Maidstone Borough Council

Playing Pitch Strategy

Record of Comments and Action Points: January 2019

Consultee & Comments	Action taken
Maidstone Borough Council Councillors	
Cllr Gooch – Barming Youth Football Club, which is affiliated to Kent County Football Association, needs a home ground. The club currently practices at several grounds.	Noted in section 5.3.1 (page 19)
Cllr Gooch – Barming Heath is not in the ownership/responsibility of Barming Parish Council. It is MBC owned and managed.	Amended in section 5.4.10 (page 31)
Document refer to Swadelands School, Lenham – now called The Lenham School.	Amended throughout the document
Cllr Boughton	
Though detailed, the draft playing pitch strategy seems very much a desktop exercise and does not look at the performance of the existing service at Maidstone Borough Council. The reason for this is because, I believe, the performance of the council discourages the dwindling number from using council pitches. Instead they are looking towards private sector alternatives. This is due to a complicated pitch booking and refund system and, more pertinently, issues with the supply of pitches.	These points are reflected in the club survey responses reported in section 5.4.11 (page 33)
To give you an example, last season both Vinters and Maidstone International used Shepway Green as their home pitch. They shared well, it worked with the league, and it was a good pitch to play. However, without any warning or consultation whatsoever, last month MBC opted to use Shepway Green for American Football only. This forced both teams off Council pitches, and on to 'private' pitches, run by someone else or a parish council. Evidently they will both think twice before asking MBC to provide their pitch again.	Section 5.3.1 amended to reflect the changed home venues for Vinters and Maidstone International. American Football was accommodated at Shepway Green due to the decline in demand for adult football pitches in the borough, both prior to and following the demise of the Maidstone and District League.
The reason this is important is because the draft strategy assumes both football and American Football can continue at Shepway Green, and recognises that an extra American Football pitch will be needed in the borough, but doesn't challenge the assumption that this will be here too. So the strategy tells me that there will be 2 American Football pitches, and one football	Shepway Green removed from the list of available and used football pitches in section 5.4.4 (page 24) and from the football action plan in section 5.12.3 (page 59).

pitch at Shepway, but it wouldn't be possible to fit both of these onto the area available! As it is MBC's decision to chuck off the football teams has solved that problem, but this is not reflected in the strategy.

In the assumption that MBC's woeful management of football pitches gets better, then it is likely that there will be an increased demand for football pitches in the borough. This doesn't seem to have been accommodated in the strategy. In addition, I'd be interested to know what conversations have happened with the local football leagues, considering the impact of grassroots football no longer being played on a Saturday afternoon? It could easily result in the increase in popularity of Sunday morning football, which would require more pitches across the borough.

So, although the strategy is detailed, it is evidently a desktop-based study with very little understanding of what is happening locally. Just last week another club using a council pitch, Maidstone Kestrels at Parkwood, folded and they had issues with the MBC booking system through the whole of last season with games being postponed when MBC thought the pitch was eminently playable. It is essential that this is accounted for in the strategy otherwise the managed decline, that seems so evident in MBC run football pitches at the moment, will continue.

Cllr Brice

The data for Staplehurst Monarchs is incorrect - the teams do not use Bethany school to train. If they did, as this is in T.Wells, this should have been noted in 5.3.3 - so is the report incorrect either way?

There is no training provision for the Monarchs at Jubilee Field from October to April due to the lack of lighting. Many of the players attend a training group at Paddock Wood - so this should be noted in paragraph 5.3.3.

Further, I would like the Council to have a summary of the largest clubs, to allow prioritisation - the Monarchs is the second largest club - yet we have no 3G, no floodlighting and a pitch that is unusable much of the winter and spring season due to drainage issues, if there is heavy rain.

The response from the Maidstone and mid-Kent Sunday League is recorded on page 4 of this report. Section 5.10 of the Playing Pitch Strategy examines various scenarios for expanding pitch capacity.

