

**Ploszajski Lynch  
Consulting Ltd.**



**Maidstone Borough Council**

***Sports Facilities Strategy  
Final Draft***

**June 2018**

## CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	ASSESSING SPORTS FACILITIES NEEDS	4
3	THE LOCAL CONTEXT	8
4	STRATEGIC INFLUENCES	15
5	SPORTS HALLS	22
6	SWIMMING POOLS	36
7	HEALTH AND FITNESS FACILITIES	47
8	SQUASH COURTS	56
9	INDOOR AND OUTDOOR TENNIS	63
10	INDOOR AND OUTDOOR BOWLS	75
11	ATHLETICS TRACKS	86
12	POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS	92
13	APPLYING AND REVIEWING THE STRATEGY	95

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

In Spring 2016 Ploszajski Lynch Consulting Ltd. (PLC) was commissioned by the Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) to produce a Sports Facilities Strategy (SFS) for the borough. This is part of a wider assessment of sport and leisure provision in the borough which also includes a playing pitch assessment.

## 1.2 Strategic drivers

The primary purpose of the SFS is to provide a strategic framework which ensures that the provision of indoor and outdoor sports facilities 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 SFS 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 SFS is to provide Maidstone Borough Council with an assessment of all relevant indoor and outdoor built 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 indoor and outdoor sport facilities will meet future demand and reflect sustainable development objectives.

### 1.3.2 Objectives

The objectives of the SFS 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, deficits and anticipated future demand for sports facilities.
- Assess the current supply of indoor and outdoor sports 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 sport (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 facilities**

The sports facilities included in the Strategy are:

- Sports halls.
- Swimming pools.
- Health and fitness facilities.
- Squash courts.
- Indoor and outdoor tennis facilities.
- Indoor and outdoor bowls facilities.
- Athletics tracks.

## **1.5 The study methodology**

The methodology for the study follows the '*Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance*' (2014) approach (ANOG), developed by Sport England. The process involves two parts and three stages as follows:

- **Part One** - Undertaking the assessment.
  - **Stage A:** Prepare and tailor the assessment.
  - **Stage B:** Gather information on supply and demand.
  - **Stage B:** Bring the information together.
- **Part Two - Stage C:** Applying the assessment.

## **1.6 Strategy format**

The structure of the Strategy document is as follows:

- Assessing sports facilities needs in Maidstone.
- The local context for facilities provision.
- Strategic influences on facilities provision.
- Sports halls.
- Swimming pools.
- Health and fitness facilities.
- Squash courts.
- Indoor and outdoor tennis facilities.
- Indoor and outdoor bowls facilities.
- Athletics tracks.
- Policies and recommendations.
- Applying and reviewing the strategy.

## 2 ASSESSING SPORTS FACILITIES NEEDS IN MAIDSTONE

### 2.1 Introduction

This section explains the basis upon which the current sports facilities 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.

The methodology applied to assess the needs and opportunities for sports facilities follows Sport England's recommended approach, advocated in '*Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance*' (2014).

### 2.2 Preparing and tailoring the approach

MBC convened a project steering group led by officers from the Planning and Development department and involving officers from Culture and Leisure and Grounds Maintenance and the Maidstone Leisure Trust, to devise:

- The aims and objectives of the review of sports and leisure facilities in the borough.
- The scope of the exercise, including the types of facilities to include, the geographical scope and the overall timeframe for the assessment.
- The local and wider strategic context.
- The project management arrangements for the study, including the decision to engage assistance from external consultants.

A project brief was produced, approved and signed-off to complete Stage A of the process.

### 2.3 Assessing sports facilities supply

The assessment of sports facilities supply at Stage B of the study involved four main elements:

- **Quantity:** Establishing what facilities there are in the borough, with details of their dimensions, technical information like playing surfaces and floodlighting. This included consideration of facilities not currently in use, not available to the community and significant provision in neighbouring areas that serves some needs of Maidstone residents.
- **Quality:** Auditing the quality of all aspects of all facilities. This involved assessing each facility in terms of its condition (its age, appeal, fabric and ancillary provision like changing and car parking - factors that will influence its attractiveness to users) and fitness for purpose (its technical specifications and ability to accommodate an appropriate standard of play).

- **Accessibility:** Determining spatial distribution of provision in the borough by GIS mapping of each facility type, including catchment analysis appropriate to the scale and role of each facility.
- **Availability:** Identifying how much each facility is used, whether there is any existing spare capacity and if there is any scope to increase capacity. This involved consideration of programming and usage data, opening times and pricing levels, which was secured through consultation with facility providers and operators.

The information was collated and analysed in a facilities supply report, which was evaluated and approved by the project steering group.

## 2.4 Assessing sports facilities demand

The assessment of sports facilities demand at Stage B of the study involved five main elements:

- **Local population profile:** Establishing the local demography, including the size, age profile, affluence/deprivation, health indices and growth projections.
- **Sports participation:** Identifying local sports participation characteristics, through analysing the results of Sport England's 'Active People' survey, market segmentation data, local facilities usage figures and a survey of local clubs to establish membership patterns and trends.
- **Unmet, displaced and future demand:** In addition to current expressed demand, analysis of unmet (demand which exists but cannot currently be satisfied), displaced (demand from within the borough that is satisfied elsewhere) and future demand (based on projected population and participation increases) was identified.
- **Local participation priorities:** Establishing and local priorities for the use of sports facilities, such as those relating to corporate health and well-being policies.
- **Sport-specific priorities:** Determining through consultation with Kent Sport, the governing bodies of sport and a local sports clubs survey, whether there are any sport-specific priorities for Maidstone.

The information was collated and analysed in a facilities demand report, which was evaluated and approved by the project steering group.

## 2.5 Assessing the balance between sports facilities supply and demand

To complete Stage B of the process, the supply and demand information was brought together for each type of facility to establish:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough facilities with sufficient capacity to meet needs?
- **Quality:** Are the facilities fit for purpose for the users?
- **Accessibility:** Are the facilities in the right physical location for the users?
- **Availability:** Are the facilities available for those who want to use them?

Where appropriate for some types of facility, the assessment included the use of Sport England planning tools, in particular:

- **Facilities Planning Model:** The Facilities Planning Model (FPM) comprises a spatial assessment of sports hall and swimming pool provision based on the nature of demand within an area and the available supply, taking into account issues such as capacity (hours of availability in the peak period) and accessibility.
- **Sports Facilities Calculator:** The Sports Facility Calculator (SFC) has been developed by Sport England to help local planning authorities quantify how much additional demand for the key community sports facilities (swimming pools, sports halls, indoor bowls and artificial grass pitches) is generated as a result of new growth linked to specific development locations

The information was collated and analysed in a supply and demand assessment report, which was evaluated, approved and signed-off by the project steering group to complete Stage B of the process.

## 2.6 Applying the assessment - Developing the strategy

The results of the assessment were applied to produce a Sports Facilities Strategy for the borough, which included:

- **Options for provision:** The options for meeting current and future facilities needs were identified under Sport England's recommended headings of 'Protect', 'Provide' and 'Enhance'.
- **Policy recommendations:** Arranged under the headings of 'Protect', 'Provide' and 'Enhance', planning policy recommendations were developed to ensure that the implementation of the strategy will be supported by the provisions of the Local Plan.
- **Action plan:** An action plan was developed for each type of sports facility, linking identified issues with specific actions, including the organisations responsible for lead and support roles, the resource implications and the respective priorities.
- **Delivery:** Mechanisms for securing developer contributions towards the costs of meeting additional facilities arising from housing growth in the borough were developed.
- **Monitoring and review:** The arrangements for ensuring that the SFS remains robust and up-to-date were specified.

## 2.7 Sources of information

Information was gathered throughout the process 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.
- ***Maidstone Leisure Trust:*** Data on usage of the key facilities at Maidstone Leisure Centre.
- ***Other local sports facilities providers:*** Consultation with organisations such as the YMCA and commercial health and fitness operators on usage levels and spare capacity.
- ***Neighbouring local authorities:*** Information on their sports facilities assessments and the impact of any cross-border issues was obtained from Ashford Borough Council, Medway Council, Swale District Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.
- ***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.
- ***Sports clubs:*** Information on sports facilities provision and use, current and future needs and opinions on quality.
- ***Parish Councils:*** Information on the quantity and quality of facilities that they provide.
- ***Schools:*** Information on sports facilities provision and use, plus attitudes towards community use.

## 2.8 Summary

Assessing sports facilities needs in Maidstone borough using the approach advocated by Sport England in its *'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance'* has ensured that the exercise is both robust and evidence-based and as a result complies with the provisions of the Government's planning policy framework.

## 3 THE LOCAL CONTEXT FOR FACILITIES PROVISION

### *Key findings:*

- **Overall sports participation rates:** Sports participation rates in Maidstone are higher than the respective county and regional averages.
- **Geographical variations in participation:** There are significant differences in sports participation between the urban (where rates are lower) and rural (where rates are higher) parts of the borough, which will impact upon demand patterns.
- **Population growth:** The borough's population is projected to increase by 22,380 people by 2031. This will create significant additional demand for sports facilities.
- **'Dominant' market segments:** Swimming and fitness activities feature highly in the sporting preferences of the 'dominant' market segments in Maidstone, which will inflate local demand for facilities that provide for these sports.
- **Facilities supply:** Sports facilities are provided by a mosaic of owners and operators from the public, voluntary and commercial sectors, which highlights the need for and benefits of a strategic approach to co-ordinating provision.

### 3.1 Introduction

This section identifies the context within which sports facilities provision is made in Maidstone.

### 3.2 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.

### 3.3 Population

The key population statistics are as follows:

#### 3.3.1 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%).

### 3.3.2 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%).

### 3.3.3 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.

### 3.3.4 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.

## 3.4 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.

## 3.5 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%.

## **3.6 Local sports facilities demand**

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:

### **3.6.1 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.

### **3.6.2 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%.

### **3.6.3 Club membership**

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

### **3.6.4 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%.

### **3.6.5 Organised competition**

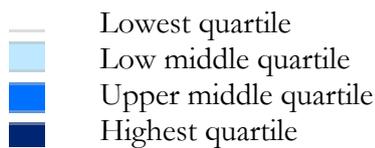
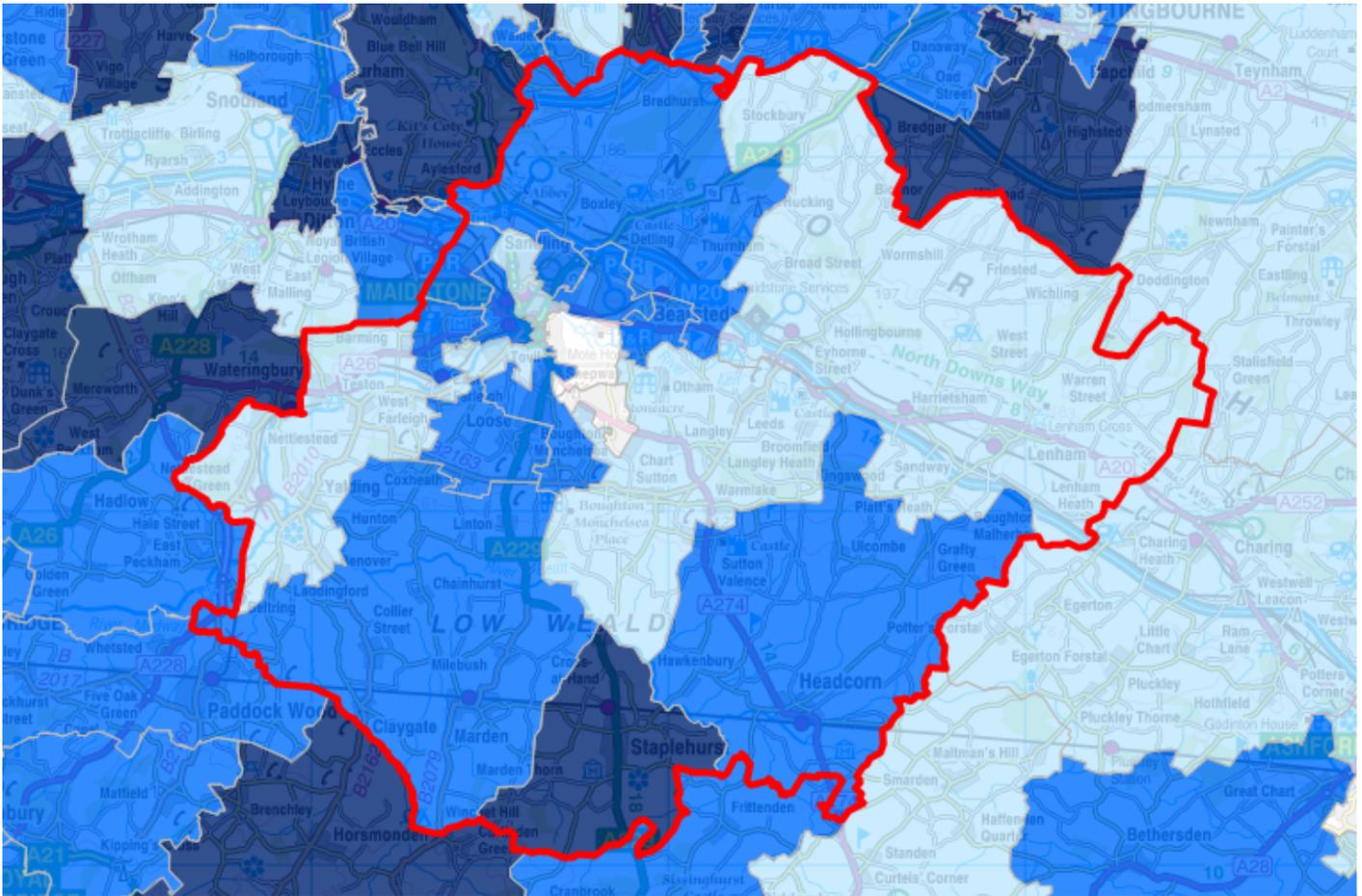
The percentage of the Maidstone population taking part in a sporting competition in the last twelve months was 16.1% in 2015/16, above the south-east figure of 15.6% and the national average of 13.3%.

### **3.6.6 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%.

### **3.6.7 Geographical variations**

Whilst overall rates of participation in the borough are relatively high, as the map overleaf identifies, 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.



