pitches with changing rooms and showers. The table shows that pitch hire costs in the borough of Maidstone are in line with the charges made in neighbouring areas, so there are no cost factors to encourage imported or exported demand.

<i>Pitch Provider</i>	<i>Pitch Size &amp; Description</i>	<i>Price per Match</i>	<i>Price per 10 or more Matches</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	Adult	£84	£70	All pitches have changing
	Junior	£33.60	£28	
	Mini-soccer	£63.60	£53	
Swale Borough Council	Adult	£67	£67	No block booking reductions
	Junior	£20	£20	
	Mini	£15	£15	
Canterbury City Council	Adult	£73.50	£61.25	
	Junior 11 v 11	£27.60	£23	
	Youth 9 v 9	£27.60	£23	
	Mini-Soccer	£27.60	£23	
Medway Council	Adult	£80	Block bookings only available to teams in local leagues. Charges to individual clubs are made by these leagues	
	Junior	£35		
	Mini	£24.40		

- **'3G' football turf pitches:** Hire charges for selected '3G' football turf pitches in Maidstone and neighbouring areas are tabulated below. The data shows that pitch hire costs in Maidstone are broadly in line with the charges made in neighbouring areas, so there are no cost factors to encourage imported or exported demand.

<i>Pitch Provider</i>	<i>Pitch Size and Description</i>	<i>Price per Match</i>	<i>Price per 10 or more Matches</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Maidstone United FC	Whole pitch	£265 + VAT	Not available	Stadium pitch Includes changing
Maidstone YMCA	One-third pitch	£46 per match	£40 per match	Peak time charges
Lenham School	Whole pitch	£65 + VAT = £78 per match	£65 per match	Includes changing
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	Whole pitch	£64.80 per hour = £129.60 per match	£54 per hour = £108 per match	Includes changing
Kings Hill Sports Park, Tonbridge	Whole pitch	£75 per hour = £112.50 per match	Not available	Costs for adult team hire
Hayesbrook School, Tonbridge	Whole pitch	£80 per hour = £120 per match	Not available	Includes changing

- **Consultees' comments on pitch hire charges:**
  - In responding to the club survey 72% of clubs felt that their current pitches offer value for money. This leaves a sizeable minority of 28% who think that charges do not provide good value.

- Local leagues indicated that the cost of hiring facilities is a factor in the decline of club numbers
- Club consultees spoke of the difficulty in booking pitches at Mote Park through MBC's contractor Serco and the fact that booked pitches were not always available when teams arrived.
- School pitch bookings are often problematic for local clubs. Switchboards are not seen as user friendly and there is difficulty getting through to the person responsible for booking.

#### 5.4.10 Ownership, management and security of access

The ownership, management and security of access of all football pitch sites in Maidstone with community use and used is detailed below:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Ownership</i>	<i>Management</i>	<i>Security of access</i>
Allington Primary School	Kent County Council	Allington Primary School	Unsecured
Barming Heath	Maidstone Borough Council	Maidstone Borough Council	Secured
Barming Primary School	Kent County Council	Barming Primary School	Unsecured
Beacon Playing Field	Coxheath Parish Council	Coxheath Parish Council	Secured
Bearsted FC	Otham Parish Council	Bearsted FC	Secured
Bearsted Green	Maidstone Borough Council	Bearsted Parish Council	Secured
Bower Grove School	Kent County Council	Bower Grove School	Unsecured
Chart Sutton Memorial Playing Field	Chart Sutton Parish Council	Chart Sutton Parish Council	Secured
Civil Service Sports & Social Club	Civil Service Sports & Social Club	Civil Service Sports & Social Club	Secured
Cornwallis Academy	Cornwallis Academy	Cornwallis Academy	Unsecured
Elizabeth Harvie Field	Bearsted Parish Council	Bearsted Parish Council	Secured
Elmscroft Park	Rookery Estates	Rookery Estates	Secured
Gatland Recreation Ground	Maidstone Borough Council	Maidstone Borough Council	Secured
Giddyhorn Recreation Ground	Maidstone Borough Council	Maidstone Borough Council	Secured
Headcorn Football Club	Headcorn Football Club	Headcorn Football Club	Secured
Jubilee Playing Field, Staplehurst	Staplehurst Parish Council	Trustees of Jubilee Field	Secured
King George V Playing Field, Hunton	Fields in Trust	Hunton Parish Council	Secured
King George V Playing Field, Loose	Fields in Trust	Loose Parish Council	Secured
Lance Memorial Playing Field, Hollingbourne	Hollingbourne Parish Council	Hollingbourne Parish Council	Secured
Langley Recreation Ground	Langley Parish Council	Langley Parish Council	Secured
Leeds Playing Field	Leeds Parish Council	Leeds Parish Council	Secured
Lenham School	Lenham School	Lenham School	Unsecured
Madginford Primary School	Kent County Council	Madginford Primary School	Unsecured
Maidstone Leisure Centre	Maidstone Borough Council	Serco	Secured
Mallards Way Playing Field	Maidstone Borough Council	Maidstone Borough Council	Secured

<i>Site</i>	<i>Ownership</i>	<i>Management</i>	<i>Security of access</i>
Marden Minors FC	Marden Minors FC	Marden Minors FC	Secured
Marden Playing Field	Marden Parish Council	Marden Parish Council	Unsecured
Molehill Copse Primary Academy	Kent County Council	Molehill Copse Primary Academy	Unsecured
New Barming Pavilion	Barming Parish Council	Barming Parish Council	Secured
New Line Learning Academy	New Line Learning Academy	New Line Learning Academy	Unsecured
Oakwood Park Grammar School	Oakwood Park Grammar School	Oakwood Park Grammar School	Unsecured
Parish Recreation and Sports Field	Broomfield and Kingswood Parish Council	Broomfield and Kingswood Parish Council	Secured
Parkwood	Maidstone Borough Council	Maidstone Borough Council	Secured
Roseacre Primary School	Kent County Council	Roseacre Primary School	Unsecured
South Borough Primary School	Kent County Council	South Borough Primary School	Unsecured
South Park	Maidstone Borough Council	Serco	Secured
The Gallagher Stadium	Maidstone United FC	Maidstone United FC	Secured
The Kintons	Yalding Parish Council	Yalding Parish Council	Secured
The Maplesden Noakes School	The Maplesden Noakes School	The Maplesden Noakes School	Secured
The Orchard Ground	Allington Community Association	Allington Community Association	Secured
Ulcombe Recreation Ground	Ulcombe Parish Council	Ulcombe Parish Council	Secured
Valley Park School	Valley Park School	Valley Park School	Unsecured
War Memorial Playing Field	Sutton Valance Parish Council	Sutton Valance Parish Council	Secured
William Pitt Field	Lenham Parish Council	Lenham Parish Council	Secured
YMCA Maidstone	YMCA Maidstone	YMCA Maidstone	Secured

Security of access for each type of football pitch in Maidstone is summarised below. It shows that just over two-thirds of football pitches have secured access:

<i>Pitch type</i>	<i>Total pitches</i>	<i>Number secured</i>	<i>% secured</i>
Full-sized '3G'	5	3	60.0%
Adult 11v11	28	19	67.9%
Youth 11v11	10	10	100.0%
Youth 9v9	21	12	57.1%
Mini-soccer 7v7	13	9	69.2%
Mini-soccer 5v5	12	8	66.7%
<b><i>TOTAL</i></b>	<b><i>89</i></b>	<b><i>61</i></b>	<b><i>68.5%</i></b>

#### 5.4.11 The views of local stakeholders on pitch supply

Consultation with the FA's Regional Facilities and Investment Manager and the Kent FA's County Development Manager identified the following key issues in relation to Maidstone:

- ***'3G' football turf pitches:*** All '3G' pitches in Maidstone appear on the FA's National Register apart from the YMCA pitch and are therefore, available for competitive play. 3G pitches are perceived to be expensive to hire. The FA wishes providers to move to a 'Match Day' rate rather than an hourly hiring rate. Three Secondary Schools in Maidstone have invested in their own '3G' pitches which are let to local clubs, but there is no secured community use of the facilities.
- ***Grass football pitches:*** Maidstone is an active area for football with active Saturday and Sunday adult leagues and a thriving youth, junior and mini-soccer sector. Changes to the pitch requirements for the various age groups have generally been well implemented. The FA has concerns about falling standards of maintenance at local authority (borough and parish council) pitches. There are concerns about the inability of clubs to apply for funding due to a lack of tenure on their home sites

Consultation with FA-affiliated football clubs identified the following issues in relation to Maidstone:

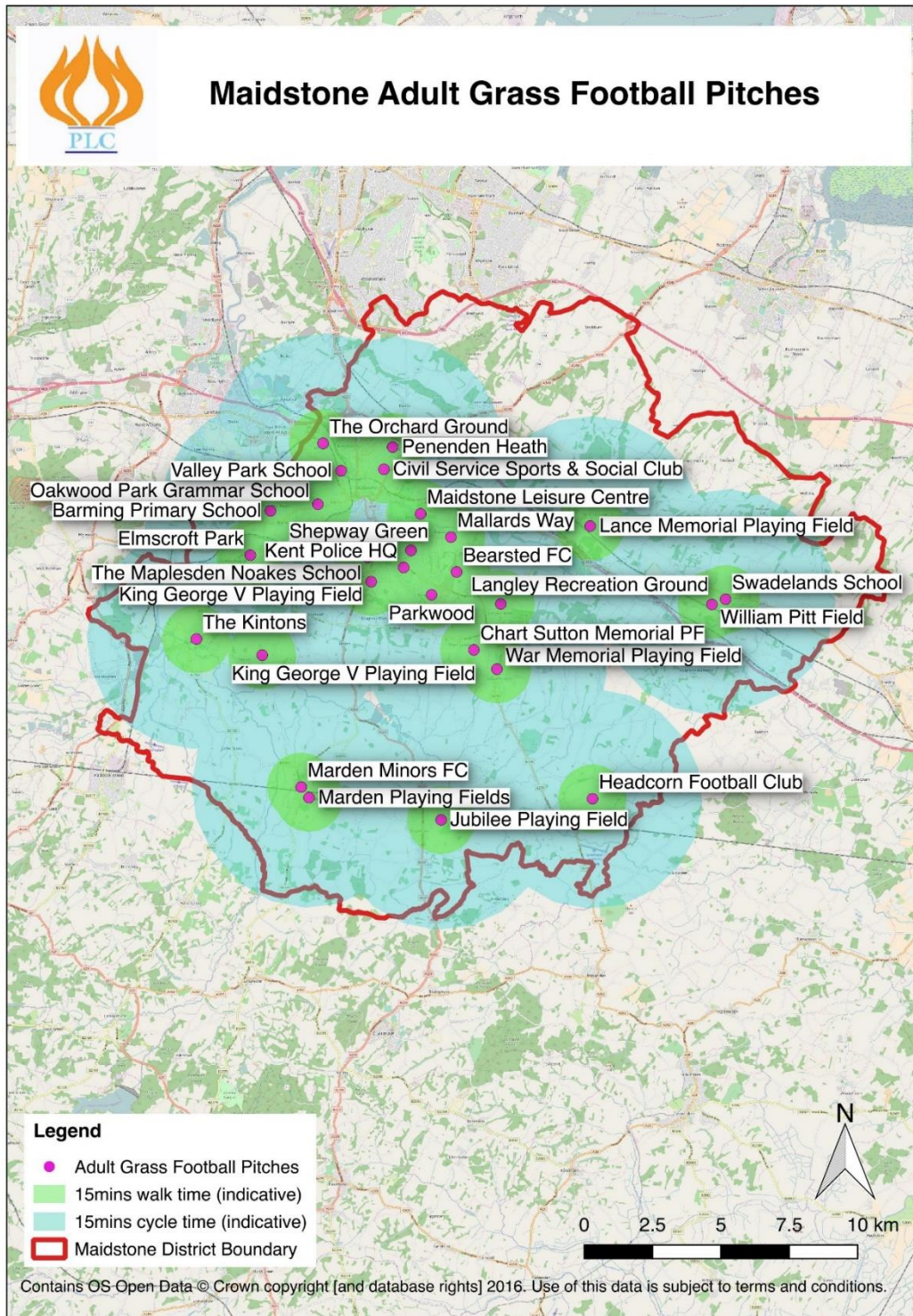
- ***Demand increases:*** MPE FC stated that 'in general we are happy to use MBC pitches, but some of the private pitches we play away matches on are of a better quality. My concern is that as the number of teams in the league increases, this will put pressure on the availability of MBC pitches'.
- ***'3G' pitch provision:*** Vinters FC stated that 'there is a need for additional '3G' pitches. Maidstone BC's booking system does not work well'. Maidstone Tempest FC also stated that 'there needs to be more purpose-built facilities, including 3G pitches and more focus on the adult game. Everything is focused on youth football, which is good, but most men's teams now fold due to lack of players and funds and this is mainly because of the facilities'.
- ***Borough Council pitches:*** Maidstone Tempest FC commented that 'whilst we understand the challenges of operating and maintaining pitches, the overall standard is very poor. Pitches are generally not well taken care off, at least not for the price we are charged compared to privately owned pitches, which are much better maintained and cared for. However, the lack of available pitches elsewhere means many teams play at council-owned pitches and put up with it, so the council can charge what they want and leave the pitches as they are. There used to be many more pitches at Mote Park but there is now just 2 adult pitches, plus a few smaller pitches. We are grateful to the council for what they offer but it could be much improved'.
- ***Pricing issues:*** Marden Minors FC commented that 'the borough council gives the impression that they don't want football on their parks with poor up-keep and over-priced facilities if any'. Maidstone Athletic FC also commented that 'Maidstone's provision for local football has been in decline for years, to the extent that most teams in Maidstone now seek private hire rather than use the facilities that MBC provide. MBC do not maintain quality pitches, changing facilities or security to go with them, and charge way over the top for their use'.
- ***Pitch shortages in Maidstone:*** Bearsted FC stated that 'generally there are not sufficient facilities in Maidstone, hence we have to travel to places like Lenham and Kings Hill that provide training facilities equitable to cost'. Maidstone Athletic FC also commented that 'although we are essentially a Maidstone based club, we are currently having to travel to Lenham to play due to the poor standard of facilities in Maidstone'.



## 5.5 Geographical distribution

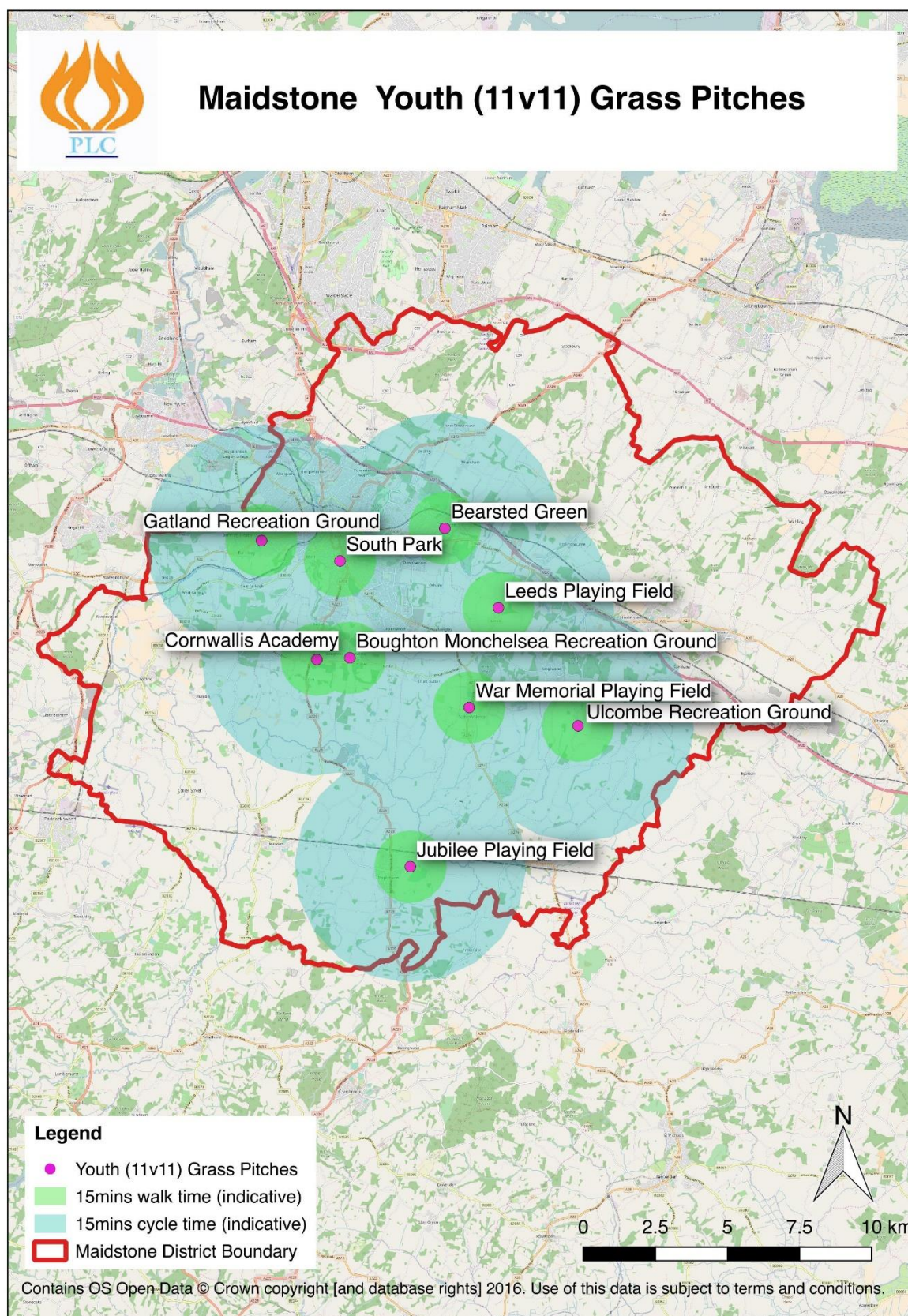
The geographical distribution of football in Maidstone is set out in the maps below. 15-minute walking and cycling time catchments have been marked to illustrate local level accessibility. The 15-minute driving time catchments are not marked, because for all pitch types there is comprehensive drivetime catchment coverage.

### 5.5.1 Adult grass pitches



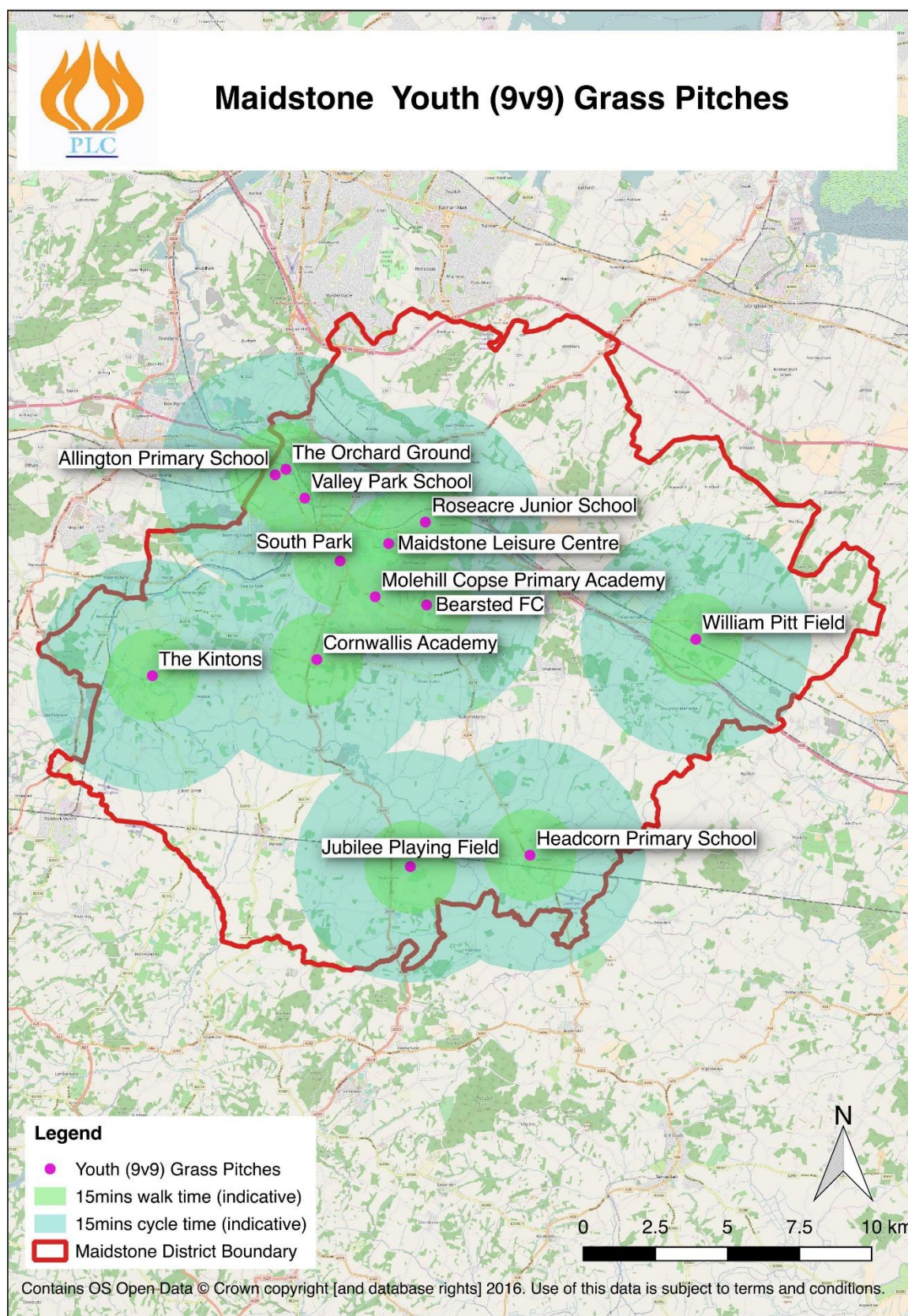


## 5.5.2 Youth 11v11 grass pitches



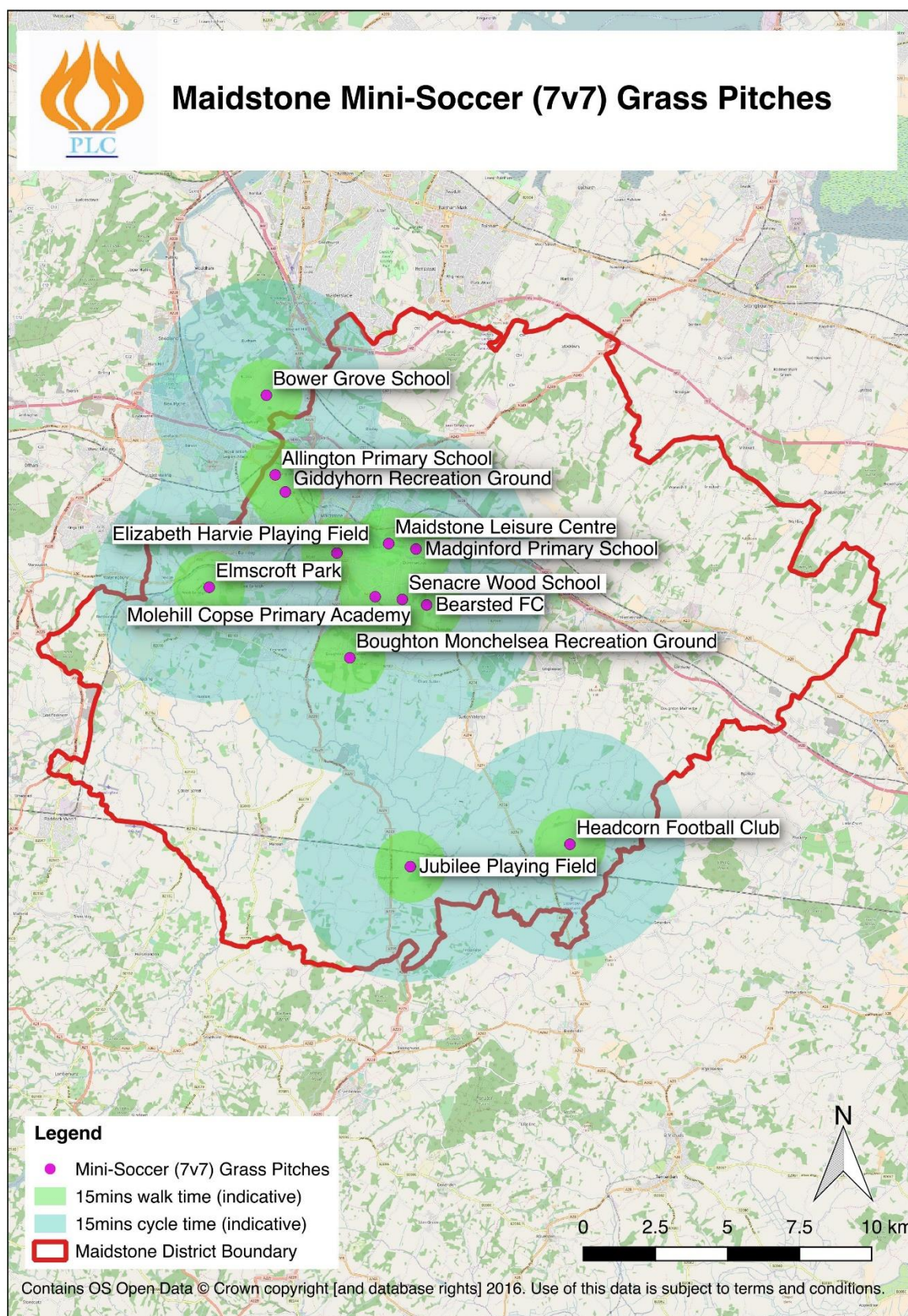


### 5.5.3 Youth 9v9 grass pitches



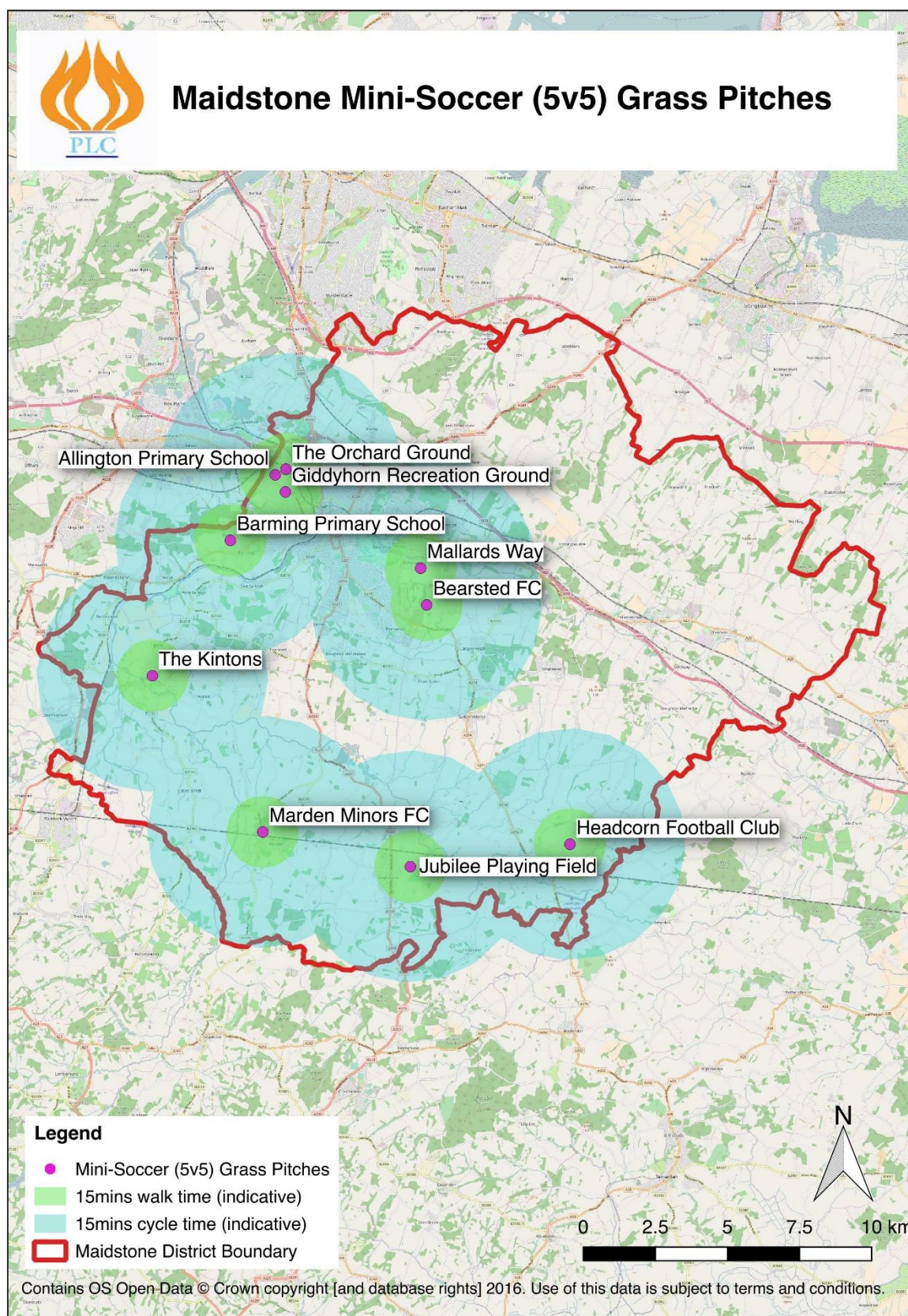


## 5.5.4 Mini-soccer 7v7 grass pitches



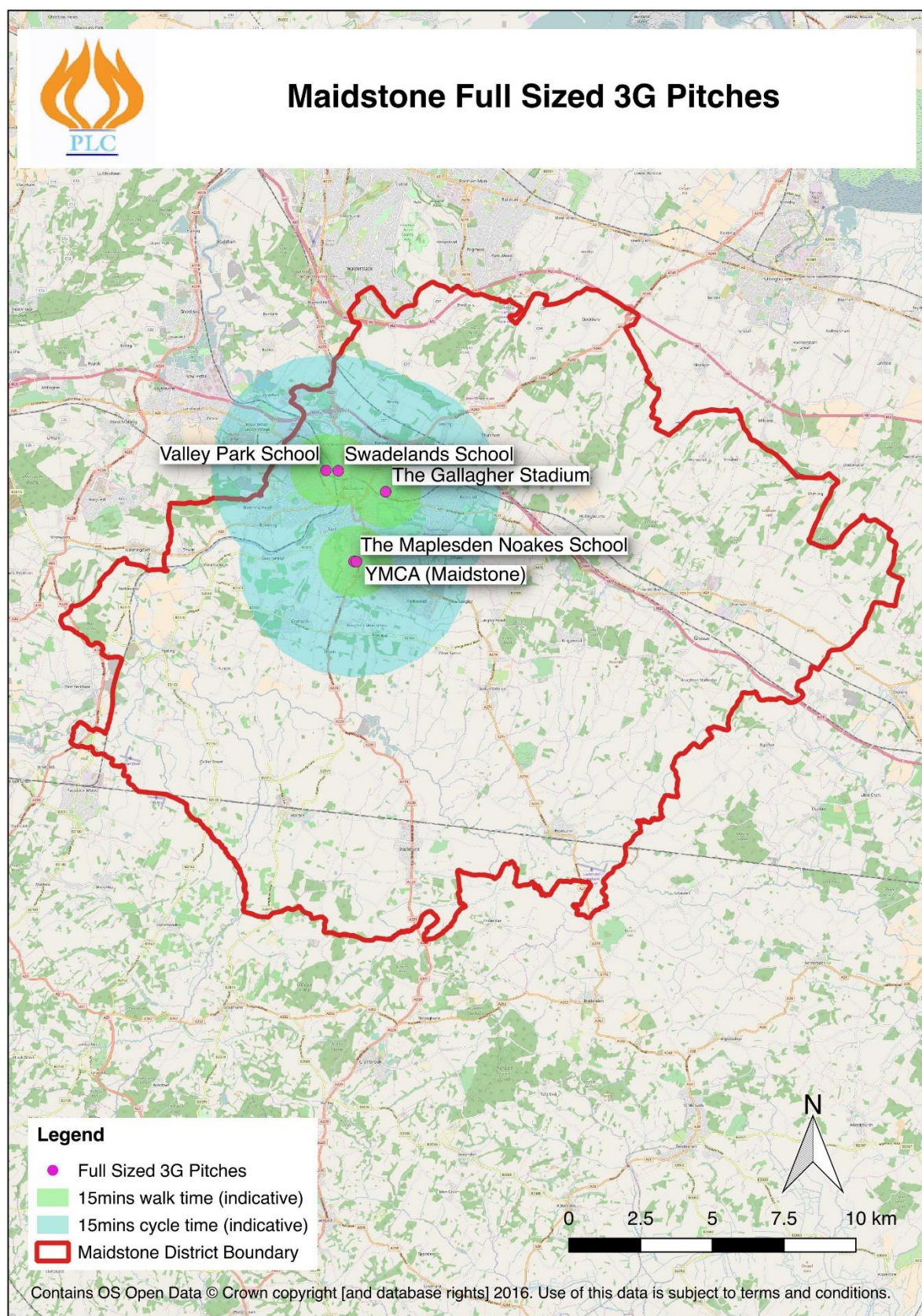


### 5.5.5 Mini-soccer 5v5 grass pitches





### 5.5.6 '3G' football turf pitches



The key findings are as follows:

- **Adult grass pitches:** There is comprehensive geographical coverage of the borough.
- **Youth 11v11 grass pitches:** Areas to the south-west and north-east of the borough are the furthest from the nearest pitch, but all are within 15-minutes driving time.
- **Youth 9v9 grass pitches:** Areas to the south-west and north-east of the borough are the furthest from the nearest pitch, but all are within 15-minutes driving time.
- **Mini-soccer 7v7 grass pitches:** Areas to the south-west and east of the borough are the furthest from the nearest pitch, but all are within 15-minutes driving time.
- **Mini-soccer 5v5 grass pitches:** Areas to the east of the borough are the furthest from the nearest pitch, but all are within 15-minutes driving time.
- **Full-sized '3G' football turf pitches:** Provision is concentrated in and around Maidstone, but with road links focused on the town, nowhere within the borough is beyond 20-minutes driving time of the nearest pitch.