The Playing Pitch Strategy methodology prescribed by Sport England is very formal and process-driven and so can sometimes obscure or underplay the 'on the ground' experience of local players. However, we consulted with the Kent FA, all the local leagues and every local football club in the course of doing the study and have included many of the responses in the document verbatim (e.g. sections 5.3.2 - page 21, 5.4.9 - page 30 and 5.4.11 - pages 32-33).

Section 5.3.3 (page 20) amended to show Putlands Sports Centre, Paddock Wood as the club's training venue.

Section 5.3.3 (page 20) amended to show Putlands Sports Centre, Paddock Wood as the club's training venue.

Club sizes (in terms of team numbers) are listed in section 5.3.1 (pages 19-21)

5.3.4 - please can this be updated to reflect that the Monarchs also have to train out of the borough and are not able to train at their venue at all from October through to April.

Section 5.3.4 amended to make specific mention of Staplehurst Monarchs

5.4.7 - I dispute the rating of the youth pitches as standard. I would like the consultant to confirm when they viewed the pitch. The pitch has significant issues for many years, I can provide statistics on the number of cancelled matches due to pitch condition if useful.

All pitches were visited and rated according to the standardised methodology provided by the FA, but rating for youth and mini pitches at Jubilee Playing Field downgraded to 'lower end of standard' in section 5.4.7 (page 27)

It is noted in the introduction that the highest rates of participation in activity are in Staplehurst. However, I think a map showing the distribution of sporting facility provision would show there is little adequate provision in the village. Please can there be a recommendation made about how this should be met for our village?

Mention of the '3G' pitch proposals in Staplehurst now noted in section 5.8.4 (page 48) and in the Action Plan in section 5.11.3 (page 58)

Further, given the higher participation in Staplehurst, it should be also highlighted that our Cricket Club is also rated over capacity.

Report amended in section 6.3.1 (page 63)

Maidstone Borough Council Leisure Manager

1. Section 5.3.2 Expressed demand trends This paragraph references the Maidstone and District Football League having 22 teams in two divisions. This league folded in June 2018 at the end of their 2017/2018 season. At the time they had 8 teams remaining. The figure of 22 teams was included in the total of 57 adults men's teams quoted in the document. That total of men's teams in the borough is likely to be closer to 35 now. Further work recounting the teams in the remaining league will give an accurate current figure and capture how many of the 22 have continued to play by joining another league.

Report amended as follows:

- Updated 2018/19 clubs and teams data included in section 5.3.1 (page 19)
- Specific reference to the demise of the league in section 5.3.2 (page 21)
- Site-specific supply and demand data recalculated in section 5.7.2 (pages 41-46)
- Team Generation Rates recalculated in section 5.8.6 (page 49)

Kent Sport

Pointed to the data from Sport England's Active People Survey not being totally consistent with the newer Active Lives Survey. Active Lives data included in a new section 2.7 (page 7)

Boughton Monchelsea Parish Council

The parish council is opposed to hosting rugby league on their recreation ground on the grounds of overuse and inadequate car parking.

Recommendation for rugby league to be played at Boughton Monchelsea deleted from draft report.

Maidstone & Mid-Kent Sunday Football	
League	
Confirmed that the Saturday league has now folded. Existing teams now play in leagues based in Rochester and Sevenoaks	Issues noted in sections 5.3.2 (page 21) and 5.8.2 (page 47)
Sunday league now has three divisions of 7, 12 and 10 teams	
No shortage of grass adult pitches. Shepway Green is now devoted to American Football.	
Mini-soccer and youth football continues to thrive with girls football showing significant increase	
Sufficient pitches to go around but concern that 3G pitch owners are pricing clubs out of the market. E.g. Vinters School now charge £150 per game.	
Major drop off in participation is at 17 and 18 years age group. Big drop off in transition from youth to adult football with young players not getting protection from referees as they would at youth level.	
England Lacrosse	
Further information provided on National Lacrosse Strategy: Delivering More 2016-2020	Amended in section 11.2.1 (page 138)
No changes required to draft document. Lacrosse is a "lodger" sport and can use any of the playing fields available, ie football, rugby or hockey.	Noted in section 11.4.6 (page 140)
The most significant barrier to participation is access to floodlit areas for midweek training.	Noted in section 11.4.6 (page 140)
Kent Football Association	
P.21: Agree with the other reasons for unmet demand, the changing provision and issues around cleanliness of pitches has been raised a number of time by local clubs with us.	No action
P.30: 3G Pitch Hire – there are no details for Valley Park School or Maplesden Noakes	Details not forthcoming from the pitch providers
P.32: The pitch at Maplesden Noakes was funded by the Football Foundation so there should be a CUA in place.	Report amended in section 5.4.10 (page 32)
P.47: I would question the community access at Maplesden Noakes, this definitely has above 4 hours of community use. Again, would question the limited peak time capacity.	Time availability amended to 22.5 hours of peak use in section 5.7.7 (page 46)