### 3.6.8 Individual sports

The ‘Active People’ survey also measures levels of participation in individual sports at local authority level and the results for Maidstone, compared with the figures for the South East and England are tabulated below

<i>Sport</i>	<i>Maidstone</i>	<i>South East</i>	<i>England</i>
Swimming	11.7%	12.2%	11.5%
Gym	9.9%	10.9%	10.9%
Health and fitness	7.2%	6.6%	6.7%
Cycling	7.0%	9.5%	8.1%
Running	6.2%	6.7%	6.5%

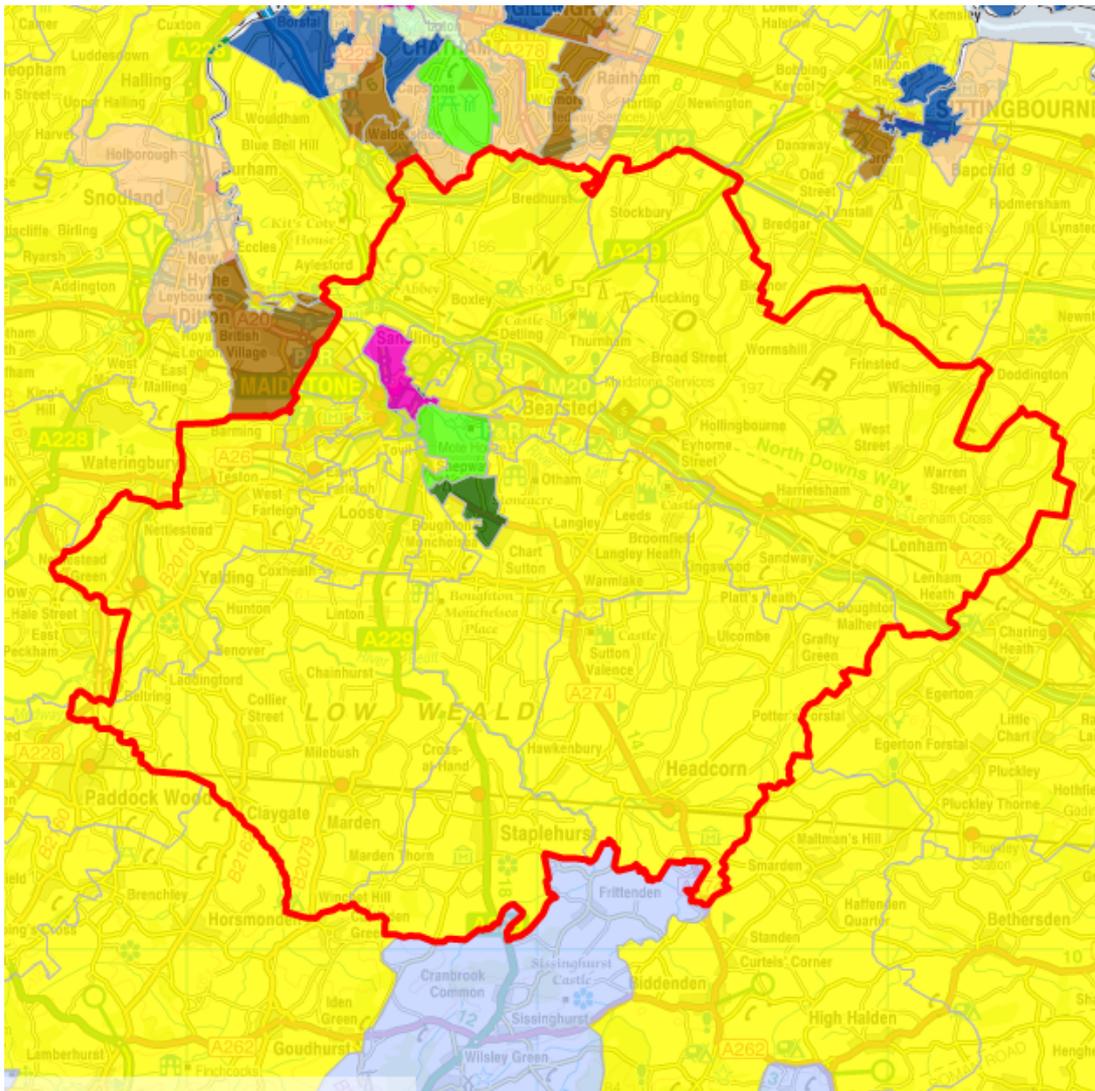
### 3.6.9 Market segmentation

Sport England has analysed 19 adult sporting market segments, to better understand specific motivations for sports participation and barriers to doing more sport and physical activity. The data provides a useful way of anticipating demand for individual types of activity, based upon the extent to which each segment is over or under represented in the local population.

Sport England classifies all market segments with more than 7% of the adult population as ‘dominant’ and their sporting preferences therefore influence facilities demand in the area. The ‘dominant’ market segments in Maidstone are listed below:

<i>Segment name</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Sports that appeal</i>
Settling down males	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age 26-45</li> <li>• Married</li> <li>• Owner-occupied</li> <li>• Employed full-time</li> <li>• 50% have children</li> <li>• Social class ABC1</li> <li>• 32% do 3x30 minutes exercise per week</li> <li>• 27% do no exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canoeing</li> <li>• Skiing</li> <li>• Cricket</li> <li>• Golf</li> <li>• Cycling</li> <li>• Squash</li> <li>• Football</li> </ul>
Stay at home mums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age 26-45</li> <li>• Married</li> <li>• Owner-occupied</li> <li>• Employed part-time/at home</li> <li>• Children</li> <li>• Social class ABC1</li> <li>• 25% do 3x30 minutes exercise per week</li> <li>• 33% do no exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swimming</li> <li>• Tennis</li> <li>• Badminton</li> <li>• Cycling</li> <li>• Aerobics</li> <li>• Horse riding</li> <li>• Pilates</li> <li>• Exercise bike</li> </ul>
Comfortable mid-life males	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age 36-65</li> <li>• Married</li> <li>• Owner-occupied</li> <li>• Employed full-time</li> <li>• 50% have children</li> <li>• Social class ABC1</li> <li>• 26% do 3x30 minutes exercise per week</li> <li>• 39% do no exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sailing</li> <li>• Gym</li> <li>• Football</li> <li>• Jogging</li> <li>• Badminton</li> <li>• Golf</li> <li>• Cycling</li> <li>• Cricket</li> </ul>
Empty nest career ladies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age 46-55</li> <li>• Married</li> <li>• Owner-occupied</li> <li>• Employed full-time</li> <li>• No dependent children</li> <li>• Social class ABC1</li> <li>• 25% do 3x30 minutes exercise per week</li> <li>• 44% do no exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swimming</li> <li>• Yoga</li> <li>• Walking</li> <li>• Horse riding</li> <li>• Aqua aerobics</li> <li>• Pilates</li> <li>• Step machine</li> <li>• Gym</li> </ul>
Early retirement couples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age 56-65</li> <li>• Married</li> <li>• Owner-occupied</li> <li>• Retired/employed full-time</li> <li>• No dependent children</li> <li>• Social class ABC1</li> <li>• 19% do 3x30 minutes exercise per week</li> <li>• 54% do no exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swimming</li> <li>• Sailing</li> <li>• Walking</li> <li>• Golf</li> <li>• Aqua aerobics</li> <li>• Shooting</li> <li>• Bowls</li> <li>• Fishing</li> </ul>

- **Geographical variations:** The ‘dominant’ market segment in each Middle Super Output Area in Maidstone is mapped below. ‘Settling Down Males’ (marked in yellow) are the ‘dominant’ segment in all but three areas of Maidstone town.



### 3.7 The local sports facilities supply network

Sports facilities provision in Maidstone comprises a mixed economy involving the public, voluntary and commercial sectors. The key providers are as follows:

- **Maidstone Leisure Trust:** The Leisure Trust manages the major community leisure facility in the borough at Maidstone Leisure Centre.
- **YMCA:** The YMCA provides a community-focussed sports centre in Maidstone with a range of indoor and outdoor facilities.
- **Schools:** Schools in the public and private sectors are major sports facilities providers in the borough, although not all provision is community accessible.

- **Sports clubs:** Voluntary sector sports clubs provide and run a range of mostly smaller facilities, in particular tennis courts and bowls greens.
- **Commercial providers:** The commercial sector is very active in Maidstone, from major national operators like David Lloyd, though to small local businesses. Health and fitness facilities comprise the main form of commercial provision, but some facilities also include tennis courts.
- **Parish councils:** Parish councils make some limited provision in the rural parts of the borough, principally tennis courts.

### 3.8 The implications for sports facilities provision

The implications of the local context for sports facilities provision in Maidstone are as follows:

- **Relative affluence:** Maidstone is a relatively affluent area and this is typically associated with higher rates of participation in sport and physical activity.
- **Population growth:** The borough's population is projected to increase by 22,380 people by 2031. This will create significant additional demand for sports facilities.
- **Overall sports participation rates:** General participation rates in sport and physical activity are higher than the respective county and regional averages.
- **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.
- **'Dominant' market segments:** Swimming and fitness activities feature highly in the sporting preferences of the 'dominant' market segments in Maidstone, which will inflate local demand for facilities that provide for these sports.
- **Facilities supply:** Sports facilities are provided by a mosaic of owners and operators from the public, voluntary and commercial sectors, which highlights the need for and benefits of a strategic approach to co-ordinating provision.

## 4 STRATEGIC INFLUENCES ON FACILITIES PROVISION

### *Key findings:*

- ***Maidstone Strategic Plan:*** Encouraging the good health and well-being of Maidstone residents is a key action area. The key challenge for all sports facilities providers 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 sports facilities needs in the borough is required to inform planning policy, including the Local Plan Review and this SFS will provide this.
- ***County priorities:*** Kent Sport’s Strategic Framework includes a priority for improving sports facilities provision based on strategic and community need, including those on school sites.
- ***National sports policy shifts:*** The move in national sports policy towards prioritising new participants will create a challenge for sport to ensure that the traditional facilities ‘offer’ is sufficiently relevant and attractive to engage a wider participation base, including people who are currently inactive.
- ***Governing body of sport priorities:*** There are no major identified strategic facilities needs or opportunities in Maidstone, but some potential to link with funding programmes that might enhance local provision.

### 4.1 Introduction

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

### 4.2 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 SFS 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.

### 4.3 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 Strategic Plan (2015) and its 2017/18 refresh. The Maidstone Borough Local Plan is the spatial expression of the council's vision.
- Policy DM20 deals with Community Facilities, including sports provision and states that:
  - 'Residential development which would generate a need for new community facilities or for which spare capacity in such facilities does not exist, will not be permitted unless the provision of new, extended or improved facilities (or a contribution towards such provision) is secured as appropriate by planning conditions, through legal agreements or through the Community Infrastructure Levy'.
  - 'Proposals which would lead to a loss of community facilities will not be permitted unless demand within the locality no longer exists or a replacement facility acceptable to the council is provided'.
  - 'The council will seek to ensure, where appropriate, that providers of education facilities make provision for dual use of facilities in the design of new schools, and will encourage the dual use of education facilities (new and existing) for recreation and other purposes'.

### 4.4 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.

### 4.5 Kent Sport's Strategic Framework

Kent Sport (the Kent and Medway County Sports Partnership) produced a *Strategic Framework for Sport and Physical Activity* (2012), with ten key priorities for sport and physical activity in the county to 2021:

- ***Increasing participation in sport and physical activity:*** Provide a range of informal fun and social physical activity opportunities, as well as more formalised competitive sporting opportunities for all people across the county.

- ***Using sport and physical activity to contribute to other social agendas:*** Ensure sport and physical activity are key factors in improving health, community safety, community cohesion, community pride, educational attainment and quality of life in the county.
- ***Supporting the voluntary sector and volunteering:*** Ensure national governing bodies of sport, clubs, coaches, leaders, health trainers and volunteers in sport and physical activity are supported and developed.
- ***Attracting funding and investment:*** Attract funding and investment for sport and physical activity from a wide range of sources and co-ordinate work to make best use of limited resources available.
- ***Improving facilities for sport and physical activity:*** Ensure facility development proposals are based on strategic and community need and there are a mix of multi-use and sport specific facilities, including on school sites, that are accessible, affordable and welcoming.
- ***Ensuring sport and physical activity is recognised and supported by local policy and decision makers:*** Ensure the value of sport to other social agendas is recognised by key decision and policy makers and features as a contributor within other appropriate key policies and strategies.
- ***Improving information, co-ordination and partnership working:*** Ensure information is readily available to residents in the county and that partners work together to provide co-ordination across sport and physical activity networks.
- ***Supporting and developing talented performers:*** Identified talented sports performers should be supported to reach their full potential through a range of mechanisms to support their training and development.
- ***Attracting major events to the County:*** Seek to attract major sporting events to the county and use these, along with other high profile international sporting events coming to the UK, to promote sport and physical activity.
- ***Researching and planning for sport and physical activity:*** Sport and physical activity opportunities should be underpinned by research using existing data tools and community need. Programmes should be monitored for effectiveness and to share good practice amongst partners.

#### **4.6 The Government's Planning Policies**

In March 2012, the Government published the 'National Planning Policy Framework' (2012), 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 sports facilities provision and retention are as follows:

- **S**

- ***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 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 ‘*National Planning Practice Guidance*’ in 2014 and the following is of particular relevance to sports facilities:

- ***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)’.

#### **4.7 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 sports facilities provision in Maidstone:

- The Strategy seeks to ‘redefine what success looks like in sport’ by concentrating on five key outcomes: physical wellbeing, mental 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.

#### **4.8 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 sports facilities 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.

#### **4.9 Governing Bodies of Sport Strategies**

The governing bodies of sport funded by Sport England each produce a ‘*Whole Sport Plan*’ containing their sports development and related facilities priorities. The facilities elements of the Whole Sport Plans using facility types included in this assessment are summarised below, to assess their implications for provision in Maidstone borough:

<i>Sport</i>	<i>Facilities priorities</i>	<i>Implications for Maidstone</i>
Athletics	<p>A hierarchy of facilities is proposed in UK Athletics <i>Facilities Strategy 2014 - 2019</i> (2014) with district and local levels of provision comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Club Training Venue</b> - Track and field facilities (indoor and outdoor) that have a strong anchor club with 100+ track and field members. To support site sustainability, Club Venues should have excellent social and ancillary provision and facilities that actively encourage multi-sport usage.</li> <li>• <b>Compact Athletics Facility</b> - A new generation of affordable and sustainable indoor and outdoor athletics satellite facilities that provide a stepping stone into Club Venues. They are designed to fit available spaces and budgets and provide functional, inspiring, facilities at which people of all ages and abilities can improve their fitness and confidence and develop the fundamental athletics movement skills.</li> </ul>	Existing athletics track provision means that there are no immediate needs for smaller-scale facilities.
Badminton	<p>Badminton England's <i>Whole Sport Plan 2013 - 2017</i> (2012) includes provision for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investing in facilities to underpin the operations of county badminton associations, performance centres and community badminton networks.</li> <li>• Investing in leisure facilities to underpin the <i>Play Badminton</i> programme.</li> </ul>	Potential for funding to upgrade sports halls to accommodate additional badminton activity.
Basketball	England Basketball's <i>Whole Sport Plan 2013 - 2017</i> (2012) contains no facilities priorities, but priority areas for club development are focused on major urban areas.	Maidstone not identified as a priority area.
Bowls	The Bowls Development Alliance <i>Whole Sport Plan 2013 - 2017</i> (2012) confirms that efforts will focus on support packages promoting participation amongst the over 55's and disabled participants aged 16+, using the existing clubs network. No capital funding is involved.	Opportunities for clubs to expand their memberships with support packages.
Gymnastics	<p>British Gymnastics' <i>Facility Strategy 2013 - 2017</i> (2012) includes provision for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Locally accessible facilities</b> - Increasing access to facilities and new spaces resulting from local authority and business austerity measures.</li> <li>• <b>Dedicated Facilities</b> - Funding for dedicated gymnastics centres.</li> <li>• <b>Freestyle Equipment</b> - Funding for freestyle gymnastics equipment packs for clubs and other delivery partners.</li> <li>• <b>Trampoline Equipment</b> - Funding for trampolines in clubs or leisure centres.</li> </ul>	<p>Opportunities to create or enhance local gymnastics provision.</p> <p>There is a dedicated gymnastic centre in Maidstone run by the highly regarded Pegasus Gymnastic Club.  <a href="http://www.pegasusgc.org/">http://www.pegasusgc.org/</a></p>
Netball	England Netball's <i>Whole Sport Plan 2013 - 2017</i> (2012) has no facilities priorities, but capital funding is available to develop facilities to support the work of Development Community Coaches, based in areas of high population.	Maidstone not identified as a priority area.

<i>Sport</i>	<i>Facilities priorities 2013 - 2017</i>	<i>Implications for Maidstone</i>
Squash	England Squash and Racketball's <i>Whole Sport Plan 2013 - 2017</i> (2012) has no facilities priorities, but capital funding is available to develop facilities in 'Hub and Spoke' areas, which do not include Maidstone.	Maidstone not identified as a priority area.
Swimming	The Amateur Swimming Association's <i>Whole Sport Plan 2013 - 2017</i> (2012) has no facilities priorities, but proposals to establish 'Local Aquatic Networks' comprising a 'local area partnership bringing together relevant partners to maximise the amount of usable water space in an area based by producing an 'Aquatic Improvement Plan'.	There is potential to optimise and rationalise the use of local pools through co-ordinated programming.
Table tennis	No facilities priorities, but small grants are available to provide an equipment package to allow community organisations to deliver non-traditional participation opportunities.	Equipment packages may enhance local participation opportunities.
Tennis	Facilities investment will support the delivery of the tennis programmes, largely focused in priority areas to address gaps or improve provision where critical to park or community programmes	Maidstone not identified as a priority area.

#### **4.10 The implications for sports facilities provision**

The implications of the key strategic influences on sports facilities 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 many 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 sports facilities needs in the borough is required to inform planning policy, including the Local Plan review and this SFS will provide this to help ensure good future provision.
- **County priorities:** It is an identified priority to ensure that appropriate facilities provision is made to support an increase in sport and physical activity.
- **National sports policy shifts:** The move in national sports policy towards prioritising new participants will create a challenge for sport to ensure that the traditional facilities 'offer' is sufficiently relevant and attractive to engage a wider participation base, including people who are currently inactive.
- **Governing body of sport priorities:** There are no major identified strategic facilities needs or opportunities in Maidstone, but some potential to link with funding programmes that might enhance local provision.