## 5.6 The implications for football in Maidstone

Analysis of local supply of football pitches in Maidstone indicates the following:

- Ten adult football, three youth (11v11), four youth (9v9) and 11 mini (7v7) pitches in the borough are currently available but unused, which suggests that there is some spare capacity.
- Whilst youth and mini players frequently do not use changing facilities even where they are provided, it is concerning that almost 40% of pitches are served by 'poor' quality or no changing facilities. The adverse impact on user experiences makes it more difficult to recruit and retain new players, particularly women and girls.
- Almost 16% of pitches are rated as 'good' quality, with fewer than 6% being assessed as 'poor' quality. Notwithstanding this, there is widespread user criticism of the poor quality of pitches owned by the Borough Council and some evidence that the levels of expenditure on grounds maintenance are below Sport England's recommended levels.
- Just under 70% of pitches have secured community access, but conversely more than 30% do not and as a result access could, in theory, be withdrawn at any time.

## 5.7 Assessment of current needs

### 5.7.1 Introduction

To assess whether the current supply of pitches is adequate to meet existing demand an understanding of the situation at all sites available to the community needs to be developed. This is achieved by providing a brief overview for each site, which comprises:



A comparison between the carrying capacity of a site with how much demand currently takes place there. The carrying capacity of a site is defined as the amount of play it can regularly accommodate without adversely affecting its quality and use. Demand is defined in terms of the number of ‘match equivalent sessions’ at each site.

- An indication of the extent to which pitches are being used during their peak periods.

The site overviews identify the extent to which pitches are:

- ***Being overplayed:*** Where use exceeds the carrying capacity (highlighted in red in the tables below).
- ***Being played to the level the site can sustain:*** Where use matches the carrying capacity (highlighted in yellow in the tables below).
- ***Potentially able to accommodate some additional play:*** Where use falls below the carrying capacity (highlighted in green in the tables below).

In line with FA guidance, the following assumptions have been made in relation to the number of weekly match equivalent sessions that can be accommodated by different quality pitches:

<i>Pitch type</i>	<i>Good quality</i>	<i>Standard quality</i>	<i>Poor quality</i>
Adult	3	2	1
Youth 11v11	4	2	1
Youth 9v9	4	2	1
Mini-soccer 7v7	6	4	2
Mini-soccer 5v5	6	4	2

## 5.7.2 Adult grass pitches

The supply demand balance is tabulated below. Spare capacity is highlighted by green shading, balanced usage levels are highlighted in yellow and sites that are overused are highlighted in red:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pitches</i>	<i>Users</i>	<i>Weekly capacity</i>	<i>Weekly demand</i>	<i>Weekly balance</i>	<i>Peak capacity</i>	<i>Peak demand</i>	<i>Peak balance</i>
Bearsted FC	1	Bearsted FC	3.0	3.0	Balanced	1.0	2.0	-1.0
Chart Sutton Memorial PF	1	Coxheath & Farleigh FC Bearsted FC	1.0	1.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Civil Service Sports & Social Club	1	Park Royal FC	2.0	1.0	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Elmscroft Park	1	West Farleigh FC	2.0	3.0	-1.0	1.0	2.0	-1.0
Headcorn Football Club	1	Headcorn FC Vinters FC	3.0	3.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Jubilee Playing Field	1	Staplehurst Monarchs FC	1.0	1.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
King George V Playing Field, Hunton	1	Hunton FC	2.0	1.0	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pitches</i>	<i>Users</i>	<i>Weekly capacity</i>	<i>Weekly demand</i>	<i>Weekly balance</i>	<i>Peak capacity</i>	<i>Peak demand</i>	<i>Peak balance</i>
King George V Playing Field, Loose	1	Cross Keys (Sunday) FC	2.0	1.0	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Lance Memorial Playing Field	1	Sugar Loaves FC	3.0	1.0	+2.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Langley Recreation Ground	1	Blue Eagles FC Maidstone Inter FC	2.0	1.0	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Lenham School	2	AFC Ashford Athletic Kings Park Rangers FC Lenham Wanderers FC Whitehawk FC School use	4.0	3.0	+1.0	2.0	2.0	Balanced
Maidstone Leisure Centre	2	Maidstone Tempests FC Weaving FC	4.0	2.0	+2.0	2.0	2.0	Balanced
Marden Playing Field	1	Marden FC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
New Line Learning Academy	2	Whitehawk FC Academy use	4.0	3.5	+0.5	2.0	2.0	Balanced
Oakwood Park Grammar School	1	Walnut Wanderers Maidstone United YFC School use	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	2.0	-1.0
Parish Recreation Ground	1	Roseacre Raiders FC	2.0	1.0	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Parkwood	1	Parkwood Jupitors FC	2.0	1.0	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
The Kintons	2	Yalding & Laddingford FC	4.0	3.0	+1.0	2.0	1.0	+1.0
The Orchard Ground	1	Castle Wanderers FC	2.0	1.0	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Valley Park School	3	Vinters FC School use	9.0	7.5	+1.5	3.0	3.0	Balanced
War Memorial Playing Field	1	Mangravel FC Maidstone Lacrosse Club	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
William Pitt Field	1	Lenham Wanderers FC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>60.0</b>	<b>46.0</b>	<b>+14.0</b>	<b>+28.0</b>	<b>+30.0</b>	<b>-2.0</b>

The key findings are:

- Adult teams demand is supplemented by youth (11v11) teams using adult pitches at several sites.
- Peak time utilisation shows an overall deficit at three sites and is balanced at a further 19 sites. There is spare capacity at one site.
- The collective peak time deficit in the borough amounts to 2.0 match equivalent sessions.
- The peak time capacity calculation shows a deficit of 10.0 match equivalent sessions at sites with secured community access.

### 5.7.3 Youth 11v11 grass pitches

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pitches</i>	<i>Users</i>	<i>Weekly capacity</i>	<i>Weekly demand</i>	<i>Weekly balance</i>	<i>Peak capacity</i>	<i>Peak demand</i>	<i>Peak balance</i>
Barming Heath	1	Barming Youth FC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Beacon Playing Field	1	Coxheath & Farleigh JFC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Bearsted Green	2	Bearsted FC	4.0	2.0	+2.0	2.0	1.0	+1.0
Gatland Recreation Ground	1	Barming Youth FC	1.0	3.5	-2.5	1.0	4.0	-3.0
Jubilee Playing Field	1	Staplehurst Monarchs FC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	2.0	-1.0
Leeds Recreation Ground	1	Loose Lions FC	2.0	3.0	-1.0	1.0	2.0	-1.0
The Orchard Ground	1	Castle Colts FC Castle Wanderers FC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Ulcombe Recreation Ground	1	Headcorn Juniors FC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
War Memorial Playing Field	1	Loose Lions FC Lenham Wanderers FC	2.0	1.0	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>-0.5</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>-4.0</b>

The key findings are:

- Peak time utilisation shows an overall deficit at three sites and is balanced at a further five sites.
- There is spare capacity at one site.
- The collective peak time deficit in the borough to 4.0 match equivalent sessions.
- The collective peak time capacity calculation remains the same if the sites without secured community access is excluded.

### 5.7.4 Youth 9v9 grass pitches

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pitches</i>	<i>Users</i>	<i>Weekly capacity</i>	<i>Weekly demand</i>	<i>Weekly balance</i>	<i>Peak capacity</i>	<i>Peak demand</i>	<i>Peak balance</i>
Allington Primary School	1	Castle Colts FC School use	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Barming Primary School	1	Barming Youth FC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Beacon Playing Field	1	Coxheath & Farleigh JFC Coxheath Colts	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	2.0	-1.0
Bearsted FC	2	Bearsted FC	12.0	6.0	+6.0	2.0	2.0	Balanced
Cornwallis Academy	1	Maidstone Utd. Ladies FC	2.0	1.0	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Gatland Recreation Ground	1	Barming Youth FC	1.0	1.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Jubilee Playing Field	1	Staplehurst Monarchs FC	2.0	3.0	-1.0	1.0	2.0	-1.0
Mallards Way	1	MPE FC	2.0	1.0	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Marden Minors FC	1	Marden Minors FC	4.0	2.0	+2.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Molehill Copse Primary School	1	Loose Lions FC School use	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
New Barming Pavilion	1	Barming Youth FC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Roseacre Junior School	1	Roseacre Raiders FC School use	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	2.0	-1.0
South Borough Primary School	1	Roseacre Raiders FC School use	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
South Park	1	MPE FC	2.0	1.0	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
The Orchard Ground	2	Castle Colts FC	4.0	4.0	Balanced	2.0	2.0	Balanced
Valley Park School	3	Vinters FC School use	12.0	10.0	+2.0	3.0	3.0	Balanced
William Pitt Field	1	Lenham Wanderers FC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>57.0</b>	<b>45.0</b>	<b>+12.0</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>-3.0</b>

The key findings are:

- Peak time utilisation shows an overall deficit at three sites and is balanced at all other sites.
- There is no peak time spare capacity at any sites.
- The collective peak time deficit in the borough amounts to 3.0 match equivalent sessions.
- The collective peak time capacity calculation shows a deficit of 12.0 match equivalent sessions if the sites without secured community access are excluded.

### 5.7.5 Mini-soccer 7v7 grass pitches

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pitches</i>	<i>Users</i>	<i>Weekly capacity</i>	<i>Weekly demand</i>	<i>Weekly balance</i>	<i>Peak capacity</i>	<i>Peak demand</i>	<i>Peak balance</i>
Allington Primary School	2	Castle Colts FC Castle Wanderers FC School use	8.0	6.0	+2.0	2.0	2.0	Balanced
Barming Primary School	1	Barming Youth FC School use	4.0	4.0	Balanced	1.0	3.0	-2.0
Beacon Playing Field	1	Coxheath & Farleigh JFC	4.0	2.0	+2.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Bearsted FC	1	Bearsted FC	6.0	3.0	+3.0	1.0	2.0	-1.0
Bower Grove School	1	Maidstone Utd. Juniors School use	4.0	3.0	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Giddyhorn Recreation Ground	1	Maidstone Utd. Ladies FC	4.0	2.0	+2.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Headcorn Football Club	1	Headcorn Juniors FC	4.0	3.0	+1.0	1.0	2.0	-1.0
Jubilee Playing Field	1	Staplehurst Monarchs FC	4.0	2.0	+2.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Madgingford Primary School	1	MPE FC School use	4.0	3.0	+1.0	1.0	2.0	-1.0
Molehill Copse Primary School	1	Loose Lions FC School use	4.0	3.0	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
The Kintons	2	Yalding & Laddingford FC	8.0	2.0	+7.0	2.0	1.0	+1.0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>54.0</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>+21.0</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>-4.0</b>

The key findings are:

- Peak time utilisation shows an overall deficit at four sites, is balanced at six sites and a surplus at one site.
- The collective peak time deficit in the borough amounts to 4.0 match equivalent sessions.
- The collective peak time capacity calculation shows a deficit of 10.0 match equivalent sessions if the sites without secured community access are excluded.



### 5.7.6 Mini-soccer 5v5 grass pitches

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pitches</i>	<i>Users</i>	<i>Weekly capacity</i>	<i>Weekly demand</i>	<i>Weekly balance</i>	<i>Peak capacity</i>	<i>Peak demand</i>	<i>Peak balance</i>
Allington Primary School	1	Castle Colts FC Castle Wanderers School use	4.0	6.0	-2.0	1.0	3.0	-2.0
Barming Primary School	1	Barming Youth FC School use	4.0	3.0	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Beacon Playing Field	1	Coxheath & Farleigh JFC	4.0	1.0	+3.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Elizabeth Harvie Field	1	Rosecare Raiders FC	4.0	4.0	Balanced	1.0	2.0	-1.0
Giddyhorn Recreation Ground	2	Barming Youth FC Maidstone Utd. Ladies FC	8.0	4.0	+4.0	2.0	2.0	Balanced
Headcorn FC	1	Headcorn Juniors FC	6.0	2.0	+4.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Jubilee Playing Field	1	Staplehurst Monarchs FC	4.0	1.0	+3.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Mallards Way	1	MPE FC	2.0	4.0	-2.0	1.0	2.0	-1.0
Molehill Copse Primary School	1	Loose Lions FC School use	4.0	3.0	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
The Kintons	1	Yalding & Laddingford FC	4.0	2.0	+2.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Valley Park School	1	Vinters FC	4.0	4.0	Balanced	1.0	2.0	-1.0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>48.0</b>	<b>34.0</b>	<b>+14.0</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>-5.0</b>

The key findings are:

- Peak time utilisation shows an overall deficit at three sites and is balanced at all other sites.
- There is no spare capacity at any of the utilised sites.
- The collective peak time deficit in the borough amounts to 5.0 match equivalent sessions.
- The collective peak time capacity calculation shows a deficit of 9.0 match equivalent sessions if the sites without secured community access are excluded.

### 5.7.7 '3G' football turf pitches

The methodology for assessing the used capacity of full-sized artificial turf pitches is based upon their used capacity in the peak period:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Peak hours</i>	<i>Utilised peak hours</i>	<i>Peak utilisation rate</i>
Lenham School	17.00 - 21.00 Mon - Fri	15	75%
The Gallagher Stadium	18.00 - 22.00 Mon - Fri	20	100%
The Maplesden Noakes School	17.00 - 21.30 Mon - Fri	18	80%
Valley Park School	18.00 - 21.00 Mon - Fri	12	80%
YMCA (Maidstone)	18.00 - 22.00 Mon - Fri	15	75%

- The Gallagher Stadium pitch is fully utilised in the peak period.
- There is limited spare peak time capacity the other four pitches, which collectively amounts to 17.5 hours per week (equivalent to 0.7 pitches), although this figure reduces to 5 hours per week (equivalent to 0.25 pitches) if the sites without secured community access are excluded.

Another way to assess '3G' pitch needs is to apply the FA's guide figure of one full-sized pitch per 38 teams. With 231 football teams in Maidstone at present, there is a requirement for 6.08 pitches the borough. Existing provision of five full-sized pitches should meet the needs of 190 teams. This creates an effective need for 1.08 full-sized '3G' pitches.

## 5.8 Assessment of future needs

### 5.8.1 Population growth

MBC's 'Strategic Housing Market Assessment' (2015) confirmed the objectively assessed housing need for the borough over the period 2011 to 2031 as 17,660 dwellings. Of these 8,335 have already been built or granted planning permission. This scale of development will increase the borough's population by 22,380 to 177,523 people by 2031. This will represent an increase of 14.4% over the 2011 census figure.

### 5.8.2 Potential changes in demand

Changes in demand for football in the in future can also be modelled on a trend-based projection. Three sets of data can help to inform this:

- **'Active People' survey:** The national rates of football participation between 2005 and the present, as measured by the 'Active People' survey, are as follows:

2005/6	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/1	2011/2	2012/3	2013/4	2014/5	2015/6	% Change
4.97%	5.18%	5.08%	4.96%	4.98%	4.94%	4.25%	4.39%	4.34%	4.28%	-0.69%

- **Local participation trends:** The national trends are reflected in Maidstone where there has been a decline in adult football demand in recent years. For example, the Maidstone and District Football League, which was the grass-roots Saturday competition, had 22 teams in two divisions in 2017 compared with six divisions of 12 to 14 teams at its height in the late 1980s. Following a fall to eight teams in 2018 the league folded and the remaining teams now play in the local Sunday league.
- **FA strategic targets:** The FA's 'National Game Strategy 2018 - 2021' sets the following participation targets:
  - Retain and support the 129,000 male, female and disability teams.
  - Increase female youth participation by 11% by 2021.
  - Increase the number of over 16's playing every week by over 200,000, by offering a variety of formats by 2021.

Balancing past trends that identify falling demand against the target increases in participation suggests that projecting future need based in current demand patterns is a reasonable basis for forecasting.

### 5.8.3 Site-specific pressures

Maidstone Borough Council needs to identify sites upon which it can deliver its housing targets. Whilst planning policy offers protection to playing pitches, those sites that do not currently accommodate formal football activity may be vulnerable unless it can be proved that they are needed to accommodate existing or future shortfalls in supply or serve some other green space functions.

### 5.8.4 Potential changes in supply

Lenham is designated by Maidstone Borough Council as a broad location for a further 1,000 dwellings between now and 2031. A draft Neighbourhood Plan is currently out for consultation and it proposes that the William Pitt Field will be used for housing development. The Parish Council and Lenham Wanderers Football club are proposing a replacement facility to the east of the Village with two grass pitches and a '3G' pitch plus Clubhouse.

The Jubilee Fields Management Committee in Staplehurst is also considering the provision of a '3G' football turf pitch at its site, which already has a Football Foundation-funded clubhouse.

Additionally, there is no secured community use of most of the pitches on school sites and so access could, in theory, be withdrawn at any time. For most types of grass pitch, there is currently insufficient capacity at secured sites to cover this eventuality, apart from:

- **Adult pitches:** There would be a deficit of 10.0 match equivalent sessions per week if sites without secured community access are excluded.
- **Youth 11v11 pitches:** There would be a deficit of 4.0 match equivalent sessions per week if access to the pitch on a school site was lost.
- **Youth 9v9 pitches:** There would be a deficit of 12.0 match equivalent sessions per week if sites without secured community access are excluded.
- **Mini-soccer 7v7 pitches:** There would be a deficit of 10.0 match equivalent sessions per week if sites without secured community access are excluded.

To secure existing pitches to meet both current and future needs, a priority should be to negotiate secured community use agreements with as many schools as possible.

### 5.8.5 Existing spare capacity

Existing spare football pitch capacity in the peak period has been calculated in section 5.7 above and is as follows:

<i>Pitch type</i>	<i>Match equivalent sessions</i>	<i>Pitch equivalents</i>
Adult	2.0	1.0
Youth 11v11	-4.0	-2.0
Youth 9v9	-3.0	-1.5
Mini-soccer 7v7	-4.0	-1.0
Mini-soccer 5v5	-5.0	-1.25
'3G' football turf pitches	14 hours	0.7

### 5.8.6 Future grass pitch needs

Future formal grass pitch needs to 2031 are modelled below using ‘Team Generation Rates’ (TGRs), which identify how many people in a specified age group in the borough are required to generate one team. These are then applied to projected changes in population to identify the likely number of teams in the future.

<i>Sport</i>	<i>Age range</i>	<i>Current population</i>	<i>Current teams</i>	<i>TGR</i>	<i>Population 2031</i>	<i>Teams 2031</i>	<i>Extra teams</i>	<i>Extra pitches</i>
Adult male football	17-45	28,710	54	1: 532	32,844	62	8	4
Adult female football	17-45	29,280	1	1: 29,280	33,496	1	0	0
Boys youth 11v11 football	12-16	3,984	57	1: 70	4,558	65	8	4
Girls youth 11v11 football	12-16	4,016	1	1: 4,016	4,594	1	0	0
Boys youth 9v9 football	10-11	1,594	38	1: 42	1,824	43	5	3
Girls youth 9v9 football	10-11	1,606	10	1: 161	1,837	11	1	1
Mini-soccer 7v7 (mixed)	8-9	4,039	35	1: 115	4,621	40	5	2
Mini-soccer 5v5 (mixed)	6-7	3,961	35	1: 113	4,531	40	5	2

### 5.8.7 Future ‘3G’ pitch needs

Future ‘3G’ pitch needs to 2031 are modelled below based upon the following:

- The existing number of FA-affiliated teams seeking access to ‘3G’ pitches in Maidstone at present is 231. On the basis of the FA calculation of 38 teams equating to demand for one ‘3G’ pitch, this creates current demand for 6.08 pitches.
- The projected number of teams seeking access to ‘3G’ pitches in Maidstone in 2031 is 263. On the basis of the FA calculation of 38 teams equating to demand for one ‘3G’ pitch, this creates future demand for 6.92 pitches.

## 5.9 Key findings and issues

### 5.9.1 What are the main characteristics of current supply and demand?

- ***Demand trends:*** There has been a long-term decline in adult football in the borough, mirroring wider national trends.
- ***Women and Girls:*** Women and girls football is significantly under-developed in Maidstone, with only one adult women’s teams and one girl’s youth 11v11 team. However, there are ten girl’s youth 9v9 teams and girls are also well represented in mixed mini-soccer teams, so there appears to be an issue with participation drop-off in the older age groups.
- ***Poor quality changing facilities:*** Almost 40% of grass football pitches in Maidstone are served by poor quality or no changing facilities. The impact of this on user experiences may be one factor behind the poor rates of female participation.

- ***Perception of poor quality grass pitches:*** Although fewer than 7% of football pitches in the borough were assessed as ‘poor’ using the FA’s pitch quality audit methodology, there is a widespread perception amongst local clubs that the problem is more widespread. This is probably due to the fact that most borough council owned pitches are towards the lower end of the ‘standard’ quality rating, but several clubs are opting not to hire council pitches as a result. The pitches at Maidstone Leisure Centre are significantly underused for this reason.
- ***Dependence on unsecured school pitches:*** More than 30% of football pitches in the borough are on school sites with no secured community use, so access could in theory be rescinded at any time. The issue is particularly significant for ‘3G’ pitches, where three of the five full-sized pitches are on unsecured education sites.
- ***Perception of high pitch prices:*** Several local clubs were critical of what they perceive to be high prices for pitch hire. Comparison with the charges in neighbouring areas reveals that pricing levels are comparable, so the perception of high prices perhaps relates more to the value for money in relation to what are frequently regarded as poor-quality pitches and changing facilities.

#### 5.9.2 Is there enough accessible and secured community use to meet current demand?

- ***Adult grass pitches:*** There is a deficit of 10.0 weekly match equivalent sessions at the community-secured sites, which equates to 5.0 ‘standard’ quality pitches. However, a further ten pitches available for community use are currently unused.
- ***Youth 11v11 pitches:*** There is a deficit of 4.0 weekly match equivalent sessions at the community-secured sites, which equates to 2.0 ‘standard’ quality pitches.
- ***Youth 9v9 pitches:*** There is a deficit of 12.0 weekly match equivalent sessions at community-secured sites, which equates to around 6.0 ‘standard’ quality pitches.
- ***Mini-soccer 7v7 pitches:*** There is a deficit of 10.0 weekly match equivalent sessions at community-secured sites, which equates to around 3.0 ‘standard’ quality pitches.
- ***Mini-soccer 5v5 pitches:*** There is collective spare capacity of 9.0 weekly match equivalent sessions at the community-secured sites, which equates to 3.0 ‘standard’ quality pitches.
- ***‘3G’ football turf pitches:*** At sites with secured community access, there is 35 hours of peak time use. Total current demand is for 66 hours of peak use per week, so if access to the pitches on education sites was to be withdrawn, there would be a shortfall of 31 hours of peak time usage per week.

### 5.9.3 Is the accessible provision of suitable quality and appropriately maintained?

- **Quality:** Pitch quality was rated ‘poor’ at only six out of 84 football pitches in the borough. However, quality is at the lower end of ‘standard’ at a further eight pitches, many of which are likely to fall into the ‘poor’ category in the future, without enhanced maintenance.
- **Maintenance:** Consultation with pitch providers indicates that current annual expenditure is typically in the range of £4,000 to £5,000 per pitch, with several sites relying on volunteer labour to maintain standards. These figures compare with Sport England’s latest cost guidance of £11,700 per annum for an adult football pitch and £9,600 per annum for a youth football pitch.
- **Fewer but better:** Notwithstanding the above, a case can be made for concentrating grounds maintenance resources on fewer but better quality pitches, to provide a similar or better carrying capacity. The advantages of this approach would be that football hub sites could be developed, ideally based on the FA’s model of focusing ‘3G’ and good quality grass pitches at a limited number of sites to deliver a more sustainable operation.

### 5.9.4 What are the main characteristics of future supply and demand?

- **Population growth:** The borough’s population is projected to increase by 22,380 to 177,523 people by 2031. This will represent an increase of 14.4% over the 2011 figure.
- **Changes in demand:** Balancing past trends that identify falling demand against the target increases in participation suggests that projecting future need based on current demand patterns is a reasonable basis for forecasting.
- **Changes in supply:** There are no known development threats to any existing pitch sites, including those that are currently disused. However, there is no secured community use of any of the pitches on school sites and so access could, in theory, be withdrawn at any time.
- **Existing spare capacity:** Apart from adult grass pitches, all the other pitch types have a current shortfall in provision.
- **Future needs:** Based on projected population growth, these have been assessed as follows:
  - Adult grass pitches: 4 additional pitches.
  - Youth 11v11 grass pitches: 4 additional pitches.
  - Youth 9v9 grass pitches: 4 additional pitches.
  - Mini-soccer 7v7 pitches: 2 additional pitches.
  - Mini-soccer 5v5 pitches: 2 additional pitches.
  - ‘3G’ football turf pitches: 0.84 additional pitches.

### 5.9.5 Is there enough accessible and secured provision to meet future demand?

The situation at community accessible pitches in the borough is summarised below. Match equivalent sessions have been converted into pitch requirements:

<i>Pitch type</i>	<i>Current Secured pitches</i>	<i>Current secured Peak spare pitch capacity</i>	<i>Current Peak needs</i>	<i>Extra peak by 2031</i>	<i>Total peak by 2031</i>	<i>Additional Extra secured pitch needs</i>
Adult football	21	-1.0	30	4	34	15
Youth 11v11	10	-2.0	12	4	16	8
Youth 9v9	12	-6.0	18	4	22	11
Mini 7v7	9	-3.0	11	2	13	4
Mini 5v5	8	-3.0	11	2	13	5
'3G'	5	-0.52	5.52	0.84	6.36	1.36

## 5.10 Scenario Testing

### 5.10.1 Introduction

Based upon the key findings and issues identified above, a number of scenarios have been examined, to identify the optimum approach to addressing needs.

### 5.10.2 Scenario 1: Re-instating un-used and disused pitches

- **Rationale:** There are 10 un-used or disused adult football pitches (with collective weekly capacity of 20.0 match equivalent sessions), three youth 11v11 pitches (with collective weekly capacity of 6.0 match equivalent sessions), four youth 9v9 pitches (with collective weekly capacity of 8.0 match equivalent sessions) and 11 mini 7v7 pitches (with collective weekly capacity of 22.0 match equivalent sessions). It would therefore make sense to resume use and/or reinstate these pitches to meet additional future demand, rather than making entirely new provision.
- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - Most pitches were used until recently, so could be reinstated at relatively low cost.
  - Eight of the have secured community access so usage would be assured.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - Usage was discontinued at all the sites because of localised falling demand and despite capacity issues at many of the currently used sites in Maidstone, clubs and teams have declined to take advantage of the available alternatives at present.
  - Use at some sites was discontinued because of pitch quality issues which will need to be addressed if the pitch capacity is to be maximised and users attracted back.
  - Some of the school sites with previous community use permitted access on a temporary basis and may not be prepared to re-instate it.



- **Conclusions:** This scenario offers some advantages for enhancing local pitch capacity on a cost-effective basis and should therefore be examined further on a site-by-site basis.

### 5.10.3 Scenario 2: Accessing pitches on education sites

- **Rationale:** Four adult football pitches (with collective weekly capacity of 8.0 match equivalent sessions), three youth 11v11 pitches (with collective weekly capacity of 6.0 match equivalent sessions) and six mini-soccer 7v7 pitches (with collective weekly capacity of 12.0 match equivalent sessions) are on school sites with no current community access. These represent one option for expanding current and future pitch capacity.
- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - The pitches already exist and therefore could be brought into use at little or no additional cost.
  - There would be opportunities to establish closer school-club links if community-based clubs were playing on school sites.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - None of the schools has community use at present, so there is no guarantee that they would be prepared to commence such an arrangement.
  - None of the sites has a formal Community Use Agreement, so continued access would not be secured.
- **Conclusions:** This scenario offers some advantages for enhancing local pitch capacity on a cost-effective basis and should therefore be examined further on a site-by-site basis.

### 5.10.4 Scenario 3: De-commission all council-operated football pitches

- **Rationale:** Maidstone Borough Council provides 13 football pitches at eight sites in the borough in the borough, all which are either poor quality, or towards the lower end of 'standard' quality. In addition, six further pitches at Council-owned sites are currently unused. Additionally:
  - Five Council sites have only a single used pitch, which creates a relatively expensive maintenance regime.
  - Local demand for adult pitches has been falling and the first sites where usage has been discontinued are Council-owned, because they are perceived to be relatively poor quality and comparatively expensive.
  - The quality of Council-owned pitches is believed by local clubs to have fallen in recent years, which suggest that additional expenditure on maintenance will be required if usage levels are to be sustained in the future.
  - Providing pitches is a permissive rather than a statutory requirement for local authorities, therefore Maidstone Borough Council is under no obligation to provide pitches. If alternatives were available therefore, the Council could decommission all its pitches.



- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - The table below models the effects of removing Council pitches, but re-instating un-used and disused pitches, plus those on school sites with no current community access. The data shows that with some rationalisation (conversion of some pitch types which show a surplus to those types showing a deficit), all current football needs could theoretically be met without using Council-owned pitches.