P.54: I am a little uncomfortable with the scenario Scenario retained in section 5.10.4 (pages 53-54)) of decommissioning all council pitches; although with numbers reworked in the table on page 54 the report states that it would be 'unacceptably risky' it does go on to mention that single sites could be decommissioned should demand patterns permit. P.55: Recommendation 3 – if external funding Covered in section 5.11.3 (pages 55-56) cannot be brought in to improve facilities could the council look at designating some sites as 'Adult' and some as 'youth' sites to overcome any potential safeguarding issues? There is also potential for sites that have poor playing surfaces 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. Table 5.12.3 Maplesden Noakes 3G says 5 hours Time availability amended to 22.5 hours of peak community access by body of report says 4 hours use in section 5.7.7 (page 46) P.59: War Memorial Field, Sutton Valance. At Report amended to reflect low priority in section present this is not a priority for funding. Initial 5.12.3 (page 69). discussions have been had with Sutton Valance PC, but we're not expecting any Football Foundation application. In separate correspondence KFA express concern over the loss of football facilities at Shepway Green. Kent Cricket & ECB Loose – referred to as playing at Rumwood's site Clarified in section 6.9.2 (page 75) but in the scenario section it says about reinstating disused wickets and the ten grass wickets and an artificial wicket - which site is this actually referring to – the one in Loose itself? Ulcombe – not sure that will ever be revived and Retained as an option the location would make it a no go I feel - in the middle of no where Hollingbourne – since the time of writing the Usage details amended in section 6.6 (page 71) report the club have folded and players moved to other clubs, however the ground is being used by county age group boys/girls, disability squads and Bearsted CC for youth training and matches Leeds & Broomfield – women and girls, I believe Report amended in section 6.7.6 (page 73) they have left the club Cost of a NTP more likely £8k to £10k to be on Cost amended to £10,000 throughout the report safe side

Actions – I agree and in terms of NTPs in parks, Retained in the Action Plan there are some options I have in mind but haven't done any kind of research or feasibility as yet Top of page 63 ref to Kent Cricket Board, please Removed throughout the report remove the word Board, if there are others please remove them too P62 6.2.3 Second bullet point add... All Stars Cricket, an entry level programme aimed Included in section 6.2.3 (page 62) 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 a expanded take up in 2018 and beyond. P63 6.3.2 Demand Trends add Included in section 6.3.2 (page 63) The data taken from the last 6 years of NCPS information shows a trend of stabilisation in adult (U14+) participation with a minimal decline over the period. The ECB is producing a series of reports into participation in the first quarter of 2018. Page 81 re The Mote This needs challenging as there are significant Practice nets re-scored as 'poor' and pavilion as issues at the site. The pavilion needs modernising. 'standard' in section 6.4.2 (page 66) and improvements to both are included in the Action The practice facilities need replacing. Plan in 6.11.3 (page 81) Marden Parish Council 5.3.1: Marden Minors - no adult teams at Amended table in section 5.3.1 (page 20) Pattenden Lane 5.3.1: Add Marden Playing Field, off Rookery Added to table in section 5.3.1 (Page 20) Path, Marden - 2 adult teams 5.4.4: Marden Minors - no adult pitch facility and Amended table in section 5.4.4 (page 24) not available for community unit 5.4.6: Marden Minors - no adult pitch Amended table in section 5.4.6 (page 27) 5.4.6: Add Marden Playing Field, off Rookery Added to table in section 5.4.6 (Page 27) Path, Marden - 1 adult pitch with changing facilities 5.4.9: Marden Parish Council - pitch hire £50 Added to table in section 5.4.9 (Page 30) 5.4.10: Add Marden Playing Field - Marden Parish Amended table in section 5.4.10 (page 32) Council - Marden Parish Council - unsecured 5.7.2: Delete Marden Minors FC as no adult pitch Amended table in section 5.7.2 (page 42) 5.7.2: Add Marden Playing Field - 1 pitch - used Added to table in section 5.7.2 (page 42) by Marden Minors FC - 2 games a weekend - not used during the week - 1 game played per day 5.12.3: Grass football pitches: Add Marden Added to table in section 5.12.3 (page 58) Playing Field 6.3.1: Address for Marden Cricket Club should Report amended in section 6.3.1 (page 63)