## 5 SPORTS HALLS

### *Key findings:*

- **Quantity:** There are nine community-accessible sports halls in Maidstone, plus one other facility without public access. There is no current spare peak-time sports hall capacity in the borough. Additional demand by 2031 will amount to the equivalent of 2.4 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access.
- **Quality:** The quality of most aspects of most sports halls is rated as ‘average’ or better. Only two sports halls comply with (or exceed) the dimensions recommended by Sport England for halls that can cater for a full range of multi-sports use.
- **Accessibility:** All the main populated areas of the borough are within 15-minutes driving time of a community-accessible sports hall with ‘pay-and-play’ access.
- **Availability:** Seven of the nine sports halls in the borough are on school sites, with limited midweek daytime access and only four halls offer regular weekend availability. None of the school facilities has secured community use.

### 5.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of sports halls in Maidstone. Sports halls are defined as indoor halls with multi-sport markings and minimum dimensions equivalent to three badminton courts (27m x 18m).

### 5.2 Quantity

#### 5.2.1 Sports halls with community use

The location and dimensions of sports halls with community use in Maidstone is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Year built</i>
Cornwallis Academy	Hubbard Lane, Coxheath ME17 4HX	33m x 18m	2011
Lenham School	Ham Lane, Lenham ME17 2LL	33m x 17m	1972
Maidstone Grammar School	Barton Road, Maidstone ME15 7BT	33m x 17m	1965
Maidstone Leisure Centre	Mote Park, Maidstone ME15 8NQ	32m x 26m	1991
New Line Learning Academy	Ham Lane, Lenham ME17 2LL	31m x 26m	2010
St Augustine Academy	Boughton Lane, Maidstone ME15 9QL	36.6m. x 18.3m	2007
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	North Street, Sutton Valence ME17 3HN	45m x 23m	2005
The Maplesden Noakes School	Buckland Road, Maidstone ME16 0TJ	33m x 18m	2008
YMCA	Melrose Close, Maidstone ME15 6BD	34.5m x 20m	2011

#### 5.2.2 Sports halls without community use

The location and dimensions of the sports hall without community use in Maidstone is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Year built</i>
St. Simon Stock School	Oakwood Park, Maidstone ME16 0JP	34.5m x 20m	2005

## 5.3 Quality

### 5.3.1 The criteria assessed

The quality of sports halls was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were evaluated were as follows:

- **Playing area:** The overall condition, playing surface, clear span roof height, lighting, spectator provision, equipment and fitness for purpose.
- **Changing facilities:** The capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- **Disability access:** The extent of full disabled access to the facility, including the provision of access ramps, dedicated changing, toilets and car parking.
- **Maintenance and cleanliness:** The quality of maintenance and cleanliness standards.
- **General access:** Including car parking, signposting, external lighting and proximity to public transport.

### 5.3.2 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to ‘very good’ (highlighted in green below), 4 to ‘good’ (also highlighted in green below), 3 to ‘average’ (highlighted in yellow below), 2 to ‘poor’ (highlighted in red below) and 1 to ‘very poor’ (also highlighted in red below). The ratings for the sports halls in Maidstone are shown in the table below.

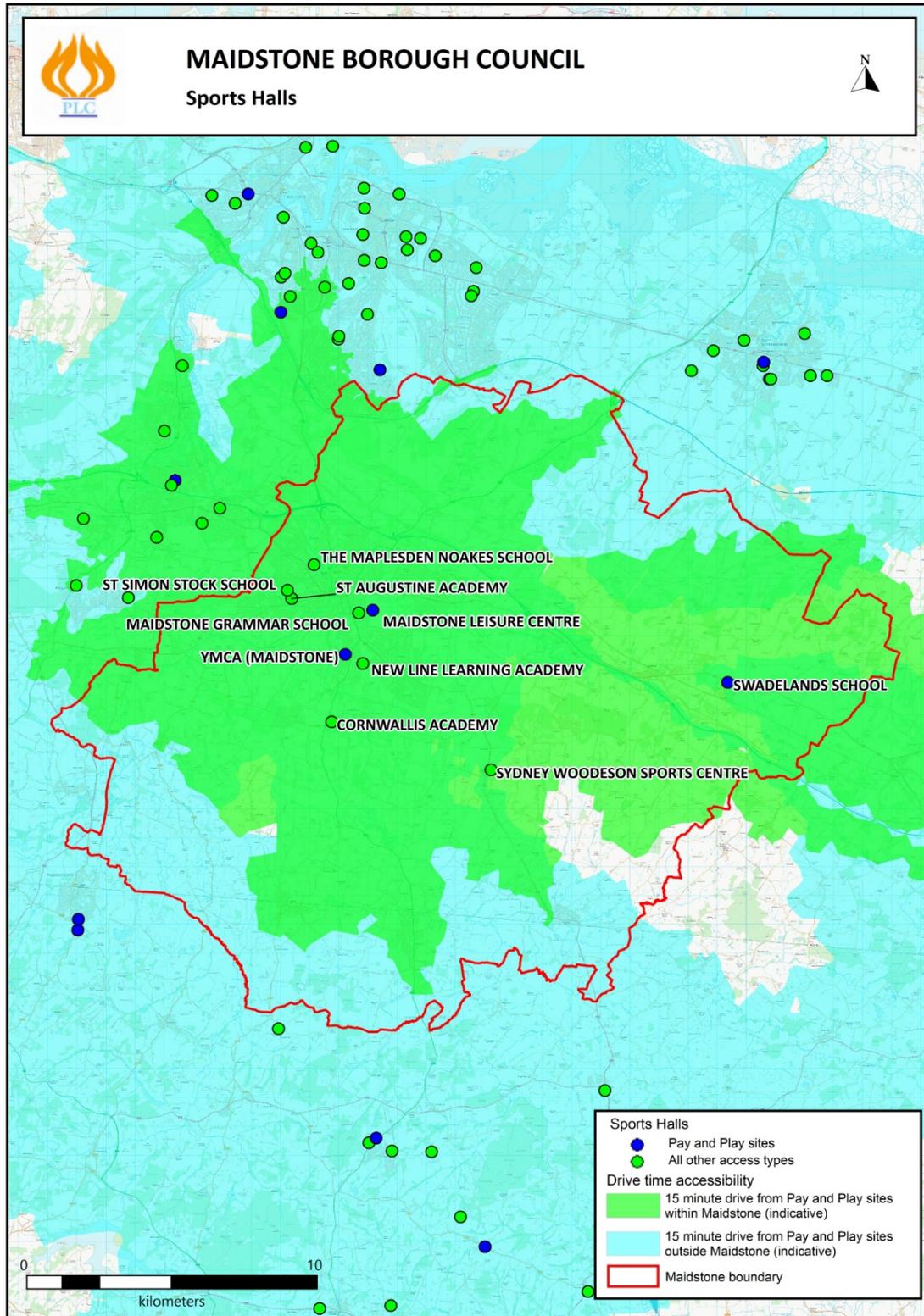
<i>Facility</i>	<i>Playing area</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Disability Access</i>	<i>Maintenance</i>	<i>General access</i>
Cornwallis Academy	4	3	3	5	5
Lenham School	4	3	3	4	3
Maidstone Grammar School	4	4	4	5	4
Maidstone Leisure Centre	4	4	5	3	3
New Line Learning Academy	4	3	4	4	4
St Augustine Academy	4	2	2	3	4
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	5	4	3	5	2
The Maplesden Noakes School	3	3	2	4	3
YMCA	4	4	3	4	3

## 5.4 Accessibility

The map overleaf shows the location of all sports halls in Maidstone:

- Based on Sport England research, the ‘effective catchment’ for sports halls (defined as the time/distance travelled and the prevailing mode of transport used by up to 90% of facility users) is 15 minutes driving time.

- Sports halls with ‘pay and play’ access are marked in blue, with their 15-minute drive time catchments, which are denoted in green for facilities within the borough and in pale blue for those in neighbouring areas with catchments that overlap the borough boundary.
- Sports halls with only block-booked access are marked in green.



## 5.5 Availability

The table below identifies the opening hours, usage arrangements, pricing, booking arrangements and used capacity in the peak periods.

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Opening hours and basis of use</b>	<b>Pricing and booking arrangements</b>	<b>Peak period usage levels</b>
Cornwallis Academy	Mon-Fri 6pm - 10pm Block bookings only	Whole hall £30 Badminton court £7.50 Bookings by phone.	75%
Lenham School	Mon-Fri 5pm - 9pm Sat 8am - 4pm Sun 10am - 4pm	Whole hall £30 Badminton Court £7.50 Bookings in person, on-line or by phone.	90% Mon - Thurs 50% other times
Maidstone Grammar School	Mon-Fri 6pm - 10pm Weekends by arrangement 'Pay-and-play' and block bookings	Whole hall £35 Badminton court £10 Bookings in person, or by phone after enquires on-line.	80%
Maidstone Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri 6.30am - 10pm Sat-Sun 8am - 8pm 'Pay-and-play' and block bookings	Whole hall (peak) £105 Badminton court £13.50 Bookings in person, on-line or by phone.	85%
New Line Learning Academy	Mon-Fri 6pm - 10pm Block bookings only	Whole hall £40 Badminton court £7.50 Bookings in person or by phone.	80%
St Augustine Academy	Mon-Fri 6pm - 10pm Block bookings only	Whole Hall £30 Bookings in person or by phone.	100%
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	Mon-Fri 6pm - 8pm Block bookings only	Whole hall £40 Bookings by phone.	100%
The Maplesden Noakes School	Mon - Fri. 6pm - 9.30pm Sat 9am - 3.30pm Block bookings only	Whole hall £30 Badminton court £10 Bookings in person, or by phone after enquires on-line.	90%
YMCA	Mon - Fri 6.25am - 10pm Sat - Sun 8am - 6pm Membership required, then 'pay-and-play' and block bookings available.	Membership £41 per annum Whole hall £45 Badminton court £10.50 Bookings in person, or by phone.	95%

## 5.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- With seven of the nine sports halls in the borough on school sites, there is limited midweek daytime access to sports halls and only four halls offer regular weekend availability.
- Only two of the community-accessible sports halls comply with (or exceed) the dimensions of 34.5m x 20m recommended in Sport England's 'Sports Halls Design and Layouts' (2012) for halls that can cater for a full range of multi-sports use.

- Halls on school sites are typically provided as 33m x 17m or 33m x 18m to meet education needs, but have some limitation scattering for sports such as netball, handball, hockey and korfball.
- All the main populated areas of the borough are within 15-minutes driving time of a community-accessible sports hall with ‘pay-and-play’ access.
- Five of the halls are only available for block bookings by clubs or individuals, which mitigates against casual participants who may wish to play on an irregular or intermittent basis.
- Pricing is generally fairly consistent, with a full hall rate of £30 to £40 per hour at most facilities. Whilst the charges at Maidstone Leisure Centre are higher, the hall is 50% larger than the ‘standard’ four badminton court dimensions and under the Trust’s membership scheme, a single badminton court can be hired for £10.50 which is comparable to charges elsewhere.
- Peak time utilisation rates are universally high. Sport England recognises a measure of ‘comfortable capacity’, where a sports hall is regarded as effectively fully utilised when peak usage levels reach 80%. This reflects the fact that changeover periods between bookings, particularly those that involve removing and/or installing equipment, will reduce the usage time available. Seven of the nine sports halls in Maidstone are used to above ‘comfortable capacity’.

## 5.7 Current demand for sports halls

### 5.7.1 Expressed demand

Expressed community use demand for sports halls in Maidstone is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Peak hours available</i>	<i>Peak hours utilised</i>	<i>% Peak utilisation</i>
Cornwallis Academy	20	15	75%
Lenham School	32	22	69%
Maidstone Grammar School	20	16	80%
Maidstone Leisure Centre	32	27	85%
New Line Learning Academy	20	16	80%
St Augustine Academy	20	20	100%
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	10	10	100%
The Maplesden Noakes School	24	22	90%
YMCA	32	30	95%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>85%</b>

### 5.7.2 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to users of sports halls from within the study area which takes place outside of the area. The following sports halls with community ‘pay-and-play’ accessibility are located in adjacent local authority areas, close enough to the borough boundary to provide usage opportunities for Maidstone residents.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Distance from Maidstone boundary</i>
Angel Leisure Centre	Angel Lane, Tonbridge TN9 1SF	3 miles
Kings Rochester Sports Centre	Maidstone Road, Rochester ME1 3QJ	3 miles
Lordswood Leisure Centre	North Dane Way, Chatham ME5 8AY	1 mile
Swallows Leisure Centre	Central Avenue, Sittingbourne ME10 4NT	4 miles
Tunbridge Wells Sports Centre	St. John's Road, Tunbridge Wells TN4 9TX	2 miles
Weald Sports Centre	Angley Road, Cranbrook TN17 2PN	3 miles

Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM) 2017 run for sports halls in Maidstone, which is examined in greater detail below, estimates that 27.7% of all sports hall demand in the borough is exported to facilities in neighbouring areas.

### 5.7.3 Unmet demand

Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM) also included an assessment of unmet demand for sports halls in the borough. This involves two components:

- Demand that cannot be met within a sports hall catchment due to excess demand for that facility.
- Demand that cannot be met because it is located outside the catchment of a sports hall.

The FPM estimates that 7.2% of all demand for sports halls in Maidstone is currently unmet, which is equivalent to demand for 3.4 badminton courts (equivalent to slightly less than one sports hall). 95.4% of the unmet demand is attributable to the population living beyond the catchment of a sports hall.

### 5.8 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in Maidstone, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. Sports halls have a role to play in this, given the breadth of appeal of the wide range of indoor sports and activities that they can accommodate.

### 5.9 Sport-specific priorities

Analysis of sport-specific strategies (summarised in section 4.9 above) and consultation with Kent Sport and the governing bodies of sport produced a limited range of priorities in relation to local sports hall provision:

- **Basketball:** Maidstone Warriors Basketball Club operates at the YMCA sports hall where it runs youth and disability sessions and Aylesford School outside the borough. The club also uses several Maidstone school sports halls for training.
- **Table Tennis:** Table Tennis England responded that Maidstone is not a priority area and that local clubs are primarily based in village and community halls rather than larger sports halls

- **Volleyball:** Maidstone Volleyball Club is based at Maidstone Leisure Centre and is working with the Maidstone Leisure Trust to attract young players.

## 5.10 Future demand for sports halls

### 5.10.1 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.

### 5.10.2 Participation rates

One factor in considering future sports participation rates is to track historical trends, as a guide to possible future developments.

- **National trends:** Sport England's 'Active People' survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for each sport at national level on an annual basis since 2005. The results for those sports that use sports halls are tabulated below. Badminton, Basketball and Tennis have also experienced statistically significant decreases, whilst Netball and Table Tennis have both achieved statistically significant increases:

Sport	2005/06	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	% Change
Badminton	1.29%	1.24%	1.20%	1.24%	1.20%	1.26%	1.16%	1.13%	1.04%	0.97%	-0.32%
Basketball	0.39%	0.45%	0.46%	0.36%	0.36%	0.35%	0.36%	0.31%	0.36%	0.35%	-0.04%
Gymnastics	0.14%	0.15%	0.12%	0.12%	0.11%	0.12%	0.11%	0.09%	0.10%	0.15%	+0.01%
Judo	0.04%	0.05%	0.04%	0.06%	0.03%	0.06%	0.04%	0.05%	0.04%	0.04%	No change
Netball	0.27%	0.29%	0.32%	0.34%	0.31%	0.37%	0.28%	0.35%	0.36%	0.42%	+0.15%
Table Tennis	0.17%	0.18%	0.20%	0.30%	0.32%	0.23%	0.25%	0.22%	0.23%	0.24%	+0.07%
Tennis	1.12%	1.18%	1.27%	1.04%	0.88%	1.03%	0.94%	0.97%	0.97%	0.90%	-0.22%
Volleyball	0.08%	0.12%	0.09%	0.09%	0.07%	0.06%	0.07%	0.06%	0.07%	0.08%	No change

- **Local trends:** Sport England's 'Active People' survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for Maidstone on an annual basis since 2005. The results are tabulated below and show that whilst rates have fluctuated over the survey periods, there is an overall increase between 2005 and 2016, although due to the small sample sizes at local authority level (550 people), this is not regarded as statistically significant:

2005/06	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	% Change
34.9%	39.2%	34.5%	36.3%	35.0%	36.1%	32.1%	37.0%	35.6%	39.3%	+4.7%

### 5.10.3 Future projections

Sport England has developed the Sport Facility Calculator (SFC), to help to quantify how much additional demand for key community facilities like sports halls, will be generated by population increases. The SFC uses Sport England survey data on who uses facilities and applies this to the

population profile of the local area. This builds up a profile of usage, which can be then applied to estimate how much demand any given population would generate.