<i>Pitch type</i>	<i>Secured non-MBC pitches</i>	<i>Current peak needs</i>	<i>Deficit at non-MBC pitches</i>	<i>Unused non-MBC pitches</i>	<i>Pitches with no access</i>	<i>Position including unused/no access pitches</i>
Adult football	26	30	-2	8	4	+10
Youth 11v11	9	14	-7	1	3	-3
Youth 9v9	9	24	-8	4	0	-4
Mini 7v7	7	17	-5	11	6	+6
Mini 5v5	6	17	-6	0	0	-6

- There would be significant pitch maintenance cost savings for the Council.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - As indicated in Scenario 1 above, some of the disused pitches were abandoned because of their poor quality and therefore there would be capital cost implications in re-instating them to a standard that would sustain sufficient use to compensate for the loss of the Council pitches.
  - As indicated in Scenario 2 above, schools are under no obligation to hire their pitches for community use and many are unwilling to do so for a variety of reasons including wear-and-tear to the playing surfaces that impacts adversely upon education use and logistical problems of accessing school fields out of hours. For this reason, no assumptions could be made about community accessibility to school pitches.
- **Conclusions:** It would be unacceptably risky to decommission all the Council's football pitches, given the high degree of uncertainty over the quality of the currently unused pitch stock and the difficulties of securing community use of school pitches. However, the Council should keep the position under regular review and could decommission pitches at the single pitch sites should demand patterns permit, which would improve the logistics of its grounds maintenance regime. Furthermore, any sites with decommissioned pitches should be kept as public open space, to allow for the re-instatement of pitches in the future, in response to increases in demand.

## 5.11 Policy recommendations

### 5.11.1 Introduction

The recommendations in relation to football are made in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which stipulates that existing open space including playing pitches, should not be built upon unless:

- An assessment has taken place which has clearly shown the open space to be surplus to requirements, or;
- 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;
- The development is for alternative sport and recreation provision, the needs for which clearly outweighs the loss.

The following recommendations are arranged under the three main headings of ‘protect’, ‘enhance’ and ‘provide’.

### 5.11.2 Protect

**Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision:** The Maidstone PPS comprises a robust and evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for football in the borough. The PPS identifies a need for all current and disused football pitch sites to be retained, on the basis of the specific identified roles that each can play in delivering the needs of the sport and/or other wider open space functions in Maidstone both now and in the future. It is therefore recommended that existing planning policies continue to support the retention of all sites, based upon the evidence in the PPS. In the event that any pitch sites do become the subject of development proposals, this will only be permissible if they are replaced and meet policy exception E4 of Sport England’s Playing Fields Policy, which states that ‘the playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development must be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development’.

**Recommendation 2 - Security of tenure:** More than 30% of football pitches with community use in Maidstone do not have security of tenure, principally those on school sites. The absence of a Community Use Agreement (CUA) at a school makes it impossible to assume the continued availability of the pitches for the community. It is also difficult for a school to apply for external grant funding to improve its facilities, including receiving funds from developer contributions. It is therefore recommended that efforts are made to achieve CUAs at sites without them.

### 5.11.3 Enhance

**Recommendation 3 - Improving existing ‘poor’ quality provision:** Five pitches (6.0%) in the borough are rated as ‘poor’ quality and several more are rated at the lower end of ‘standard’ quality. Additionally, 33 pitches (39.3%) are served by ‘poor’ quality or no changing facilities. This reduces the quality of playing experience, may present child protection issues in relation to simultaneous male and female and adult and junior use of changing provision and may deter some potential participants. Subject to security of tenure issues, it is recommended that:

- Site owners concerned should be supported to apply for external funding for facility enhancements, including the receipt of developer contributions (see below) where the usage capacity would be enhanced.
- If funding is not available, sites could be designated as exclusively adult or youth sites, to avoid the problems of mixed adult-youth changing areas.

- Sites with poor playing surfaces should apply to be part of the FA Pitch Improvement Programme, which will offer a programme to improve the short, medium and long-term maintenance of pitches to improve pitch quality.

**Recommendation 4 - Developer contributions (enhancements):** Some of the additional demand for football arising from the proposed housing development in Maidstone to 2031, should be accommodated through enhancements to existing pitches and facilities. It is recommended that the site-specific action plan in the PPS be used as the basis for determining facility enhancements that demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under CIL arrangements, to cover the capital and revenue implications of the enhancements. To facilitate this, specific larger playing pitch projects should be listed as ‘relevant infrastructure’, under CIL Regulation 123.

#### 5.11.4 Provide

**Recommendation 5 - ‘3G’ football turf pitches:** There is a current shortfall of one full-sized ‘3G’ pitch in the borough, with demand equivalent to a further full-sized pitch being generated by population growth by 2031. ‘3G’ pitches are an important component of football provision, because their all-weather nature and floodlights enable a high volume of play to be accommodated on good quality playing surfaces. Providing ‘3G’ pitches to meet needs identified in the Maidstone PPS should be supported as a priority in appropriate locations.

**Recommendation 6 - Developer contributions (new provision):** Most of the extra demand for football arising from the proposed housing development in Maidstone to 2031, will need to be accommodated through the provision of new pitches and facilities. It is recommended that the site-specific action plan in the Maidstone Playing Pitch Strategy be used as the basis for determining which proposed new facilities demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under Section 106 or CIL arrangements, to cover their capital and revenue cost implications. To facilitate this, specific larger playing pitch projects should be listed as ‘relevant infrastructure’, under CIL Regulation 123.

### 5.12 Action Plan

#### 5.12.1 Introduction

In the context of the high-level recommendations above, the tables below set out the football site-specific action plan to guide the implementation of the strategy. The abbreviations stand for MBC - Maidstone Borough Council and FA - Football Association. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England’s *‘Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2018’* (2018).

#### 5.12.2 Key strategic actions

<i><b>Issues</b></i>	<i><b>Action</b></i>	<i><b>Lead</b></i>	<i><b>Partners</b></i>	<i><b>Cost estimates</b></i>	<i><b>Priority</b></i>
Community access to education pitches	Pursue formal Community Use agreements at all existing and any future proposed pitches on education sites.	MBC	Academies and schools	Possible funding for improvements to site accessibility.	High
Securing developer contributions	Ensure that policy provision is made to secure developer contributions towards new and improved football facilities.	MBC	Developers	-	High

### 5.12.3 Site specific actions - Sites with community use and used

- ***'3G' football turf pitches:***

<b><i>Site</i></b>	<b><i>Issues</i></b>	<b><i>Action</i></b>	<b><i>Lead</i></b>	<b><i>Partners</i></b>	<b><i>Cost estimates</i></b>	<b><i>Priority</i></b>
Lenham School	No secured community use	Pursue Community Use Agreement	MBC	Lenham School	-	Medium
The Gallagher Stadium	Future pitch resurfacing may preclude community use	Keep the situation under review	Maidstone United FC	-	-	Low
Maplesden Noakes School	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Valley Park School	No secured community use	Pursue Community Use Agreement	MBC	Valley Park School	-	Medium
YMCA (Maidstone)	Pitch dimensions too small for adult 11v11	Prioritise youth, mini-soccer and small-sided games.	YMCA	-	-	Low

- ***Grass football pitches:***

<b><i>Site</i></b>	<b><i>Issues</i></b>	<b><i>Action</i></b>	<b><i>Lead</i></b>	<b><i>Partners</i></b>	<b><i>Cost estimates</i></b>	<b><i>Priority</i></b>
Allington Primary School	No secured community use	Pursue Community Use Agreement	MBC	Allington Primary School	-	Medium
Barming Heath	No on-site changing	Review need for changing facilities	Barming Parish Council	User clubs	-	Medium
Barming Primary School	No secured community use	Pursue Community Use Agreement	MBC	Barming Primary School	-	Medium
Beacon Playing Field	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Bearsted FC	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Bearsted Green	No accessible changing facilities	Negotiate access to cricket pavilion	Bearsted FC	Bearsted CC	-	Medium
Bower Grove School	No secured community use	Pursue Community Use Agreement	MBC	Bower Grove School	-	Medium
Chart Sutton Memorial PF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor quality pitch</li> <li>• Poor quality changing</li> </ul>	Feasibility study for pitch and changing improvements	Chart Sutton PC	-	£7,500	High
Civil Service S&SC	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Cornwallis Academy	No secured community use	Pursue Community Use Agreement	MBC	Cornwallis Academy	-	Medium
Elizabeth Harvie Field	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-

<i>Site</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Cost estimates</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Elmscroft Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitches used to over capacity</li> <li>• No on-site changing</li> </ul>	Feasibility study for pitch improvements	Rookery Estates	-	£5,000	High
Gatland Recreation Ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor quality pitches used to over capacity</li> <li>• No on-site changing</li> </ul>	Feasibility study for pitch improvements	MBC	-	£5,000	High
Giddyhorn Recreation Ground	No on-site changing	Review need for changing facilities	MBC	User clubs	-	Medium
Headcorn FC	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Jubilee Playing Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor quality pitches</li> <li>• '3G' pitch proposals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feasibility study for pitch improvements and '3G' pitch</li> <li>• Provide '3G' pitch</li> </ul>	Staplehurst Parish Council	-	£10,000 for feasibility study £750,000 for '3G' pitch	High
KGV Playing Field, Hunton	Poor quality changing	Feasibility study for changing improvements	Hunton Parish Council	-	£7,500	High
KGV Playing Field, Loose	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Kent Police HQ	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Lance Memorial Playing Field	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Langley Recreation Ground	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Leeds Playing Field	Pitches used to over capacity	Feasibility study for pitch improvements	Leeds PC	-	£5,000	High
Madginford Primary School	No secured community use	Pursue Community Use Agreement	MBC	Madginford Primary School	-	Medium
Maidstone Leisure Centre	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Mallards Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor quality mini-soccer pitch used to over capacity</li> <li>• No on-site changing</li> </ul>	Feasibility study for pitch improvements	MBC	-	£5,000	High
Marden Playing Field	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Marden Minors FC	Poor quality changing	Improve changing facilities	Marden Minors FC	Football Foundation	£200,000	High
Molehill Copse Primary Academy	No secured community use	Pursue Community Use Agreement	MBC	Molehill Copse Primary Academy	-	Medium

<i>Site</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Cost estimates</i>	<i>Priority</i>
New Barming Pavilion	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
New Line Learning Academy	No secured community use	Pursue Community Use Agreement	MBC	New Line Learning Academy	-	Medium
Oakwood Park Grammar School	No secured community use	Pursue Community Use Agreement	MBC	Oakwood Park Grammar School	-	Medium
Parish Recreation & Sports Field	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Parkwood	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Roseacre Junior School	No secured community use	Pursue Community Use Agreement	MBC	Roseacre Junior School	-	Medium
South Borough Primary School	No secured community use	Pursue Community Use Agreement	MBC	South Borough Primary School	-	Medium
South Park	No on-site changing	Review need for changing facilities	MBC	User clubs	-	Medium
Lenham School	No secured community use	Pursue Community Use Agreement	MBC	Lenham School	-	Medium
The Kintons	Poor quality changing	Improve changing facilities	Yalding Parish Council	Y&LFC Football Foundation	£200,000	High
Maplesden Noakes School	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
The Orchard Ground	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Ulcombe Recreation Ground	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Valley Park School	No secured community use	Pursue Community Use Agreement	MBC	Valley Park School	-	Medium
War Memorial Playing Field	Poor quality changing	Improve changing facilities	Sutton Valance Parish Council	-	£200,000	Low
William Pitt Field	Possible relocation of pitches to a new site in Lenham.	Investigate the feasibility of the new site for a '3G' pitch and two grass pitches	Lenham Parish Council	Lenham Wanderers FC	£10,000 for feasibility study	High

## 6 CRICKET NEEDS IN MAIDSTONE

### 6.1 Key stakeholders

The key stakeholders delivering cricket in Maidstone are:

- **Kent Cricket:** The Community Team of Kent Cricket manages recreational cricket in the county, from its grass-roots foundations through to the interface with the first-class game and beyond. Its mission is to encourage, support and promote participation and development of the game at all levels, ages and abilities and to promote excellence in playing, coaching, officiating and the quality of both playing surfaces and social accommodation facilities.
- **Kent Cricket-affiliated clubs:** There are 20 affiliated clubs in Maidstone, who collectively run 52 adult and 30 junior teams.
- **Pitch providers:** All the pitches in the borough are managed and maintained by cricket clubs.

### 6.2 Strategic context

#### 6.2.1 National cricket strategy

The England and Wales Cricket Board's strategy for 2016 - 2020 '*Cricket Unleashed*' (2016) contains the following priorities of relevance to Maidstone

##### **Clubs and leagues:**

- Promoting player driven formats of the game in leagues.
- Providing more opportunities to play across the whole league structure.
- Delivering a new club affiliation core offer.
- Delivering new training opportunities for coaches, officials and groundstaff.
- Delivering a volunteer offer to drive recruitment, retention and recognition.

##### **Kids:**

- Developing an ability-based pathway for children aged 5-12 for adoption in clubs, schools and youth organisations.
- In partnership with Chance to Shine, expanding the reach of the game into all schools across the country through a combination of bat and ball opportunities, a national teacher ambassador programme and curriculum-aligned classroom resources.
- Creating a seamless transition across the age groups and different formats to reduce the current drop out at key ages.
- Promoting shorter pitch lengths for younger age groups.

##### **Communities:**

- Implementing inclusion and engagement strategies to deliver welcoming environments and opportunities for players of diverse backgrounds.
- Prioritising additional investment in coaches for women's, girl's, multicultural groups and disability cricket.

- Increasing the opportunities for people with a disability to take part and play cricket at all levels.
- Maximising the impact of hosting ICC global events to inspire a more diverse participation base to play cricket.
- Delivering and investing in cricket programmes that are specifically designed to bring communities together and improve physical and mental wellbeing.

***Casual:***

- Delivering simple and enjoyable casual cricket offers.
- Developing a 5 or 6-a-side version of cricket, played on artificial wickets to engage players at all ages and levels.
- Supporting innovation such as Last Man Stands, Indoor, Tape-ball and Beach Cricket.
- Creating a year-round participation programme using artificial wickets, indoor centres and other indoor spaces to allow all-year round play.
- Driving availability of bats and balls for unstructured play.

## 6.2.2 Neighbouring local authorities

Playing pitch strategies in neighbouring boroughs identify cross-boundary issues:

***Ashford***

The Council is in the final stages of producing a new playing pitch strategy. Draft findings include:

- All current demand can be met from within current provision.
- Existing facilities have the capacity to meet the needs of anticipated population growth, with some small capacity improvements.
- There is no evidence of any imported cricket demand from Maidstone, nor any exported demand to Maidstone.

***Medway***

The council has an adopted strategy dating from 2012 which it plans to revise in 2018. The strategy identified:

- There is a current need for an additional 4 cricket pitches.
- Future demand will increase the shortfall to 5 pitches by 2028.
- There is no evidence of any imported cricket demand from Maidstone, nor any exported demand to Maidstone.

***Swale***

The council has an adopted playing pitch strategy dating from 2015. It identifies:

- A current shortage of 6 cricket pitches.
- Future demand will increase the shortfall to 10 pitches by 2025.
- There is no evidence of any imported cricket demand from Maidstone, nor any exported demand to Maidstone.



### ***Tonbridge and Malling***

The council does not have a playing pitch strategy but plans to draft one in the near future. Its most recent assessment states that:

- Cricket is 'favourably provided for'.
- There is no evidence of any imported cricket demand from Maidstone, nor any exported demand to Maidstone.

### ***Tunbridge Wells***

The council is finalising a playing pitch strategy in 2018. However, there is no evidence of any imported cricket demand from Maidstone, nor any exported demand to Maidstone.

## **6.2.3 Implications of the strategic context**

The implications of the strategic context for cricket in Maidstone are as follows:

- ***Wider agendas:*** Given the increasing limitations on public finances, demonstrating the role that cricket can play in delivering wider agendas such as health and wellbeing is a key requirement for attracting investment.
- ***Policy shifts:*** The move in national sports policy towards prioritising new participants will create a challenge for cricket to demonstrate that it can attract new and lapsed participants. Recent innovations such as Last Man Stands and Tape-ball might prove more attractive than the more traditional model. 'All Stars Cricket', an entry level programme aimed at 5-8 year olds, was launched by the ECB in 2017 attracting 37,500 children nationally to cricket. A successful pilot was run in the Maidstone which is expected to lead to an expanded take up in the future.
- ***Neighbouring areas:*** There are assessed deficiencies in cricket pitch provision in two neighbouring areas, which may lead to imported demand into Maidstone if they are not rectified.

## **6.3 Cricket demand in Maidstone**

### **6.3.1 Affiliated clubs and teams**

A questionnaire survey of clubs affiliated to Kent Cricket produced responses from seven clubs, collectively representing 30 teams, or 38% of the 36.6% affiliated teams in Maidstone. The following clubs responded:

- Bearsted Cricket Club
- Blue House Cricket Club
- Detling Cricket Club
- Headcorn Cricket Club
- Hunton Wanderers Cricket Club
- Marden Cricket Club
- Staplehurst Cricket Club

The survey was supplemented by on-site consultations with four further clubs (Leeds and Broomfield Cricket Club, Hollingbourne Cricket club, Linton Park Cricket Club and The Mote Cricket Club), which increased the collective response rate from cricket clubs in the borough to 64 teams, or 81% of the 82 affiliated teams in Maidstone. The following clubs that are based in Maidstone borough affiliate to Kent Cricket.

<b><i>Club</i></b>	<b><i>Home Ground</i></b>	<b><i>Adult Teams</i></b>	<b><i>Junior Teams</i></b>
Bearsted Cricket Club	Bearsted Green	4	4
Blue House Cricket Club	Mile Bush Lane, Marden	1	0
Detling Cricket Club	Pilgrims Way, Detling	2	0
East Sutton Cricket Club	East Sutton Cricket Club	1	0
Harrietsham Cricket Club	Booth Field, Harrietsham	2	0
Headcorn Cricket Club	Lenham Road, Headcorn	3	0
Hunton Wanderers Cricket Club	West Street, Hunton	3	0
Leeds and Broomfield CC	Burberry Lane, Leeds	4	9
Lenham Cricket Club	Lenham Cricket Ground	2	1
Linton Park Cricket Club	Linton Park, Maidstone	6	4
Loose Cricket Club	White Horse Lane, Otham	1	0
Marden Cricket Club	Maidstone Road, Marden	3	3
Otterden Place Cricket Club	Otterden Place	1	0
Rumwood Cricket Club	White Horse Lane, Otham	1	0
Staplehurst Cricket Club	Frittenden Road, Staplehurst	6	4
Stockbury with Hartlip CC	Stockbury Sports Ground	2	0
Teston Cricket Club	Barham Court, Teston	2	1
The Mote Cricket Club	Mote Park, Maidstone	5	3
West Farleigh Cricket Club	Church Lane, West Farleigh	2	0
Yalding Cricket Club	The Kintons, Yalding	1	1
<b><i>TOTALS</i></b>	<b><i>-</i></b>	<b><i>52</i></b>	<b><i>30</i></b>

### 6.3.2 Demand trends

Data from the last six years of the ECB's '*National Cricket Playing Survey*' shows a trend of stabilisation in adult (U14+) participation with a minimal decline over the period. Of the 850,000 players nationally, 250,000 are 'core' players (playing at least 12 times per season), 400,000 are 'occasional' players (playing between three and 11 times per season) and 200,000 are 'cameo' players (playing once or twice per season). 5% of all organised fixtures were cancelled in 2014 because at least one of the teams was unable to field eleven players. The survey also revealed that 30 per cent of grassroots cricketers are drawn from ethnic minorities.

### 6.3.3 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to play by teams or other users of playing pitches from within the study area which takes place outside of the area:

- Maidstone-based clubs responding to the club's survey collectively draw all their membership from within the borough.
- There is no evidence of imported demand to Maidstone from neighbouring areas.

### 6.3.4 Unmet demand

Unmet demand takes a number of forms:

- Teams may have access to a pitch for matches but nowhere to train or vice versa.
- Some pitches may be unavailable to the community.
- The poor quality and consequent limited capacity of pitches in the area and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement.

Consultation with local clubs and cricket leagues indicated that there is no unmet demand in Maidstone at present.

### 6.3.5 Latent demand

Latent demand is demand that may be generated from the current population if they had access to more or better provision. Clubs' survey identified a trend for static or falling membership, despite good levels of available provision, which suggests that there is no local latent demand.

## 6.4 Cricket supply in Maidstone

### 6.4.1 Outdoor cricket facilities

Provision of cricket pitches in Maidstone is set out below:

- *Available for community use and used:*

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Grass Wickets</i>	<i>Artificial wickets</i>
Bearsted Green	Bearsted Green, Bearsted ME14 4EF	10	1
Blue House Cricket Club	Milebush Lane, Marden TN12 9AS	6	-
Detling Cricket Club	Pilgrims Way, Detling ME14 3JY	6	-
East Sutton Cricket Club	East Sutton Road, East Sutton ME17 3DT	12	-
Headcorn Cricket Club	Lenham Road, Headcorn TN27 9LE	12	-
Hollingbourne Cricket Club	Pilgrims Way, Hollingbourne ME17 1UW	14	-
Hunton Cricket Club	West Street, Hunton ME15 0RR	8	-
Leeds and Broomfield CC	Burberry Lane, Leeds ME17 1PL	14	1
Lenham Cricket Club	Ham Lane, Lenham ME17 2QB	10	-
Linton Park Cricket Club	Linton Park, Maidstone ME17 4HT	15	1
Marden Cricket Club	Maidstone Road, Marden TN12 9AG	15	1
Otterden Place Cricket Club	Otterden Place ME13 0BU	8	-
Rumwood Cricket Club	White Horse Lane, Otham ME15 8RG	10	-
Staplehurst Cricket Club	Frittenden Road, Staplehurst TN12 0DH	12	-
Stockbury Cricket Club	The Street, Stockbury ME9 7UD	5	-
Teston Cricket Club	Barham Court, Teston ME18 5BZ	8	-
The Booth Field	Church Road, Harrietsham ME17 1AP	8	-
The Mote Cricket Club	Mote Park, Maidstone ME15 7RN	30	-
West Farleigh Cricket Club	Church Lane, West Farleigh ME15 0DT	8	-
Yalding Cricket Club	The Kintons, Yalding ME18 6DP	14	-
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>4</b>

- *Available for community use and not used:*

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Grass Wickets</i>	<i>Artificial wickets</i>
Lenham School	Ham Lane, Lenham ME17 2LL	0	1
Maidstone Grammar School	Barton Road, Maidstone ME15 7BT	14	2
New Line Learning Academy	Boughton Lane, Maidstone ME15 9QL	0	1
Oakwood Park Grammar School	Oakwood Park, Maidstone ME16 8AH	8	1
St Augustine Academy	Oakwood Park, Maidstone ME16 8AE	6	0
St Simon Stock School	Oakwood Park, Maidstone ME16 0JP	12	0
Valley Park School	Huntsman La., Maidstone ME14 5DT	0	1
<b>TOTALS</b>	-	<b>40</b>	<b>6</b>

- *Not available for community use:*

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Grass Wickets</i>	<i>Artificial wickets</i>
Sutton Valence School	North Street, Sutton Valence ME17 3HN	12	1
Sutton Valence Prep School	Chart Road, Sutton Valence ME17 3HL	6	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	-	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>

- *Not available as disused:*

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Grass Wickets</i>	<i>Artificial wickets</i>
Loose Cricket Club	Lancet Lane, Loose ME15 8SH	10	1
Ulcombe Cricket Club	Headcorn Road, Ulcombe ME17 1EB	6	-
<b>TOTALS</b>	-	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>

## 6.4.2 Cricket facilities quality

The qualitative analysis of pitches in Maidstone involved visits to all cricket pitches during the playing season, to undertake the sport-specific non-technical visual inspections produced by the ECB for Sport England's *Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance* (2013). The assessment generated 'scores' for each site by evaluating the condition of:

- **Grass wickets:** This includes presence of line markings, evidence of rolling, grass cut and height, repaired wickets, grass coverage and ball bounce.
- **Outfield:** This includes grass coverage, length of grass, evenness and evidence of unofficial use or damage to the surface.
- **Non-turf wickets:** This includes integration with the surrounding grass, evenness, stump holes any evidence of moss, tears or surface lifting and ball bounce.
- **Changing facilities:** This includes the presence or absence of umpires' provision, toilets, hot/cold water, heating and an assessment of the condition of the building.
- **Non-turf practice nets:** This includes integration with the surrounding grass, surface quality, ball bounce, safety and integrity of the steel frame and nets and safety signage.

The assessment generates a 'score' for each site by evaluating the condition of the wickets, outfield, ancillary facilities and practice nets. Blank cells in the table mean that the feature concerned is absent from the site in question. The ratings for each cricket pitch site in Maidstone based upon the application of the ECB assessment methodology are as follows, with features rated as 'good' highlighted in green, 'standard' in yellow and 'poor' in red.:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Grass wicket</i>	<i>Artificial wicket</i>	<i>Outfield</i>	<i>Pavilion</i>	<i>Practice nets</i>
Bearsted Green	Good	Good	Good	Good	-
Blue House Cricket Club	Standard	-	Standard	Poor	-
Detling Cricket Club	Good	-	Good	Poor	-
East Sutton Cricket Club	Good	-	Standard	Standard	Poor
Headcorn Cricket Club	Good	-	Good	Good	Standard
Hollingbourne Cricket Club	Good	-	Good	Good	-
Hunton Cricket Club	Good	-	Good	Good	-
Leeds and Broomfield CC	Good	Good	Good	Standard	Good
Lenham Cricket Club	Good	-	Good	Good	Standard
Linton Park Cricket Club	Good	Good	Good	Standard	-
Marden Cricket Club	Good	-	Good	Good	Good
Otterden Place Cricket Club	Good	-	Standard	Standard	-
Rumwood Cricket Club	Good	-	Good	Poor	-
Staplehurst Cricket Club	Good	-	Good	Good	-
Stockbury Cricket Club	Good	-	Good	Standard	-
Teston Cricket Club	Good	-	Good	Good	-
The Booth Field	Good	-	Good	Good	-
The Mote Cricket Club	Good	-	Good	Standard	Poor
West Farleigh Cricket Club	Standard	-	Standard	Standard	-
Yalding Cricket Club	Standard	-	Standard	Poor	-

### 6.4.3 Pitch carrying capacity

The carrying capacity of pitches is related to their quality and is expressed as the number of 'match equivalent sessions' that can be accommodated each season. The *Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance* indicates the following seasonal carrying capacities for cricket pitches:

- A 'good' quality wicket will accommodate five, a 'standard' quality wicket will accommodate four and a 'poor' quality wicket will accommodate no matches per season.
- 'Good' and 'Standard' quality artificial turf wickets accommodate 60 matches per season.
- The seasonal pitch carrying capacity of each cricket site in Maidstone is as follows:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Grass wicket carrying capacity</i>	<i>Artificial wicket carrying capacity</i>	<i>Total carrying capacity</i>
Bearsted Green	50	60	110
Blue House Cricket Club	24	-	24
Detling Cricket Club	30	-	30
East Sutton Cricket Club	60	-	60
Headcorn Cricket Club	60	-	60
Hollingbourne Cricket Club	70	-	70



<i>Site</i>	<i>Grass wicket carrying capacity</i>	<i>Artificial wicket carrying capacity</i>	<i>Total carrying capacity</i>
Hunton Cricket Club	40	-	40
Leeds and Broomfield CC	70	60	130
Lenham Cricket Club	50	-	50
Linton Park Cricket Club	75	60	135
Marden Cricket Club	75	60	135
Otterden Place Cricket Club	40	-	40
Rumwood Cricket Club	50	-	50
Staplehurst Cricket Club	60	-	60
Stockbury Cricket Club	25	-	25
Teston Cricket Club	50	-	50
The Booth Field	40	-	40
The Mote Cricket Club	150	-	150
West Farleigh Cricket Club	32	-	32
Yalding Cricket Club	56	-	56

#### 6.4.4 Pitch maintenance

Most cricket pitches with community use and used in Maidstone are maintained by the incumbent clubs themselves, although a minority of clubs hire external contractors.

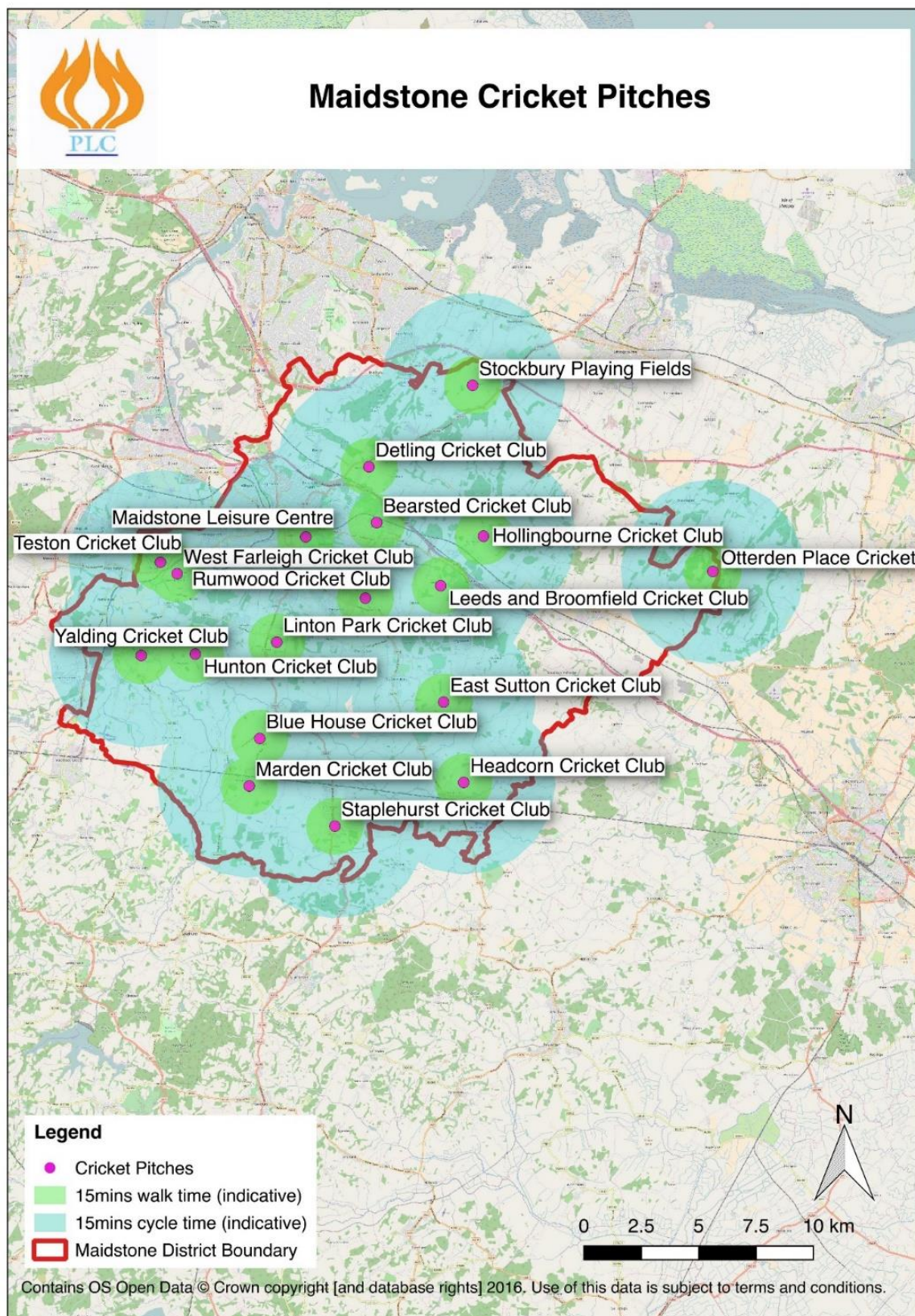
#### 6.4.5 Ownership, management and security of access

The ownership, management and security of access of all cricket pitch sites in Maidstone with community use and used is detailed below:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Ownership</i>	<i>Management</i>	<i>Security of access</i>
Bearsted Green	Bearsted Parish Council	Bearsted Cricket Club	Secured
Blue House Cricket Club	Private	Blue House Cricket Club	Unsecured
Detling Cricket Club	Detling Cricket Club	Detling Cricket Club	Secured
East Sutton Cricket Club	East Sutton Parish Council	East Sutton Cricket Club	Secured
Headcorn Cricket Club	Headcorn Cricket Club	Headcorn Cricket Club	Secured
Hollingbourne Cricket Club	Hollingbourne CC	Hollingbourne Cricket Club	Secured
Hunton Cricket Club	Fields in Trust	Hunton Cricket Club	Secured
Leeds and Broomfield CC	Leeds Castle estate	Leeds and Broomfield CC	Unsecured
Lenham Cricket Club	Lenham Parish Council	Lenham Cricket Club	Secured
Linton Park Cricket Club	Linton Park	Linton Park Cricket Club	Unsecured
Marden Cricket Club	Marden Cricket Club	Marden Cricket Club	Secured
Otterden Place Cricket Club	Private Estate	Otterden Place CC	Unsecured
Rumwood Cricket Club	Rumwood Cricket Club	Rumwood Cricket Club	Secured
Staplehurst Cricket Club	Staplehurst Cricket and Tennis Club	Staplehurst Cricket and Tennis Club	Secured
Stockbury Cricket Club	Stockbury Parish Council	Stockbury Cricket Club	Secured
Teston Cricket Club	Private	Teston Cricket Club	Unsecured
The Booth Field	Harrietsham Parish Council	Harrietsham Cricket Club	Secured
The Mote Cricket Club	The Mote Trust	The Mote Cricket Club	Secured
West Farleigh Cricket Club	Private owner	West Farleigh Cricket Club	Secured
Yalding Cricket Club	Yalding Parish Council	Yalding Cricket Club	Secured

## 6.4.6 Geographical distribution

The geographical distribution of cricket pitches in Maidstone is set out in the map below.