Report amended in section 6.4.1 (page 64)

read "Maidstone Road, Marden" (whole site has

6.4.1: Amend Marden Cricket Club address as

item 6.3.1 - need to revisit re grass/artificial

moved to new location)

wickets	
6.4.2: Marden Cricket Club- revisit due to change	Quality scores amended in section 6.4.2 (page 66)
of location	
6.6: Revisit to update assessment on Cricket Club	Report amended in section 6.6 (page 71)
6.11.3 Revisit to update site specific actions (ie	Report amended in section 6.11.3 (page 81)
new practice nets)	
9.3.1 Marden Russets - contact club for details of	Team numbers verified by England Hockey
teams	
9.4.6 ground is not known as Day's Sports Field -	Map not amended
should read Marden Cricket and Hockey Club	
West Farleigh Parish Council	
The cricket club land is not in the ownership of	Report amended in section 6.4.5 (page 67)
the Parish Council, we believe that it is owned by	
a private individual and the pavilion is owned by	
the Cricket Club.	
Elmscroft Park is not owned by Maidstone	Report amended in section 6.4.5 (page 67)
Borough Council, it is owned by Rookery Estates.	page or
Lenham Parish Council	
As things stand they are accurate in respect of the	
current situation in Lenham.	
current situation in Lennam.	
II I	D
However, Lenham has been has been designated	Proposed developments and the associated needs
by Maidstone Borough Council as a broad	reflected in the report in section 5.8.4 (page 48)
location for future housing development.	
The Village has been allocated a further 1,350 or	Housing allocation figure amended to 1,000 in
so houses between now and 2031 which will turn	section 5.8.4 (page 48)
it into a small town rather than a large Village.	
A draft Neighbourhood Plan is currently out for	
Consultation and this plan proposes that the	
William Pitt Field (the home to the Lenham	
Wanders Football teams) will be used for housing	
development.	
The bulk of the new housing will be to the West	
and South of the Village and even if the William	
Pitt field was retained it would not be a good	
location for Football with housing closely lining	
its boundaries.	
The Parish Council has met representatives of the	
Lenham Wanderers Football club and is	
proposing a new facility to the East of the Village	
with 2 grass pitches and a 3g pitch plus	
Clubhouse etc.	
Commende and a second s	
Currently we are considering as part of the New	
facility, an assault type course running track	
around the perimeter.	
It is our hope that other sports can be attracted to	
the new area as well. Currently the Cricket Club is	
experiencing problems due to the encroachment	

of Housing at their Ham Lane site and we can envisage similar problems in the future in respect of the Bowls Club.

Our vision for the future is still at proposal stage (still to be ratified by MBC et al) but it would be good if you could incorporate the potential changes generated by the doubling of the Village population into your strategy documentation as part of the future situation.

Staplehurst Parish Council & Jubilee Fields Management Committee & Staplehurst Cricket & Tennis Club

Staplehurst Parish Council

Playing Pitches Strategy Page 31 Section 5.4.10 Staplehurst Parish Council is freeholder of Jubilee Field, but the field is leased to Trustees of Jubilee Field who manage the building (changing rooms) and maintenance and letting of the football pitches.