This demand is then converted into the quantity of facilities needed and expressed as badminton courts to define sports hall needs. For the purposes of projecting future demand in Maidstone, population growth of 22,380 by 2031 was assumed, along with current participation rates, since there have been no statistically significant increases since 2005, either locally in Maidstone or collectively for the sports that use sports halls. Based upon this, the SFC calculates demand for an additional 6.2 badminton courts, which is equivalent to 1.6 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access.

### **5.11 Key findings on demand**

The key findings are as follows:

- Expressed demand for sports halls in Maidstone is high. In the peak demand periods, seven of the nine sports halls in Maidstone are used to above Sport England’s calculated ‘comfortable capacity’ figure of 80%.
- Sport England’s Facilities Planning Model (FPM) 2017 run for sports halls in Maidstone, estimates that 27.7% of all sports hall demand in the borough is exported to facilities in neighbouring areas.
- The FPM estimates that 7.2% of all demand for sports halls in Maidstone is currently unmet, which is equivalent to demand for 3.4 badminton courts (equivalent to slightly less than one sports hall). 95.4% of the unmet demand is attributable to the population living beyond the catchment of a sports hall.
- Sport England’s Sport Facility Calculator projects demand for an additional 6.2 badminton courts by 2031, which is equivalent to 1.6 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access.

### **5.12 The balance between sports hall supply and demand**

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between sports hall supply and demand in Maidstone:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough facilities with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the facilities fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the facilities in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the facilities available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

## 5.13 Quantity

### 5.13.1 Current needs

Current sports halls in Maidstone are assessed to be at operating at over ‘comfortable capacity’, with a small shortfall in provision based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used peak capacity:** Average peak utilisation rates for sports halls in Maidstone are 85%, which is above Sport England’s ‘comfortable capacity’ figure of 80%. This suggests that the current number of community-accessible sports halls is inadequate to meet current needs, with a small capacity shortfall.
- **Satisfied demand:** The FPM supports this conclusion, calculating that 92.8% of demand for sports halls in Maidstone is met by current provision. The unmet demand is assessed to be equivalent to 3.4 badminton courts (0.85 of a sports hall).
- **Exported demand:** The FPM calculates that 27.7% of all sports hall demand in the borough is exported to facilities in neighbouring areas. This reflects both the lack of capacity in sports halls in Maidstone and the availability of some accessible spare capacity in adjacent local authorities.
- **Sports hall dimensions:** Only two of the sports halls comply with (or exceed) the dimensions of 34.5m x 20m recommended in Sport England’s ‘Sports Halls Design and Layouts’ (2012) for halls that can cater for a full range of multi-sports use. This does not cause immediate problems at present, because the smaller halls can cater adequately for recreational style play, but the needs of netball, handball, hockey and korfball, which rely on the larger halls should be kept under review and all new facilities should comply with the larger dimensions.
- **Unavailable facilities:** A sports hall at St. Simon Stock School in Maidstone is currently unavailable for community use and the school has indicated that this position is unlikely to change. It does, however, represent one option for addressing the current deficit.
- **Changes in supply:** There are no known proposals to provide additional sports halls in the borough at present. However, seven of the nine existing sports halls are on school sites with no formal community use agreements, so access could in theory be withdrawn at any time.

### 5.13.2 Future needs

The quantity of sports halls required to meet future needs has been assessed as equivalent to 1.6 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Demand increases:** 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.

- **Participation trends:** Based on national and local sports participation trends, for the purposes of forecasting future demand the likeliest scenario is for participation rates to remain at their current levels.
- **Additional needs:** Based upon a population increase of 22,380 people in the borough by 2031 and sports participation rates remaining at current levels, Sport England's Sport Facility Calculator projects demand for an additional 6.2 badminton courts, which is equivalent to 1.6 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access.

## 5.14 Quality

### 5.14.1 Current quality

There are no critical quality issues relating to sports halls in Maidstone, although the position should be kept under review based upon the following evaluation:

- **Existing quality issues:** Most sports halls rate from 'average' to 'good' across all quality categories, with the exception of 'poor' ratings for changing and disabled access at St. Augustine Academy, general access to the Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre and disability access at the Maplesden Noakes School. None of these quality issues has a significant impact upon either capacity or usage levels at present.
- **Ageing facilities:** The Maidstone Grammar School and Swadelands School sports halls were built in 1965 and 1972 respectively and have not been extensively refurbished since. Both facilities are likely to be reaching the end of their planned life expectancy, which will reduce the available supply unless they are replaced.

### 5.14.2 Future quality

By the end of the plan period in 2031, the Maidstone Leisure Centre sports hall will be at the end of its design life. The current management contract with Maidstone Leisure Trust expires in 2024, which may provide an opportunity to assess the options.

## 5.15 Accessibility

### 5.15.1 Current accessibility

Some parts of the borough lie beyond the catchment of the nearest sports hall based upon the following evaluation:

- **Geographical spread:** All the main populated areas of the borough are within 15-minutes driving time of a community-accessible sports hall with 'pay-and-play' access. There is one small area in the south-east of the borough near Ulcombe that is more than 15-minutes' drive from a community-accessible sports hall, although Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre is within 15-minutes for use involving block bookings by clubs.

- **Unmet demand:** The FPM estimates that 7.2% of all demand for sports halls in Maidstone is currently unmet, which is equivalent 728 visits per week in the peak period. This equates to demand for 3.4 badminton courts (equivalent to 0.85 of a sports hall). 95.4% of the unmet demand is attributable to the population living beyond the catchment of a sports hall.
- **Location of unmet demand:** The FPM calculates that the unmet demand is spread thinly across the district, rather than being focussed in a particular area.

### 5.15.2 Future accessibility

To ensure that there is adequate accessibility to sports halls in the future, an appropriate level of developer contributions will be required to upgrade existing facilities and/or to provide new ones, appropriately located in relation to the new population.

## 5.16 Availability

### 5.16.1 Current availability

There are a number of current impediments to sports hall availability in Maidstone:

- **'Pay and play' availability:** Because of the management arrangements at many of the sports halls on school sites in Maidstone, five of the halls are only available for block bookings by clubs or individuals, which mitigates against casual participants who may wish to play on an irregular or intermittent basis.
- **Off-peak availability:** With seven of the nine sports halls in the borough on school sites, there is limited midweek daytime access to sports halls and only four halls offer regular weekend availability.

### 5.16.2 Future availability

Addressing the current availability issues in the future will either involve providing sports halls on non-education sites, with appropriate management arrangements, or looking at innovative solutions to facilitate daytime community access to school sports halls.

## 5.17 The options for securing additional sports hall capacity

The options for securing existing and additional sports hall capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

### 5.17.1 Protect

Protecting existing sports halls through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing sports halls, including any without current community access, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

## 5.17.2 Provide

Ensuring that extra sports hall capacity is achieved by:

- Providing new facilities in conjunction with new housing developments, either on-site or through developer contributions that reflect the additional sports hall demand arising from the additional population. To facilitate this, sports halls should be listed as ‘relevant infrastructure’ under CIL regulation 123.
- Encouraging the provision of sports halls that meet Sport England’s recommended dimensions (34.5m x 20m), to offer maximum flexibility of use.

## 5.17.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing sports hall capacity by:

- Securing formal Community Use Agreements at existing and proposed future facilities on school sites, to enhance community accessibility.
- Encouraging schools with existing community use to extend opening hours, particularly those with limited or no weekend use at present.
- Negotiating community access to the existing sports hall at St. Simon Stock School.
- Supporting schools to improve their management of community use arrangements, to improve ‘pay-and-play’ access to sports halls.

## 5.18 Action Plan

### 5.18.1 Introduction

The tables below set out the action plan for sports halls to guide the implementation of the strategy. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England’s *Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2016* (2016).

### 5.18.2 Key strategic actions

<b>Issues</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Estimated costs</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Protection of existing sports halls	Include a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing sports halls.	MBC	-	-	High
Community access to sports halls	Pursue formal Community Use agreements at all existing and any future proposed sports halls on education sites.	MBC	Academies and schools	Possible funding for improvements to physical accessibility (e.g. dedicated entrance, site security etc.)	High
Funding for future sports hall needs	Include sports halls as ‘relevant infrastructure’ under CIL regulation 123.	MBC	-	-	High

### 5.18.3 Site-specific actions

<i>Site</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Estimated costs</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Cornwallis Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No weekend community access.</li> <li>• No 'pay-and-play' use.</li> <li>• No formal Community Use Agreement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage Academy to provide weekend access and 'pay-and-play' use.</li> <li>• Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement.</li> </ul>	MBC	Cornwallis Academy	-	High
Lenham School	No formal Community Use Agreement.	Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement.	MBC	Swadelands School	-	Low
Maidstone Grammar School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited weekend access.</li> <li>• No formal Community Use Agreement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage School to extend weekend access.</li> <li>• Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement.</li> </ul>	MBC	Maidstone Grammar School	-	Medium
Maidstone Leisure Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ageing facility.</li> <li>• Current management agreement expires in 2024.</li> </ul>	Feasibility study to establish the case for replacement or refurbishment of all on-site facilities.	MBC	Maidstone Leisure Trust	£20,000	Medium
New Line Learning Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No weekend community access.</li> <li>• No 'pay-and-play' use.</li> <li>• No formal Community Use Agreement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage Academy to provide weekend access and 'pay-and-play' use.</li> <li>• Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement.</li> </ul>	MBC	New Line Learning Academy	-	High
St Augustine Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Poor quality' changing and disabled access.</li> <li>• No weekend community access.</li> <li>• No 'pay-and-play' use.</li> <li>• No formal Community Use Agreement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the Academy in seeking external funding to improve facilities.</li> <li>• Encourage Academy to provide weekend access and 'pay-and-play' use.</li> <li>• Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement.</li> </ul>	MBC	St Augustine Academy	£100,000	High
St. Simon Stock School	No community access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage School to allow community access.</li> <li>• Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement.</li> </ul>	MBC	St. Simon Stock School	-	High
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Poor' quality general access.</li> <li>• No weekend community access.</li> <li>• No 'pay-and-play' use.</li> <li>• No formal Community Use Agreement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the School in seeking external funding to improve general access.</li> <li>• Encourage School to provide weekend access and 'pay-and-play' use.</li> <li>• Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement.</li> </ul>	MBC	Sutton Valance School	£50,000	High

<i>Site</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Estimated costs</i>	<i>Priority</i>
The Maplesden Noakes School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Poor' quality disabled access.</li> <li>• No Sunday community access.</li> <li>• No formal Community Use Agreement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the School in seeking external funding to improve facilities.</li> <li>• Encourage the school to provide Sunday access.</li> <li>• Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement.</li> </ul>	MBC	The Maplesden Noakes School	£50,000	Medium
YMCA	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-

## 6 SWIMMING POOLS

### *Key findings:*

- **Quantity:** There are nine swimming pools at five sites with community use in Maidstone which comply with the minimum dimensions, plus four smaller pools. Four of the five swimming pool sites in Maidstone are used to above ‘comfortable capacity’ at peak times. Additional demand by 2031 will amount to the equivalent of one 25m x 4-lane pool with full community access.
- **Quality:** The quality of most aspects of most pools is ‘very good’ or ‘good’.
- **Accessibility:** Some areas on the edge of the borough are more than 20-minutes’ drive from the Maidstone Leisure Centre pools, although there is some access in these areas to pools with unrestricted access in neighbouring local authorities and to membership-only pools.
- **Availability:** Only the Maidstone Leisure Centre pools offer ‘pay-and-play’ public access in the borough, with the remaining facilities accessible on a membership only basis.

### 6.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of swimming pools in Maidstone. Swimming pools are defined as indoor facilities with minimum pool length of 20 metres, although smaller teaching and diving pools are included in the assessment where they are integral to a facility with a main pool.

### 6.2 Quantity

#### 6.2.1 Swimming pools with community use

The location and dimensions of swimming pools with community use in Maidstone is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Year built</i>
David Lloyd Club (Maidstone)	Barker Road, Maidstone ME16 8LW	25m x 10m	2007
Freedom Leisure Maidstone	St. Peter’s Street, Maidstone ME16 0SX	20m x 10m	2004
Maidstone Leisure Centre	Mote Park, Maidstone ME15 8NQ	25m x 15m 25m x 10m 15m x 15m 9m x 9m 9m x 9m	1991
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	North St., Sutton Valence ME17 3HN	25m x 12m	2008
Velocity Health and Fitness (Maidstone)	Forstal Road, Maidstone ME14 3AQ	25m x 10m	2016

#### 6.2.2 Additional smaller pools

The location and dimensions of the smaller swimming pools that serve some supplementary needs in Maidstone is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Year built</i>
Feel Good Health Club	Ashford Road, Maidstone ME17 1RE	16m x 8m	2005
LivingWell Health Club	Bearsted Road, Maidstone ME14 5AA	19m x 9m	1998
Marriott Leisure Club	Ashford Road, Maidstone ME17 4NQ	16m x 12m	2008
Topnotch Health Club	London Road, Maidstone ME16 0DT	18m x 5m	2009

## 6.3 Quality

### 6.3.1 The criteria assessed

The quality of swimming pools was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were evaluated were as follows:

- **Pool area(s):** The overall condition, lighting, aquatic activities provided for, temperature, spectator provision and fitness for purpose.
- **Changing facilities:** Capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- **Disability access:** Provision for disabled access throughout the facility.
- **Maintenance and cleanliness:** The quality of maintenance and cleanliness standards.
- **General access:** Car parking, lighting, signposting and proximity to public transport.

### 6.3.2 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to ‘very good’ (highlighted in green below), 4 to ‘good’ (also highlighted in green below), 3 to ‘average’ (highlighted in yellow below), 2 to ‘poor’ and 1 to ‘very poor’. The ratings for the swimming pools in Maidstone are shown in the table below.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Pool area</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Disability Access</i>	<i>Maintenance</i>	<i>General access</i>
David Lloyd Club (Maidstone)	5	5	5	5	3
Freedom Leisure Maidstone	5	5	5	5	4
Maidstone Leisure Centre	5	4	5	5	4
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	5	4	4	5	3
Velocity Health and Fitness (Maidstone)	5	4	4	5	4

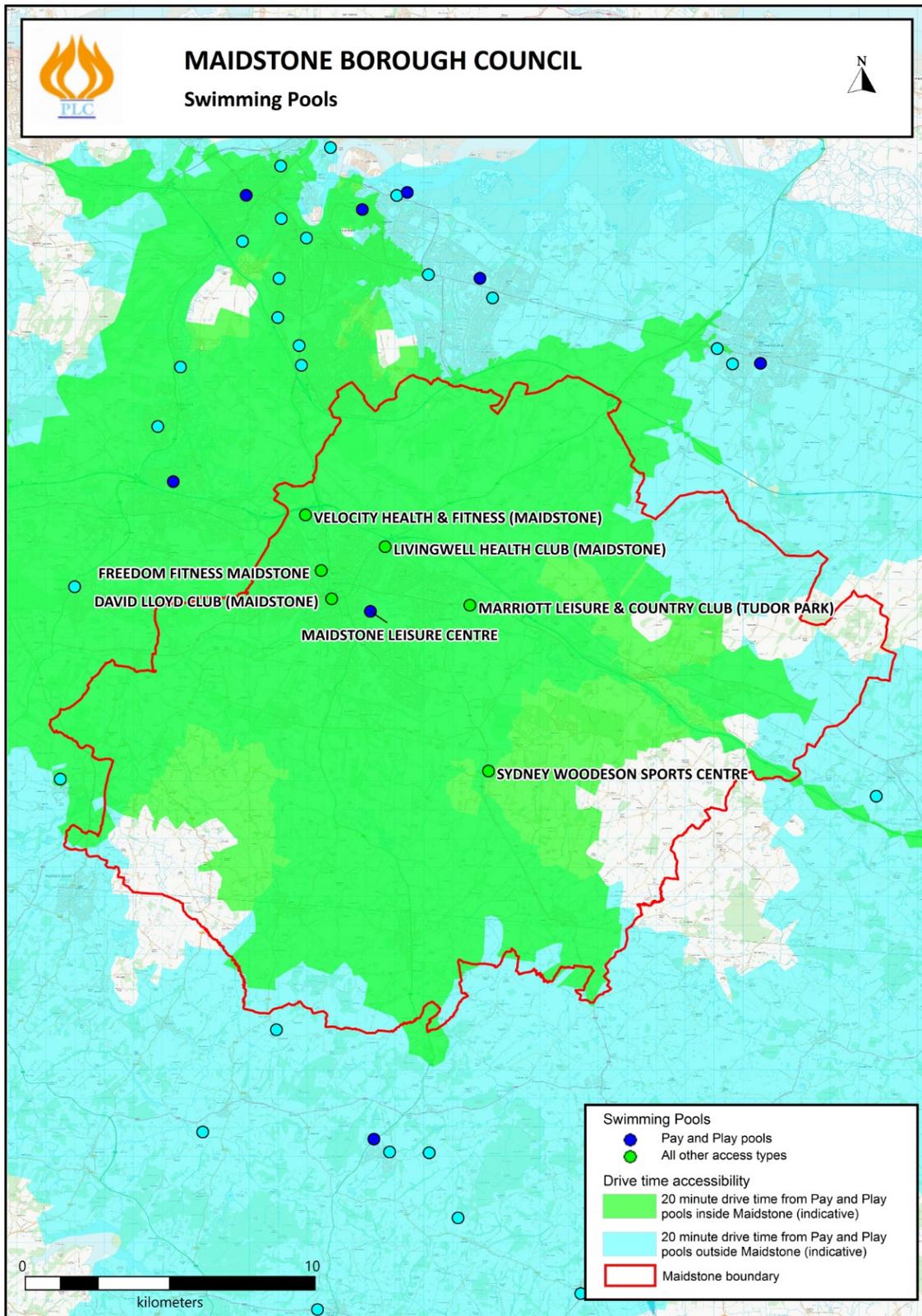
## 6.4 Accessibility

The map below shows the location of all swimming pools in Maidstone:

- Based on Sport England research, the ‘effective catchment’ for indoor swimming pools (defined as the time/distance travelled and the prevailing mode of transport used by up to 90% of facility users) is 20 minutes driving time.
- Pools with open access are marked in blue, with their 20-minute drive time catchments, which are denoted in green for facilities within the borough and in pale blue for those in

neighbouring areas with catchments that overlap the borough boundary.