#### 6.4.7 The views of stakeholders on pitch supply

Consultation with Kent Cricket's Director of Community Cricket identified the following key issues in relation to Maidstone:

- **Local demand:** Local cricket participation is high, with Kent having the second highest level of participation of any English county.
- **Facilities priorities:** The emphasis in recent times has been on preserving the quality of grounds, developing and supporting structures such as pavilions and nets and working to improve security of tenure.
- **Types of play:** Formal match play is the only form of the game played in Maidstone at present, with no informal versions like 'Last Man Stands' played in the borough.
- **Women and girls:** Only one club, Leeds and Broomfield, has a Women and Girls section.
- **Schools pitches:** None of the school cricket pitches in Maidstone is used by community-based clubs.

Consultation with affiliated cricket clubs identified the following issues in relation to Maidstone:

- **Preferred sites:** All clubs are playing at their preferred sites.
- **Security of tenure:** 13 clubs either own the freehold or have a long lease at their pitch sites. The remaining clubs do not have formal security of tenure but have used their ground for a long time under informal agreements with the landlord.
- **Hunton Cricket Club:** Hunton Cricket Club commented that 'we are generally very happy with our main playing facility. We are however seeing clubs fold all around us and our main concern is our ability to retain players and/or grow the club. We see the main obstacle to this being our current Saturday league structure and the requirements of Clubmark, both of which favour large well-established clubs at the expense of village clubs with fewer members and volunteers'.
- **Staplehurst Cricket Club:** 'We are bursting at the seams when it comes to formal play. This season, our 12 wickets (and two edge of square Under-13 wickets) hosted over 80 matches including Kent representative games. While we have made several unsuccessful approaches to our neighbouring landowner to come to some arrangement on buying or leasing land to extend our playing area, our top priority for investment is the Clubhouse. We are currently seeking funding from the sports' governing bodies and Sport England to match the £300k we have raised ourselves from selling a small part of our estate for housing development'.
- **Yalding Cricket Club:** 'We don't have dedicated practice facilities (i.e. cricket nets) so the adult and junior practice sessions take place on the main cricket square and so the pitches designated for this purpose are not available for match day use. The first and second strip at each end are used for practice, meaning only 8 are available for play. Of these, only strips 5-10 are eligible for adult league play as they need at least 50 yards to the boundary. So in reality we only have six strips available for matches, as opposed to the 14 theoretically available. Permanent training nets would therefore be a huge asset'.



## 6.5 The implications for cricket in Maidstone

Analysis of local supply of cricket pitches in Maidstone indicates the following:

- Two former club sites are currently available but unused, as are cricket pitches on seven school sites, which suggests that there is some current spare capacity.
- Whilst the standard of the playing surfaces is high with 18 of 21 pitches rated as good, the pavilions show far greater variety in style and quality. Most clubs are tenants at their sites and therefore reliant on buildings provided by landlords. Most do not have the resources to undertake major building work to refurbish or renovate their built facilities. As a result, many pavilions do not meet modern standards of space with poor access for disabled players and spectators. Changing for officials is inadequate and few pavilions are able to accommodate female changing.
- 15 out of 20 pitch sites have secured community access, which makes it difficult for the five clubs based at the unsecured sites to apply for external funding to improve facilities, because they have insufficient security of tenure.

## 6.6 Assessment of current needs

To assess whether the current supply of pitches is adequate to meet existing demand an understanding of the situation at all sites available to the community needs to be developed. This is achieved by providing a brief overview for each site, which comprises:

- A comparison between the carrying capacity of a site with how much demand currently takes place there. The carrying capacity of a site is defined as the amount of play it can regularly accommodate without adversely affecting its quality and use. Demand is defined in terms of the number of ‘match equivalent’ sessions at each site.
- An indication of the extent to which pitches are being used during their peak periods.

The site overviews identify the extent to which pitches are

- ***Being overplayed:*** Where use exceeds the carrying capacity (highlighted in red in the tables below).
- ***Being played to the level the site can sustain:*** Where use matches the carrying capacity (highlighted in yellow in the tables below).
- ***Potentially able to accommodate some additional play:*** Where use falls below the carrying capacity (highlighted in green in the tables below).

In line with ECB guidance, the following assumptions have been made in relation to the number of weekly match equivalents that can be accommodated by different quality pitches:

- Overall capacity is expressed as match equivalents per **season**, as opposed to per **week** for all other pitch types.
- The number of wickets at each site is shown below. Artificial wickets are listed in brackets.
- In line with the guidance it has been assumed that a ‘good’ quality wicket will accommodate five matches per season, a ‘standard’ quality wicket will accommodate four and a ‘poor’ quality wicket will accommodate no matches per season.

- Adult teams account for an average of 0.5 ‘home’ games per week and junior teams for 0.35 ‘home’ games per week.
- Artificial turf wickets will accommodate 60 matches per season.
- Aspects of each site shaded in red indicate a deficiency, those shaded in yellow indicate that supply and demand are balanced and those shaded in green have some spare capacity.

<i>Site</i>	<i>Wickets</i>	<i>Users</i>	<i>Seasonal capacity</i>	<i>Seasonal demand</i>	<i>Seasonal balance</i>	<i>Peak capacity</i>	<i>Peak demand</i>	<i>Peak balance</i>
Bearsted Green	10(1)	Bearsted Cricket Club	110	80	+30	1	2	-1.0
Blue House Cricket Club	6	Blue House Cricket Club	24	10	+14	1	0.5	+0.5
Detling Cricket Club	6	Detling Cricket Club	30	20	+10	1	1	Balanced
East Sutton Cricket Club	12	East Sutton Cricket Club	60	10	+50	1	0.5	+0.5
Headcorn Cricket Club	12	Headcorn Cricket Club	60	30	+30	1	1	Balanced
Hollingbourne Cricket Club	14	Bearsted CC Kent age group and disability teams	70	30	+40	1	1	Balanced
Hunton Cricket Club	8	Hunton Cricket Club	40	30	+10	1	1	Balanced
Leeds and Broomfield CC	14(1)	Leeds & Broomfield CC	130	120	+10	1	2	-1.0
Lenham Cricket Club	10	Lenham Cricket Club	50	30	+20	1	1.5	-0.5
Linton Park Cricket Club	15(1)	Linton Park Cricket Club	135	80	+55	1	2	-1.0
Marden Cricket Club	15	Marden Cricket Club	135	60	+75	1	1	Balanced
Otterden Place Cricket Club	8	Otterden Place Cricket Club	40	10	+30	1	0.5	+0.5
Rumwood Cricket Club	10	Rumwood Cricket Club Loose Cricket Club	50	20	+30	1	0.5	+0.5
Staplehurst Cricket Club	12	Staplehurst Cricket Club	60	100	-40	1	1	Balanced
Stockbury Cricket Club	5	Stockbury Cricket Club	25	20	+5	1	1	Balanced
Teston Cricket Club	8	Teston Cricket Club	50	20	+30	1	1	Balanced
The Booth Field	8	Harrietsham Cricket Club	40	20	+20	1	1	Balanced
The Mote Cricket Club	30	The Mote Cricket Club	150	70	+80	2	2	Balanced
West Farleigh Cricket Club	8	West Farleigh Cricket Club	32	20	+12	1	1	Balanced
Yalding Cricket Club	14	Yalding Cricket Club	56	40	+16	1	0.5	+0.5
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>223(4)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,347</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>+527</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>-1.0</b>



The key findings are as follows:

- One site shows a significant seasonal deficit, although collectively there is significant seasonal spare capacity in the borough as a whole.
- Four sites show a peak time deficit, although this is generally managed by fixture scheduling. Peak usage is balanced at nine further sites and there is a collective peak time deficit of 1.0 match equivalent session in the borough as a whole.
- Seasonal spare capacity at secured community access sites only reduces to 283 match equivalent sessions.
- The peak time spare capacity at secured sites only reduces to a precise balance between supply and demand.

## 6.7 Assessment of future needs

### 6.7.1 Population growth

MBC's *'Strategic Housing Market Assessment'* (2015) confirmed the objectively assessed housing need for the borough over the period 2011 to 2031 as 17,660 dwellings. Of these 8,335 have already been built or granted planning permission. This scale of development will increase the borough's population by 22,380 to 177,523 people by 2031. This will represent an increase of 14.4% over the 2011 census figure.

### 6.7.2 Potential changes in demand

Changes in demand for cricket in the future can be modelled on a trend-based projection. Two sets of data can help to inform this:

- **'Active People' survey:** The national rates of cricket participation between 2005 and the present, as measured by the 'Active People' survey, are as follows:

2005/06	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	% Change
0.48%	0.49%	0.49%	0.41%	0.51%	0.43%	0.34%	0.37%	0.32%	0.42%	-0.06%

- **National cricket playing survey:** The ECB's most recent *'National Cricket Playing Survey'* (2016) identified a 7% decrease in player numbers between 2014 and 2015.

Balancing past trends that identify falling demand against target increases in participation suggests that projecting future need based on static demand patterns is a reasonable basis for forecasting.

### 6.7.3 Site-specific pressures

Maidstone Borough Council needs to identify sites upon which it can deliver its housing targets. Whilst planning policy offers protection to playing pitches, those sites that do not currently accommodate formal cricket activity may be vulnerable unless it can be proved that they are needed to accommodate existing or future shortfalls in supply or serve some other green space functions.

#### 6.7.4 Potential changes in supply

Staplehurst Cricket Club is currently seeking funding for a larger clubhouse to address capacity issues and has also investigated leasing adjacent land to expand its playing facilities.

There are no known development threats to any existing pitch sites, including those that are currently disused.

#### 6.7.5 Existing spare capacity

Existing spare cricket pitch capacity has been calculated in section 6.7 above and indicates seasonal spare capacity of 527 match equivalent sessions at all sites and 283 match equivalent sessions at sites with secured community use. This equates to 105 good quality grass wickets or nine artificial turf wickets at all sites or 57 good quality grass wickets or five artificial turf wickets at secured sites. However, if weekly peak time capacity is considered, there is a deficit of 1.0 match equivalent, which means that there is no effective spare capacity as present.

#### 6.7.6 Future cricket pitch needs

Future cricket pitch needs to 2031 are modelled below using 'Team Generation Rates' (TGRs), which identify how many people in a specified age group in the borough are required to generate one team. For women and girls, future team numbers have been estimated on the basis of efforts to promote the game for these groups. These are then applied to projected changes in population to identify the likely number of teams in the future. The extra wickets calculation is based upon the seasonal capacity of a 'good' quality grass wicket.

<i>Team type</i>	<i>Age range</i>	<i>Current population</i>	<i>Current teams</i>	<i>TGR</i>	<i>Population 2031</i>	<i>Teams 2031</i>	<i>Extra teams</i>	<i>Extra wickets</i>
Adult males	16-55	42,828	52	1: 824	48,995	59	7	14
Adult females	16-55	43,172	0	-	49,389	1	0	0
Junior males	10-15	5,976	30	1: 199	6,837	34	4	8
Junior females	10-15	6,024	0	-	6,891	2	0	0

### 6.8 Key findings and issues

#### 6.8.1 What are the main characteristics of current supply and demand?

- **Demand trends:** There has been a long-term decline in cricket participation nationally, which has been mirrored to a lesser extent in the borough.
- **Women and Girls:** There are currently no women and girls' teams in the borough.
- **Spare capacity:** Two former club sites are currently available but unused, as are cricket pitches on seven school sites, which confirms that there is some current spare capacity.
- **Changing facilities:** Whilst the standard of the playing surfaces is high with 16 of 19 wickets rated as good, many changing pavilions do not meet modern standards of space with poor access for disabled players and spectators. Changing for officials is frequently inadequate and few pavilions are able to accommodate female changing.

- **Security of tenure:** 15 out of 20 pitch sites have secured community access, which makes it difficult for the five clubs based at the unsecured sites to apply for external funding to improve facilities, because they have insufficient security of tenure.

#### 6.8.2 Is there enough accessible and secured community use to meet current demand?

- **Seasonal pitch capacity:** One site shows a seasonal deficit, although collectively there is seasonal spare capacity of 527 matches in the borough as a whole. Seasonal spare capacity just at secured community access sites reduces to 283 match equivalent sessions.
- **Peak time pitch capacity:** Four sites show a peak time deficit, although this is managed by fixture scheduling. Peak usage is balanced at nine further sites and there is a collective peak time deficit of 2.0 match equivalent sessions in the borough as a whole. The collective peak time spare capacity just at secured sites reduces to a precise balance between supply and demand.

#### 6.8.3 Is the accessible provision of suitable quality and appropriately maintained?

- **Quality:** All cricket pitches on secured sites with community use and used are 'good' or 'standard' quality, but changing facilities are rated as 'poor' at four sites.
- **Maintenance:** All club cricket pitches in the borough are appropriately maintained, although the quality of maintenance of some school pitches is generally lower than would be required to sustain use by external clubs.

#### 6.8.4 What are the main characteristics of future supply and demand?

- **Population growth:** The borough's population is projected to increase by 22,380 to 177,523 people by 2031. This will represent an increase of 14.4% over the 2011 census figure.
- **Changes in demand:** Balancing past trends that identify falling demand against the target increases in participation suggests that projecting future need based on current demand patterns is a reasonable basis for forecasting.
- **Changes in supply:** There are no known development threats to any existing pitch sites, including those that are currently disused.
- **Existing spare capacity:** Existing collective seasonal spare capacity amounts to 527 match equivalents, which equates to 105 good quality grass wickets or nine artificial turf wickets. However, weekly peak time supply and demand are effectively balanced, which means that there is no current spare capacity.
- **Future needs:** Based on projected population growth, there will be additional demand from 11 extra cricket teams by 2031, which is equivalent to 22 good quality grass wickets (equivalent to three pitches) or one artificial turf wicket.

### 6.8.5 Is there enough accessible and secured provision to meet future demand?

There is sufficient accessible and secured provision to meet future demand at present, but additional capacity could be created in two ways:

- Utilising provision at the two sites with community access that are currently unused, which collectively comprise 16 grass and one artificial turf wicket.
- Enhancing capacity at existing secured club sites with community use and used, such as the addition of artificial turf wickets. This is preferable to creating new sites in housing developments in areas with no established teams.

## 6.9 Scenario Testing

### 6.9.1 Introduction

Based upon the key findings and issues identified above, a number of scenarios have been examined, to identify the optimum approach to addressing needs.

### 6.9.2 Scenario 1: Re-instating disused pitches

- ***Rationale:*** The pitches at Loose Cricket Club's former ground (ten grass wickets and one artificial wicket comprising 65 seasonal match equivalent sessions) and Ulcombe Cricket Club (six grass wickets comprising 18 seasonal match equivalent sessions) are both currently unused and it would therefore make sense to reinstate both facilities to meet additional future demand, rather than providing entirely new provision:
- ***Advantages:*** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - Both pitches were recently abandoned due to localised falling demand, so could be reinstated at relatively low cost.
  - There is sufficient collective capacity at both sites to cater for the needs of up to 11 teams, which is the projected additional number of teams by 2031.
- ***Disadvantages:*** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - With no established club at either site, new clubs would need to be formed from demand arising from new housing development. It is generally more difficult to organise a new club from scratch, as opposed to adding teams to a club with an established operational structure.
  - Re-instatement costs are likely to escalate the longer the facilities remain unused and given that the increase in demand will be gradual to 2031, future restoration may not be as economically viable as current restoration.
  - The Ulcombe pitch in particular is not well-located in relation to proposed new housing developments.

- **Conclusions:** Whilst this scenario offers some advantages, it would be preferable to pursue other options for enhancing local pitch capacity.

### 6.9.3 Scenario 2: Accessing pitches on education sites

- **Rationale:** A total of 40 grass wickets and six artificial grass wickets (collectively comprising 520 seasonal match equivalent sessions) are available for community use on school sites but are currently unused by external clubs. These represent one option for expanding current and future pitch capacity.
- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - The pitches already exist and in most cases there is established community use of other facilities at the respective sites.
  - There would be opportunities to establish closer school-club links if community-based clubs were playing on school sites.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - The quality of maintenance of most school pitches falls below the standard required for competitive club cricket.
  - None of the sites has a formal Community Use Agreement, so continued access would not be secured.
  - School cricket pitches are only available for a relatively short period during the summer term (April to July), whereas the club cricket season extends to September.
  - Schools use of the pitches reduces their effective capacity for community use to well below the theoretical 520 match equivalent sessions per season.
- **Conclusions:** The poor quality and limited availability of cricket pitches on school sites makes this scenario an inferior option to the other scenarios considered.

### 6.9.4 Scenario 3: Expanding capacity at existing sites

- **Rationale:** Accommodating the additional demand arising from housing at existing cricket pitch sites is the most effective, efficient and economic way of catering for extra participants. The type of measures that will improve capacity include the installation of artificial wickets, extending the existing pitch to include additional grass wickets, provision of an additional junior pitch on the current outfield (where there is sufficient space and expanding changing and ancillary facilities).
- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - The demand arising from new housing normally builds over a protracted period and it may be a period of years before there is sufficient critical mass to form a new club at a new site. Joining an existing club allows new members to be integrated immediately into an organised team set up.



- The established administrative structures of clubs at existing sites provide an effective operational model for managing cricket facilities, particularly the grounds maintenance implications.
  - Expanding capacity at existing sites, is a more cost-effective way of accommodating additional demand than providing an entirely new facility, particularly given the large land take involved with cricket pitches.
  - An influx of new members will secure the long-term viability of existing clubs.
  - There is a wide geographical spread of clubs throughout the district, so implementing capacity improvements at sites that are closely related to the location of new housing developments is relatively straightforward.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
    - Because of the configuration of cricket pitches, only one wicket per site can be used for a game in the peak period, so even if overall site capacity is expanded, the ability to accommodate additional teams will depend upon scheduling activity outside of the peak periods.
    - Five sites do not have security of tenure so investing developer contributions in facility improvements without secured access would be problematic at those sites.
  - **Conclusions:** Expanding the capacity of cricket pitches and ancillary facilities at established club sites in Maidstone should be considered as the default option for meeting the additional demand arising from new housing developments, unless site-specific issues are identified which establish that this is not feasible at particular sites, at which stage the option for new provision should be examined.

#### 6.9.5 Scenario 4: Installing artificial wickets in parks

- **Rationale:** All the pitch sport governing bodies have developed and are promoting innovative and informal variations of their games, to attract new and lapsed participants. Cricket has developed shortened versions of the game (twenty over matches and 'Last Man Stands') and soft ball variants including tape ball cricket and has promoted play in non-formal pitch settings ('cage cricket' on multi-use games areas and casual play in parks). Installing artificial turf wicket at appropriate locations in parks and open spaces would provide for and encourage informal play.
- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - An artificial wicket can be installed at relatively low cost (£10,000) and can sustain high levels of use compared with natural grass.
  - Maintenance costs are minimal.
  - It would provide an 'entry level' route into cricket, either through informal casual participation or through promotional events run by cricket clubs.

- **Disadvantages:** The only disadvantage of this scenario is that facilities like artificial wickets in areas with unrestricted public access might be prone to vandalism and misuse.
- **Conclusions:** Providing artificial wickets in appropriate locations within parks and open spaces conforms with sports development trends in seeking to attract new and lapsed participants in informal settings.

## 6.10 Policy recommendations

### 6.10.1 Introduction

The recommendations in relation to cricket are made in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which stipulates that existing open space including playing pitches, should not be built upon unless:

- An assessment has taken place which has clearly shown the open space to be surplus to requirements, or;
- 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;
- The development is for alternative sport and recreation provision, the needs for which clearly outweighs the loss.

The following recommendations are arranged under the three main headings of ‘protect’, ‘enhance’ and ‘provide’.

### 6.10.2 Protect

**Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision:** The Maidstone Playing Pitch Strategy comprises a robust and evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for cricket in the borough. The Strategy has identified a need for all current and disused cricket pitch sites to be retained, on the basis of the specific identified roles that each can play in delivering the needs of the sport in Maidstone both now and in the future. It is therefore recommended that existing planning policies continue to support the retention of all sites, based upon the evidence in the Playing Pitch Strategy. In the event that any pitch sites do become the subject of development proposals, this will only be permissible if they are replaced and meet policy exception E4 of Sport England’s Playing Fields Policy. This states that ‘the playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development must be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development’.

**Recommendation 2 - Security of tenure:** The users of five of the 20 pitch sites with community use in Maidstone do not have security of tenure. Whilst most have occupied the respective sites for many years and are under no known threats of eviction, the absence of a long-term (minimum 25-year) lease makes it impossible for the clubs concerned to apply for external funding to improve their facilities. This will include the receipt of funds from developer contributions. It is therefore recommended that:

- Efforts are made to achieve security of tenure at the five sites without such status at present.
- Arrangements are reviewed at other sites where leases have less than 25-years to run, to extend the current periods.

### 6.10.3 Enhance

***Recommendation 3 - Improving existing 'poor' quality provision:*** Four sites in the borough have pavilions and changing facilities that are rated as 'poor' quality and two sites have 'poor' quality practice nets. This reduces the quality of playing experience, may present child protection issues in relation to simultaneous adult and junior use of changing provision and may deter some potential participants. Subject to security of tenure issues, it is recommended that the clubs concerned should be supported to apply for external funding for facility enhancements, including the receipt of developer contributions (see below) where the usage capacity would be enhanced.

***Recommendation 4 - Developer contributions (enhancements):*** Most of the additional demand for cricket arising from the proposed housing development in Maidstone to 2031, should be accommodated through enhancements to existing pitches and facilities. It is recommended that the site-specific action plan in the Maidstone Playing Pitch Strategy be used as the basis for determining facility enhancements that demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under Section 106 or CIL arrangements, to cover the capital and revenue implications of the enhancements. To facilitate this, specific larger playing pitch projects should be listed as 'relevant infrastructure', under CIL Regulation 123.

### 6.10.4 Provide

***Recommendation 5 - Artificial wickets for informal play:*** The provision of artificial turf wickets in MBC-owned parks and open spaces will encourage informal and casual participation in cricket and provide opportunities for an initial introduction to the game. It is therefore recommended that:

- Opportunities for providing artificial wickets are investigated in MBC-owned parks and open spaces, with particular attention paid to siting them in proximity to thoroughfares used by young people, to maximise visibility and accessibility.
- The provision of appropriately located artificial wickets is included within the open space obligations of developers, either through off-site financial contributions or direct on-site provision.

***Recommendation 6 - Developer contributions (new provision):*** Some of the extra demand for cricket arising from the proposed housing development in Maidstone to 2031, will need to be accommodated through the provision of new pitches and facilities. It is recommended that the site-specific action plan in the Maidstone Playing Pitch Strategy be used as the basis for determining which proposed new facilities demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under Section 106 or CIL arrangements, to cover their capital and revenue cost implications. To facilitate this, specific larger playing pitch projects should be listed as 'relevant infrastructure', under CIL Regulation 123.

## 6.11 Action Plan

### 6.11.1 Introduction

In the context of the high-level recommendations above, the tables below set out the cricket action plan to guide the implementation of the strategy. The abbreviations stand for MBC - Maidstone Borough Council, ECB - England and Wales Cricket Board and KC - Kent Cricket. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England's *Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2018* (2018).

### 6.11.2 Key strategic actions

<b>Issues</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Cost estimates</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Artificial wickets in MBC-owned parks and open spaces	Identify suitable sites in MBC-owned parks and open spaces for artificial wickets and install	MBC	KC ECB	£10,000 per wicket	High
Securing developer contributions	Ensure that policy provision is made to secure developer contributions towards new and improved cricket facilities.	MBC	Developers	-	High

### 6.11.3 Site specific actions

<b>Site</b>	<b>Issues</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Cost estimates</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Bearsted Green	Site overused in the peak period.	Expand pitch capacity with additional grass wickets.	Bearsted PC	Bearsted CC KC ECB	£50,000	High
Blue House Cricket Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No security of tenure</li> <li>Poor quality changing facilities</li> </ul>	Investigate security of tenure with landowner Improve pavilion	Landowner	Blue House Cricket Club KC ECB	£200,000 for improved pavilion	High
Detling Cricket Club	Poor quality changing facilities.	Improve pavilion	Detling Cricket Club	KC ECB	£200,000	High
East Sutton Cricket Club	Poor quality practice nets	Provide new practice nets	East Sutton PC	East Sutton Cricket Club KC ECB	£20,000	Medium
Headcorn Cricket Club	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Hollingbourne Cricket Club	Site overused in the peak period.	Expand pitch capacity with artificial grass wicket.	Hollingbourne Cricket Club	KC ECB	£10,000	High
Hunton Cricket Club	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Leeds and Broomfield CC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No security of tenure</li> <li>Site overused seasonally and in the peak period</li> </ul>	Investigate security of tenure with landowner Expand pitch capacity with additional grass wickets.	Leeds Castle Estate	Leeds and Broomfield CC KC ECB	£50,000	High

<i>Site</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Cost estimates</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Lenham Cricket Club	Site overused in the peak period.	Expand pitch capacity with artificial grass wicket.	Lenham PC	Lenham Cricket Club KC ECB	£10,000	High
Linton Park Cricket Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No security of tenure</li> <li>• Site overused in the peak period</li> </ul>	Investigate security of tenure with landowner Expand pitch capacity with additional grass wickets.	Leeds Castle Estate	Linton Park Cricket Club CC KC ECB	£50,000	High
Marden Cricket Club	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Otterden Place Cricket Club	No security of tenure	Investigate security of tenure with landowner	Landowner	Otterden Place CC	-	Medium
Rumwood Cricket Club	Poor quality changing facilities.	Improve pavilion	Rumwood CC	KC ECB	£200,000	High
Staplehurst Cricket Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site overused seasonally</li> <li>• Clubhouse development to extend capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand pitch capacity with additional grass or artificial grass wickets.</li> <li>• Provide new clubhouse</li> </ul>	Staplehurst Cricket Club	KC ECB	£10,000 for extra wickets £600,000 for clubhouse	High
Stockbury Cricket Club	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Teston Cricket Club	No security of tenure	Investigate security of tenure with landowner	Landowner	Teston CC	-	Medium
The Booth Field	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
The Mote Cricket Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing facilities need upgrading</li> <li>• Poor quality practice nets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve pavilion</li> <li>• Improve practice nets</li> </ul>	The Mote Trust	The Mote Cricket Club KC ECB	£200,000 to improve pavilion £20,000 for practice nets	High
West Farleigh Cricket Club	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Yalding Cricket Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing facilities need upgrading</li> <li>• Practice nets needed to free up pitch use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve pavilion</li> <li>• Provide practice nets</li> </ul>	Yalding PC	Yalding CC KC ECB	£200,000 to improve pavilion £20,000 for practice nets	High



## 7 RUGBY UNION NEEDS IN MAIDSTONE

### 7.1 Organisational context

- **Rugby Football Union:** The RFU is the governing body of the sport and supports the development of the game in Maidstone.
- **RFU-affiliated clubs:** There are two clubs based in the borough, who collectively field six adult teams, five junior teams and six mini-rugby teams.

### 7.2 Strategic context

#### 7.2.1 National rugby facilities strategy

The RFUs *National Facilities Strategy for Rugby Union in England 2013 - 2017* (2013) provides a framework for facility provision.

- Increase the provision of integrated changing facilities that are child friendly and can sustain concurrent male and female activity at the club.
- Improve the quality and quantity of natural turf pitches.
- Increase the number of Artificial Turf Pitches.
- Improve social, community and catering facilities, which can support diversification and the generation of additional revenues.
- Invest in facility upgrades which result in an increase in energy-efficiency, in order to reduce the running costs of clubs.

#### 7.2.2 Neighbouring local authorities

Playing pitch strategies in neighbouring local authority areas identify cross-boundary issues:

##### **Ashford**

The Council is in the final stages of producing a new playing pitch strategy. Draft findings include:

- All current demand can be met from within existing provision.
- Four additional grass rugby pitches or one rugby-compliant artificial turf pitch will be required to meet the needs of anticipated population growth.
- There is no evidence of any imported rugby demand from Maidstone, nor any exported demand to Maidstone.

##### **Medway**

The council has an adopted strategy dating from 2012 which it plans to revise in 2018. The strategy identified:

- All current demand can be met from within existing provision.
- One additional pitch will be needed to meet extra demand by 2028.
- There is no evidence of any imported rugby demand from Maidstone, nor any exported demand to Maidstone.

### ***Swale***

The council has an adopted playing pitch strategy dating from 2015. It identifies:

- A current surplus of one adult and 2.8 mini-rugby pitches.
- Future demand by 2025 can be accommodated by the existing spare capacity.
- There is no evidence of any imported rugby demand from Maidstone, nor any exported demand to Maidstone.

### ***Tonbridge and Malling***

The council does not have a playing pitch strategy but plans to draft one in the near future. Its most recent assessment states that:

- Rugby is 'much less well provided for than the country as a whole, which is a constraint on the growth of club rugby'.
- There is no evidence of any imported rugby demand from Maidstone, nor any exported demand to Maidstone.

### ***Tunbridge Wells***

- The council is finalising a playing pitch strategy in 2018. However, there is no evidence of any imported rugby demand from Maidstone, nor any exported demand to Maidstone.

## **7.2.3 Implications of the strategic context**

The implications of the strategic context for rugby union in Maidstone are:

- ***Existing deficits:*** There are either identified surpluses or modest deficits in rugby pitch provision in neighbouring areas, which is likely to have no significant impact on provision within Maidstone.
- ***Future deficits:*** In all cases where a detailed assessment has been undertaken, rugby pitch shortfalls are projected to increase in the future. Artificial Grass Pitches may offer some additional capacity, but these need to comply with a specification based on World Rugby's Regulation 22 to accommodate competitive play and contact training.