Re Jubilee Field: please refer to Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan Policy C5 which is part of the statutory planning framework in the borough of Maidstone.

Jubilee Fields Management Committee
The Chairman of the Jubilee field management committee highlighted the following issues: We have two full-size football pitches a youth size pitch and a mini soccer pitch at the Jubilee field. Whilst our groundsman carries out a fabulous job, we do experience problems with drainage, this has been improved with funding from the Parish Council in recent years, however we could still do with upgrading in order to achieve full usage of the facility.

The football fields are used by 13 junior teams and two adult football teams, including to female youth teams which we are all very proud of. However due to the number of teams and the large use of the facility, even though we have an 8 acre site, without further improvements the clubs are outgrowing the sports provision and during the winter many games are called off due to overuse. It has been discussed about finding other local sports fields we can utilise because of the situation.

Jubilee field management committee consistently struggles for finances as football club members using the field, paying subs cannot hope to cover the running costs and maintenance costs particularly of our £500,000 (plus) Pavilion. Discussion is ongoing with the JFMC & The Parish Council to try to improve this.

Report amended in section 5.4.10 (page 31)

Poor drainage reflected in the report in section 5.4.6 (page 27)

High levels of use and potential overuse reflected in section 5.7 (pages 41-46)

Aspirations reflected in section 5.8.4 (page 48)

Aspirations reflected in section 5.8.4 (page 48) and the Action Plan in section 5.11.3 (page 58)

We do not have a clubhouse which would hugely help with running costs. Feasibility drawings have been done to extend the large loft area we have about sports pavilion which would provide a wonderfully area for eight clubhouse and general social provision.

I think it is most important that we acquire an allweather sports facility at the Jubilee where teams of all ages could train and the junior teams could play matches obviously this could be used for other sport as well.

I'm delighted to say we are looking into a unified effort, led by the Parish Council to try and improve the sports facilities in Staplehurst.

Staplehurst Cricket & Tennis Club
Comments follow meeting with Parish Council
and other sporting stakeholders.

No surprise that Staplehurst has the highest sporting participation rates in the Borough and in the top quartile nationally.

The Cricket & Tennis and Football clubs are very active in recruitment and two of the highest profile community institutions in Staplehurst with a combined playing membership approaching 700

Staplehurst Running Club, based at Staplehurst C&TC, which has a fluid membership of around 400,

The three clubs, alone, must represent around 15% of the local population.

The provision of facilities is not enough; supply does not necessarily create its own demand. The infrastructure required to recruit and retain people in sport, especially after school age, goes well beyond playing facilities and buildings. It is not reflected in the number of teams either. For example, the Cricket & Tennis Club has around 60 people fulfilling various volunteer roles including coaching, schools outreach and marketing as well as general administration. While most are also playing members, it is by no means all, and we have many parents and past players involved in this effort. SC&TC 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.

Aspirations reflected in section 5.8.4 (page 48) and the Action Plan in section 5.11.3 (page 58)

Aspirations reflected in section 6.4.7 (page 69)

We have increased membership by more than 100% over 10 years, driven primarily by increased junior provision, the playing and semi-commercial income that membership generates is not enough to make up for years of 'hand-to-mouth' existence typical of community sports clubs. All our investment in facilities and programmes has been internally generated save for some small grants from sports' governing bodies and local authorities.

The Football Club's site is in desperate need of improved playing surfaces and drainage enabling year-round matches and practice.

As part of Maidstone, investment in Staplehurst's sporting provision has been serially, and seriously, underfunded by comparison with most other areas of the Borough

I should also amend the figures for Staplehurst Cricket & Tennis Club. In cricket, we now have a third team playing on occasions on Saturdays and a second team on Sundays. There is also a midweek team. So that is 6 adult teams in total. This does not reflect the probable disparity in numbers of playing members PER TEAM between us and other comparison clubs. We have around 15 adult (aged 16+) playing members for each of those six teams.