- Pools with membership-only and other restrictive access are marked in green.



## 6.5 Availability

The table below identifies the opening hours, usage arrangements, pricing and used capacity in the peak periods.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Opening hours and basis of use</i>	<i>Pricing</i>	<i>Peak usage</i>
David Lloyd Club (Maidstone)	Mon - Fri 6am - 10pm Sat - Sun 8am - 6pm Membership only	£60 per month for adults	70%
Freedom Leisure Maidstone	Mon - Fri 6.30am - 10.30pm Sat - Sun 8am - 6pm Membership only	£47 per month for adults	70%
Maidstone Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri 6.30am -10pm Sat-Sun 8am - 8pm 'Pay-and-play' with membership arrangement offering discounts	Adult casual swim peak £6.65 Adult casual swim off-peak £5.65 Junior casual swim peak £4.60 Junior casual swim off-peak £3.60 Family swim £19.75 Monthly Swim direct debit £25.95	75%
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	Mon 6.30pm - 8.30pm Sat - Sun 1.00pm - 6.00pm Block bookings only	Price be negotiation with club and swim school users.	100%
Velocity Health and Fitness (Maidstone)	Mon - Fri 6am - 10pm Sat - Sun 8am - 8pm Membership only	£58 per month for adults	65%

## 6.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are nine swimming pools at five sites with community use in Maidstone which comply with the minimum dimensions, plus four smaller pools.
- Only the Maidstone Leisure Centre pools offer 'pay-and-play' public access in the borough, with the remaining facilities accessible on a membership only basis.
- Membership charges conform with market norms and include some discounts for junior membership, but might still be regarded as prohibitive to lower income groups.
- The quality of most features of most pools is 'very good' or 'good'.
- Some areas on the periphery of the borough are more than 20-minutes' drive from the Maidstone Leisure Centre pools, although there is some access in these areas to pools with unrestricted access in neighbouring local authorities and to membership-only pools.
- Peak time utilisation rates are universally high. Sport England recognises a measure of 'comfortable capacity', where a swimming pool is regarded as effectively fully utilised when peak usage levels reach 70%. Four of the five swimming pool sites in Maidstone are used to above 'comfortable capacity'.

## 6.7 Current demand for swimming pools

### 6.7.1 Expressed demand

Expressed community use demand for swimming pools in Maidstone is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>% Peak utilisation</i>
David Lloyd Club (Maidstone)	70%
Freedom Leisure Maidstone	70%
Maidstone Leisure Centre	75%
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	100%
Velocity Health and Fitness (Maidstone)	65%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>76%</b>

Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM) 2017 run for swimming pools in Maidstone, estimates that expressed demand in the borough is equivalent to 10,707 visits per week in the peak period.

### 6.7.2 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to users of swimming pools from within the study area which takes place outside of the area. The following pools with community 'pay-and-play' accessibility are located in adjacent local authority areas, close enough to the borough boundary to provide usage opportunities for Maidstone residents.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Distance from Maidstone boundary</i>
Angel Leisure Centre	Angel Lane, Tonbridge TN9 1SF	3 miles
Kings Rochester Sports Centre	Maidstone Road, Rochester ME1 3QJ	3 miles
Swallows Leisure Centre	Central Avenue, Sittingbourne ME10 4NT	4 miles
Tunbridge Wells Sports Centre	St. John's Road, Tunbridge Wells TN4 9TX	2 miles
Weald Sports Centre	Angley Road, Cranbrook TN17 2PN	3 miles

The FPM run for swimming pools in Maidstone calculates that the borough is a net importer of swimming demand. It estimates that 14.7% of all swimming demand (1,434 visits per week in the peak period) is exported to facilities in neighbouring areas, whilst 2,215 visits per week in the peak period are imported. This indicates that most local demand can be accommodated within the borough, with some external demand also included.

### 6.7.3 Unmet demand

Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM) also included an assessment of unmet demand for swimming pools in the borough. This involves two components:

- Demand that cannot be met within a pool catchment due to excess demand for that facility.
- Demand that cannot be met because it is located outside the catchment of a pool.

The FPM estimates that 8.6% of all demand for swimming pools in Maidstone is currently unmet, which is equivalent to demand for 153sq.m of pool space (equivalent to 0.47 of a 25m x 6-lane pool). 99.6% of the unmet demand is attributable to the population living beyond the catchment of a swimming pool.

## 6.8 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in Maidstone, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. Swimming pools have a role to play in this, given the breadth of appeal to all age groups.

## 6.9 Sport-specific priorities

Consultation with Swim England and Kent Sport identified the following:

- **Swim England:** The governing body of swimming assesses pool supply against a standard of 11sq.m of pool space per 1,000 population. This calculation assesses current supply at the peak time in Maidstone to be the equivalent of 1,462sq.m. The standard indicates a demand for 1,809sq.m of water space, suggesting a shortfall of 347sq.m (equivalent to 1.07 25m x 6-lane pools). Swim England is also concerned that there is only a single ‘pay-and-play’ pool in the borough. Maidstone Leisure Centre is a strategically important but ageing swimming facility. Any loss or closure of this building would have serious consequences for the future of the sport in the borough.
- **Kent Sport:** The County Sports Partnership also commented on the importance of the Maidstone Leisure Centre to swimming in the borough, particularly for ‘pay-and-play’.

## 6.10 Future demand for swimming pools

### 6.10.1 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.

### 6.10.2 Participation rates

One factor in considering future sports participation rates is to track historical trends, as a guide to possible future developments. Sport England’s ‘Active People’ survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for swimming at national and local level on an annual basis since 2005. The results are tabulated below and show that participation rates have fallen over the past decade, both in England and Maidstone:

<b>Sport</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>% Change</b>
England	8.04%	7.83%	7.57%	7.50%	6.62%	6.81%	6.77%	6.16%	5.70%	5.67%	-2.37%
Maidstone	8.05%	8.52%	6.38%	7.63%	-	-	8.57%	5.61%	-	-	-2.44%

### 6.10.3 Future projections

Sport England has developed the Sport Facility Calculator (SFC), to help to quantify how much additional demand for key community facilities like swimming pools, will be generated by population increases. The SFC uses Sport England survey data on who uses facilities and applies this to the population profile of the local area. This builds up a profile of usage, which can be then applied to estimate how much demand any given population would generate.

This demand is then converted into the quantity of facilities needed and expressed as pool water space to define swimming pool needs. For the purposes of projecting future demand in Maidstone, population growth of 22,380 by 2031 was assumed. Whilst swimming participation rates have fallen over the past decade, given the appeal of the sport to a broad cross-section of the community, it has been assumed that participation rates will remain static for the period until 2031. Based upon this, the SFC calculates demand for an additional 238sq.m of pool space by 2031, which is equivalent to one 25m x 4-lane pool with full community access.

### 6.11 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Expressed demand for swimming pools in Maidstone is high. In the peak demand periods, four of the five pool sites in Maidstone are used to above Sport England's calculated 'comfortable capacity' figure of 70%.
- Sport England's FPM estimates that only 14.7% of all swimming pool demand in the borough is exported to facilities in neighbouring areas.
- The FPM estimates that 8.6% of all demand for pools in Maidstone is currently unmet, which is equivalent to demand for just under half of a standard sized pool. 99.6% of the unmet demand is attributable to the population living beyond the catchment of a sports hall, rather than a lack of capacity in local facilities.
- Sport England's Sport Facility Calculator projects demand for an additional 238sq.m of pool space by 2031, which is equivalent to one 25m x 4-lane pool with full community access.

### 6.12 The balance between swimming pool supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between swimming pool supply and demand in Maidstone:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough facilities with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the facilities fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the facilities in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the facilities available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

## 6.13 Quantity

### 6.13.1 Current needs

Current swimming pools in Maidstone are assessed to be at operating at over ‘comfortable capacity’, with a small shortfall in provision based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used peak capacity:** Average peak utilisation rates for pools in Maidstone are 76%, which is above Sport England’s ‘comfortable capacity’ figure of 70%. This suggests that there is a small capacity shortfall at present.
- **Satisfied demand:** The FPM supports this conclusion, calculating that 91.4% of demand for pools in Maidstone is met by current provision. The unmet demand is assessed to be equivalent to 0.47 of a swimming pool.
- **Exported demand:** The FPM calculates that the borough is a net importer of swimming demand. It estimates that 1,434 visits per week in the peak period is exported to facilities in neighbouring areas, whilst 2,215 visits per week in the peak period are imported. This indicates that most local demand can be accommodated within the borough, with some external demand also included.
- **Unmet demand:** The FPM estimates that 8.6% of all demand for swimming pools in Maidstone is currently unmet, which is equivalent to demand for 153sq.m of pool space (equivalent to 0.47 of a 25m x 6-lane pool). 99.6% of the unmet demand is attributable to the population living beyond the catchment of a swimming pool.
- **Changes in supply:** By the end of the plan period in 2031, Maidstone Leisure Centre will be at the end of its design life. Whilst the leisure pool was refurbished in 2010 and one of the learner pools in 2013, the current management contract with Maidstone Leisure Trust expires in 2024, which may provide an opportunity to assess the options

### 6.13.2 Future needs

The quantity of swimming pools required to meet future needs has been assessed as an additional 238sq.m of pool space by 2031, which is equivalent to one 25m x 4-lane pool with full community access, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Demand increases:** 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.
- **Participation trends:** Based on national and local sports participation trends, for the purposes of forecasting future demand the likeliest scenario is for participation rates to remain at their current levels.
- **Additional needs:** Sport England’s Sport Facility Calculator projects demand for 238sq.m of additional pool space by 2031, which is equivalent to one 25m x 4-lane pool with full community access

## 6.14 Quality

### 6.14.1 Current quality

There are no critical quality issues relating to swimming pools in Maidstone, although the position should be kept under review.

### 6.14.2 Future quality

Maidstone Leisure Centre was built in 1991, so will be 50 years old by the end of the plan period in 2031 and in need of refurbishment. Whilst the leisure pool was refurbished in 2010 and one of the learner pools in 2013, The current management contract with Maidstone Leisure Trust expires in 2024, which may provide an opportunity to assess the options.

## 6.15 Accessibility

### 6.15.1 Current accessibility

Some parts of the borough lie beyond the catchment of the nearest swimming pool based upon the following evaluation:

- **Geographical spread:** Some areas in the south-west, south-east and east of the borough are beyond the catchment of the Maidstone Leisure Centre pools, although there is some access in these areas to pools with unrestricted access in neighbouring local authorities and to membership-only pools.
- **Unmet demand:** The FPM estimates that 8.6% of all demand for swimming pools in Maidstone is currently unmet, which is equivalent to demand for 153sq.m of pool space (equivalent to 0.47 of a 25m x 6-lane pool). 99.6% of the unmet demand is attributable to the population living beyond the catchment of a swimming pool.
- **Location of unmet demand:** The FPM calculates that the unmet demand is spread thinly across the district, rather than being focussed in a particular area.

### 6.15.2 Future accessibility

To ensure that there is adequate accessibility to swimming pools in the future, an appropriate level of developer contributions will be required to upgrade existing facilities and/or to provide new ones, appropriately located in relation to the new population.

## 6.16 Availability

### 6.16.1 Current availability

Only Maidstone Leisure Centre offers ‘pay-and-play’ swimming on a non-membership basis, which mitigates against casual participants who may wish to swim on an irregular or intermittent basis.

## 6.16.2 Future availability

Ensuring that there are sufficient ‘pay-and-play’ swimming opportunities to meet future demand will entail the development of additional pool capacity. This may involve the redevelopment/expansion of Maidstone Leisure Centre or the development of a more geographically dispersed new network of provision. As at present, some additional capacity is likely to be provided by the commercial leisure sector.

## 6.17 The options for securing additional swimming pool capacity

The options for securing existing and additional swimming pool capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

### 6.17.1 Protect

Protecting existing pools through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing swimming pools, including those with membership-only access, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

### 6.17.2 Provide

Ensuring that extra swimming pool capacity is achieved by:

- Providing new facilities in conjunction with new housing developments, either on-site or through developer contributions that reflect the additional swimming demand arising from the additional population. To facilitate this, swimming pools should be listed as ‘relevant infrastructure’ under CIL regulation 123.
- Encouraging the provision of swimming pools with a minimum length of 20m by commercial leisure providers to offer maximum flexibility of use.

### 6.17.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing swimming pool capacity by negotiating with:

- Commercial operators to provide casual swimming for non-members in off-peak periods.
- Negotiating additional community access, including casual swimming to the existing pool at the Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre.

## 6.18 Action Plan

### 6.18.1 Introduction

The tables below set out the action plan for swimming pools to guide the implementation of the strategy. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England’s *Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2016* (2016).

## 6.18.2 Key strategic actions

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Estimated costs</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Protection of existing swimming pools	Include a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing swimming pools.	MBC	-	-	High
'Pay-and-play' access to commercial pools	Encourage the operators of commercial pools to provide off-peak 'pay-and-play' access.	MBC	Private health clubs	-	Medium
Funding for future swimming pool needs	Include swimming pools as 'relevant infrastructure' under CIL regulation 123.	MBC	-	-	High

## 6.18.3 Site-specific actions

<i>Site</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Estimated costs</i>	<i>Priority</i>
David Lloyd Club (Maidstone)	No 'pay-and-play' use.	Encourage the operator to provide off-peak 'pay-and-play' access.	MBC	David Lloyd Club (Maidstone)	-	Medium
Freedom Leisure Maidstone	No 'pay-and-play' use.	Encourage the operator to provide off-peak 'pay-and-play' access.	MBC	Freedom Leisure Maidstone	-	Medium
Maidstone Leisure Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ageing facility.</li> <li>• Current management agreement expires in 2024.</li> </ul>	Feasibility study to establish the case for replacement or refurbishment of all on-site facilities.	MBC	Maidstone Leisure Trust	£20,000	Medium
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited community access.</li> <li>• No 'pay-and-play' use.</li> <li>• No formal Community Use Agreement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage Academy to provide more access and 'pay-and-play' use.</li> <li>• Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement.</li> </ul>	MBC	Sutton Valance School	-	High
Velocity Health and Fitness	No 'pay-and-play' use.	Encourage the operator to provide off-peak 'pay-and-play' access.	MBC	Velocity Health and Fitness	-	Medium

## 7 HEALTH AND FITNESS

### *Key findings:*

- **Quantity:** There are 15 publicly accessible health and fitness facilities in Maidstone, collectively comprising 1,047 equipment stations. In addition, there are three school facilities with no public access. Additional demand by 2031 will amount to the equivalent of an extra 187 equipment stations.
- **Quality:** The quality of most aspects of most facilities is ‘very good’ or ‘good’.
- **Accessibility:** Some areas in the south-east and east of the borough are beyond the catchment of a ‘pay-and-play’ facility within Maidstone, although most in these areas have access to facilities with unrestricted access in neighbouring local authorities and/or to membership-only sites.
- **Availability:** Only two sites (comprising 15% of facility capacity) offer ‘pay-and-play’ public access in the borough, with the remaining facilities accessible on a membership only basis.