## **7.3 Rugby Union demand**

### **7.3.1 RFU-affiliated clubs and teams**

The following clubs affiliate to the RFU:

<b><i>Club</i></b>	<b><i>Home ground</i></b>	<b><i>Adult male teams</i></b>	<b><i>Adult female teams</i></b>	<b><i>Junior male teams</i></b>	<b><i>Junior female teams</i></b>	<b><i>Mini teams</i></b>
Maidstone Rugby Club	Mote Park	5	0	5	0	6
Weaving Warriors RFC	Park Wood Recreation Ground	1	0	0	0	0
<b><i>TOTALS</i></b>	<b><i>-</i></b>	<b><i>6</i></b>	<b><i>0</i></b>	<b><i>5</i></b>	<b><i>0</i></b>	<b><i>6</i></b>

### 7.3.2 Demand trends

Sport England's 'Active People' survey national data for rugby union indicates that the percentage of adults (16+) who played rugby the four weeks prior to each survey has remained static in the period since 2005.

2005/6	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/1	2011/2	2012/3	2013/4	2014/5	2015/6	% Change
0.46%	0.56%	0.50%	0.46%	0.42%	0.42%	0.37%	0.43%	0.40%	0.46%	0.00%

### 7.3.3 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to play by teams or other users of playing pitches from within the study area which takes place outside of the area:

- Both the Maidstone-based rugby union clubs draw all their membership from within the borough.
- There is no evidence of imported demand to Maidstone from neighbouring areas.

### 7.3.4 Unmet demand

Unmet demand takes a number of forms:

- Teams may have access to a pitch for matches but nowhere to train or vice versa.
- Some pitches may be unavailable to the community.
- The poor quality and consequent limited capacity of pitches in the area and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement.

Consultation with the local clubs indicated that the quality of pitches and facilities is appropriate to the standards of play and that there is currently sufficient capacity to accommodate some additional demand, should it arise.

### 7.3.5 Latent demand

Whereas unmet demand is known to currently exist latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better provision. There are currently no women's or girl's rugby teams in Maidstone, although Maidstone Rugby Club has organised a female section in the recent past. It is likely that latent demand for women's rugby still exists in the borough and that the lack of spare pitch capacity is one factor inhibiting greater participation.

## 7.4 Rugby union supply in Maidstone

### 7.4.1 Quantity

Provision of rugby union pitches in Maidstone is set out below:

- **Available for community use and used:**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Floodlit Pitches</i>	<i>Non-floodlit pitches</i>	<i>Floodlit training areas</i>
Mote Park	Willow Way, Maidstone ME15 7RN	1	2	1
Park Wood Recreation Ground	Bicknor Road, Maidstone ME15 9PS	0	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	-	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>

- **Available for community use and not used:**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Non-floodlit pitches</i>
Lenham School	Ham Lane, Lenham ME17 2LL	1
Maidstone Grammar School	Barton Road, Maidstone ME15 7BT	2
New Line Learning Academy	Boughton Lane, Maidstone ME15 9QL	1
Oakwood Park Grammar School	Oakwood Park, Maidstone ME16 8AH	1
St Augustine Academy	Oakwood Park, Maidstone ME16 8AE	1
Simon Stock School	Oakwood Park, Maidstone ME16 0JP	1
The Maplesden Noakes School	Great Buckland, Maidstone ME16 0TJ	1
Valley Park School	Huntsman Lane, Maidstone ME14 5DT	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	-	<b>9</b>

- **Not available for community use:**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Non-floodlit pitches</i>
Sutton Valance School	North St., Sutton Valance ME17 3NH	6
Sutton Valance Prep. School	Chart Rd., Sutton Valance ME17 3RF	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	-	<b>10</b>

- **Not available as disused:** There are no rugby pitches that are available for community use and not used.

#### 7.4.2 Grass pitch quality

The qualitative analysis involved visits to both rugby union sites with community use and used during the playing season, to undertake the sport-specific non-technical visual inspections produced by the RFU for Sport England's *'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance'* (2013). The assessment generated 'scores' for each site by evaluating the condition of:

- **Pitch drainage:** Inadequately naturally drained (scores D0), adequately naturally drained (scores D1) pipe drained (scores (D2) and pipe and slit drained pitches (scores D3).
- **Grounds maintenance:** Frequency of aeration, sand-dressing, fertilising, weed killing and chain harrowing. This generates scores of 'Poor' (M0), 'Adequate' (M1) and 'Good' (M2).

The scores for each rugby union pitch in Maidstone with community use and used are as follows. 'Good' ratings are highlighted in green and 'Adequate' in yellow.

<i>Site</i>	<i>Drainage</i>	<i>Maintenance</i>
Mote Park Pitch One	D2	M2
Mote Park Pitch Two	D1	M1
Mote Park Pitch Three	D1	M1
Park Road Recreation Ground	D1	M1

#### 7.4.3 Grass pitch carrying capacity

The carrying capacity of grass pitches is related to their quality and is expressed as the number of 'match equivalent sessions' that can be accommodated each week. The *Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance* indicates the following weekly carrying capacities for rugby union pitches:

<i>Drainage</i>	<i>Maintenance</i>		
	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Standard</i>	<i>Good</i>
Natural inadequate	0.5	1.0	2.0
Natural adequate	1.5	2.0	3.0
Pipe drained	1.75	2.5	3.25
Pipe and slit drained	2.0	3.0	3.5

The weekly collective carrying capacity of the rugby union pitches at each site with community use and used in Maidstone is as follows:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Capacity</i>
Mote Park	5.0
Park Road Recreation Ground	1.0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>6.0</b>

#### 7.4.4 Changing quality

The quality of changing facilities at each rugby union site with community use and used was assessed in terms of changing accommodation for players and officials, disability access and building layout:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Rating</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Mote Park	Poor	The capacity of the changing facilities is inadequate if all pitches are in use and there is a lack of segregation for simultaneous adult and youth usage.
Park Road Recreation Ground	Poor	The changing facilities are ageing and too small. There is no provision for use by women or youth players.

#### 7.4.5 Pitch maintenance

Pitch maintenance arrangements at the two sites with community use and used are as follows:

- **Mote Park:** Maidstone Rugby Club maintains the two pitches on the cricket ground part of the site, whilst the council's grounds maintenance contractor maintains the adjacent pitch on the leisure centre part of the site.
- **Park Road Recreation Ground:** The pitch is maintained by the council's grounds maintenance contractor.



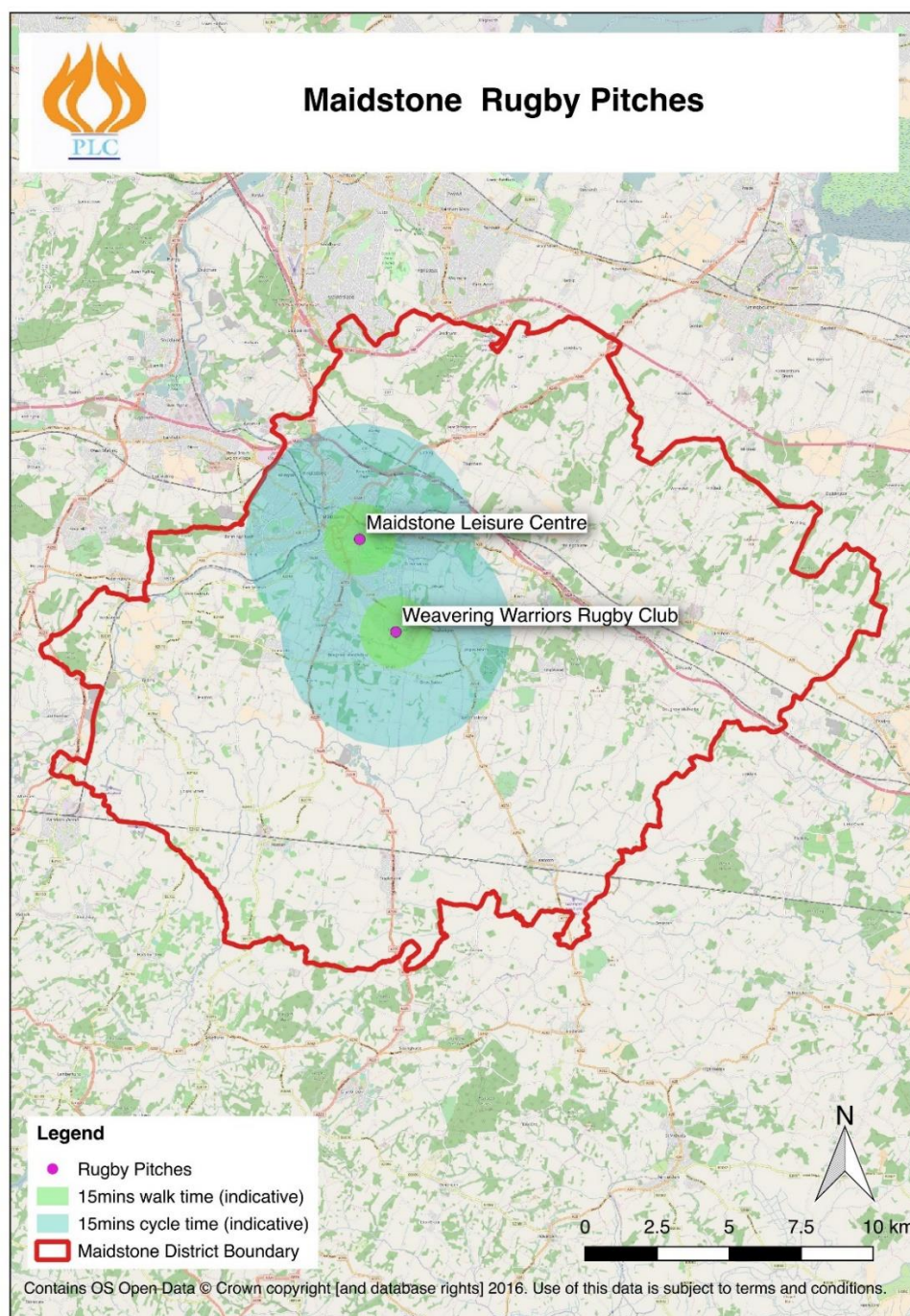
#### 7.4.6 Ownership, management and security of access

Neither of the rugby clubs has security of tenure at their home sites.

<i>Site</i>	<i>Ownership</i>	<i>Management</i>	<i>Security of access</i>
Mote Park	The Mote Trust	The Mote Trust	Unsecured
Park Road Recreation Ground	Maidstone BC	Maidstone BC	Unsecured

#### 7.4.7 Geographical distribution

The geographical distribution of rugby union pitches in Maidstone is set out in the map below.



#### 7.4.8 The views of stakeholders on pitch supply

Consultation with the RFU's Regional Facilities Manager and Rugby Development Officer identified the following key issues in relation to Maidstone:

- **Maidstone Rugby Club:** The Club was founded in 1880 and has played at its current ground at Mote Park since the early 1950s under an arrangement with the Mote Cricket Club. The RFU supported the club by funding for floodlights on their training pitch. The club is negotiating with the Mote Trust to extend its lease, but in the long term is seeking a purpose-built rugby centre on a different site. The RFU's view is that pitches, especially the training ground, are overplayed. As a result, pitches other than the main pitch are deteriorating. Changing accommodation at Mote Park does not meet modern standards for space, provision for female players and officials, disabled access and the ability to separate adult and junior players
- **Weaving Warriors RFC:** The club was established in 2004 with a single league team playing in the Premier 2 division of the Kent Rural League and occasional 2<sup>nd</sup> XV who play friendlies. It has no junior section. At present, it has no security of tenure at its home ground at Park Wood Recreation Ground which is an obstacle to their long-term ability to grow.

Consultation with affiliated rugby clubs identified the following issues in relation to Maidstone:

- **The local demand profile:** Both clubs report increased membership over the last two years, although the women and girls' sections at Maidstone RFC have declined.
- **Maidstone RFC:** The club leases its main home ground from the Mote Cricket Club, which holds the ground in trust. The rugby club's lease has expired and it is currently negotiating a five-year extension. In the medium term, the club would like to move to new, wholly owned premises and it is actively investigating options at present. The club also hires pitches from time to time from Maidstone Council at Mote Park
- **Weaving Warriors:** The club plays at the council-owned recreation ground at Park Road. It would like to secure a lease on the ground but has not yet been able to do so.

#### 7.5 The implications for rugby union in Maidstone

Analysis of local supply of rugby union pitches in Maidstone indicates the following:

- The two sites with community use and used are both served by poor standard changing facilities, which are particularly poorly suited to accommodating use by women and juniors.
- There are nine further pitches on school sites that are available for community use, but which are unused. This is primarily because of the cohesive nature of club rugby, which generally favours a single site delivery model.
- Neither of the key sites has secured community use, which hampers the ability of both clubs to secure external investment for facilities improvements.

## 7.6 Assessment of current needs

To assess whether the current supply of pitches is adequate to meet existing demand an understanding of the situation at all sites available to the community needs to be developed. This is achieved by providing a brief overview for each site, which comprises:

- A comparison between the carrying capacity of a site and how much demand currently takes place there. The carrying capacity of a site is defined as the amount of play it can regularly accommodate without adversely affecting its quality and use. Demand is defined in terms of the number of ‘match equivalent sessions’ at each site.
- An indication of the extent to which pitches are being used during their peak periods.

The site overviews identify the extent to which pitches are

- ***Being overplayed:*** Where use exceeds the carrying capacity (highlighted in red in the table below).
- ***Being played to the level the site can sustain:*** Where use matches the carrying capacity.
- ***Potentially able to accommodate some additional play:*** Where use falls below the carrying capacity.

As per RFU guidance, rugby pitch capacity, demand and the resultant balance are expressed as ‘match equivalent’ sessions, both weekly and at peak times.

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pitches</i>	<i>Users</i>	<i>Weekly capacity</i>	<i>Weekly demand</i>	<i>Weekly balance</i>	<i>Peak capacity</i>	<i>Peak demand</i>	<i>Peak balance</i>
Mote Park	3	Maidstone RFC	4.5	4.5	-0.5	3.0	5.5	-2.5
Park Road Rec.	1	Weaving Warriors RFC	1.0	1.0	Balanced	1.0	0.5	+0.5

The key findings are:

- The weekly supply and demand figures at Mote Park both indicate a deficit, but there is a small peak demand surplus at Park Road Recreation Ground.
- The floodlit training area at Mote Park adds some capacity to the three formal pitches at that site.

## 7.7 Assessment of future needs

### 7.7.1 Population growth

MBC’s ‘Strategic Housing Market Assessment’ (2015) confirmed the objectively assessed housing need for the borough over the period 2011 to 2031 as 17,660 dwellings. Of these 8,335 have already been built or granted planning permission. This scale of development will increase the borough’s population by 22,380 to 177,523 people by 2031. This will represent an increase of 14.4% over the 2011 census figure.

### 7.7.2 Potential changes in demand

Sport England's 'Active People' survey national data for rugby union indicates that the percentage of adults who played rugby the four weeks prior to each survey has remained static in the period since 2005. This suggests that projecting needs based on current demand patterns is a reasonable basis for forecasting.

### 7.7.3 Site-specific pressures

Maidstone Borough Council needs to identify sites upon which it can deliver its housing targets. Whilst planning policy offers protection to playing pitches, any sites that do not currently accommodate formal rugby activity may be vulnerable unless it can be proved that they are needed to accommodate existing or future shortfalls in supply, or serve some other green space functions.

### 7.7.4 Potential changes in supply

Maidstone Rugby Club has aspirations to move from its current site, which is owned by the Mote Trust and is shared with the Mote Cricket Club, to a dedicated rugby facility with additional pitch capacity. However, no specific site has yet been identified.

### 7.7.5 Existing spare capacity

There is no collective peak time spare capacity, with a deficit at Mote Park only partially offset by a surplus at Park Road Recreation Ground.

### 7.7.6 Future rugby pitch needs

Future rugby pitch needs are modelled below using 'Team Generation Rates' (TGRs), which identify how many people in a specified age group in the borough are required to generate one team. These are then applied to projected changes in population to identify the likely number of teams in the future.

- Team numbers are based on the participation data supplied by the RFU.
- The extra pitches calculation is based upon the weekly capacity of a pipe-drained grass pitch with standard maintenance.

<i>Team type</i>	<i>Age range</i>	<i>Current population</i>	<i>Current teams</i>	<i>TGR</i>	<i>Population 2031</i>	<i>Teams 2031</i>	<i>Extra teams</i>	<i>Extra pitches</i>
Adult males	19-45	26,660	6	1: 4,443	30,499	7	1	0.5
Adult females	19-45	27,467	0	-	31,422	0	0	0
Junior males	13-18	5,282	5	1: 1,056	6,043	6	1	0.5
Junior females	13-18	5,304	0	-	6,068	0	0	0
Mini-rugby (mixed)	7-12	11,200	6	1: 1,887	12,813	8	2	0.5



## 7.8 Key findings and issues

### 7.8.1 What are the main characteristics of current supply and demand?

- **Women and girls rugby:** Despite a number of past initiatives to develop women and girls rugby in the borough, none has resulted in sustainable teams. In part, this reflects the lack of pitch capacity, but the quality and layout of changing facilities at both clubs is also an inhibiting factor.
- **Pitch capacity:** The existing grass pitches are currently used to their sustainable capacity in the peak periods. Pitch drainage and maintenance could be improved to enhance overall weekly capacity, but this would not solve the issue of the deficit in the peak demand period.

### 7.8.2 Is there enough accessible and secured community use to meet current demand?

There is some limited weekly spare capacity, but supply and demand are balanced in the peak periods. Neither site has secured community access for either rugby club.

### 7.8.3 Is the accessible provision of suitable quality and appropriately maintained?

Three of the four pitches with community use and used are of 'standard' quality, which is appropriate to the nature of their use. The changing facilities at both sites are rated as poor quality and each has limited capacity to accommodate female and youth players.

### 7.8.4 What are the main characteristics of future supply and demand?

- **Population growth:** The population of the borough is projected to increase by 22,380 people by 2031. This represents an increase of 14.4% over the 2011 census figure.
- **Changes in demand:** The projected increase in population will generate one additional adult male team, one junior male team and two mixed mini-rugby teams by 2031.
- **Changes in supply:** There are no known prospective changes in rugby pitch supply, although neither club has security of tenure of their respective sites so access could, in theory be withdrawn.
- **Existing spare capacity:** There is no current spare pitch capacity.
- **Future needs:** Additional future needs equate to demand for 1.5 extra rugby pitches.

### 7.8.5 Is there enough accessible and secured provision to meet future demand?

There is insufficient accessible and secured provision to meet future demand at present, but additional capacity could be created in five ways:

- Enhancing the carrying capacity of the existing grass rugby pitches, with drainage and maintenance improvements.
- Converting one or more of the under-utilised adult football pitches at Mote Park to rugby.



- Achieving security of tenure at the two existing sites, to at least secure current provision.
- Negotiating secured access to existing rugby pitches on school sites in the borough, although this would be the least satisfactory option from the point of view of the operational cohesiveness of single site rugby club operations.
- Installing a World Rugby Regulation 22-compliant artificial grass pitch (which could also cater for local rugby league and American football needs).

## 7.9 Scenario Testing

### 7.9.1 Introduction

Based upon the key findings and issues identified above, a number of scenarios have been examined, to identify the optimum approach to addressing needs.

### 7.9.2 Scenario 1: Enhancing grass pitch carrying capacity

- **Rationale:** Improving the drainage and maintenance of the existing pitches could theoretically add capacity equivalent to 8.0 weekly match equivalents sessions.
- **Advantages:** The advantage of this scenario is that improvements could be made at the existing sites.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - The overall weekly carrying capacity would be increased but peak-time demand is defined by the number, rather than the quality of pitches and this would be unaffected by the quality improvements.
  - The increased costs with a more intensive grounds maintenance regime may be unaffordable for a single team club like Weaving Warriors.
  - The lack of security of tenure at both sites would make it difficult to secure external funding for the improvements.
- **Conclusions:** It would be preferable to pursue other options for enhancing local pitch capacity.

### 7.9.3 Scenario 2: Converting football to rugby pitches at Mote Park

- **Rationale:** There is some spare capacity at adult football pitches at Mote Park, so converting one pitch to rugby would improve capacity adjacent to Maidstone Rugby Club's site.
- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - The conversion of a football pitch to rugby could be achieved relatively cheaply, without detriment to current football needs.

- The extra pitch would enhance peak-time capacity by 1.0 match equivalent, which is where the greatest deficit exists at present.
- This would offer a straightforward temporary solution that would not compromise Maidstone Rugby Club's desire to move from the site in the medium term by investing in a high-cost solution.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - The peak-time deficit at Mote Park is 2.5 match equivalents, so the provision of one extra pitch would not solve all Maidstone Rugby Club's needs.
  - The pitch is likely to be needed to meet increasing demand for football in the future, unless alternative provision is made.
- **Conclusions:** This offers a pragmatic short-term solution to meeting some of Maidstone Rugby Club's immediate needs.

#### 7.9.4 Scenario 3: Security of tenure at existing sites

- **Rationale:** The absence of security of tenure at both sites is an impediment to long-term planning for both clubs, so achieving a long-term lease would overcome this. The loss of rugby use of both the current sites would place the future of both clubs in jeopardy.
- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are that both clubs could plan for the future with greater certainty and apply for external funding for pitch and facility improvements.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - Mote Park is not an ideal site for Maidstone Rugby Club because of the shortage of pitch capacity and inadequate changing facilities. Seeking long-term security of tenure at a sub-optimal site would therefore not best serve their needs, providing that a better alternative site can be identified.
  - Maidstone Borough Council may be reluctant to grant a long-term lease to Weaving Warriors at Park Road Recreation Ground, although subject to some investment in improving the pitch and changing facilities, the site would meet the club's current and future needs.
- **Conclusions:** The constraints of the Mote Park site mean that it cannot meet all of Maidstone Rugby Club's needs, so seeking security of tenure at the site would not be a sensible priority. However, security of tenure at Park Road Recreation Ground would allow Weaving Warriors the scope to seek funding bids for improved provision at a site that could meet their long-term needs.

#### 7.9.5 Scenario 4: Securing access to school rugby pitches

- **Rationale:** There are nine rugby pitches on school sites, several of which have community access for other pitch sport users. It would be sensible to investigate whether these pitches might offer an alternative means of expanding local pitch capacity.

- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - The pitches are already there, so would require little or no investment to facilitate community use.
  - Several of the schools already accommodate community use for other pitch sports.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - Spreading matches and/or training across more than one site would threaten the cohesiveness of club operations.
  - Some schools only mark out rugby pitches for a single term, so their availability would be time-limited within the rugby season.
- **Conclusions:** There is little current appetite from either of the local rugby clubs to access school rugby pitches, mainly because of the single site with a clubhouse model of operation favoured by most clubs.

#### 7.9.6 Scenario 5: Provision of a rugby-compliant artificial grass pitch

- **Rationale:** Artificial grass pitches that are compliant with the World Rugby Regulation 22 specification can be used for rugby training and matches. As all-weather floodlit facilities, they can accommodate a least 35-hours per week of peak-time usage. Current collective demand in Maidstone for 21 hours of use per week could thus be accommodated with flexible programming, as could the additional 7 hours per week of projected future demand.
- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - All local rugby demand could be accommodated at a single pitch site.
  - There would be sufficient spare capacity also to accommodate local rugby league and American Football needs.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - Neither of the current rugby club sites would be physically suitable to accommodate an artificial grass pitch (and neither has security of tenure), so a new site would need to be identified.
  - The capital cost of provision is high - in the order of £850,000.
- **Conclusions:** Further feasibility work would need to be undertaken to establish whether this option is viable, but it might provide one operational model for Maidstone Rugby Club in particular to consider in relation to its proposed ground move.

## 7.10 Policy recommendations

### 7.10.1 Introduction

The recommendations in relation to rugby union are made in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 74, which stipulates that existing open space including playing pitches, should not be built upon unless:

- An assessment has taken place which has clearly shown the open space to be surplus to requirements, or;
- 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;
- The development is for alternative sport and recreation provision, the needs for which clearly outweighs the loss.

The following recommendations are arranged under the three main headings of ‘protect’, ‘enhance’ and ‘provide’.

### 7.10.2 Protect

***Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision:*** The Maidstone Playing Pitch Strategy comprises a robust and evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for rugby union in the borough. The Strategy has identified a need to increase local rugby pitch capacity and to this extent, it will be important for both current community used rugby pitch sites to be retained. However, there are issues relating to the suitability of both sites and the options for moving to sites with security of tenure and additional capacity are being investigated. It is therefore recommended that existing planning policies continue to support the retention of all sites, based upon the evidence in the Playing Pitch Strategy. In the event that proposals to move rugby pitches from the sites do come forward, this will only be permissible they are replaced and meet policy exception E4 of Sport England’s Playing Fields Policy. This states that ‘the playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development must be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development’.

***Recommendation 2 - Security of tenure:*** Neither of the rugby pitch sites with community use in Maidstone has security of tenure. Whilst this is less of an issue at Mote Park, where Maidstone Rugby Club is actively seeking to move, it is more significant for Weaving Warriors. Whilst there are no known threats of eviction, the absence of a long-term (minimum 25-year) lease makes it impossible for the club to apply for external funding to improve the facilities at Park Road Recreation Ground. This will include the receipt of funds from developer contributions. It is therefore recommended that:

- Efforts are made to achieve security of tenure at Park Road Recreation Ground
- Adequate security of tenure should be a condition at any site to which Maidstone Rugby Club might move.

### 7.10.3 Enhance

**Recommendation 3 - Improving existing ‘poor’ quality provision:** Both club sites in the borough have pavilions and changing facilities that are rated as ‘poor’ quality. This reduces the quality of playing experience and may deter some potential participants. Subject to resolving the security of tenure issues, it is recommended that both clubs concerned should be supported to apply for external funding for facility enhancements, including the receipt of developer contributions (see below) where the usage capacity would be enhanced. In the case of Maidstone Rugby Club, this is likely to involve provision at a new site.

**Recommendation 4 - Developer contributions (enhancements):** Some of the additional demand for rugby arising from the proposed housing development in Maidstone to 2031, should be accommodated through enhancements to provision at the rugby club sites. It is recommended that the action plan in the Maidstone Playing Pitch Strategy be used as the basis for determining facility enhancements that demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under Section 106 or CIL arrangements, to cover the capital and revenue implications of the enhancements. To facilitate this, specific larger playing pitch projects should be listed as ‘relevant infrastructure’, under CIL Regulation 123.

### 7.10.4 Provide

**Recommendation 5 - New facilities:** Given the lack of capacity at its current site and the limited options at Mote Park to improve the situation, Maidstone Rugby Club is actively seeking to find a new site where it can provide better quality facilities with sufficient capacity to cater for existing and future needs. It is therefore recommended that the club be supported in their efforts.

**Recommendation 6 - Developer contributions (new provision):** Some of the extra demand for rugby arising from the proposed housing development in Maidstone to 2031, will need to be accommodated through the provision of new pitches and facilities. It is recommended that the action plan in the Maidstone Playing Pitch Strategy be used as the basis for determining which proposed new facilities demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under Section 106 or CIL arrangements, to cover their capital and revenue cost implications. To facilitate this, specific larger playing pitch projects should be listed as ‘relevant infrastructure’, under CIL Regulation 123.

## 7.11 Action Plan

### 7.11.1 Introduction

In the context of the high-level recommendations above, the tables below set out the rugby union action plan to guide the implementation of the strategy. The abbreviations stand for MBC - Maidstone Borough Council and RFU - Rugby Football Union. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England’s ‘Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2018’ (2018).



### 7.11.2 Key strategic actions

<i><b>Issues</b></i>	<i><b>Action</b></i>	<i><b>Lead</b></i>	<i><b>Partners</b></i>	<i><b>Cost estimates</b></i>	<i><b>Priority</b></i>
Securing developer contributions	Ensure that policy provision is made to secure developer contributions towards new and improved rugby facilities.	MBC	Rugby Clubs	-	High

### 7.11.3 Site specific actions

<i><b>Site</b></i>	<i><b>Issues</b></i>	<i><b>Action</b></i>	<i><b>Lead</b></i>	<i><b>Partners</b></i>	<i><b>Cost estimates</b></i>	<i><b>Priority</b></i>
Maidstone Rugby Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No security of tenure</li> <li>• Poor quality changing facilities</li> <li>• Site overused in the peak period</li> </ul>	Investigate alternative sites. Obtain secured tenure at preferred site. Provide new pitches clubhouse and ancillary facilities with increased capacity.	Maidstone RFC	MBC RFU	TBA	High
Weaving Warriors Rugby Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No security of tenure</li> <li>• Poor quality changing facilities</li> </ul>	Investigate security of tenure. Provide new or improved changing facilities	Weaving Warriors Rugby Club	MBC RFU	£350,000	High

## 8 RUGBY LEAGUE NEEDS IN MAIDSTONE

### 8.1 Organisational context

- **Rugby Football League:** The RFL is the governing body of the sport and supports the development of the game in Maidstone.
- **London Rugby League Foundation:** The Foundation is a charitable trust established to increase participation and engagement in rugby league in London and the surrounding counties. The Foundation supports the development of rugby league in Maidstone.
- **Invicta Panthers RLC:** Invicta Panthers is the only rugby league club in the borough and currently fields one adult team, two junior teams and two mini-rugby teams. The Club is based at the New Line Learning Academy in Maidstone.

### 8.2 Strategic context

#### 8.2.1 National rugby league facilities strategy

The RFL's 'Community Rugby League Facilities Strategy - England' (2011) sets out the priorities and targets for developing facilities provision.

- The need for clubs to acquire security of tenure to secure grant funding.
- The need to improve club management.
- The need to improve pitch and clubhouse quality.
- The need to access economically priced '3G' pitches.
- The need to develop the appropriate facilities to develop the game in primary and secondary schools.

The RFL is currently commissioning a new national strategy to lead its facilities development programme. This is seeking to maximise the anticipated legacy arising from them winning the rights to stage the 2021 World Cup. As part of the award the RFL have secured a £10 million capital legacy infrastructure fund which should enable investment into the community game. However, Maidstone lies outside what the RFL's 'Emerging Affinity Areas' and it therefore unlikely that any investment will be made in the borough.

#### 8.2.2 Neighbouring local authorities

The situation regarding rugby league in neighbouring boroughs is as follows:

##### **Ashford**

There is no rugby league activity in the borough.

##### **Medway**

The Medway Dragons RLC is based at the Garrison Stadium in Gillingham and runs one adult and six junior teams.

**Swale**

There is no rugby league activity in the borough.

**Tonbridge and Malling**

There is no rugby league activity in the borough.

**Tunbridge Wells**

There is no rugby league activity in the borough.

## 8.2.3 Implications of the strategic context

Rugby league is a minority pitch sport in Kent, but the Invicta Panthers provide local opportunities to play the game. Their lack of security of tenure of the pitch they use at the New Line Learning Academy runs counter to the RFL's strategic objectives for club facilities.

## 8.3 Rugby League demand

### 8.3.1 RFL-affiliated clubs and teams

Invicta Panthers RLC affiliates to the RFL:

<i>Club</i>	<i>Home ground</i>	<i>Adult male teams</i>	<i>Adult female teams</i>	<i>Junior male teams</i>	<i>Junior female teams</i>	<i>Mini teams</i>
Invicta Panthers RLC	New Line Learning Academy	1	0	2	0	2

### 8.3.2 Demand trends

- **National trends:** Sport England's 'Active People' survey national data for rugby union indicates that the percentage of adults (16+) who played rugby league in the four weeks prior to each survey has fallen in the period since 2005.

<i>2005/06</i>	<i>2013/14</i>	<i>2014/15</i>	<i>2015/16</i>	<i>% Change</i>
0.18%	0.09%	0.09%	0.12%	-0.06%

- **Local trends:** Invicta Panthers has been established for only three years and has 150 juniors and 40 adult members. Membership has increased steadily year-on-year.

### 8.3.3 Displaced demand

Almost all of the Invicta Panthers membership is drawn from within Maidstone borough and there is no evidence of exported demand to the Medway Dragons club.