Furthermore, the number of Staplehurst junior cricket teams - four - included in the report only represents junior teams playing in representative local junior league cricket at relevant age groups. We also have less formal teams operating in ad hoc and occasional competitive cricket. Nor does it reflect the growing number of 5-8 year olds in junior cricket, especially since the launch of ECB's All Stars Cricket programme, for which we are a local centre. Or the growing number of girls across all age groups we are targeting, and need to do better to recruit and retain, that we are not yet in a postion to provide dedicated separate-sex teams. So, in effect, our 4 teams represent 120 junior (16 or under) cricketers whereas, in other clubs, 4 teams could represent only 44 junior cricketers, or fewer.

All in all, this picture materially reinforces the conclusion in your report that the Club is short of cricket playing space. And it is true 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.

Report amended in section 6.3.1 (page 63)

But expanded playing area is not the Club's top priority indicated by your report. 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.

The bottom line is this: unless we can grow our net income by £20,000 (i.e. 65% growth) per annum within 2-3 years, we will not be in a position to replace our 75 year-old groundsman with the paid contractors required. And then we will have no cricket, in a very short timeframe, given the general efficacy of volunteer ground labour and the rapidity with which facilities can degrade, demonstrated all too often in the experiences elsewhere.

Our number one priority is financial sustainability. That is why, in addition to seeking additional funding for the required Clubhouse development, we also have ambitious plans to double the number of junior cricketers - and quadruple the number of tennis players of all ages At a projected cost in excess of £200k, we have a business case for investment which shows an average annual return above and beyond the cost of capital and future maintenance/running costs, over 20 years, of £8,000 per annum based on reasonable target membership growth, pay-to-play capacity and coaching income, especially given anticipated local population growth.

Action Plan amended in section 6.11.3 (page 81)

Yalding Parish Council

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. There are only 12 strips at the Kintons. 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 we only really have 6 strips available for matches, as opposed to the 14 quoted in the report. In practice, this is enough for us given the number of teams we have playing – it might be a problem if we get back to having a 1st XI and 2nd XI.

The report quotes one adult and one junior cricket team. Last year was the only year with one junior team: next year, as in previous years, we will have u11s and u13s, alongside the adult team and Yalding Old Boys. We are almost at a

Report amended in section 6.4.7 (page 69)

point where we could raise two adult teams (1st and 2nds) and this would mean we are hugely short of pitch capacity.

Permanent training nets would therefore be a huge asset but are not listed as a target within the report.

Football Club

Page 20

Yalding and laddIngford fc 2 adult, 1 youth 11v11, 2 mini 7v7, 2 mini 5v5

Page 23

The Kintons available pitches. 2 adult 11v11, 2 mini 7v7, 1 mini 5v5

Page 27

Pitches all standard but changing rated as poor. As previously identified by KCFA in 2014.

Page 37

The Kintons not on map

Page 39

This highlights that there is no 3G facility in the East of the Borough. ALL of the boroughs 3G pitches are within 2 miles of each other.

Page 42

Adult grass pitch balance. This states the Kintons has capacity of 4.0 with a demand of 3.0 showing pitch balance of +1.0 however Swadelands school on line above has same demand and capacity yet is showing as balanced.

Page 49

This highlights that 1/3 of pitches have no or poor quality changing with the Kintons being one of two pitch areas showing as poor standard. Page 59

States - Kintons no current issues yet report says changing facility - POOR

The report says that a new pavilion is urgently required, at a cost of £200,000, which is about right. But it is very surprising that the report does not suggest that any action is required for the changing facilities at the Kintons for the football club, despite earlier saying that there are poor quality changing facilities for them in a cricket pavilion.

We agree that the priority must be the pavilion and the rating of Poor is more than justified but stress that Y&LFC and YCC are working together to try and get adequate changing facilities for both clubs and other potential sporting activities in Yalding. This are currently beyond our abilities to finance unaided.

Action Plan amended in section 6.11.3 (page 81)

Report amended in section 5.3.1 (page 21)

Report amended in section 5.4.4 (page 24)

Noted in section 5.4.6 (page 28)

Map not amended

No action required

Lenham School has education use in addition to community use, hence the differential supplydemand balance

No action required

Action plan amended in section 5.12.3 (page 59)

Action plan amended in section 5.12.3 (page 59)