### 7.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of health and fitness facilities in Maidstone. Health and fitness facilities are defined as dedicated community accessible facilities with a range of exercise equipment.

### 7.2 Quantity

#### 7.2.1 Health and fitness facilities with community use

The location and number of stations at health and fitness facilities with community use in Maidstone is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Stations</i>	<i>Year built</i>
Bob Prowse Health Club	Armstrong Road, Maidstone ME15 6AZ	65	2006
David Lloyd Club (Maidstone)	Barker Road, Maidstone ME16 8LW	200	2007
Feel Good Health Club	Ashford Road, Maidstone ME17 1RE	33	2005
Fit4less (Maidstone)	Week Street, Maidstone ME14 1RF	40	2015
Freedom Leisure Maidstone	St. Peter’s Street, Maidstone ME16 0SX	81	2004
Lenham Activate	Ham Lane, Lenham ME17 2LL	26	2007
LivingWell Health Club	Bearsted Road, Maidstone ME14 5AA	28	1998
Maidstone Leisure Centre	Mote Park, Maidstone ME15 8NQ	120	1991
Marriott Leisure Club	Ashford Road, Maidstone ME17 4NQ	72	2008
Snap Fitness	High Street, Maidstone ME14 1JH	60	2017
Topnotch Health Club	London Road, Maidstone ME16 0DT	70	2009
truGym Maidstone	The Broadway, Maidstone ME16 8PS	110	2013
Velocity Health and Fitness	Forstal Road, Maidstone ME14 3AQ	90	2016
Weald of Kent Golf Club	Maidstone Road, TN27 9PT	12	2016
YMCA	Melrose Close, Maidstone ME15 6BD	40	2011

## 7.2.2 Health and fitness facilities without community use

The location of health and fitness facilities with no community use in Maidstone is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Stations</i>	<i>Year built</i>
Bower Grove School	Fant Lane, Maidstone ME16 8NL	10	2011
St Augustine Academy	Boughton Lane, Maidstone ME15 9QL	17	2007
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	North Street, Sutton Valence ME17 3HN	24	2015

## 7.3 Quality

### 7.3.1 The criteria assessed

The quality of health and fitness facilities was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were evaluated were as follows:

- ***Fitness facilities:*** The overall condition, mix of cardio-vascular and resistance equipment, lighting and ambience.
- ***Changing facilities:*** Capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- ***Disability access:*** Provision of disability-specific equipment and disabled access throughout the facility.
- ***Maintenance and cleanliness:*** The quality of maintenance and cleanliness standards.
- ***General access:*** Car parking, lighting, signposting and proximity to public transport.

### 7.3.2 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to ‘very good’ (highlighted in green below), 4 to ‘good’ (also highlighted in green below), 3 to ‘average’ (highlighted in yellow below), 2 to ‘poor’ (highlighted in red below) and 1 to ‘very poor’.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Fitness facilities</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Disability Access</i>	<i>Maintenance</i>	<i>General access</i>
Bob Prowse Health Club	4	4	3	3	2
David Lloyd Club (Maidstone)	5	5	4	5	4
Feel Good Health Club	5	5	4	5	5
Fit4less (Maidstone)	5	5	4	5	4
Freedom Leisure Maidstone	5	5	4	5	4
Lenham Activate	4	4	4	4	4
LivingWell Health Club	5	5	4	5	5
Maidstone Leisure Centre	5	5	3	5	5
Marriott Leisure Club	5	5	4	5	5
Snap Fitness	5	5	4	5	4
Topnotch Health Club	5	5	4	5	4
truGym Maidstone	5	5	4	5	3
Velocity Health and Fitness	5	5	4	5	5
Weald of Kent Golf Club	5	5	4	5	4
YMCA	5	5	5	5	5



## 7.5 Availability

The table below identifies the opening hours, usage arrangements and pricing (shown as monthly direct debit costs to facilitate comparison).

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Opening hours and basis of use</i>	<i>Pricing</i>
Bob Prowse Health Club	Mon - Fri 6.30am - 10pm Sat - Sun 9am - 5pm Membership only	£35
David Lloyd Club (Maidstone)	Mon - Fri 6am - 10pm Sat - Sun 8am - 6pm Membership only	£60
Feel Good Health Club	Mon - Fri 6.45am - 10pm Sat - Sun 7am - 9pm Membership only	£40.99
Fit4less (Maidstone)	Mon - Fri 6.30am - 10pm Sat - Sun 8am - 6pm Membership only	£19.99
Freedom Leisure Maidstone	Mon - Fri 6.30am - 10.30pm Sat - Sun 8am - 6pm Membership only	£47
Lenham Activate	Mon - Fri 7am - 9am and 5pm - 10pm Sat 8am - 3pm Membership only	£28
LivingWell Health Club	Mon - Fri 6am - 10pm Sat 7am - 9pm Sun 8am - 10pm Membership only	£46
Maidstone Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri 6.30am - 10pm Sat-Sun 8am - 8pm 'Pay-and-play' with membership arrangement offering discounts	£35.95
Marriott Leisure Club	Mon - Sun 6am - 11pm Membership only	£65
Snap Fitness	24/7 access for members only Staffed access Mon 9am - 8pm, Tue - Sat 10am - 8pm	£19.99
Topnotch Health Club	Mon - Fri 6.30am - 10pm Sat - Sun 8am - 6pm Membership only	£37.50
truGym Maidstone	Mon - Fri 5am - 12am Sat - Sun 8am - 8pm Membership only	£19.99
Velocity Health and Fitness	Mon - Fri 6.30am - 10pm Sat - Sun 8am - 8pm Membership only	£58
Weald of Kent Golf Club	Mon - Sun 6.45am - 9.30pm Membership only	£34.95
YMCA	Mon-Fri 6.30am - 10pm Sat-Sun 8am - 6pm 'Pay-and-play' with membership arrangement offering discounts	£36

## 7.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are 15 publicly accessible health and fitness facilities in Maidstone, collectively comprising 1,047 equipment stations.
- Only the Maidstone Leisure Centre and the YMCA offer 'pay-and-play' public access in the borough, with the remaining facilities accessible on a membership only basis.
- Membership charges vary between £19.99 and £60 per month, although there are discounted introductory offers at many facilities.

- The quality of most features of most facilities is ‘very good’ or ‘good’.
- Some areas in the south-east and east of the borough are beyond the catchment of a ‘pay-and-play’ facility within Maidstone, although most have access in these areas to facilities with unrestricted access in neighbouring local authorities and to membership-only sites.

## 7.7 Current demand for health and fitness facilities

### 7.7.1 Expressed demand

The 2016 ‘*State of the UK Fitness Industry*’ report’ reveals that the UK health and fitness industry is continuing to grow. It has more clubs, more members and a greater market value than ever before. Over the twelve-month period to the end of March 2016, there were increases of:

- 1.9% in the number of fitness facilities.
- 5.3% in the number of members.
- 3.2% in overall market value.

For the first time ever, health and fitness members exceeded 9 million. 1 in 7 people in the UK is a member of a gym, an all-time penetration rate high of 14.3%. The low-cost market with its large membership numbers, online joining, long opening hours and low-prices has continued to expand rapidly. The private low-cost sector now accounts for 12% of the total number of private clubs, 13% of the private market value and 32% of the private sector membership.

### 7.7.2 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to users of health and fitness facilities from within the study area which takes place outside of the area. The following facilities with ‘pay-and-play’ accessibility are located in adjacent local authority areas, close enough to the borough boundary to provide usage opportunities for Maidstone residents.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Distance from Maidstone boundary</i>
Angel Leisure Centre	Angel Lane, Tonbridge TN9 1SF	3 miles
Kings Rochester Sports Centre	Maidstone Road, Rochester ME1 3QJ	3 miles
Lordswood Leisure Centre	North Dane Way, Chatham ME5 8AY	1 mile
Swallows Leisure Centre	Central Avenue, Sittingbourne ME10 4NT	4 miles
Tunbridge Wells Sports Centre	St. John’s Road, Tunbridge Wells TN4 9TX	2 miles
Weald Sports Centre	Angley Road, Cranbrook TN17 2PN	3 miles

### 7.7.3 Unmet demand

All health and fitness facilities in the borough have indicated that they can accommodate some new users/members, so a lack facility capacity is not an issue even though usage is busy in the peak periods. Some of the population is outside the catchment of a ‘pay-and-play’ facility within Maidstone, although most have access in these areas to facilities with unrestricted access in neighbouring local authorities and to membership-only sites so there is no unmet geographical demand.

## 7.8 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in Maidstone, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. Health and fitness facilities have a particular role to play in this, given the breadth of appeal to all age groups.

## 7.9 Sport-specific priorities

There are no identified strategic priorities for developing health and fitness facilities in Maidstone.

## 7.10 Future demand for health and fitness facilities

### 7.10.1 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.

### 7.10.2 Participation rates

One factor in considering future sports participation rates is to track historical trends, as a guide to possible future developments. Sport England's 'Active People' survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for health and fitness at national and local level on an annual basis since 2005. The results are tabulated below and show that participation rates have increased significantly over the past decade, both in England and Maidstone:

<i>Sport</i>	<i>2005/06</i>	<i>2007/08</i>	<i>2008/09</i>	<i>2009/10</i>	<i>2010/11</i>	<i>2011/12</i>	<i>2012/13</i>	<i>2013/14</i>	<i>2014/15</i>	<i>2015/16</i>	<i>% Change</i>
England	12.6%	14.1%	14.0%	14.3%	14.3%	14.6%	15.3%	15.4%	15.5%	16.0%	+3.4%
Maidstone	13.8%	15.0%	12.5%	13.2%	12.9%	13.7%	13.0%	10.4%	17.0%	16.3%	+2.5%

### 7.10.3 Future projections

Local health and fitness participation rates have increased by an average of 0.25% per annum over the past decade. It would therefore be reasonable to assume a similar growth rate until 2031, which would increase demand by 3.5% by the end of the plan period. When combined with population growth of 14.4%, this would collectively increase demand by 17.9% by 2031. Based on current provision of 1,047 equipment stations and no effective spare capacity, there will be demand for 1,234 stations by 2031, an increase of 187 over the existing figure.

## 7.11 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- In line with national trends, expressed demand for health and fitness facilities in Maidstone is high.

- Demand is projected to increase by 17.9% by the end of the plan period. This will lead to a need for an extra 187 equipment stations by 2031.

## 7.12 *The balance between health and fitness supply and demand*

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between health and fitness facility supply and demand in Maidstone:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough facilities with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the facilities fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the facilities in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the facilities available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

## 7.13 *Quantity*

### 7.13.1 *Current needs*

Current health and fitness facilities in Maidstone are assessed to be at operating at close to full capacity, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used peak capacity:** Although no detailed figures are available, consultation with local operators indicates that most facilities are operating at close to full capacity in the peak periods.
- **Satisfied demand:** There is no evidence of unmet demand, with a good geographical spread of provision and ‘pay-and-play’ facilities providing more than 16% of the overall capacity in terms of equipment stations.
- **Changes in supply:** There are no know planned changes to supply, although commercial sector providers are likely to respond to increases in demand by expanding local capacity.

### 7.13.2 *Future needs*

The quantity of health and fitness provision required to meet future needs has been assessed as equivalent to 1,234 fitness stations by 2031, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Demand increases:** 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.

- **Participation trends:** Local health and fitness participation rates have increased by an average of 0.25% per annum over the past decade. It would therefore be reasonable to assume a similar growth rate until 2031, which would increase demand by 3.5% by the end of the plan period.
- **Additional needs:** Based the above figures and on current provision of 1,047 equipment stations and no effective spare capacity, there will be demand for 1,234 stations by 2031, an increase of 187 over the existing figure.

## 7.14 Quality

### 7.14.1 Current quality

There are no significant quality issues relating to health and fitness facilities in Maidstone, although the position should be kept under review.

### 7.14.2 Future quality

In a highly competitive market, commercial health and fitness providers place a high premium on equipment innovation and facility quality, so it seems reasonable to assume that local provision will continue to be upgraded regularly.

## 7.15 Accessibility

### 7.15.1 Current accessibility

Some areas in the south-east and east of the borough are beyond the catchment of a ‘pay-and-play’ facility within Maidstone, although most have access in these areas to facilities with unrestricted access in neighbouring local authorities and to membership-only sites.

### 7.15.2 Future accessibility

Commercial health and fitness operators are likely to ensure that additional facilities are provided that are well-located in relation to new housing developments.

## 7.16 Availability

### 7.16.1 Current availability

Only the Maidstone Leisure Centre and the YMCA offer ‘pay-and-play’ public access in the borough, with the remaining facilities accessible on a membership only basis. Membership charges vary between £19.99 and £60 per month, although there are discounted introductory offers at many facilities.

### 7.16.2 Future availability

With a competitive local market including several low-cost commercial providers, it seems unlikely that cost will be a barrier to accessibility in the future. However, the inclusion of expanded ‘pay-and-play’ health and fitness provision as part of any redevelopment of Maidstone Leisure Centre would ensure that accessible facilities are available for the whole community.

## 7.17 The options for securing additional health and fitness capacity

The options for securing existing and additional health and fitness facility capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

### 7.17.1 Protect

Protecting existing health and fitness facilities through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, including those with membership-only access, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

### 7.17.2 Provide

Ensuring that extra health and fitness capacity is achieved by:

- Providing new or expanded facilities at Maidstone Leisure Centre, to ensure that ‘pay-and-play’ access is available, funded through developer contributions that reflect the extra demand arising from the additional population. To facilitate this, health and fitness facilities should be listed as ‘relevant infrastructure’ under CIL regulation 123.
- Encouraging the provision of health and fitness facilities by commercial leisure providers.

### 7.17.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing health and fitness capacity by negotiating with:

- Commercial operators to provide access for non-members in off-peak periods.
- Negotiating community access to the three facilities on school sites that have no external use at present.

## 7.18 Action Plan

The table below sets out the action plan for health and fitness facilities to guide the implementation of the strategy. All actions are generic, rather than facility specific. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England’s *Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2016* (2016).

<b>Issues</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Estimated costs</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Protection of existing community health and fitness facilities.	Include a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing health and fitness facilities.	MBC	-	-	High
Need for an additional 269 fitness stations by 2031.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand ‘pay-and-play’ capacity at Maidstone Leisure Centre.</li> <li>• Encourage additional provision by commercial providers.</li> </ul>	MBC	Maidstone Leisure Trust Commercial providers	Dependent on the scale and nature of provision.	Medium
‘Pay-and-play’ access to commercial health and fitness facilities.	Encourage the operators of commercial facilities to provide off-peak ‘pay-and-play’ access.	MBC	Private health clubs	-	Medium
Funding for future health and fitness needs.	Include health and fitness facilities as ‘relevant infrastructure’ under CIL regulation 123.	MBC	-	-	High

## 8 SQUASH COURTS

### *Key findings:*

- **Quantity:** There are two facilities with community use in Maidstone, collectively containing six squash courts, plus one facility on a school site with two courts and no public access. There is sufficient spare capacity at existing courts to meet all additional demand to 2031.
- **Quality:** The quality of both facilities is ‘good’.
- **Accessibility:** Some areas in the south-west and north-east of the borough are beyond the catchment of a facility within Maidstone, although all have access in these areas to facilities in neighbouring local authorities.
- **Availability:** Only the Mote Squash Club offers ‘pay-and-play’ public access in the borough

### 8.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of squash courts in Maidstone. Squash courts are defined as specialist courts for squash and racketball, complying with regulation dimensions.

### 8.2 Quantity

#### 8.2.1 Squash Courts with community use

The location and number of squash courts with community use in Maidstone is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Courts</i>	<i>Year built</i>
Maidstone Squash Club	Union Street, Maidstone ME14 1EB	2	2009
Mote Squash Club	Mote Park, Maidstone ME15 7RN	4	2008

#### 8.2.2 Squash Courts without community use

The location and number of squash courts with no community use in Maidstone is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Courts</i>	<i>Year built</i>
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	North Street, Sutton Valence ME17 3HN	2	1950

### 8.3 Quality

#### 8.3.1 The criteria assessed

The quality of squash courts was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were assessed to give a single overall score for each squash facility were the court surface, changing provision, line markings, walls, disability and general access and fitness for purpose.