### 8.3.4 Unmet demand

Unmet demand takes a number of forms:

- Teams may have access to a pitch for matches but nowhere to train or vice versa.

- Some pitches may be unavailable to the community.
- The poor quality and consequent limited capacity of pitches in the area and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement.

The pitch used by Invicta Panthers at New Line Learning Academy is poor quality and the site lacks any ability to generate revenue through the sale of refreshments. The London Rugby League Foundation advocates the need for a training pitch to supplement match play and this is not available at the current site. These deficiencies have hampered the further expansion of the club and therefore there is some local unmet demand.

### 8.3.5 Latent demand

Whereas unmet demand is known to currently exist, latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better provision. The current facility deficiencies outlined above suggest that there is an element of latent demand within the local population, that would be realised with more and better provision.

## 8.4 Rugby league pitch supply

### 8.4.1 Quantity

Provision of rugby league pitches in Maidstone is set out below:

- **Available for community use:**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Non-floodlit pitch</i>
New Line Learning Academy	Boughton Lane, Maidstone ME15 9QL	1

- **Available for community use and not used:** There are no rugby league pitches that are available for community use and not used.
- **Not available for community use:** There are no rugby league pitches that are not available for community use.
- **Not available as disused:** There are no rugby league pitches that are not available for community use because they are disused.

### 8.4.2 Pitch quality

The qualitative analysis involved visits to both rugby union sites with community use and used during the playing season, to undertake the sport-specific non-technical visual inspections produced by the RFL for Sport England's *Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance* (2013). The assessment generated 'scores' for each site by evaluating the condition of:

- **Pitch drainage:** Inadequately naturally drained (scores D0), adequately naturally drained (scores D1) pipe drained (scores (D2) and pipe and slit drained pitches (scores D3).

- **Grounds maintenance:** Frequency of aeration, sand-dressing, fertilising, weed killing and chain harrowing. This generates scores of ‘Poor’ (M0), ‘Adequate’ (M1) and ‘Good’ (M2).

The scores for the pitch at the New Line Learning Academy are as follows.

<i>Site</i>	<i>Drainage</i>	<i>Maintenance</i>
New Line Learning Academy	D0	M1

### 8.4.3 Pitch carrying capacity

The carrying capacity of grass pitches is related to their quality and is expressed as the number of ‘match equivalent sessions’ that can be accommodated each week. The *Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance* indicates the following weekly carrying capacities for rugby pitches:

<i>Drainage</i>	<i>Maintenance</i>		
	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Standard</i>	<i>Good</i>
Natural inadequate	0.5	1.0	2.0
Natural adequate	1.5	2.0	3.0
Pipe drained	1.75	2.5	3.25
Pipe and slit drained	2.0	3.0	3.5

The weekly carrying capacity of the pitch at the New Line Learning Academy is therefore 1.0 match equivalent session.

### 8.4.4 Changing quality

The quality of changing facilities the New Line Learning Academy was assessed terms of changing accommodation for players and officials, disability access and building layout and were rated as ‘good’ quality.

### 8.4.5 Pitch maintenance

The pitch is maintained by the New Line Learning Academy.

### 8.4.6 Pitch hire charges

The Invicta Panthers pay £40 to hire the pitch for each 2.5 hour session.

### 8.4.7 Ownership, management and security of access

<i>Site</i>	<i>Ownership</i>	<i>Management</i>	<i>Security of access</i>
New Line Learning Academy	New Line Learning Academy	New Line Learning Academy	Unsecured

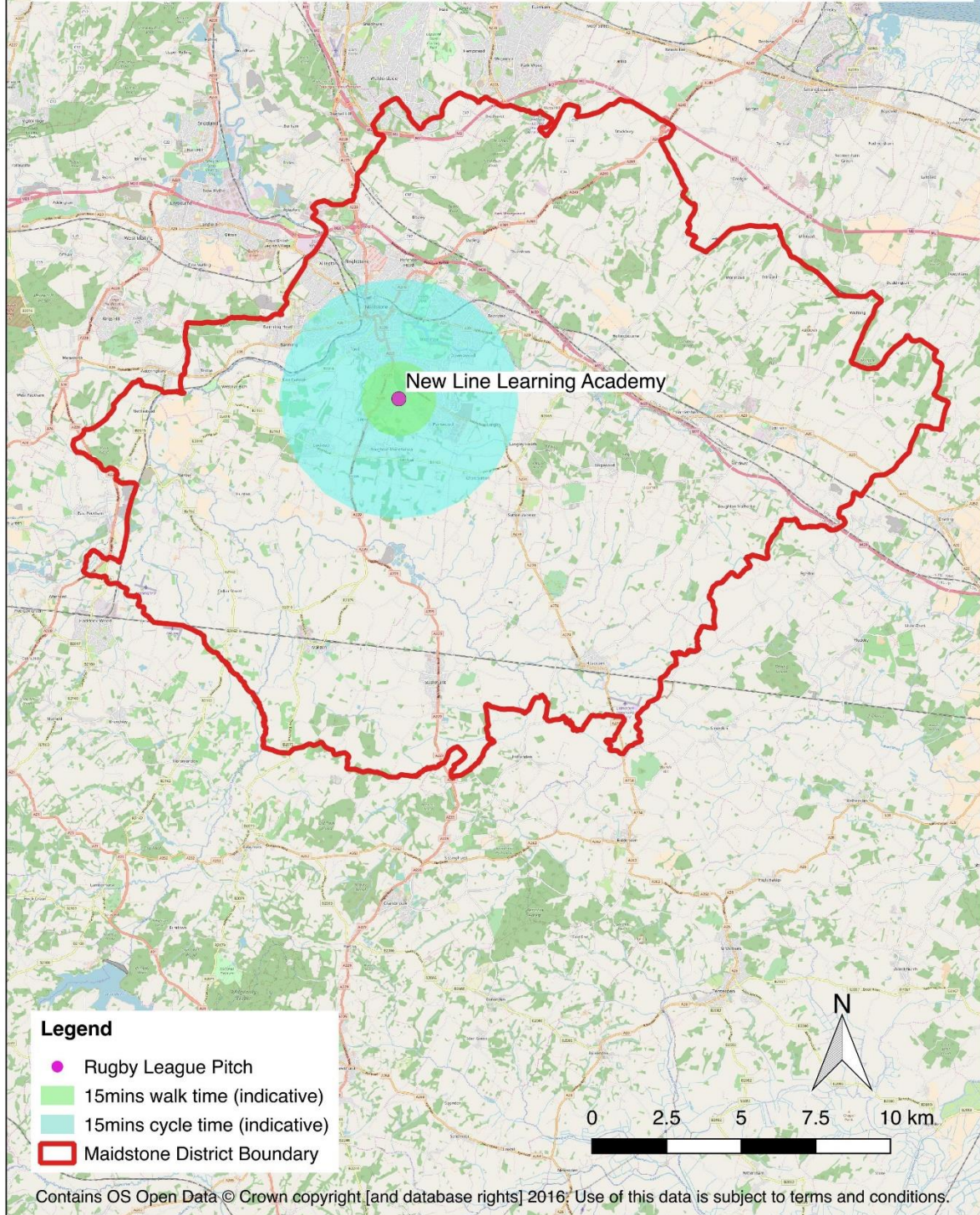
### 8.4.8 Geographical distribution

To location of the rugby league pitch in Maidstone is set out in the map below. The single site is located relatively centrally to the borough.





## Maidstone Rugby League Pitches



#### 8.4.9 The views of stakeholders on pitch supply

Consultation with the London Rugby League Foundation's Director identified the following key issues in relation to Maidstone:

- **Local demand:** Invicta Panthers are a young, enthusiastic and ambitious club with a senior team supported by a strong youth programme. The playing season is March to July
- **Facilities priorities:** Current requirements are for secured access to a competition pitch and training pitch. This will allow the club to grow organically and in the long term look to acquire its own facilities

Consultation with Invicta Panthers RLC identified the following issues in relation to Maidstone:

- **Current facilities:** The club uses the New Line Learning Academy pitch for both training and matches. The pitch is uneven and rated by the club as poor. Plans by the Academy to develop an artificial grass pitch for rugby league and American football have been put on hold.
- **Future facilities:** The club would ideally like to secure a home site with a clubhouse to act as a base and to sell refreshments. It had found what it considered an ideal site at Boughton Monchelsea Recreation Ground, although this is opposed by the Parish Council which owns the site, on the grounds of inadequate car parking. The Club is also looking to establish a wheelchair rugby league team at a sports hall in the borough.

#### 8.5 The implications for rugby league in Maidstone

Analysis of local supply of rugby league pitches in Maidstone indicates the following:

- The New Line Learning Academy pitch is inadequate to meet the current needs of the Invicta Panthers.
- Unmet and latent demand is equivalent to one more adult team, one junior team and one mini-rugby team.
- The quality of the pitch is poor and the site does not have secured community access.

#### 8.6 Assessment of current needs

To assess whether the current supply of pitches is adequate to meet existing demand an understanding of the situation at all sites available to the community needs to be developed. This is achieved by providing a brief overview for each site, which comprises:

- A comparison between the carrying capacity of a site with how much demand currently takes place there. The carrying capacity of a site is defined as the amount of play it can regularly accommodate without adversely affecting its quality and use. Demand is defined in terms of the number of 'match equivalent' sessions at each site.
- An indication of the extent to which pitches are being used during their peak periods.



The site overviews identify the extent to which pitches are

- ***Being overplayed:*** Where use exceeds the carrying capacity (highlighted in red in the table below).
- ***Being played to the level the site can sustain:*** Where use matches the carrying capacity (highlighted in yellow in the table below).
- ***Potentially able to accommodate some additional play:*** Where use falls below the carrying capacity.

As per RFL guidance, rugby pitch capacity, demand and the resultant balance are expressed as ‘match equivalent sessions’, both weekly and at peak times.

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pitches</i>	<i>Users</i>	<i>Weekly capacity</i>	<i>Weekly demand</i>	<i>Weekly balance</i>	<i>Peak capacity</i>	<i>Peak demand</i>	<i>Peak balance</i>
New Line Learning Academy	1	Invicta Panthers RLC	1.0	3.0	-2.0	1.0	2.0	-1.0

## 8.7 Assessment of future needs

### 8.7.1 Population growth

MBC’s ‘*Strategic Housing Market Assessment*’ (2015) confirmed the objectively assessed housing need for the borough over the period 2011 to 2031 as 17,660 dwellings. Of these 8,335 have already been built or granted planning permission. This scale of development will increase the borough’s population by 22,380 to 177,523 people by 2031. This will represent an increase of 14.4% over the 2011 census figure.

### 8.7.2 Potential changes in demand

Sport England’s ‘*Active People*’ survey national data for rugby league indicates that the percentage of adults who played rugby league in the four weeks prior to each survey has fallen in the period since 2005.

<i>2005/06</i>	<i>2013/14</i>	<i>2014/15</i>	<i>2015/16</i>	<i>% Change</i>
0.18%	0.09%	0.09%	0.12%	-0.06%

However, there is local evidence of both unmet and latent demand, equivalent to one adult, one junior and one mini-rugby team and this demand should be factored in to assessments of current and future needs.

### 8.7.3 Site-specific pressures

The overuse of the grass pitch at the New Line Learning Academy will prevent it from accommodating additional future demand without increases in capacity. This could be achieved through improved grass pitch quality (which would be unlikely to provide sufficient capacity), or the provision of an artificial turf pitch (which if floodlit and compliant with the relevant RFL performance specification, would meet all needs).

#### 8.7.4 Potential changes in supply

There are no known potential changes to rugby league pitch supply, although the Academy's proposal for an artificial grass pitch would provide sufficient capacity for all the needs of the Invicta Panthers.

#### 8.7.5 Existing spare capacity

There is no spare capacity at present.

#### 8.7.6 Future pitch needs

Future rugby league pitch needs are modelled below using 'Team Generation Rates' (TGRs), which identify how many people in a specified age group in the borough are required to generate one team. These are then applied to projected changes in population to identify the likely number of teams in the future. The team numbers include an assessment of the additional teams that would be generated if identified unmet and latent demand were met, to give a more accurate representation of local demand levels:

<i>Team type</i>	<i>Age range</i>	<i>Current population</i>	<i>Current teams</i>	<i>TGR</i>	<i>Population 2031</i>	<i>Teams 2031</i>	<i>Extra teams</i>	<i>Extra pitches</i>
Adult males	19-45	26,660	2	1: 13,330	30,499	2	0	0
Adult females	19-45	27,467	0	-	31,422	0	0	0
Junior males	13-18	5,282	3	1: 1,321	6,043	5	2	1.0
Junior females	13-18	5,304	0	-	6,068	0	0	0
Mini-rugby (mixed)	7-12	11,200	3	1: 2,800	12,813	5	2	0.5

### 8.8 Key findings and issues

#### 8.8.1 What are the main characteristics of current supply and demand?

The poor quality of the pitch at the New Line Learning Academy means that it is already being used to beyond its sustainable capacity to accommodate existing expressed demand. Latent and unmet demand collectively amounts to one further adult, one junior and one mini-rugby team.

#### 8.8.2 Is there enough accessible and secured community use to meet current demand?

There is insufficient grass pitch capacity to meet current needs and community use of the pitch is also unsecured.

#### 8.8.3 Is the accessible provision of suitable quality and appropriately maintained?

The grounds maintenance schedule at the New Line Learning Academy is not currently adequate to sustain current levels of rugby league usage.

#### 8.8.4 What are the main characteristics of future supply and demand?

- **Population growth:** The population of the borough is projected to increase by 22,380 people by 2031. This represents an increase of 14.4% over the 2011 census figure.
- **Changes in demand:** The projected increase in population will generate one additional adult male team, two junior male teams and two mixed mini-rugby teams by 2031.
- **Changes in supply:** There are no known potential changes to rugby league pitch supply, although the Academy's proposal for an artificial grass pitch would provide sufficient capacity for all the needs of the Invicta Panthers.
- **Existing spare capacity:** There is no current spare pitch capacity.
- **Future needs:** Additional future needs equate to demand for an additional 1.5 rugby league pitches.

#### 8.8.5 Is there enough accessible and secured provision to meet future demand?

There is insufficient accessible and secured provision to meet future demand at present, but additional capacity could be created in four ways:

- Converting one or two adult football pitches with spare capacity at a site elsewhere in the borough to rugby league pitches.
- Providing an artificial turf pitch at New Line Learning Academy, which if floodlit and compliant with the relevant RFL performance specification, would meet all needs.
- Providing an artificial turf pitch at another site also serving football, rugby union and American Football's needs for additional '3G' pitches, which if floodlit and compliant with the relevant RFL performance specification, would meet all needs.

### 8.9 Scenario Testing

#### 8.9.1 Introduction

Based upon the key findings and issues identified above, a number of scenarios have been examined, to identify the optimum approach to addressing needs.

#### 8.9.2 Scenario 1: Securing access to school rugby pitches

- **Rationale:** There are nine rugby pitches on school sites (collectively providing 18.0 weekly match equivalent sessions), several of which have community access for other pitch sport users. It would be sensible to investigate whether these pitches might offer an alternative means of expanding local pitch capacity.
- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:



- The pitches are already there, so would require little or no investment to facilitate community use.
- Several of the schools already accommodate community use for other pitch sports.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - None of the schools in Maidstone currently has secured community access to their pitches so there would be no security of tenure for the Invicta Panthers.
  - Some schools only mark out rugby pitches for a single term during the winter months, so their availability does not correspond with the spring/summer rugby league season.
- **Conclusions:** The Rugby League summer playing season does not fit with the availability of school rugby pitches.

### 8.9.3 Scenario 2: Converting football pitches to rugby league

- **Rationale:** There is some spare capacity at adult football pitches at several community-accessible sites in Maidstone, so converting two pitches for rugby league would improve capacity.
- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - The conversion of football pitches to rugby league could be achieved relatively cheaply, without detriment to current football needs.
  - The conversion could be effected at a site with secured community use, thereby solving the lack of security of tenure at the club's current site.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - Although there is some current peak time spare capacity at adult football pitches in the borough, deficits of youth football and mini-soccer pitches mean that conversion for other local football needs is a higher priority.
  - All existing football pitches are likely to be needed to meet increasing demand for football in the future, unless alternative provision is made.
- **Conclusions:** Whilst this scenario offers a pragmatic and cost-effective solution to meeting some short-term rugby league needs, it is not the preferred longer-term solution.

### 8.9.4 Scenario 3: Providing an Artificial Grass Pitch suitable for rugby league at New Line Learning Academy

- **Rationale:** Enhancing pitch capacity at the existing site used for rugby league would avoid the disruption of a ground move and would also serve a range of needs for other sports.

- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - Whilst demand for rugby league alone would be insufficient to justify its provision, there is a deficit in artificial grass provision for football in the borough and a range of local needs for rugby union and American Football could also be met by a pitch with a specification acceptable to all the governing bodies of the sports concerned.
  - The pitch could meet a range of educational needs for the New Line Learning Academy.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - There is no secured community use of the site at present, although this could be rectified through conditions attached to planning consent and/or external funding.
  - The capital cost of provision is high - in the order of £850,000.
- **Conclusions:** Further feasibility work will need to be undertaken to establish whether this option is viable.

#### 8.9.5 Scenario 4: Artificial grass pitch suitable for rugby league elsewhere in Maidstone

- **Rationale:** Providing an artificial grass pitch at an alternative site in Maidstone might better meet the needs of rugby league and other sports. For example, were Maidstone Rugby Club to provide an artificial turf pitch as part of their proposed ground move, rugby league's summer playing season would dovetail well with the rugby union winter season to facilitate shared usage.
- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - Whilst demand for rugby league alone would be insufficient to justify its provision, there is a deficit in artificial grass provision for football in the borough and a range of local needs for rugby union and American Football could also be met by a pitch with a specification acceptable to all the governing bodies of the sports concerned.
  - Meeting a range of pitch sport needs at a single site would create a critical mass of activity and improve the viability of the operation.
  - Locating an artificial turf pitch at a site with secured community access would overcome any security of tenure issues associated with school sites.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantage of this scenario is the capital cost of provision is high - in the order of £850,000.
- **Conclusions:** Further feasibility work will need to be undertaken to establish whether this option is viable, but subject to the outcome, this would appear to be the most advantageous longer-term option.

## 8.10 Policy recommendations

### 8.10.1 Introduction

The recommendations in relation to rugby league are made in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which stipulates that existing open space including playing pitches, should not be built upon unless:

- An assessment has taken place which has clearly shown the open space to be surplus to requirements, or;
- 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;
- The development is for alternative sport and recreation provision, the needs for which clearly outweighs the loss.

The following recommendations are arranged under the three main headings of ‘protect’, ‘enhance’ and ‘provide’.

### 8.10.2 Protect

**Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision:** The Maidstone Playing Pitch Strategy comprises a robust and evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for rugby league in the borough. The Strategy has identified a need to increase local rugby league pitch capacity and to this extent, it will be important for the current site at New Line Learning Academy to be retained. However, a number of alternative site options are being investigated because the current pitches do not meet all the Invicta Panthers needs. It is therefore recommended that existing planning policies continue to support the retention of all sites, based upon the evidence in the Playing Pitch Strategy. Given the general shortfall in rugby pitch provision in the borough, any loss of existing pitches will only be permissible they are replaced and meet policy exception E4 of Sport England’s Playing Fields Policy. This states that ‘the playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development must be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development’.

**Recommendation 2 - Security of tenure:** Invicta Panthers have no security of tenure at New Line Learning Academy at present. Whilst the club is not committed to remaining at the site, doing so with facilities enhancements is one option under consideration. It is therefore recommended that efforts are made to achieve security of tenure at New Line Learning Academy.

### 8.10.3 Enhance

**Recommendation 3 - Improving existing ‘poor’ quality provision:** Pitch drainage is poor at New Line Learning Academy, which compromises usage capacity. Subject to resolving the security of tenure issues, it is recommended that the Academy should be supported to apply for external funding for pitch capacity enhancements, including the receipt of developer contributions (see below).

**Recommendation 4 - Developer contributions (enhancements):** Some of the additional demand for rugby arising from the proposed housing development in Maidstone to 2031, should be accommodated through enhancements to provision at the rugby club sites. It is recommended that the action plan in the Maidstone Playing Pitch Strategy be used as the basis for determining facility enhancements that demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under Section 106 or CIL arrangements, to cover the capital and revenue implications of the enhancements. To facilitate this, specific larger playing pitch projects should be listed as ‘relevant infrastructure’, under CIL Regulation 123.

#### 8.10.4 Provide

**Recommendation 5 - New facilities:** Given the lack of capacity at its current site, Invicta Panthers are seeking to secure access to new facilities, either at their current site or elsewhere. It is therefore recommended that the club be supported in their efforts.

**Recommendation 6 - Developer contributions (new provision):** All of the extra demand for rugby league arising from the proposed housing development in Maidstone to 2031, will need to be accommodated through the provision of new pitches and facilities. It is recommended that the action plan in the Maidstone Playing Pitch Strategy be used as the basis for determining which proposed new facilities demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under Section 106 or CIL arrangements, to cover their capital and revenue cost implications. To facilitate this, specific larger playing pitch projects should be listed as ‘relevant infrastructure’, under CIL Regulation 123.

#### 8.11 Action Plan

In the context of the high-level recommendations above, the table below sets out the rugby league action plan to guide the implementation of the strategy. The abbreviations stand for MBC - Maidstone Borough Council, LRLF - London Rugby League Foundation and RFL - Rugby Football League. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England’s *Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2018* (2018).

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Cost estimates</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Securing developer contributions	Ensure that policy provision is made to secure developer contributions towards new and improved rugby league facilities.	MBC	Invicta Panthers RLC	-	High
Increasing short-term pitch capacity	Convert unused football pitches into two rugby league pitches.	MBC	Invicta Panthers RLC	£2,000 for two sets of rugby posts.	High
Increasing long-term pitch capacity	Commission a feasibility study to establish the options for expanding local pitch capacity, including an artificial grass pitch shared with other sports and provision at New Line Learning Academy. Subject to the outcome of the feasibility study, provide new community-secured facilities.	MBC	Invicta Panthers LRLF RFL (other governing bodies of sport)	£20,000 for feasibility study to cover all sports. £850,000 for new artificial grass pitch. £500,000 for changing facilities.	High

## 9 HOCKEY NEEDS IN MAIDSTONE

### 9.1 Organisational context

- **England Hockey:** England Hockey is the governing body of the sport and supports the development of the game in Maidstone.
- **Affiliated Hockey Clubs:** There are three England Hockey-affiliated clubs in Maidstone, Maidstone HC, Sutton Valance HC and Marden Russets HC.

### 9.2 Strategic context

#### 9.2.1 National hockey strategy

England Hockey's strategic plan 2013 - 2017 '*A Nation Where Hockey Matters*' (2013) contains the following priorities of relevance to Maidstone:

**Adults:** The number playing regularly in the club network will be increased by:

- Working with universities, schools and colleges to deliver quality playing experiences and clear pathways to club hockey.
- Working with regional and local leagues and affiliated clubs, to deliver the highest quality playing experience and appropriate competition frameworks.
- Developing more opportunities for over 40s to play hockey.
- Delivering a quality programme of competitions that meet the needs of players and clubs.

**Young people:** The number playing hockey in schools and clubs will be increased by:

- Developing more relationships between clubs and primary and secondary schools.
- Working with clubs to increase the number of junior hockey sessions being provided.
- Delivering a quality programme of competitions that meet the needs of players, schools and clubs.
- Developing an ability-based pathway for children aged 5-12 for adoption in clubs, schools and youth organisations.

**Informal hockey:** The numbers of people playing informal hockey will be increased by:

- Setting up opportunities to play Quicksticks in community sites.
- Increasing the opportunities to play Rush Hockey at schools, colleges, universities, clubs and community sites.
- Increasing the opportunity for women to take part in Back to Hockey sessions at clubs and community sites.

#### 9.2.2 Hockey facilities strategy

England Hockey's '*Facilities Strategy*' (2016) contains the following key elements:

- **Protect - To conserve the existing hockey provision:** There are currently over 800 pitches that are used by hockey clubs (club, school, universities.) The current provision must be retained where appropriate, to ensure that hockey is maintained across the country.



- **Improve - To improve the existing facilities stock (physically and administratively):** The current facilities stock is ageing and there needs to be strategic investment into refurbishing the pitches and ancillary facilities. There needs to more support for clubs to obtain better agreements with facilities providers and education around owning an asset.
- **Develop - To strategically build new hockey facilities where there is an identified need and ability to deliver and maintain:** The research has identified key areas across the country where there is a lack of suitable Hockey provision and there is a need for additional pitches. There is an identified demand for multi pitches in the right places to consolidate hockey and allow clubs to have all of their provision catered for at one site.

### 9.2.3 Neighbouring local authorities

Playing pitch strategies in neighbouring boroughs identify cross-boundary issues:

#### **Ashford**

The Council is in the final stages of producing a new playing pitch strategy. Draft findings include:

- All current hockey pitches in the borough should be protected.
- An additional artificial grass pitch for hockey should be provided at Ashford HC.
- There is no evidence of any imported hockey demand from Maidstone, nor any exported demand to Maidstone.

#### **Medway**

The council has an adopted strategy dating from 2012 which it plans to revise in 2018. The strategy identified:

- All current demand can be met from within existing provision.
- 0.5 additional pitches will be needed to meet extra demand by 2028.
- There is no evidence of any imported hockey demand from Maidstone, nor any exported demand to Maidstone.

#### **Swale**

The council has an adopted playing pitch strategy dating from 2015. It identifies:

- A small current and future shortage of artificial grass pitches for hockey, equivalent to 0.2 pitches.
- This can be met through transferring current football use of artificial grass pitches for hockey to proposed new '3G' football turf pitches.
- There is no evidence of any imported hockey demand from Maidstone, nor any exported demand to Maidstone.

#### **Tonbridge and Malling**

The council does not have a playing pitch strategy but plans to draft one in the near future. Its most recent assessment states that:

- Hockey is underdeveloped in the borough due in part to a shortage of pitches.
- There is some evidence of exported hockey demand to Maidstone, with use of the Sutton Valance School pitch by Cobdown HC from Aylesford.

### ***Tunbridge Wells***

The council is finalising a playing pitch strategy in 2018. However, there is no evidence of any imported hockey demand from Maidstone, nor any exported demand to Maidstone.

## **9.2.4 Implications of the strategic context**

There is no significant spare capacity at artificial grass pitches for hockey in neighbouring areas that could accommodate additional users from Maidstone.

## **9.3 Hockey demand**

### **9.3.1 England Hockey-affiliated clubs and teams**

The following clubs affiliate to England Hockey:

<i>Club</i>	<i>Home ground</i>	<i>Adult male teams</i>	<i>Adult female teams</i>	<i>Adult mixed teams</i>	<i>Junior male teams</i>	<i>Junior female teams</i>	<i>Junior mixed teams</i>
Maidstone HC	South Park, Maidstone	6	4	0	3	2	1
Marden Russets HC	Marden Cricket and Hockey Club	4	3	1	5	5	0
Sutton Valance HC	Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre Sutton Valance Prep School	5	1	1	0	3	1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>

### **9.3.2 Demand trends**

- **National trends:** Sport England's 'Active People' survey national data indicates that the percentage of adults who played hockey in the four weeks prior to each survey has fallen in the period since 2005.

<i>2005/6</i>	<i>2007/8</i>	<i>2008/9</i>	<i>2009/10</i>	<i>2010/1</i>	<i>2011/2</i>	<i>2012/3</i>	<i>2013/4</i>	<i>2014/5</i>	<i>2015/6</i>	<i>% Change</i>
0.23%	0.23%	0.24%	0.23%	0.21%	0.19%	0.25%	0.20%	0.20%	0.20%	-0.03%

National affiliation data for hockey club members provided by England Hockey reveals a different picture compared with the 'Active People' survey, recording successive increases in the period since 2010 as follows:

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. players</i>	<i>Annual % increase</i>
2010/11	102,313	-
2011/12	106,665	4.3%
2012/13	114,642	7.5%
2013/14	113,575	-0.9%
2014/15	120,404	6.0%
2015/16	129,857	7.9%
2016/17	138,915	6.6%
2017/18	143,762	3.6%

- **Local trends:** All three local clubs report increased membership over the last two years particularly amongst junior members. Adult membership is stable or slightly increasing.

### 9.3.3 Displaced demand

Consultation with local clubs indicated that there is no evidence of any displaced demand for hockey currently being met by clubs and facilities outside the borough.

### 9.3.4 Unmet demand

Unmet demand takes a number of forms:

- Teams may have access to a pitch for matches but nowhere to train or vice versa.
- Some pitches may be unavailable to the community.
- The poor quality and consequent limited capacity of pitches in the area and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement.

Consultation with England Hockey and the local clubs indicated that there is no evidence of any unmet demand in the borough at present, with some spare pitch capacity available to accommodate any extra demand that might arise.

### 9.3.5 Latent demand

Whereas unmet demand is known to currently exist latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better provision. Consultation with England Hockey and the local clubs indicated that there is no evidence of any latent demand in the borough at present.

## 9.4 Hockey pitch supply in Maidstone

### 9.4.1 Quantity

Provision of artificial turf pitches for Hockey (sand-filled and sand-based surfaces) in Maidstone is below:

- ***Available for community use and used:***

<b><i>Facility</i></b>	<b><i>Address</i></b>	<b><i>Size</i></b>	<b><i>Surface</i></b>	<b><i>Year built</i></b>
Marden Cricket and Hockey Club	Maidstone Road, Marden TN12 9AE	100m x 60m 100m x 60m	Sand-dressed Sand-dressed	2017
South Park, Maidstone	Armstrong Rd., Maidstone ME15 6AZ	97m x 60m	Sand-dressed	2007
Sutton Valence Prep. School	Chart Rd., Sutton Valence ME17 3RF	98m x 61m	Sand-dressed	2004
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	North St., Sutton Valence ME17 3HN	100m x 60m	Sand-dressed	2005

- ***Available for community use and used:***

<b><i>Facility</i></b>	<b><i>Address</i></b>	<b><i>Size</i></b>	<b><i>Surface</i></b>	<b><i>Year built</i></b>
Invicta Grammar School	Huntsman Lane, Maidstone ME14 5DS	80m x 50m	Sand-filled	2015

### 9.4.2 Hockey pitch quality

The qualitative analysis of pitches in Maidstone involved visits to all hockey pitches, to undertake the sport-specific non-technical visual inspections produced by England Hockey for Sport England's *Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance* (2013).

The assessment generates an overall 'score' for each pitch by evaluating the condition of the playing surface, fencing, floodlighting, disability access and changing provision. The overall scores for each artificial grass pitch for hockey use with community use and used in Maidstone are as follows:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pitch</i>	<i>Changing</i>
Marden Cricket and Hockey Club	Good	Good
South Park, Maidstone	Standard	Good
Sutton Valence Prep. School	Standard	None
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	Standard	Good

### 9.4.3 Pitch maintenance

The maintenance of pitches suitable for hockey use in the borough is organised by the managers of each facility.

### 9.4.4 Pitch hire charges

Marden Russets HC and Maidstone HC own their own facilities and so do not pay hire charges. Sutton Valence HC pay seasonal fees to Sutton Valence School of around £7,000.

### 9.4.5 Ownership, management and security of access

Half the hockey pitches in the borough are on sites without secured community access.