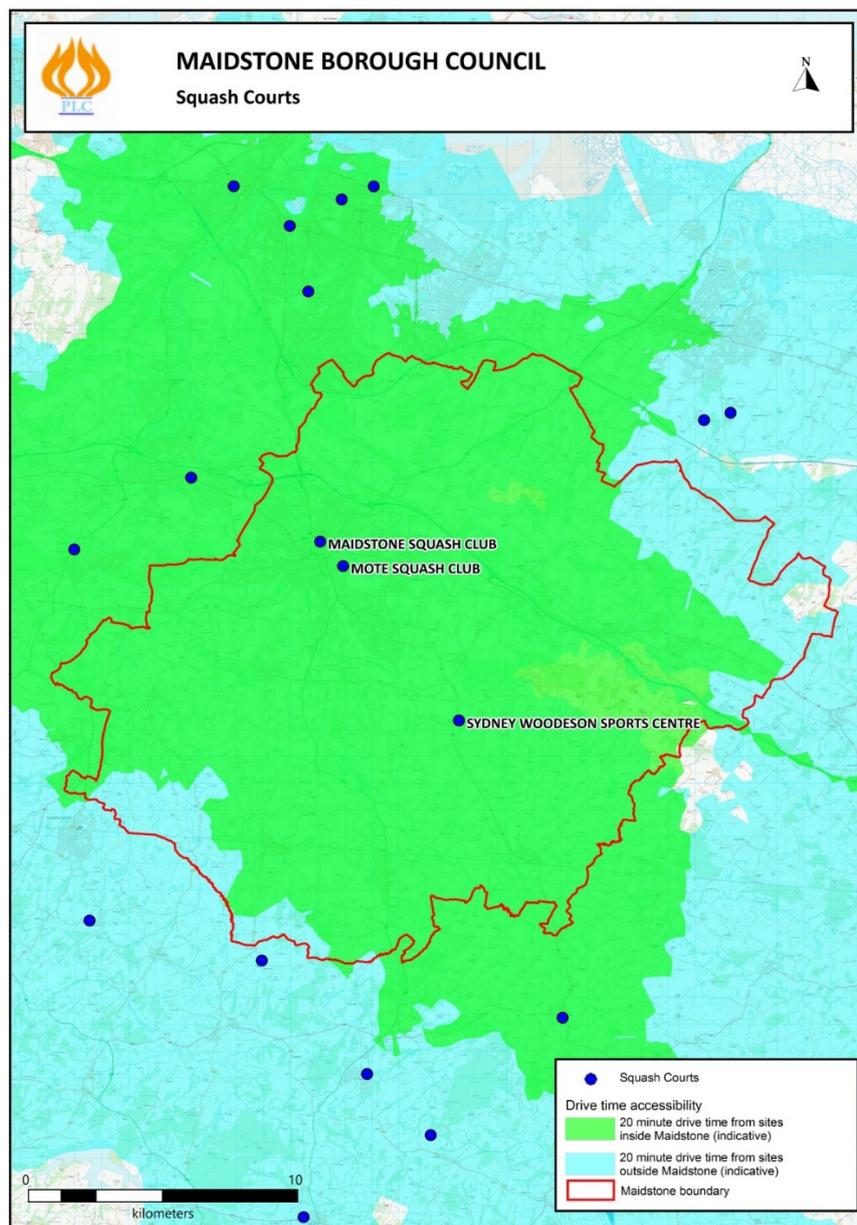
### 8.3.2 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to ‘very good’, 4 to ‘good’ (highlighted in green below), 3 to ‘average’, 2 to ‘poor’ and 1 to ‘very poor’. The ratings for the squash courts in Maidstone are shown in the table below.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Score</i>
Maidstone Squash Club	4
Mote Squash Club	4
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	4

### 8.4 Accessibility

Based on Sport England research, the ‘effective catchment’ for squash courts is 20 minutes driving time. The map below shows the location of all squash courts in Maidstone, together with courts in neighbouring areas within the 20-minute drivetime catchment of the borough boundary.



## 8.5 Availability

The table below identifies the opening hours, usage arrangements and used capacity in the peak period.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Opening hours and basis of use</i>	<i>Pricing</i>	<i>Peak usage</i>
Maidstone Squash Club	Mon - Sun 7.00am - 11.00pm Membership only	Adult membership £110 pa Students £35 pa Juniors £20 pa	55%
Mote Squash Club	Mon-Sun 7.00am -10.30pm Membership only Casual 'pay-and-play bookings	Adult peak membership £160 pa Adult off-peak membership £80 Students £35 pa Juniors £35 pa Casual £12 per session	60%

## 8.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are two facilities with community use in Maidstone, collectively containing six squash courts, plus one facility on a school site with two courts and no public access. Both the community accessible facilities are available for use on a membership basis only.
- Only the Mote Squash Club offers 'pay-and-play' public access in the borough.
- The quality of both facilities is 'good'.
- Some areas in the south-west and north-east of the borough are beyond the catchment of a facility within Maidstone, although all have access in these areas to facilities in neighbouring local authorities.

## 8.7 Current demand for squash courts

### 8.7.1 Expressed demand

Squash participation has been in long-term decline and both clubs in the borough have experienced membership reductions in the past decade although both currently have stable membership numbers. Peak-time court utilisation rates are 55% and 60% respectively, which indicates significant spare capacity.

### 8.7.2 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to users of squash courts from within the study area which takes place outside of the area. There is no evidence of exported demand from Maidstone, although several facilities are located in adjacent local authority areas, close enough to the borough boundary to provide usage opportunities for Maidstone residents.

### 8.7.3 Unmet demand

Unmet demand involves two components:

- Demand that cannot be met within a facility catchment due to excess demand for that facility.
- Demand that cannot be met because it is located outside the catchment of a facility.

Both clubs in the borough have indicated that they can accommodate new users/members, so facility capacity is not an issue. Some of the population is outside the catchment of a facility within Maidstone, although all have access in these areas to facilities in neighbouring local authorities so there is no unmet geographical demand.

### 8.8 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in Maidstone, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. As a specialist activity, squash is likely to have limited appeal to new sports participants.

### 8.9 Sport-specific priorities

England Squash commented that the two clubs in Maidstone are strong with good facilities and a stable membership. The governing body's current strategic emphasis is on protecting the current supply of facilities and the development of players rather than promoting construction of new courts.

### 8.10 Future demand for squash courts

#### 8.10.1 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.

#### 8.10.2 Participation rates

One factor in considering future sports participation rates is to track historical trends, as a guide to possible future developments. Sport England's 'Active People' survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for squash at national level on an annual basis since 2005. The results are tabulated below and show that participation has declined significantly over the past decade, with the number of regular (at least once a week) players falling by more than 100,000, from 299,800 in 2005 to 199,500 in 2016. The adult participation rates are detailed below:

2005/06	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	% Change
0.74%	0.71%	0.72%	0.69%	0.67%	0.61%	0.55%	0.45%	0.51%	0.45%	-0.29%

### 8.10.3 Future projections

Local squash participation rates have been stable in recent years and whilst this runs counter to national trends, it would be reasonable to assume static growth to 2031. Population growth of 14.4% will therefore increase demand for squash court capacity by a similar amount.

### 8.11 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Contrary to national trends, expressed demand for squash courts in Maidstone is stable.
- Population growth of 14.4% in Maidstone by 2031 is likely increase demand for squash court capacity by a similar amount.

### 8.12 The balance between squash court supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between squash court supply and demand in Maidstone:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough courts with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the courts fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the courts in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the courts available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

### 8.13 Quantity

#### 8.13.1 Current needs

Current squash courts in Maidstone are assessed to be at operating with significant capacity, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used peak capacity:** The courts at Maidstone Squash Club are operating at 55% and those at Mote Park Squash Club at 60% in the peak periods.
- **Satisfied demand:** There is no evidence of unmet demand in the borough.
- **Changes in supply:** There are no know planned changes to supply, with relatively recent court refurbishment at both local clubs.

#### 8.13.2 Future needs

Spare capacity at the existing courts should be able to accommodate all additional future demand, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Demand increases:** 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.
- **Participation trends:** Local squash participation rates have been projected to remain static until 2031.
- **Additional needs:** With 45% spare peak time capacity at the Maidstone Squash Club courts and 40% at Mote Park Squash Club, all additional demand can be accommodated by current spare capacity.

## 8.14 Quality

### 8.14.1 Current quality

There are no significant quality issues relating to squash courts in Maidstone, although the position should be kept under review.

### 8.14.2 Future quality

Both local clubs continue to invest in maintaining and improving their facilities, so if this process can be assisted with funding from developer contributions in the future, it seems reasonable to assume that local provision will continue to be upgraded regularly.

## 8.15 Accessibility

### 8.15.1 Current accessibility

Some areas in the south-west and north-east of the borough are beyond the catchment of a facility within Maidstone, although all have access in these areas to facilities in neighbouring local authorities.

### 8.15.2 Future accessibility

Since the current facilities are geographically well-located to serve boroughwide needs, they will continue to serve future needs.

## 8.16 Availability

### 8.16.1 Current availability

Mote Park Squash Club offers casual use and both clubs have membership fees that are set at reasonable rates with discounts for off-peak use and juniors.

### 8.16.2 Future availability

It is reasonable to assume that similar membership arrangements will be offered in the future and if developer contribution funding is offered to enhance the facilities at both sites, it could be conditional on the provision of 'pay-and-play' access.

## **8.17 The options for securing additional squash court capacity**

The options for securing existing and additional squash court capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

### **8.17.1 Protect**

Protecting existing squash courts through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

### **8.17.2 Provide**

There is no identified strategic need to provide additional squash courts, although the position should be regularly reviewed over the lifespan of the strategy.

### **8.17.3 Enhance**

Enhancing existing squash courts by ensuring that the courts and ancillary facilities receive regular maintenance and improvements.

## **8.18 Action Plan**

The table below sets out the action plan for squash courts to guide the implementation of the strategy.

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Estimated costs</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Protection of existing squash courts.	Include a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing squash courts.	MBC	-	-	High
Monitoring demand levels	Regular monitoring to ensure that changes in demand do not affect assessed needs.	MBC	-	-	Medium

## 9 INDOOR AND OUTDOOR TENNIS COURTS

### *Key findings:*

- **Quantity:** There are four seasonally covered indoor tennis courts with community use in Maidstone, 52 outdoor courts with community access (of which 36 are floodlit) and 30 outdoor courts without community use (of which 21 are floodlit). There is sufficient spare capacity at existing indoor and outdoor courts to cater for all additional demand to 2031.
- **Quality:** The quality of courts is ‘poor’ at three sites, in particular at Freedom Leisure Maidstone where the courts are seasonally covered to provide the single indoor facility in the borough. Seven of the 13 outdoor court sites have at least one element that is rated as ‘poor’.
- **Accessibility:** The whole population is within the 30-minute drivetime catchment of the indoor courts at Freedom Leisure Maidstone. Large areas in the east and west of the borough are more than 10-minutes’ drive from the nearest ‘pay-and-play’ outdoor tennis court, although all areas are within 10-minutes of the nearest court if club facilities are included.
- **Availability:** ‘Pay-and-play’ tennis is available at all four of the indoor courts in the borough and at 19 36.5% of the 52 community-accessible outdoor courts.

### 9.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of indoor and outdoor tennis courts in Maidstone.

- Indoor tennis halls are defined specialist permanent or temporary indoor facilities with appropriate playing surface, line markings, nets and court dimensions for tennis.
- Outdoor tennis courts are defined as specialist outdoor facilities with appropriate playing surface, line markings and nets for tennis.

### 9.2 Quantity

#### 9.2.1 Indoor tennis courts with community use

The location and number of indoor tennis courts with community use in Maidstone is as follows. The courts are covered seasonally between September and March with two airdome structures:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Courts</i>	<i>Year built</i>
Freedom Leisure Maidstone	St. Peter’s Street, Maidstone ME16 0SX	4	2008

#### 9.2.2 Outdoor tennis courts with community use

The location and number of outdoor tennis courts with community use in Maidstone is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Courts</i>	<i>Lights</i>
Allington Chestnuts TC	Buckland Rd, Maidstone ME16 0SF	9 Tarmac	Yes
Bearsted and Thurnham TC	Church Landway, Bearsted ME14 4NE	5 Tarmac	Yes
Clare Park tennis courts	Tonbridge Road, Maidstone ME16 8JS	2 Tarmac	No
Feel Good Health Club	Ashford Road, Hollingbourne ME17 1RE	2 Tarmac	No
Freedom Leisure Maidstone	St. Peter's Street, Maidstone ME16 0SX	5 Tarmac*	Yes
Headcorn Tennis Club	Lenham Road, Headcorn TN27 9LE	3 Synthetic turf	Yes
Maidstone Tennis Club	Giddyhorn Lane Park, Maidstone ME16 0DE	4 Synthetic turf	Yes
Marden tennis courts	Albion Road, Marden TN12 9EF	2 Tarmac	No
Marriott Health Club	Ashford Road, Bearsted ME14 4NQ	2 Tarmac	Yes
Penenden Heath tennis courts	The Green, Penenden Heath ME14 2DU	6 Tarmac	Yes
South Park tennis courts	Armstrong Road, Maidstone ME15 6AZ	4 Tarmac	No
Staplehurst Tennis Club	Frittenden Road, Staplehurst TN12 0DH	3 Grass 2 Tarmac	No Yes
Sutton Valence Tennis Club	North Street, Sutton Valence ME17 3HT	3 Tarmac	No

\* Includes the four seasonally covered courts.

### 9.2.3 Outdoor tennis courts without community use

The location of outdoor tennis courts without community use in Maidstone is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Courts</i>	<i>Lights</i>
Kent Police	Sutton Rd, Maidstone ME15 9BZ	2 Tarmac	No
Maidstone Grammar School for Boys	Barton Road, Maidstone ME15 7BT	2 Tarmac	No
Mapleton Noakes School	Buckland Rd, Maidstone ME16 0TJ	5 Tarmac	No
New Line Learning Academy	Boughton Lane, Loose ME15 9QL	6 Synthetic turf	Yes
Saint Augustine Academy	Oakwood Rd, Maidstone ME16 8AE	2 Tarmac	Yes
Saint Simon Stock School	Oakwood Park, Maidstone ME16 0JP	7 Tarmac	Yes
Sutton Valence School	North St., Sutton Valence ME17 3HN	6 Synthetic turf	Yes

## 9.3 Quality

### 9.3.1 The criteria assessed for indoor courts

The quality of indoor tennis courts was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were assessed were as follows:

- **The court:** The overall condition, playing surface, clear span roof height, lighting, spectator provision, equipment and fitness for purpose.
- **Changing facilities:** The capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- **Disability access:** The extent of full disabled access to the facility, including the provision of access ramps, dedicated changing, toilets and car parking.
- **Maintenance and cleanliness:** The quality of maintenance and cleanliness standards.
- **General access:** Car parking, signposting, external lighting and proximity to public transport.

### 9.3.2 The criteria assessed for outdoor courts

The quality of outdoor tennis courts was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were assessed were as follows:

- **The court:** Court surface, line markings and fitness for purpose.
- **Fencing:** Condition and appearance.
- **Disability access:** Provision for disabled access to the courts.
- **General access:** Parking, signage and proximity to public transport.
- **Lighting:** The quality, illumination levels and evenness of floodlights.

### 9.3.3 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to ‘very good’ (highlighted in green below), 4 to ‘good’ (also highlighted in green below), 3 to ‘average’ (highlighted in yellow below), 2 to ‘poor’ (highlighted in red below) and 1 to ‘very poor’ (also highlighted in red below).