<i>Site</i>	<i>Ownership</i>	<i>Management</i>	<i>Security of access</i>
Marden Cricket and Hockey Club	Marden Cricket & HC	Marden Cricket & HC	Secured
South Park, Maidstone	Maidstone BC	Maidstone Hockey Club	Secured
Sutton Valence Prep. School	Sutton Valence Prep. Sch.	Sutton Valence Prep. Sch.	Unsecured
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	Sutton Valence School	Sutton Valence School	Unsecured

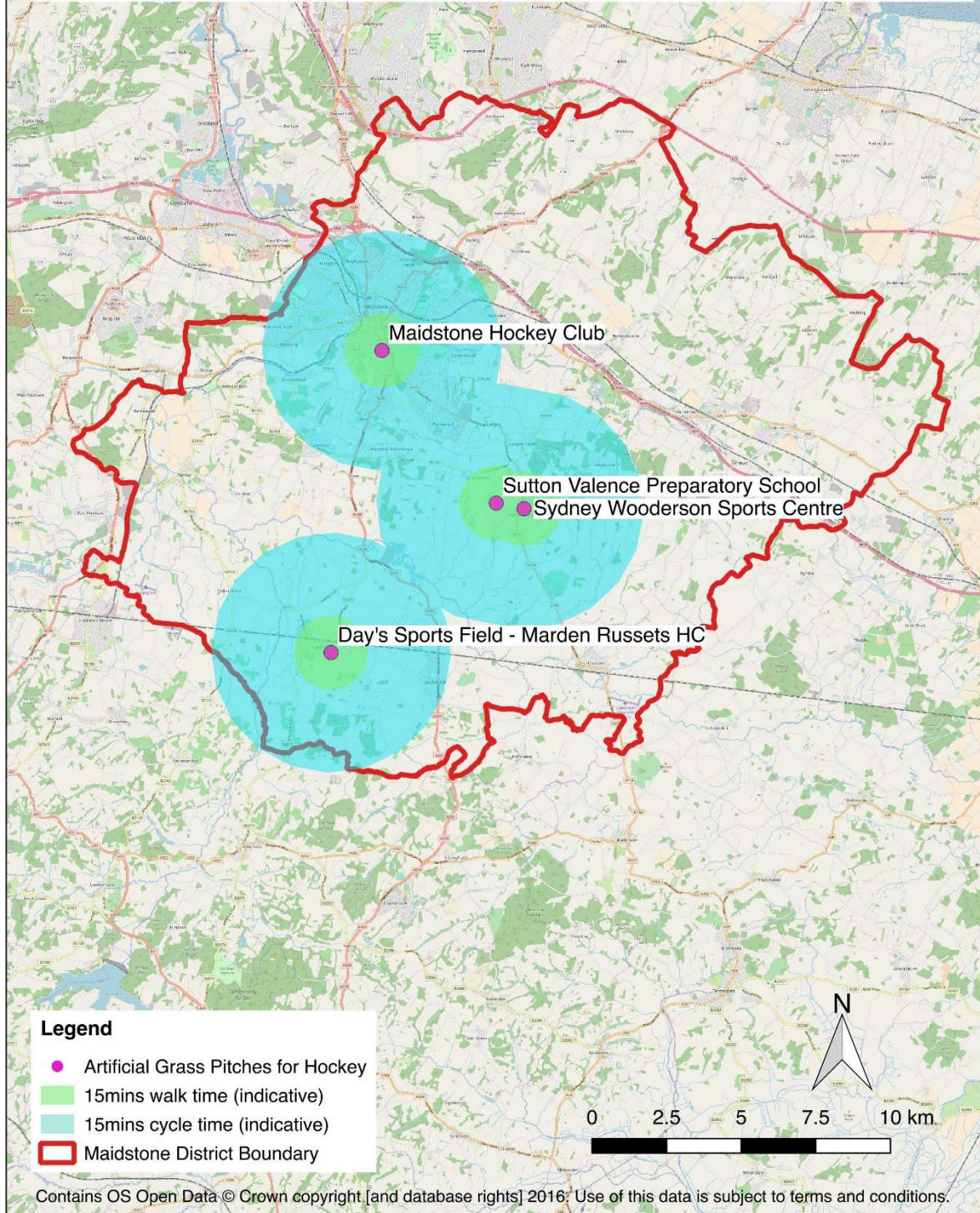
### 9.4.6 Geographical distribution

The geographical spread of artificial turf pitches with surfaces suitable for hockey in Maidstone, is set out in the map below.





## Maidstone Artificial Grass Pitches for Hockey





#### 9.4.7 The views of stakeholders on pitch supply

Consultation with England Hockey's Relationship Manager for Kent identified the following key issues in relation to Maidstone:

- **Key objective:** England Hockey's key facilities objective in Maidstone is to protect and enhance the current facilities.
- **Demand profile:** Hockey participation is increasing in the borough.
- **Imported demand:** Cobdown HC from Aylesford in Tonbridge and Malling uses the pitch at Sutton Valence School for training.
- **Informal demand:** 'Back to Hockey' sessions are run by Marden Russets HC during the summer months and by Maidstone HC on a year-round basis, in both cases during midweek evenings. This supplements the demand by formal established teams.
- **Maidstone HC:** England Hockey is aware of some capacity issues at the club at weekends but understands that this is resolved with flexibility of match start times and occasional use of other local pitches with spare capacity, including Sutton Valence, Marden and some outside the borough.
- **Overall capacity:** England Hockey supports the aspiration for additional facilities in the Maidstone area once need and demand align.
- **Participation trends:** Since 2012, hockey has seen a 65% increase of U16 players taking up Hockey within the club environment. This is increase across all age groups expected to continue especially with the success of Rio Olympics. England Hockey is also hosting the Vitality Hockey Women's World Cup in July 2018 and it is hoped that the event will also create a springboard for the game across all ages, but especially amongst young females.
- **Pitches suitable for hockey:** Unlike some sports, hockey can only be played competitively on sand or water-based artificial grass pitches. Water-based pitches are not common and only found at elite sites, whereas as in Runnymede sand-based/sand dressed pitches can be found on school sites, leisure centres and higher education establishments.
- **Pitch re-surfacing:** The popularity of artificial grass pitches on school sites is due to the surface being able is used for a number of sports to be played and taught. However, many schools do not financially plan to replace the pitch surface, or carpet as it is called. A carpet has roughly a 10-year life span dependant on use.
- **The impact of '3G' pitches:** Since the introduction of the Third Generation ('3G') artificial grass pitches catering for football and rugby, some pitch providers have been attracted by the concept of replacing sand-based/filled carpets with a '3G' surface, to generate greater income levels from hire to football clubs/commercial football providers. Because hockey cannot be played on '3G' surfaces, it has had a detrimental effect on the game in some areas causing teams to be displaced to different areas or even to disband completely.

- **Pitch surface conversion:** Any providers proposing to change the type of surface on their artificial grass pitch should take advice from the appropriate sports' governing bodies or refer to Sport England's guidance. Due to the impact on hockey, it is important to ensure that sufficient sand-based pitches are retained for playing and developing hockey within each local authority area. To that end, any proposed change of an artificial grass pitch's surface or carpet should require a planning application and as part of the process, the applicants will need to show that there is sufficient alternative provision available for hockey in the locality if the surface is changed. Advice from Sport England and England Hockey should be sought prior to any planning application being submitted.

Consultation with affiliated hockey clubs identified the following issues in relation to Maidstone:

- **Maidstone HC:** The club has 265 members and has 25-year lease on its pitch (which has 14 years to run), with the site owned by the council. There is a lack of capacity at the peak time at weekends and consequently the club wishes to build a second pitch immediately adjacent to its clubhouse to the north of Armstrong Road on South Park. This will require support from the council as land owner and planning authority. The club is aware that the carpet on its current pitch is coming to the end of its design life and will need replacing in the next two seasons. The club is already making financial provision to achieve this. Part of the wear on the pitch surface is attributable to informal use of the pitch for football by young people and the club has even provided access points in the perimeter fence to allow entry without damage to the surrounds. There are significant community benefits from this use, although there are also cost implications for the club. England Hockey's Facilities Relationship Manager for Kent has suggested that dialogue with Maidstone Borough Council would be beneficial, to establish whether through positive intervention a better user relationship with the informal footballers could be arranged, to preserve the pitch surface and to prolong its usable life.
- **Marden Russets HC:** The club currently has 453 members and has relocated to a two-pitch complex on Maidstone Road in Marden at the start of the 2017/18 season, although the current clubhouse will continue to be used until the new one opens in 2018. The new facilities were funded by sale of the current ground for housing. It will own the freehold of the site through the Marden Cricket and Hockey Club.
- **Sutton Valence HC:** The club currently has 140 members and has no security of tenure on the Sutton Valence School sites but has a long-standing arrangement to hire facilities from the school. The club is content with the quality of maintenance of the playing surfaces but has had problems with some floodlights being out of action.

## 9.5 Assessment of current needs

To assess whether the current supply of pitches is adequate to meet existing demand an understanding of the situation at all sites available to the community needs to be developed. This is achieved by providing a brief overview for each site, which comprises:

- A comparison between the carrying capacity of a site and how much demand currently takes place there. The carrying capacity of a site is defined as the amount of play it can regularly accommodate without adversely affecting its quality and use. Demand is defined in terms of the number of 'match equivalent sessions' at each site.

- An indication of the extent to which pitches are being used during their peak periods. The site overviews identify the extent to which pitches are:
- ***Being overplayed:*** Where use exceeds the carrying capacity.
- ***Being played to the level the site can sustain:*** Where use matches the carrying capacity.
- ***Potentially able to accommodate some additional play:*** Where use falls below the carrying capacity.

As per England Hockey guidance, pitch capacity is expressed as weekly peak time hours of availability, demand as actual hours of use and the resultant balance is expressed as hours of availability at peak times. The actual used capacity of artificial turf pitches is based upon their hours of use in the peak period supplied by the pitch operators.

<i>Site</i>	<i>Users</i>	<i>Peak capacity</i>	<i>Peak demand</i>	<i>Peak balance</i>
Marden Cricket and Hockey Club	Marden Russets HC	50.0	27.0	+23.0
South Park, Maidstone	Maidstone HC	25.0	22.5	-5.5
	Football users		8.0	
Sutton Valance Prep. School	Sutton Valance HC	25.0	11.0	+14.0
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	Sutton Valance HC	25.0	8.5	+9.5
	Cobdown HC		5.0	
	Maidstone Lacrosse		2.0	

The assessment shows that the South Park pitch are overused in the peak period (particularly at weekends), which is managed by scheduling activity in timeslots immediately adjacent to the peak period. There is some spare capacity at the Marden and Sutton Valance pitches. The football use of the South Park pitch provides an important income stream to Maidstone HC and should be retained or expanded on those midweek evenings when the pitch is not required for hockey use.

## 9.6 Assessment of future needs

### 9.6.1 Population growth

MBC's 'Strategic Housing Market Assessment' (2015) confirmed the objectively assessed housing need for the borough over the period 2011 to 2031 as 17,660 dwellings. Of these 8,335 have already been built or granted planning permission. This scale of development will increase the borough's population by 22,380 to 177,523 people by 2031. This will represent an increase of 14.4% over the 2011 census figure.

### 9.6.2 Potential changes in demand

Notwithstanding the data from the 'Active People' survey, which shows a fall in adult participation in the game since 2005, England Hockey's national membership figures show an increase of 24% in the past four years and local club membership has increased in the same period. However, in the absence of any unmet or latent demand in Maidstone, it seems reasonable to project future needs based upon current demand levels.

### 9.6.3 Site-specific pressures

The pitch surfaces at South Park and both the Sutton Valence facilities are all ten years old or more, which exceeds the normal life expectancy of pitch carpets. Both facilities will need to be refurbished in the near future to ensure their continued availability.

### 9.6.4 Potential changes in supply

The only known potential change in pitch supply is Maidstone Hockey Club's aspiration to provide a second pitch in South Park.

### 9.6.5 Existing spare capacity

Existing collective spare capacity in the borough in the peak period amounts to 41 hours, which equates to 1.64 pitches.

### 9.6.6 Future hockey pitch needs

Future hockey pitch needs are modelled below using 'Team Generation Rates' (TGRs), which identify how many people in a specified age group in the borough are required to generate one team. These are then applied to projected changes in population to identify the likely number of teams in the future.

- Mixed teams have been apportioned between male and female teams.
- The extra pitch calculation is based upon each team requiring an average of 2.5 hours of peak time pitch use per week (1.5 hour match and 1 hour for training), based on a peak period of 25 hours per week.

<i>Team type</i>	<i>Age range</i>	<i>Current population</i>	<i>Current teams</i>	<i>TGR</i>	<i>Population 2031</i>	<i>Teams 2031</i>	<i>Extra teams</i>	<i>Extra pitches</i>
Adult male hockey	18-45	27,720	16	1: 1,733	31,712	18	2	0.2
Adult female hockey	18-45	28,270	9	1: 3,141	32,341	10	1	0.1
Boys junior hockey	8-17	8,623	9	1: 958	9,865	10	1	0.1
Girls junior hockey	8-17	8,687	11	1: 790	9,938	13	2	0.2

Projected future demand by 2031 amounts to the equivalent of 0.6 of an artificial grass pitch.

## 9.7 Key findings and issues

### 9.7.1 What are the main characteristics of current supply and demand?

- **Overuse of one pitch:** The Maidstone pitch is overused during the peak period at weekends, although this is mitigated by scheduling activity in timeslots immediately adjacent to the peak periods and occasional use of other local pitches with spare capacity.
- **Spare capacity at two pitches:** The pitches in Marden and Sutton Valence have spare capacity and when aggregated for the borough as a whole, there is collective peak time spare capacity equivalent to 1.64 pitches.

### 9.7.2 Is there enough accessible and secured community use to meet current demand?

The two pitches on school sites in Sutton Valance do not have secured community access and the capacity at the three pitches which do would be insufficient to meet all current demand.

### 9.7.3 Is the accessible provision of suitable quality and appropriately maintained?

All the pitches are well-maintained, but two have playing surfaces that are ten years older or more and which therefore require replacement in the near future. Maidstone HC has made financial provision to replace the carpet at the South Park pitch.

### 9.7.4 What are the main characteristics of future supply and demand?

- **Population growth:** The population of the borough is projected to increase by 22,380 people by 2031. This represents an increase of 14.4% over the 2011 census figure.
- **Changes in demand:** The projected increase in population will generate six additional teams by 2031.
- **Changes in supply:** The recent provision of two new artificial grass pitches at Maidstone Road, Marden has created a net gain of one pitch in the borough.
- **Existing spare capacity:** Current collective peak time spare capacity is equivalent to 1.64 pitches.
- **Future needs:** Additional future needs equate to demand equivalent to 0.6 artificial grass pitches for hockey.

### 9.7.5 Is there enough accessible and secured provision to meet future demand?

The position is as follows:

- The existing collective peak time spare capacity in the borough amounts to the equivalent of 1.64 pitches.
- Future demand from Maidstone will be equivalent to an additional 0.6 hockey pitches by 2031, all of which can be accommodated by identified spare capacity.
- Not all current provision has secured community access, however, and if the use of the two pitches on education sites was lost, there would be a current deficit of 0.32 pitches and a future shortfall of 1.32 pitches.

## 9.8 Scenario Testing

### 9.8.1 Introduction

Based upon the key findings and issues identified above, a number of scenarios have been examined, to identify the optimum approach to addressing needs.



### 9.8.2 Scenario 1: The impact of loss of access to the school pitches

- **Rationale:** It is possible that access to the pitches on school sites which do not have secured community access could be withdrawn, therefore it is advisable to examine the impact that this would have on available capacity.
- **Advantages:** There are no advantages to this option, but the effect of losing unsecured provision needs to be considered.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - The peak-time pitch capacity in the borough would reduce by a cumulative total of 50 hours per week.
  - Current weekly peak-time demand in the borough is for 84 hours of pitch time and supply is 75 hours, so there would be a resultant shortfall of 9 hours of current demand per week.
  - Additional future demand is projected to amount to an extra 15 hours of peak-time demand per week, which would increase the deficit to 24 hours per week.
- **Conclusions:** Efforts should be made to secure community access to the pitches at the Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre and Sutton Valance Prep School.

### 9.8.3 Scenario 2: Adding additional pitch capacity at South Park

- **Rationale:** There is a peak-time deficit of 5.5 hours per week at Maidstone Hockey Club's existing pitch in South Park. The club would like to install a second pitch to create additional capacity at the site.
- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - The club is struggling to accommodate its current matchday programme and the shortage of peak-time capacity at weekends causes problems.
  - Adding additional capacity at an established club site where all teams can play on a cohesive basis is preferable to providing an extra pitch at a separate location.
  - Whilst there is sufficient existing spare artificial grass pitch capacity in the borough to meet all hockey needs to 2031, the existing pitches are not in the optimum locations to serve this demand. The spare capacity is located in Marden and Sutton Valance, rather than Maidstone where 70% of the borough's population is based, so another Maidstone-based pitch would improve accessibility and provide Maidstone Hockey Club with a more coherent model for delivering its pitch requirements.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - There are a number of planning sensitivities in relation to providing an extra pitch adjacent to the existing clubhouse.

- South Park is public open space, so there may be objections to converting a part of it to a fenced-off artificial grass pitch.
- There is insufficient unmet hockey demand from Maidstone HC at present to fully utilise an additional pitch.
- **Conclusions:** Despite the difficulties in accommodating an additional pitch at South Park, coupled with the limited amounts of unmet demand and the potential to utilise available capacity at other local pitches, the feasibility of pursuing this option should be investigated further.

#### 9.8.4 Scenario 3: Meeting Maidstone Hockey Club's needs at a new site

- **Rationale:** Given the sensitivities in providing a second pitch in South Park and the imminent need to resurface the existing pitch, moving the club to a new location more suitable to accommodating two pitches, a clubhouse and ancillary facilities would represent an alternative way of meeting Maidstone Hockey Club's needs.
- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - The club is struggling to accommodate its current matchday programme and the shortage of peak-time capacity at weekends causes problems.
  - Adding additional capacity at an established club site where all teams can play on a cohesive basis is preferable to providing an extra pitch at a separate location.
  - Whilst there is sufficient existing spare artificial grass pitch capacity in the borough to meet all hockey needs to 2031, the existing pitches are not necessarily in the optimum locations to serve this demand. The spare capacity is located in Marden and Sutton Valance, rather than Maidstone where 70% of the borough's population is based, so another Maidstone-based pitch would improve accessibility.
  - The site sensitivities at South Park would be circumvented.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - There is insufficient unmet hockey demand from Maidstone HC at present to fully utilise an additional pitch.
  - This option would be costly, particularly if it involved land purchase.
  - There are no currently identified alternative sites and there may be competition for any that do become available, with other clubs like Maidstone Rugby Club also currently seeking to move.
  - The Club does not support this option and is not giving it active consideration.
- **Conclusions:** The difficulties in identifying and securing an alternative site, coupled with the limited amounts of unmet demand and the potential to utilise available capacity at the other local pitches, makes this option sub-optimal at present.

## 9.9 Policy recommendations

### 9.9.1 Introduction

The recommendations in relation to hockey are made in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which stipulates that existing open space including playing pitches, should not be built upon unless:

- An assessment has taken place which has clearly shown the open space to be surplus to requirements, or;
- 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;
- The development is for alternative sport and recreation provision, the needs for which clearly outweighs the loss.

The following recommendations are arranged under the three main headings of ‘protect’, ‘enhance’ and ‘provide’.

### 9.9.2 Protect

**Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision:** The Maidstone Playing Pitch Strategy comprises a robust and evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for hockey in the borough. The Strategy has identified a need to maintain local hockey pitch capacity and to this extent, it will be important for all current community-used pitches to be retained. It is therefore recommended that existing planning policies continue to support the retention of all sites, based upon the evidence in the Playing Pitch Strategy. If proposals to move hockey pitches, or to convert them into ‘3G’ football turf pitches (or similar surfaces that are unsuitable for hockey use) come forward, this should be subject to planning consent and will only be permissible if:

- The applicant can demonstrate to the satisfaction of England Hockey that there is sufficient capacity at alternative pitches in the borough to meet all current and future needs, or
- The pitch is replaced and meets policy exception E4 of Sport England’s Playing Fields Policy. This states that ‘the playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development must be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development’.

**Recommendation 2 - Security of tenure:** Two of the hockey pitch sites with community use in Maidstone do not have security of tenure. Whilst there are no known threats of eviction, the loss of access to the Sutton Valence pitches would create a local deficit in provision. It is therefore recommended that efforts be made to secure formal Community Use Agreements, to ensure that all current capacity can be assured.

### 9.9.3 Enhance

**Recommendation 3 - Resurfacing existing pitches:** The pitches in Maidstone and Sutton Valance will all need resurfacing in the near future. Whilst the pitch operators are believed to have made financial provision for this, it is recommended all should be encouraged to continue to ensure that the quality of pitch surfaces is maintained in the longer-term.

**Recommendation 4 - Developer contributions (enhancements):** Most of the additional demand for hockey arising from the proposed housing development in Maidstone to 2031, should be accommodated at existing pitches and enhancements to changing provision and access arrangements would facilitate this. It is therefore recommended that the action plan in the Maidstone Playing Pitch Strategy be used as the basis for determining facility enhancements that demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under Section 106 or CIL arrangements, to cover the capital and revenue implications of the enhancements. To facilitate this, specific larger playing pitch projects should be listed as ‘relevant infrastructure’, under CIL Regulation 123.

### 9.9.4 Provide

**Recommendation 5 - New facilities:** Maidstone Hockey Club is seeking to develop a second pitch at its South Park site. There are a number of practical difficulties to overcome and by using one of the Marden pitches for occasional match play the club is able to meet all current demand. However, 70% of the population of the borough lives in Maidstone town and all of the spare pitch capacity is located elsewhere. It is therefore recommended that the feasibility of additional pitch provision at South Park be re-examined as demand from additional housing developments in the area emerges.

**Recommendation 6 - Developer contributions (new provision):** As indicated above, some of the extra demand for hockey arising from the proposed housing development in Maidstone to 2031, may need to be accommodated through the provision of new pitches and facilities. It is recommended that the action plan in the Maidstone Playing Pitch Strategy be used as the basis for determining which proposed new facilities demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under Section 106 or CIL arrangements, to cover their capital and revenue cost implications. To facilitate this, specific larger playing pitch projects should be listed as ‘relevant infrastructure’, under CIL Regulation 123.

## 9.10 Action Plan

### 9.10.1 Introduction

In the context of the high-level recommendations above, the tables below set out the hockey action plan to guide the implementation of the strategy. The abbreviations stand for MBC - Maidstone Borough Council and EH - England Hockey. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England’s ‘Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2018’ (2018).

### 9.10.2 Key strategic actions

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Cost estimates</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Securing developer contributions	Ensure that policy provision is made to secure developer contributions towards new and improved hockey facilities.	MBC	Hockey Clubs Developers	-	High

### 9.10.3 Site specific actions

<i>Site</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Cost estimates</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Marden Cricket and Hockey Club	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
South Park, Maidstone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site overused in the peak period</li> <li>• Pitch needs resurfacing</li> <li>• Informal football use is damaging the pitch surface and goals located on site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resurface pitch</li> <li>• Review options for making additional pitch provision</li> <li>• Dialogue with MBC on diverting informal football use</li> </ul>	MBC	Maidstone HC EH	£100,000 for pitch resurfacing	High
Sutton Valence Prep. School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No security of tenure</li> <li>• Pitch needs resurfacing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate security of tenure</li> <li>• Resurface pitch</li> </ul>	Sutton Valence Prep. School	MBC	£100,000 for pitch resurfacing	Medium
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No security of tenure</li> <li>• Pitch needs resurfacing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate security of tenure</li> <li>• Resurface pitch</li> </ul>	Sutton Valence School	MBC	£100,000 for pitch resurfacing	Medium



## 10 AMERICAN FOOTBALL NEEDS IN MAIDSTONE

### 10.1 Organisational context

- **British American Football:** British American Football is the governing body of the sport and supports the development of the game in Maidstone.
- **Affiliated American Football clubs:** There are two British American Football -affiliated clubs in Maidstone, Maidstone Pumas and Kent Phoenix.

### 10.2 Strategic context

#### 10.2.1 National American Football strategy

British American Football's strategic plan *'From School Yard to Super Bowl'* (2013) contains the following priorities of relevance to Maidstone:

**Vision:** 'To develop an infrastructure which is capable of developing and sustaining the widest possible participation and interest in the game of football; facilitating the development of talent to the highest competitive levels; and is recognised both in Great Britain and internationally as being defined by endeavour and excellence in all areas'.

**Priority:** The priority is 'to grow participation and membership. Integrated interventions funded and delivered by the British American Football Association and key partners will provide greater access to, retention within, and enhanced development of, our participation pathway'.

**The 'Football Pathway':** This contains three elements:

- **'Touchdown Football':** This is the collective term for programmes designed to introduce people to the sport whether as players, coaches, officials or other. The programmes seek to deliver wider participation across both the community and education contexts.
- **'In the Huddle':** This involves a range of interventions involving clubs and a range of stakeholders which support the development of football within the community with a specific focus upon youth participation.
- **'National Talent Programme':** This involves the development of talent at national level.

**Facilities Issues:** These are identified as follows:

- There is a paucity of facilities at grassroots level, with athletes often having to play on community pitches adapted from other sports and often with inappropriate markings and changing facilities.
- There is often no stakeholder ownership in community facilities and their associated social facilities so no extra revenue can be raised through bar takings and other social events.

#### 10.2.2 Neighbouring local authorities

There are no American Football teams based in neighbouring local authorities to Maidstone. The only other teams in Kent are based in Canterbury and Orpington.

### 10.2.3 Implications of the strategic context

American Football is still seeking to develop as a sport in the UK and Maidstone is one of the few places in Kent where the game can be played.

## 10.3 American Football demand

### 10.3.1 British American Football-affiliated clubs and teams

The following local clubs affiliate to British American Football:

<i>Club</i>	<i>Home ground</i>	<i>Adult teams</i>	<i>Junior teams</i>
Kent Phoenix AFC	Shepway Green	0	3
Maidstone Pumas AFC	New Line Learning Academy	1	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

### 10.3.2 The nature of American Football demand

The structure of American Football in the UK is different from many of the more established pitch sports and this impacts upon the patterns of demand and the related pitch requirements:

- The game is played all year round, but competitive matches are principally played between March and September.
- The two main versions of the game involve ‘Contact Football’, for age groups from Under 17 to adults and for males and females, which is played on a 120-yard x 60-yard pitch and ‘Flag Football’, played from Under 11 to adults and for males and females (which is non-contact but ‘tackling’ involves removing a detachable flag from an opponent), which is played on an 80-yard x 40-yard pitch.
- Because of the geographical isolation of many clubs, competitive fixtures tend to be played on a ‘tournament’ basis when teams gather to play several games on one day at a central venue. This involves the provision of formally marked out pitches, which are usually overmarked on grass football or rugby pitches on a temporary basis.
- Training takes place on a weekly basis, but this does not necessarily require formal pitch American Football pitch provision - all-weather pitches, grass pitches, multi-use games areas and sports halls are all used for this purpose.

### 10.3.3 Demand trends

- **National trends:** Sport England’s ‘Active People’ survey national data indicates that the number of adults who played American Football in the four weeks prior to each survey has fallen in the period since 2005.

<i>2006/7</i>	<i>2007/8</i>	<i>2008/9</i>	<i>2009/10</i>	<i>2010/1</i>	<i>2011/2</i>	<i>2012/3</i>	<i>2013/4</i>	<i>2014/5</i>	<i>2015/6</i>	<i>% Change</i>
45,500	37,800	30,600	38,500	19,500	24,500	38,300	35,200	25,000	28,600	-16,900

- **Local trends:** Maidstone Pumas have had a broadly stable adult membership since the club formed in 1997. Kent Phoenix have increased their junior membership to around 50 players and ten coaches.

#### 10.3.4 Displaced demand

Consultation with the local clubs indicated that all members are drawn from within Maidstone borough.

#### 10.3.5 Unmet demand

Unmet demand takes a number of forms:

- Teams may have access to a pitch for matches but nowhere to train or vice versa.
- Some pitches may be unavailable to the community.
- The poor quality and consequent limited capacity of pitches in the area and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement.

Consultation with local clubs indicated that whilst Maidstone Pumas are happy with their facilities at New Line Learning Academy, Kent Invicta believe that they could expand further with additional facility capacity.

#### 10.3.6 Latent demand

Whereas unmet demand is known to currently exist latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better provision. Kent Invicta believe that there is some evidence of latent demand in the borough at present, although this is anecdotal.

### 10.4 American Football pitch supply in Maidstone

#### 10.4.1 Quantity

Pitch provision used for American Football in Maidstone is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Pitch type</i>
New Line Learning Academy	Boughton Lane, Maidstone ME15 9QL	Adult rugby
Shepway Green	Cumberland Ave, Maidstone ME15 7JP	American Football

#### 10.4.2 Quality

The qualitative analysis of the above pitches was conducted using the football and rugby sport-specific non-technical visual inspections produced by England Hockey for Sport England's *Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance* (2013). The assessment generated the following scores:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Drainage</i>	<i>Maintenance</i>
New Line Learning Academy	D0	M1

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pitch</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Shepway Green	Poor	Standard	'Poor' quality pitch with litter and dog fouling.

#### 10.4.3 Pitch maintenance

The maintenance of the pitches used for American Football in the borough is organised by the managers of each facility.

#### 10.4.4 Pitch hire charges

Maidstone Pumas AFC pay £50 per hour to hire the New Line Learning Academy rugby pitch and Kent Phoenix AFC pay £30 per hour to hire the football pitch at Shepway Green.

#### 10.4.5 Ownership, management and security of access

Shepway Green has secured community access.

<i>Site</i>	<i>Ownership</i>	<i>Management</i>	<i>Security of access</i>
New Line Learning Academy	New Line Learning Academy	New Line Learning Academy	Unsecured
Shepway Green	Maidstone Borough Council	Maidstone Borough Council	Secured

#### 10.4.6 Geographical distribution

Both the pitches used for American Football are in Maidstone town, but as such are relatively central to the borough.

#### 10.4.7 The views of stakeholders on pitch supply

Consultation with Maidstone Pumas AFC established that the facilities they use at the New Line Learning Academy meet all their requirements.

Consultation with Kent Phoenix AFC identified the following key issues:

- ***Demand profile:*** The club trains and operates year-round (excluding December and August). Youth American Football is based upon playing a small number of Tournament events at which teams attend to play multiple games. The club is geographically well-located to create a Regional hub for American Football.
- ***Existing use:*** At present the club trains on Sunday mornings from 1000 - 1300, using a training area comparable to an adult football pitch. It has an average turnout of 30 players aged 8-18 each week. with capacity to double this number without requiring more space. The club would like to increase the training sessions to include mid-weeks.
- ***Future use:*** The club is based at Shepway Community Centre, adjacent to Shepway Green, to work with local Youth organisations through SALUS (the community enterprise that runs the centre) to recruit players, develop links and promote American Football. This provides indoor facilities for the club to access during training sessions, as well as opportunities to provide classroom training and development. It is working with SALUS and MBC to investigate opportunities to develop the outdoor multi-use games area, to bring it up to the specification for American Football.

- **Facilities needs:** The club uses an area the size of an adult football for its training. The area is not marked and it does not require any goalposts. With access to the community centre, the club does not require use of the changing rooms at Shepway Green. For events, the club requires a further similar sized area at Shepway Green (no goal posts required) and the club would mark the pitches.

## 10.5 Assessment of current needs

To assess whether the current supply of pitches is adequate to meet existing demand an understanding of the situation at all sites available to the community needs to be developed. This is achieved by providing a brief overview for each site, which comprises

- A comparison between the carrying capacity of a site and how much demand currently takes place there. The carrying capacity of a site is defined as the amount of play it can regularly accommodate without adversely affecting its quality and use. Demand is defined in terms of the number of ‘match equivalent’ sessions at each site.
- An indication of the extent to which pitches are being used during their peak periods.

The site overviews identify the extent to which pitches are

- **Being overplayed:** Where use exceeds the carrying capacity.
- **Being played to the level the site can sustain:** Where use matches the carrying capacity.
- **Potentially able to accommodate some additional play:** Where use falls below the carrying capacity.

Given the use of the pitches used for American Football by other sports, the assessment of used capacity includes consideration of other pitch users to establish their carrying capacity.

Site	Pitches	Users	Weekly capacity	Weekly demand	Weekly balance	Peak capacity	Peak demand	Peak balance
New Line Learning Academy	1	Academy use Kent Phoenix AFC Maidstone Pumas AFC	1.0	2.0	-1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Shepway Green	1	Kent Phoenix AFC	1.0	1.5	-0.5	1.0	1.5	-0.5

The assessment shows that both pitches are overused on a weekly basis and that peak demand exceeds supply at Shepway Green. This is partly due to the poor quality and consequent limited carrying capacity of the pitch.

## 10.6 Assessment of future needs

### 10.6.1 Population growth

MBC’s ‘Strategic Housing Market Assessment’ (2015) confirmed the objectively assessed housing need for the borough over the period 2011 to 2031 as 17,660 dwellings. Of these 8,335 have already been built or granted planning permission. This scale of development will increase the borough’s population by 22,380 to 177,523 people by 2031. This will represent an increase of 14.4% over the 2011 census figure.



## 10.6.2 Potential changes in demand

Notwithstanding the data from the ‘Active People’ survey, which shows a fall of 37% in adult participation in the game since 2005, the emphasis on youth development in Maidstone makes it reasonable to project future needs based upon current demand levels (with any falling adult rates offset by increasing youth participation).

## 10.6.3 Site-specific pressures

Both the current pitches used for American Football in Maidstone are poor quality and over-used. In both cases, increased capacity is required to sustain existing activity levels.

## 10.6.4 Potential changes in supply

Proposals to provide additional ‘3G’ pitch capacity to address football, rugby union and rugby league needs would also potentially benefit American Football. Improvements to the Multi-use games area at Shepway Green Community Centre would add training facility capacity at that site.

## 10.6.5 Existing spare capacity

There is no spare capacity at pitches used for American Football in Maidstone at present.

## 10.6.6 Future American Football pitch needs

Future American Football pitch needs are modelled below using ‘Team Generation Rates’ (TGRs), which identify how many people in a specified age group in the borough are required to generate one team. These are then applied to projected changes in population to identify the likely number of teams in the future.

<i>Team type</i>	<i>Age range</i>	<i>Current population</i>	<i>Current teams</i>	<i>TGR</i>	<i>Population 2031</i>	<i>Teams 2031</i>	<i>Extra teams</i>	<i>Extra pitches</i>
Adult male	18-45	27,720	1	1: 27,720	31,712	1	0	0
Adult female	18-45	28,270	0	-	32,341	0	0	0
Boys junior	8-17	8,623	3	1: 2,874	9,865	3	0	0
Girls junior	8-17	8,687	0	-	9,938	0	0	0

Projected future demand by 2031 does not involve any additional team formation.

## 10.7 Key findings and issues

### 10.7.1 What are the main characteristics of current supply and demand?

- **Overuse of two pitches:** Both pitches are overused on a weekly basis and that peak demand exceeds supply at Shepway Green. This is partly due to the poor quality and consequent limited carrying capacity of both pitches.
- **Kent Phoenix AFC:** The club would like to expand its current activities by developing partnerships at Shepway Community Centre and extending its use of the adjacent Shepway Green.

### 10.7.2 Is there enough accessible and secured community use to meet current demand?

The pitch at New Line Learning Academy does not have secured community access and there is already insufficient capacity at both pitches used for American Football to meet all current demand.

### 10.7.3 Is the accessible provision of suitable quality and appropriately maintained?

Both pitches are rated as 'poor' quality, which further limits their carrying capacity.

### 10.7.4 What are the main characteristics of future supply and demand?

- **Population growth:** The population of the borough is projected to increase by 22,380 people by 2031. This represents an increase of 14.4% over the 2011 census figure.
- **Changes in demand:** The projected increase in population will not generate any additional teams by 2031.
- **Changes in supply:** Proposals to provide additional '3G' pitch capacity to address football, rugby union and rugby league needs would also potentially benefit American Football. Improvements to the Multi-use games area at Shepway Green Community Centre would add training facility capacity at that site.
- **Existing spare capacity:** There is a current collective deficit of 0.5 pitches in the peak period.
- **Future needs:** There are no projected additional future needs.

### 10.7.5 Is there enough accessible and secured provision to meet future demand?

Once the existing deficit of 0.5 pitches in the peak period has been met, there will be no additional pitch needs by 2031.

## 10.8 Scenario Testing

### 10.8.1 Introduction

Based upon the key findings and issues identified above, a number of scenarios have been examined, to identify the optimum approach to addressing needs.

### 10.8.2 Scenario 1: Improving grass pitch capacity

- **Rationale:** Improving the quality of the two grass pitches currently used for American Football in Maidstone would improve their carrying capacity and eliminate the current deficit.

- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - Both clubs could continue to use their current sites, where the ancillary facilities already meet their respective needs.
  - The cost of improving the drainage of grass pitches is relatively inexpensive and both pitches could potentially accommodate three or four match equivalents per week if the highest quality and maintenance ratings are achieved.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are that the peak-time pitch capacity would remain unaltered, so there would still be a deficit of 0.5 pitches at Shepway Green in the peak period.
- **Conclusions:** Grass pitch improvements would not increase peak-time capacity sufficiently to meet current and future needs.

### 10.8.3 Scenario 2: Adding additional '3G' pitch capacity

- **Rationale:** There is a shortage of pitch capacity in Maidstone for football, rugby league and rugby union, that could be addressed by '3G' pitch provision that, with a rugby-based construction specification, could also meet the needs of American Football.
- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - The additional capacity provided by an artificial, all-weather surface would provide 25 hours per week of peak-time use.
  - The summer competitive seasons of rugby league and American Football complement the winter playing seasons for football and rugby, to create opportunities for complementary programming.
  - Basing both American Football clubs at a single '3G' pitch site would have the benefit of encouraging closer pathways between the youth and adult versions of the game.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - Both American Football clubs would have to leave their current sites, where the ancillary facilities support their activity programmes.
  - The cost of '3G' pitch provision is relatively high - currently in the order of £850,000.
- **Conclusions:** Provision of a '3G' pitch to meet the needs of a range of sports offers an attractive option for enhancing local capacity.

## 10.9 Policy recommendations

### 10.9.1 Introduction

The recommendations in relation to American Football are made in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which stipulates that existing open space including playing pitches, should not be built upon unless:

- An assessment has taken place which has clearly shown the open space to be surplus to requirements, or;
- 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;
- The development is for alternative sport and recreation provision, the needs for which clearly outweighs the loss.

The following recommendations are arranged under the three main headings of ‘protect’, ‘enhance’ and ‘provide’.

### 10.9.2 Protect

**Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision:** The Maidstone Playing Pitch Strategy comprises a robust and evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for American Football in the borough. The Strategy has identified a need to maintain local pitch capacity and to this extent, it will be important for all current community-used pitches to be retained. It is therefore recommended that existing planning policies continue to support the retention of all sites, based upon the evidence in the Playing Pitch Strategy. In the event that proposals to move pitches used for American Football do come forward, this will only be permissible if they are replaced and meet policy exception E4 of Sport England’s Playing Fields Policy. This states that ‘the playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development must be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development’.

**Recommendation 2 - Security of tenure:** One of the sites used for American Football in Maidstone does not have security of tenure. Whilst there are no known threats of eviction, the loss of access to the New Line Learning Academy pitch would create a local deficit in provision. It is therefore recommended that efforts be made to secure a formal Community Use Agreement, to ensure that all current capacity can be assured.

### 10.9.3 Enhance

**Recommendation 3 - Improving existing ‘poor’ quality provision:** Pitch drainage is poor at Shepway Green and the New Line Learning Academy, which compromises usage capacity. Subject to resolving the security of tenure issues, it is recommended that the Academy should be supported to apply for external funding for pitch capacity enhancements, including the receipt of developer contributions (see below), subject to the resolution of the development of alternative options such as a ‘3G’ pitch.

**Recommendation 4 - Developer contributions (enhancements):** The additional demand for American Football arising from the proposed housing development in Maidstone to 2031, will need be accommodated be enhancing current pitch capacity. It is therefore recommended that the action plan in the Maidstone Playing Pitch Strategy be used as the basis for determining facility enhancements that demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under Section 106 or CIL arrangements, to cover the capital and revenue implications of the enhancements. To facilitate this, specific larger playing pitch projects should be listed as ‘relevant infrastructure’, under CIL Regulation 123.

#### 10.9.4 Provide

**Recommendation 5 - New facilities:** Given the lack of capacity at the current sites, it is recommended that options for new provision should be investigated, either through providing additional ‘3G’ pitch capacity or improved grass pitch carrying capacity at the current sites used.

**Recommendation 6 - Developer contributions (new provision):** As indicated above, some of the extra demand for American Football arising from the proposed housing development in Maidstone to 2031, will need to be accommodated through the provision of new pitches and facilities. It is recommended that the action plan in the Maidstone Playing Pitch Strategy be used as the basis for determining which proposed new facilities demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under Section 106 or CIL arrangements, to cover their capital and revenue cost implications. To facilitate this, specific larger playing pitch projects should be listed as ‘relevant infrastructure’, under CIL Regulation 123.

### 10.10 Action Plan

#### 10.10.1 Introduction

In the context of the high-level recommendations above, the tables below set out the hockey action plan to guide the implementation of the strategy. The abbreviations stand for MBC - Maidstone Borough Council and BAF - British American Football. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England’s ‘Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2018’ (2018).

#### 10.10.2 Key strategic actions

<b>Issues</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Cost estimates</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Increasing pitch capacity	Commission a feasibility study to establish the options for expanding local pitch capacity, including an artificial grass pitch shared with other sports. Subject to the outcome of the feasibility study, provide new community-secured facilities.	MBC	Maidstone Pumas Kent Phoenix BAF (other governing bodies of sport)	£20,000 for feasibility study to cover all sports. £850,000 got new artificial grass pitch. £500,000 for changing facilities.	High
Securing developer contributions	Ensure that policy provision is made to secure developer contributions towards new and improved American Football facilities.	MBC	American Football Clubs Developers	-	High



### 10.10.3 Site specific actions

<i>Site</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Cost estimates</i>	<i>Priority</i>
New Line Learning Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor quality pitch</li> <li>• No security of tenure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve pitch quality</li> <li>• Investigate security of tenure</li> </ul>	New Line Learning Academy	Maidstone Pumas	£10,000 for pitch drainage	Medium
Shepway Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor quality pitch</li> <li>• MUGA needs resurfacing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve pitch quality</li> <li>• Resurface MUGA</li> </ul>	MBC	Kent Phoenix SALUS	£10,000 for pitch drainage £20,000 for MUGA	Medium

## 11 LACROSSE NEEDS IN MAIDSTONE

### 11.1 Organisational context

- **English Lacrosse Association:** The English Lacrosse Association is the governing body of the sport and supports the development of the game in Maidstone.
- **Maidstone Lacrosse Club:** The club affiliates to the English Lacrosse Association, is the premier lacrosse club in Kent and is based at the War Memorial Playing Field in Sutton Valance.

### 11.2 Strategic context

#### 11.2.1 National Lacrosse strategy

The English Lacrosse Association's strategic plan '*National Lacrosse Strategy: Delivering More 2016 - 2020*' (2016) contains the following priorities of relevance to Maidstone:

**Vision:** 'For Lacrosse to be recognised as a major team sport in England'.

**Market positioning:** The English Lacrosse Association will focus on male and female participation in the age range 10 - 30. This will encompass:

- School lacrosse to age 18, including after-school INTO programmes.
- Community Club expansion, using the INTO programmes on a 12-month a year basis.

**Key priorities:**

- Raising the profile of lacrosse.
- Expanding the lacrosse community.
- Improving world-level competitive performance.
- Being an effective organisation.

**Facilities Issues:** There is an identified action to develop greater access to appropriate facilities.

#### 11.2.2 Neighbouring local authorities

There are no community-based Lacrosse clubs in neighbouring local authorities to Maidstone, although the game is played at education sites at Kent University's Tonbridge Campus and schools in Sevenoaks and Cranbrook.

#### 11.2.3 Implications of the strategic context

Lacrosse is still seeking to expand as a sport and Maidstone is the only community club in Kent where the game can be played.

### 11.3 Lacrosse demand

#### 11.3.1 Maidstone Lacrosse Club

The club has the following teams and also runs a junior section:

<i>Club</i>	<i>Home ground</i>	<i>Men's teams</i>	<i>Women's teams</i>
Maidstone Lacrosse Club	War Memorial Playing Field Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	2	1

### 11.3.2 Demand trends

- **National trends:** Sport England's 'Active People' survey does not record adult participation levels in Lacrosse but the number of members nationally affiliating to the English Lacrosse Association increased from 8,000 in 2009 to 17,000 in 2017.
- **Local trends:** Maidstone Lacrosse Club was established as a single men's team in 2008, added a second men's team in 2013 and a women's team in 2014. A junior programme was launched in 2015., so local participation figures have matched national growth trends.

### 11.3.3 Displaced demand

Consultation with the club indicated that some members are drawn from outside Maidstone borough, in particular players from the University of Kent.

### 11.3.4 Unmet demand

Unmet demand takes a number of forms:

- Teams may have access to a pitch for matches but nowhere to train or vice versa.
- Some pitches may be unavailable to the community.
- The poor quality and consequent limited capacity of pitches in the area and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement.

Consultation with the club indicated that it is happy with the current facilities that it uses and that pitch capacity and availability does not constrain membership levels.

### 11.3.5 Latent demand

Whereas unmet demand is known to currently exist latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better provision. There is no evidence of latent demand in the borough at present.

## 11.4 Lacrosse pitch supply in Maidstone

### 11.4.1 Quantity

Pitch provision used for Lacrosse in Maidstone is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Pitch type</i>
War Memorial Playing Field	North Street, Sutton Valance ME17 3HT	Adult football pitch
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	North St., Sutton Valance ME17 3HN	Sand-dressed AGP

### 11.4.2 Quality

The qualitative analysis of the above pitches was conducted using the football and hockey sport-specific non-technical visual inspections produced by the FA and England Hockey for Sport England's *Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance* (2013). The assessment generated the following scores:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pitch</i>	<i>Changing</i>
War Memorial Playing Field	Standard	Poor
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	Standard	Good

### 11.4.3 Pitch maintenance

The maintenance of the pitches used for lacrosse in the borough is organised by the managers of each facility.

### 11.4.4 Ownership, management and security of access

The War Memorial Playing Field has secured community access, but the Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre does not.

<i>Site</i>	<i>Ownership</i>	<i>Management</i>	<i>Security of access</i>
War Memorial Playing Field	Sutton Valance Parish Council	Sutton Valance Parish Council	Secured
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	Sutton Valance School	Sutton Valance School	Unsecured

### 11.4.5 Geographical distribution

Both the pitches used for lacrosse are in Sutton Valance which is relatively central to the borough.

### 11.4.6 The views of stakeholders on pitch supply

Consultation with the South-east Regional Co-ordinator for England Lacrosse confirmed that:

- Kent is a priority in terms of development for the South East.
- England Lacrosse will be launching a new junior development programme, which will identify facilities to form small hubs where junior players can play Lacrosse. This is in the early stages and the governing body is unsure where the Kent hubs will be located.
- Lacrosse is a 'lodger' sport and can use any of the playing fields available (football, rugby or hockey).
- The most significant barrier to participation is access to floodlit areas for midweek training.

Consultation with the Chair of Maidstone Lacrosse Club confirmed that:

- The club plays competitive fixtures on Saturdays during the winter playing season at the War Memorial Playing Field in Sutton Valance. This involves over-marking a lacrosse pitch on the adult football pitch at the site. The changing facilities at the War Memorial Playing Field are poor quality.

- The club trains on the artificial hockey pitch at the Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre, with junior training in the sports hall at the same site.
- Current facilities provision meets all the club's needs.

### 11.5 Assessment of current needs

To assess whether the current supply of pitches is adequate to meet existing demand an understanding of the situation at all sites available to the community needs to be developed. This is achieved by providing a brief overview for each site, which comprises

- A comparison between the carrying capacity of a site and how much demand currently takes place there. The carrying capacity of a site is defined as the amount of play it can regularly accommodate without adversely affecting its quality and use. Demand is defined in terms of the number of 'match equivalent' sessions at each site.
- An indication of the extent to which pitches are being used during their peak periods.

The site overviews identify the extent to which pitches are

- ***Being overplayed:*** Where use exceeds the carrying capacity.
- ***Being played to the level the site can sustain:*** Where use matches the carrying capacity.
- ***Potentially able to accommodate some additional play:*** Where use falls below the carrying capacity.

Given the use of the pitches used for lacrosse by other sports in addition, the assessment of used capacity includes consideration of other pitch users to establish their carrying capacity.

- ***War Memorial Playing Field adult football pitch:***

Site	Pitches	Users	Weekly capacity	Weekly demand	Weekly balance	Peak capacity	Peak demand	Peak balance
War Memorial Playing Field	1	Fisherman's Arms FC Mangravel FC Maidstone Lacrosse Club	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced

- ***Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre artificial grass pitch:***

Site	Users	Peak capacity	Peak demand	Peak balance
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	Sutton Valance HC	25.0	8.5	+9.5
	Cobdown HC		5.0	
	Maidstone Lacrosse		2.0	

The assessment shows that the grass football pitch at the War Memorial Playing Field is currently used to capacity, but that there is some spare peak time capacity at the artificial grass pitch at the Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre.



## 11.6 Assessment of future needs

### 11.6.1 Population growth

MBC's *'Strategic Housing Market Assessment'* (2015) confirmed the objectively assessed housing need for the borough over the period 2011 to 2031 as 17,660 dwellings. Of these 8,335 have already been built or granted planning permission. This scale of development will increase the borough's population by 22,380 to 177,523 people by 2031. This will represent an increase of 14.4% over the 2011 census figure.

### 11.6.2 Potential changes in demand

The rapid increases in participation in lacrosse in the past decade suggest that demand for the sport is likely to continue to increase, albeit from a low base.

### 11.6.3 Site-specific pressures

There are no known site-specific pressures at either of the pitches currently used by Maidstone Lacrosse Club, although the War Memorial Playing Field has no spare capacity to accommodate additional use.

### 11.6.4 Potential changes in supply

There are no known proposed changes to the supply of pitches used by Maidstone Lacrosse Club, although there is no secured community use at the Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre pitch, which is also likely to need to be re-surfaced in the relatively near future.

### 11.6.5 Existing spare capacity

There is some limited spare capacity at pitches at the Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre pitch.

### 11.6.6 Future lacrosse pitch needs

Future lacrosse pitch needs are modelled below using 'Team Generation Rates' (TGRs), which identify how many people in a specified age group in the borough are required to generate one team. These are then applied to projected changes in population to identify the likely number of teams in the future.

<i>Team type</i>	<i>Age range</i>	<i>Current population</i>	<i>Current teams</i>	<i>TGR</i>	<i>Population 2031</i>	<i>Teams 2031</i>	<i>Extra teams</i>	<i>Extra pitches</i>
Adult male	18-45	27,720	2	1: 13,860	31,712	2	0	0
Adult female	18-45	28,270	1	1: 28,270	32,341	1	0	0
Juniors	8-17	17,310	1	1: 17,310	19,803	1	0	0

Projected future demand by 2031 does not involve any additional team formation.

## 11.7 Key findings and issues

### 11.7.1 What are the main characteristics of current supply and demand?

The grass pitch at War Memorial Playing Field is currently used to capacity, but there is some spare capacity at the artificial grass pitch at the Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre.

### 11.7.2 Is there enough accessible and secured community use to meet current demand?

The pitch at the Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre does not have secured community access, so in the event that access was withdrawn, there would be insufficient provision to meet the needs of Lacrosse.

### 11.7.3 Is the accessible provision of suitable quality and appropriately maintained?

The changing facilities at the War Memorial Playing Field are rated as 'poor' quality, which detracts from the overall user experience. The pitch carpet at the Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre is rated as 'average' but is likely to need to be replaced in the relatively near future.

### 11.7.4 What are the main characteristics of future supply and demand?

- **Population growth:** The population of the borough is projected to increase by 22,380 people by 2031. This represents an increase of 14.4% over the 2011 census figure.
- **Changes in demand:** The projected increase in population will generate one additional team by 2031.
- **Changes in supply:** There are no proposed changes in pitch supply that will directly impact upon the needs of Maidstone Lacrosse Club, although since pitch usage is shared with football and hockey respectively, the needs of lacrosse will need to be overlaid with the other sports.
- **Existing spare capacity:** There is current spare capacity equivalent to 0.38 artificial grass pitches in the peak period at the Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre.
- **Future needs:** Additional future needs equate to demand equivalent to 0.5 grass pitches and 0.1 artificial grass pitches.

### 11.7.5 Is there enough accessible and secured provision to meet future demand?

With supply and demand of the grass pitch at War Memorial Playing Field balanced, there will be a deficit of 0.5 grass pitches for Lacrosse by 2031.

## 11.8 Scenario Testing

### 11.8.1 Introduction

Based upon the key findings and issues identified above, a scenario has been examined, to identify the optimum approach to addressing needs.

### 11.8.2 Scenario 1: Improving grass pitch capacity

- **Rationale:** Improving the quality of the grass pitch currently used for Lacrosse would improve its carrying capacity and eliminate the current deficit.
- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
  - The club could remain at its existing site.
  - The cost of improving the drainage of grass pitches is relatively inexpensive and the pitch could potentially accommodate two additional match equivalents per week if the highest quality and maintenance ratings are achieved.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages are that the changing facilities at War Memorial Playing Field are rated as 'poor' so will also need to be improved to optimise site usage.
- **Conclusions:** Grass pitch improvements and new or refurbished changing facilities at War Memorial Playing Fields would meet current and future needs.

## 11.9 Policy recommendations

### 11.9.1 Introduction

The recommendations in relation to Lacrosse are made in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which stipulates that existing open space including playing pitches, should not be built upon unless:

- An assessment has taken place which has clearly shown the open space to be surplus to requirements, or;
- 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;
- The development is for alternative sport and recreation provision, the needs for which clearly outweighs the loss.

The following recommendations are arranged under the three main headings of 'protect', 'enhance' and 'provide'.

### 11.9.2 Protect

**Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision:** The Maidstone PPS comprises a robust, evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for lacrosse in the borough. The Strategy identifies a need to maintain local pitch capacity so it will be important for all current community-used pitches to be retained. It is therefore recommended that existing planning policies continue to support the retention of all sites, based upon the evidence in the Playing Pitch Strategy. In the event that proposals to replace pitches used for lacrosse do come forward, this will only be permissible they are replaced and meet policy exception E4 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. This states that 'the playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development must be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development'.

**Recommendation 2 - Security of tenure:** One of the sites used for lacrosse in Maidstone does not have security of tenure. Whilst there are no known threats of eviction, the loss of access to the Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre pitch would create a local deficit in provision. It is therefore recommended that efforts be made to secure a formal Community Use Agreement, to ensure that all current capacity can be assured.

### 11.9.3 Enhance

**Recommendation 3 - Improving existing 'poor' quality provision:** The changing facilities at War Memorial Playing Fields are rated as 'poor', which compromises the user experience. Subject to resolving the security of tenure issues, it is recommended that Sutton Valance Parish Council should be supported to apply for external funding for pitch capacity enhancements, including the receipt of developer contributions (see below).

**Recommendation 4 - Developer contributions (enhancements):** The additional demand for lacrosse arising from the proposed housing development in Maidstone to 2031, will need be accommodated by enhancing current pitch capacity. It is therefore recommended that the action plan in the Maidstone Playing Pitch Strategy be used as the basis for determining facility enhancements that demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under Section 106 or CIL arrangements, to cover the capital and revenue implications of the enhancements. To facilitate this, specific larger playing pitch projects should be listed as 'relevant infrastructure', under CIL Regulation 123.

### 11.9.4 Provide

**Recommendation 5 - New facilities:** Whilst improvements to the existing sites used for Lacrosse in the borough should meet all needs, if these cannot be implemented for any reason, it is recommended that options for new provision should be investigated.

**Recommendation 6 - Developer contributions (new provision):** As indicated above, if the extra demand for lacrosse arising from the proposed housing development in Maidstone to 2031, needs to be accommodated through the provision of new pitches and facilities, it is recommended that the action plan in the Maidstone Playing Pitch Strategy be used as the basis for determining which proposed new facilities demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under Section 106 or CIL arrangements, to cover their capital and revenue cost implications. To facilitate this, specific larger playing pitch projects should be listed as 'relevant infrastructure', under CIL Regulation 123.

## 11.10 Action Plan

### 11.10.1 Introduction

In the context of the high-level recommendations above, the tables below set out the hockey action plan to guide the implementation of the strategy. The abbreviations stand for MBC - Maidstone Borough Council and MLC - Maidstone Lacrosse Club. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England's 'Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2018' (2018).

### 11.10.2 Key strategic actions

<i><b>Issues</b></i>	<i><b>Action</b></i>	<i><b>Lead</b></i>	<i><b>Partners</b></i>	<i><b>Cost estimates</b></i>	<i><b>Priority</b></i>
Securing developer contributions	Ensure that policy provision is made to secure developer contributions towards new and improved lacrosse facilities.	MBC	MLC Developers	-	High

### 11.10.3 Site specific actions

<i><b>Site</b></i>	<i><b>Issues</b></i>	<i><b>Action</b></i>	<i><b>Lead</b></i>	<i><b>Partners</b></i>	<i><b>Cost estimates</b></i>	<i><b>Priority</b></i>
War Memorial Playing Field	Poor quality changing facilities	Provide new changing facilities	Sutton Valance Parish Council	MLC Football Foundation	£200,000	High
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No security of tenure</li> <li>• Pitch needs resurfacing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure Community Use Agreement</li> <li>• Resurface pitch</li> </ul>	Sutton Valance School	MBC	£100,000 for pitch resurfacing	Medium



## 12 APPLYING AND REVIEWING THE STRATEGY

### 12.1 Introduction

This section identifies the applications of the Maidstone Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and the mechanisms for reviewing it to ensure that it remains robust and up-to-date.

### 12.2 Strategy applications

The success of the PPS will be determined by how it is used. While the use of the PPS should be led by the Maidstone Borough Council, its application and delivery should be the responsibility of the project steering group involving other key local stakeholders including Sport England and the governing bodies of the pitch sports. The PPS has a number of applications:

#### 12.2.1 Sports development planning

The PPS can be applied to help:

- Highlight, justify and make the case for sports development activities with particular sports, groups and clubs and in particular areas.
- Identify current and future trends and changes in the demand for individual sports and how they are played.
- Inform the work, strategies and plans of sporting organisations active in the area.
- Advocate the need to work with specific educational establishments to secure community use of their site(s).
- Develop and/or enhance school club links by making the best use of school sites where they have spare capacity and are well located to meet demand.

#### 12.2.2 Planning policy

The PPS can be applied to help:

- Develop new, and review the effectiveness of existing, local planning policy (e.g. Local and Neighbourhood Plans) in line with paragraph 73 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- The implementation of local planning policy to meet the needs of the community in line with paragraph 74 of the NPPF.

#### 12.2.3 Planning applications

The PPS can be applied to help:

- Inform the development of planning applications which affect existing and/or proposed new sports facilities provision.

- Inform pre-application discussions to ensure any subsequent planning applications maximise their benefit to sport and are developed in line with national (e.g. NPPF paragraph 74) and local planning policy.
- Sports clubs and other organisations provide the strategic need for development proposals thereby potentially adding support to their application(s) and saving them resources in developing such evidence.
- Maidstone Borough Council to assess planning applications affecting existing and/or proposed new playing pitch provision in line with national (e.g. NPPF paragraph 74) and local planning policy.
- Sport England and other parties respond to relevant planning application consultations.

The PPS can also be applied to help Maidstone Borough Council to meet other relevant requirements of the NPPF including:

- Taking account of and supporting local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs (NPPF paragraph 17 - Core Planning Principles).
- Delivering the social, recreational, cultural facilities and services the community needs (NPPF paragraph 70).
- Planning positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives, principles and policies of the framework (NPPF paragraph 157).
- Working with public health leads and health organisations to understand and take account of the health status and needs of the local population, including expected future changes, and any information about relevant barriers to improving health and well-being (NPPF paragraph 171).

#### 12.2.4 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The PPS can be applied to help:

- Advocate the need for playing pitch provision to be taken into account when the local authority is developing and/or reviewing an approach to the CIL (Charging Schedule including the Regulation 123 list and Infrastructure Delivery Plan) and the wider benefits of doing so (e.g. improving health and wellbeing).
- Provide prioritised infrastructure requirements for sports facilities provision including deliverable sport, area and site-specific projects with costings (where known).

#### 12.2.5 Funding bids

The PPS can be applied to help:

- Provide the evidence base and strategic need to support funding bids by a range of parties to a variety of potential funding sources.
- Inform potential bidders of the likely strategic need for their project.

### 12.2.6 Facility and asset management

The PPS can be applied to help:

- Ensure a strategic approach is taken to the provision and management of playing pitches.
- Inform the current management, strategies and plans of playing pitch providers e.g. local authorities (within the study area and neighbouring areas), leisure trusts and educational establishments.
- Share knowledge of how sites are managed and maintained, the lessons learnt and good practice.
- Highlight the potential of asset transfers and ensure any proposed are beneficial to all parties.
- Provide additional protection for particular sites over and above planning policy, for example through deeds of dedication.
- Resolve issues around security of tenure.

### 12.2.7 Public health

The PPS can be applied to help:

- Understand how the community currently participates in sport, the need for playing pitches and how this may evolve.
- Raise awareness of and tackle any barriers to people maintaining and increasing their participation.
- Highlight and address any inequalities of access to provision within the study area.
- Provide evidence to help support wider health and well-being initiatives.

### 12.2.8 Co-ordinating resources and investment

The PPS can be applied to help:

- Raise awareness of the current resources and investment (revenue and capital) going into the management, maintenance and improvement of playing pitch provision.
- Co-ordinate the current and any future resources and investment to ensure the maximum benefit to sport and that value for money is secured.

- Ensure the current and any future resources and investment are complimentary and do not result in their inefficient use.

### 12.2.9 Capital programmes

The PPS can be applied to help:

- Provide the evidence base to justify the protection and investment in playing pitch provision.
- Influence the development and implementation of relevant capital programmes (e.g. school refurbishment and new build programmes).

## 12.3 Monitoring delivery

A process should be put in place to ensure regular monitoring of how the recommendations and action plan are being delivered. This monitoring should be led by Maidstone Borough Council and supported by all members of, and reported back to, the steering group. Understanding and learning lessons from how the PPS has been applied should also form a key component of monitoring its delivery.

## 12.4 Keeping the strategy robust and up-to-date

Along with ensuring that the PPS is used and applied, a process should be put in place to keep it robust and up to date. This will expand the life of the PPS, providing people with the confidence to continue to both use it and attach significant value and weight to its key findings and issues, along with its recommendations and actions.

Sport England advocates that the PPS should be reviewed regularly from the date it is formally signed off by the steering group. This will help to maintain the momentum and commitment built up when developing the PPS. Taking into account the time to develop the PPS this should also help to ensure that the original supply and demand information is no more than two years old without being reviewed.

Sport England guidance advocates that the reviews should highlight:

- How the delivery of the recommendations and action plan has progressed and any changes required to the priority afforded to each action (e.g. the priority of some may increase following the delivery of others).
- How the PPS has been applied and the lessons learnt.
- Any changes to particularly important facilities and/or sites in the area (e.g. the most used or high-quality sites for a particular sport) and other supply and demand information, what this may mean for the overall assessment work and the key findings and issues.
- Any development of a specific sport or particular format of a sport.
- Any new or emerging issues and opportunities.