### 9.3.4 Indoor court assessment

The ratings for the indoor tennis courts in Maidstone are shown in the table below.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Courts</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Disability Access</i>	<i>Maintenance</i>	<i>General access</i>
Freedom Leisure Maidstone	2	4	4	4	4

### 9.3.5 Outdoor court assessment

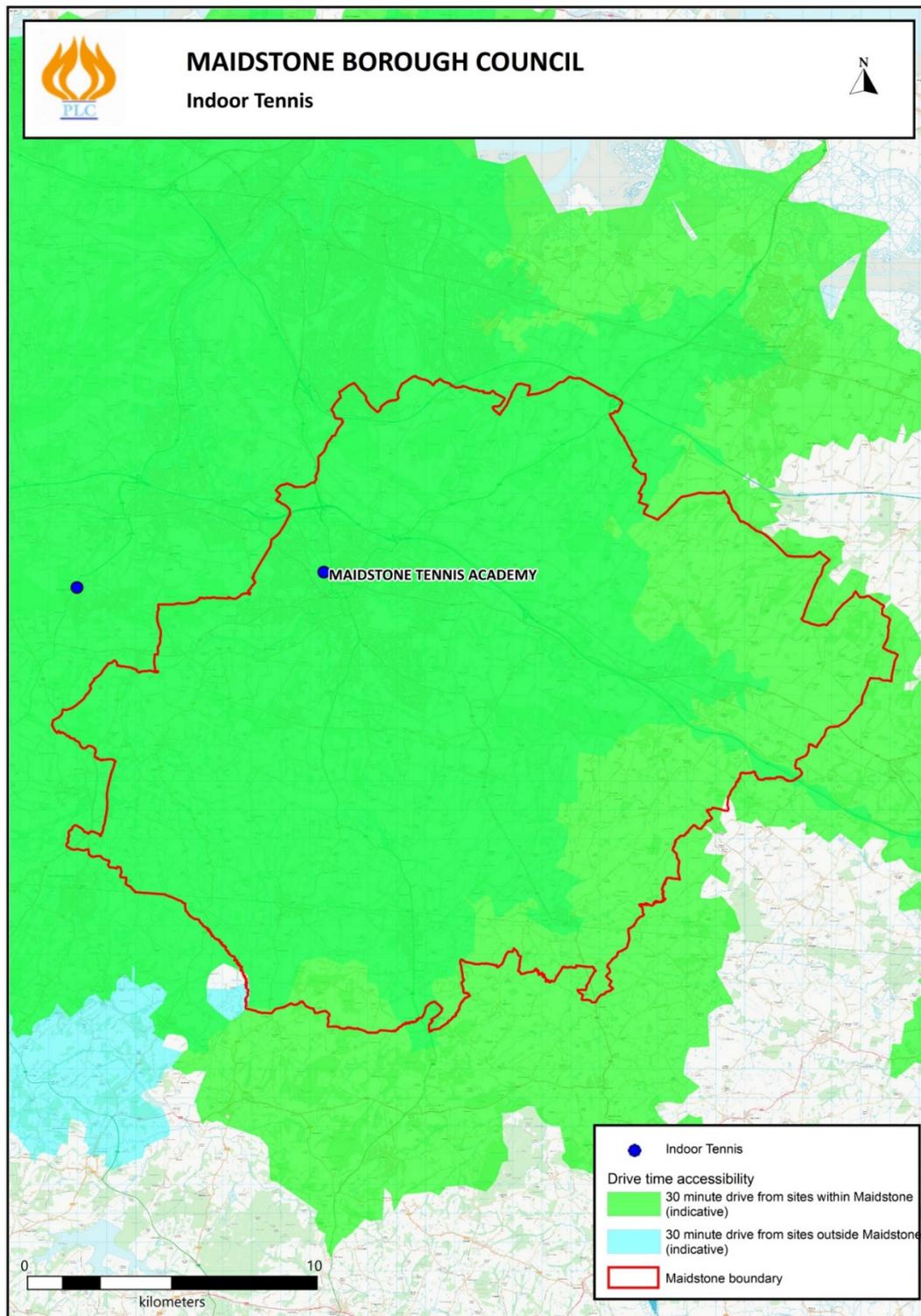
The ratings for the outdoor tennis courts in Maidstone are shown in the table below.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Court</i>	<i>Fencing</i>	<i>Disability Access</i>	<i>General access</i>	<i>Lighting</i>
Allington Chestnuts TC	5	5	3	5	4
Bearsted and Thurnham TC	5	5	4	4	5
Clare Park tennis courts	2	3	3	3	-
Feel Good Health Club	3	3	3	2	-
Freedom Leisure Maidstone	2	5	4	5	5
Headcorn Tennis Club	4	5	4	3	4
Maidstone Tennis Club	5	5	2	3	4
Marden tennis courts	3	2	2	3	-
Marriott Health Club	4	4	3	4	4
Penenden Heath tennis courts	5	4	3	4	5
South Park tennis courts	4	4	4	4	-
Staplehurst Tennis Club	3	2	2	4	2
Sutton Valence Tennis Club	2	2	1	2	-

## 9.4 Accessibility

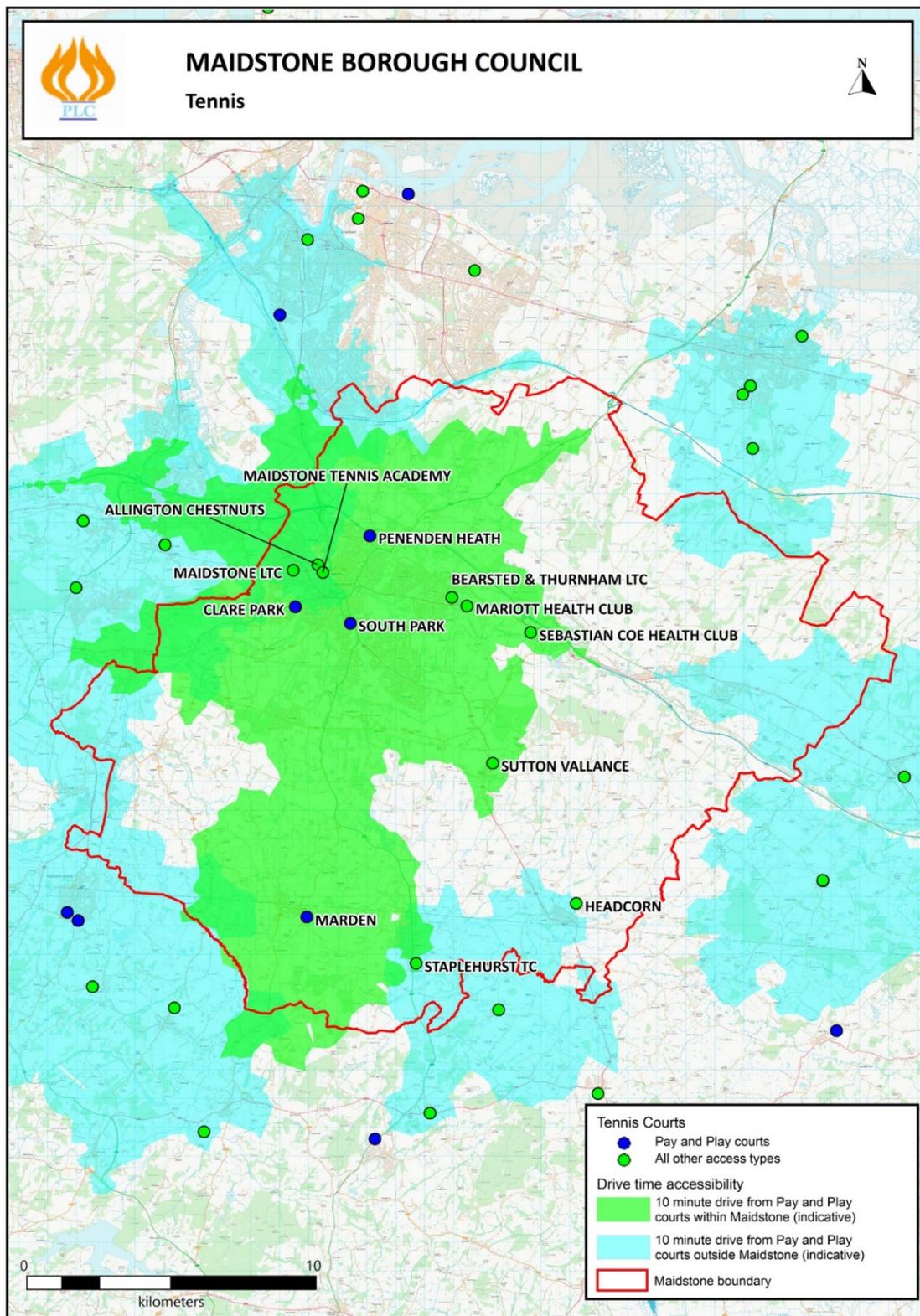
### 9.4.1 Indoor courts

Based on LTA research, the ‘effective catchment’ for indoor tennis courts is 30 minutes driving time. The map below shows the location of the indoor tennis courts in Maidstone, together with courts in neighbouring areas which are within the 30-minute drivetime catchment of the borough boundary:



## 9.4.2 Outdoor courts

Based on Sport England research, the ‘effective catchment’ for outdoor tennis courts is 10 minutes driving time. The map below shows the location of the outdoor tennis courts in Maidstone, together with courts in neighbouring areas which are within the 10-minute drivetime catchment of the borough boundary:



## 9.5 Availability

The table below identifies the basis of use and cost of tennis court usage in Maidstone:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Basis of use</i>
Allington Chestnuts TC	-	Membership only
Bearsted and Thurnham TC	£130 per year membership	Membership only
Clare Park tennis courts	£8 per court per hour (adults) £4.40 per court per hour (concessions)	'Pay-and-play'
Feel Good Health Club	£40.99 per month membership	Membership only
Freedom Leisure Maidstone	£5 per court per hour casual hire £30 per month membership	'Pay-and-play' Membership Coaching Academy
Headcorn Tennis Club	£90 per year membership	Membership only
Maidstone Tennis Club	£130 per year membership	Membership only
Marden tennis courts	£2 per court per hour	'Pay-and-play'
Marriott Health Club	£65 per month membership	Membership only
Penenden Heath tennis courts	£8 per court per hour (adults) £4.40 per court per hour (concessions)	'Pay-and-play' Coaching Academy
South Park tennis courts	£8 per court per hour (adults) £4.40 per court per hour (concessions)	'Pay-and-play'
Staplehurst Tennis Club	£60 per year membership	Membership only
Sutton Valence Tennis Club	£50 per year membership	Membership only

## 9.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are four seasonally covered indoor tennis courts with community use in Maidstone, 52 outdoor courts with community access (of which 36 are floodlit) and 30 outdoor courts without community use (of which 21 are floodlit).
- The quality of courts is 'poor' at three sites, in particular at Freedom Leisure Maidstone where the courts are seasonally covered to provide the single indoor facility in the borough. Seven of the 13 outdoor court sites have at least one element that is rated as 'poor'.
- The whole population is within the 30-minute drivetime catchment of the indoor courts at Freedom Leisure Maidstone.
- Large areas in the east and west of the borough are more than 10-minutes' drive from the nearest 'pay-and-play' outdoor tennis court, although all areas are within 10-minutes of the nearest court if club facilities are included.
- 'Pay-and-play' tennis is available at all four of the indoor courts in the borough and at 19 (36.5%) of the 52 community-accessible outdoor courts.

## **9.7 Current demand for tennis courts**

### **9.7.1 Expressed demand**

Tennis participation has been in long-term decline and although most clubs in the borough currently have stable membership numbers. There are no detailed figures available for peak time court utilisation, but all local providers have indicated that there is significant spare capacity at most courts.

### **9.7.2 Displaced demand**

Displaced demand relates to users of tennis courts from within the study area which takes place outside of the area. There is no evidence of exported demand from Maidstone, although several courts are located in adjacent local authority areas, close enough to the borough boundary to provide usage opportunities for Maidstone residents.

### **9.7.3 Unmet demand**

All clubs in the borough have indicated that they can accommodate new users/members, so facility capacity is not an issue. Some of the population is outside the catchment of a ‘pay-and-play’ facility within Maidstone, although all have access in these areas to facilities on club sites so there is no unmet geographical demand.

## **9.8 Local sports participation priorities**

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in Maidstone, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. As an activity appealing to both genders and most age groups, tennis is likely to have some appeal to new and lapsed sports participants.

## **9.9 Sport-specific priorities**

The Lawn Tennis Association commented that whilst Maidstone is not one of its priority areas for development, there is a healthy club network in the borough with several strong clubs with good junior development programmes. The Maidstone Tennis Academy at Freedom Leisure Maidstone has produced a number of elite players.

## **9.10 Future demand for tennis courts**

### **9.10.1 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.

## 9.10.2 Participation rates

One factor in considering future sports participation rates is to track historical trends, as a guide to possible future developments. Sport England's 'Active People' survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for tennis at national level on an annual basis since 2005. The results are tabulated below and show that participation has declined significantly over the past decade, with the number of regular (at least once a week) players falling by more than 59,000, from 457,200 in 2005 to 398,100 in 2016. The adult participation rates are detailed below:

2005/06	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	% Change
1.12%	1.18%	1.27%	1.04%	0.88%	1.03%	0.94%	0.89%	1.02%	0.90%	-0.22%

## 9.10.3 Future projections

Local tennis participation rates have been stable in recent years and whilst this runs counter to national trends, it would be reasonable to assume static growth to 2031. Population growth of 14.4% will therefore increase demand for tennis court capacity by a similar amount.

## 9.11 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Contrary to national trends, expressed demand for indoor and outdoor tennis courts in Maidstone is stable.
- Population growth of 14.4% in Maidstone by 2031 is likely increase demand for indoor and outdoor tennis court capacity by a similar amount.

## 9.12 The balance between tennis court supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between indoor and outdoor tennis court supply and demand in Maidstone:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough courts with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the courts fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the courts in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the courts available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

## 9.13 Quantity

### 9.13.1 Current needs

Current indoor and outdoor tennis courts in Maidstone are assessed to be at operating with significant spare capacity, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used capacity:** All local providers have indicated that there is significant spare capacity at most courts.
- **Satisfied demand:** There is no evidence of unmet demand in the borough.
- **Changes in supply:** There are no know planned changes to tennis court supply, although court quality at Freedom Leisure Maidstone, which is currently rated as ‘average’ should be kept under review to ensure that any further deterioration does not adversely affect usage capacity.

### 9.13.2 Future needs

Spare capacity at the existing indoor and outdoor tennis courts should be able to accommodate all additional future demand, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Demand increases:** 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.
- **Participation trends:** Local tennis participation rates have been projected to remain static until 2031.
- **Additional needs:** With spare capacity at both indoor and outdoor courts, all additional demand can be accommodated by current spare capacity.
- **Access to courts on school sites:** In addition to the 52 courts that are currently community accessible, there are a further 30 courts on school sites, 21 of which are floodlit, where community use might be negotiated subject to additional demand.

## 9.14 Quality

### 9.14.1 Current quality

There are a number of quality issues relating to tennis courts in Maidstone, with the following elements rated as ‘poor’ quality:

- The court surfaces at Clare Park.
- General access at Feelgood Health Club.
- The indoor/outdoor court surfaces at Freedom Leisure Maidstone.
- Disabled access at Maidstone Tennis Club.
- Court fencing and disabled access at Marden tennis courts.
- Court fencing and disabled access and floodlighting at Staplehurst Tennis Club.
- The court surface, fencing, disabled and general access at Sutton Valance Tennis Club.

## 9.14.2 Future quality

All court providers will need to continue to invest in maintaining and improving their facilities, so if this process can be assisted with funding from developer contributions in the future, it seems reasonable to assume that local provision will continue to be upgraded regularly.

## 9.15 Accessibility

### 9.15.1 Current accessibility

Whilst the whole population is within 30-minutes drivetime of the indoor courts, parts of the east and west of the borough are more than 10-minutes' drive from the nearest 'pay-and-play' outdoor tennis court. However, all areas are within 10-minutes of the nearest court of club facilities are included.

### 9.15.2 Future accessibility

It is unlikely that new outdoor tennis courts will be provided in the areas outside the catchment of the current facilities.

## 9.16 Availability

### 9.16.1 Current availability

'Pay-and-play' tennis is available at all four of the indoor courts in the borough and at 19 (36.5%) of the 52 community-accessible outdoor courts. Club membership fees are generally set at reasonable rates.

### 9.16.2 Future availability

It is reasonable to assume that a similar balance of 'pay-and-play' and membership arrangements will be offered in the future and if developer contribution funding is offered to enhance the facilities at club sites, it could be conditional on the provision of 'pay-and-play' access.

## 9.17 The options for securing additional tennis court capacity

The options for securing existing and additional tennis court capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

### 9.17.1 Protect

Protecting existing indoor and outdoor tennis courts through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

### 9.17.2 Provide

There is no identified strategic need to provide additional indoor or outdoor tennis courts, although the position should be regularly reviewed over the lifespan of the strategy.

### 9.17.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing tennis court capacity by:

- Ensuring that the courts and ancillary facilities receive regular maintenance and improvements, funded by developer contributions where appropriate.
- Negotiating community access to the 30 outdoor tennis courts on school sites.

## 9.18 Action Plan

### 9.18.1 Introduction

The tables below set out the action plan for indoor and outdoor tennis courts to guide the implementation of the strategy. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England's *Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2016*' (2016).

### 9.18.2 Key strategic actions

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Estimated costs</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Protection of existing tennis courts.	Include a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing tennis courts.	MBC	-	-	High
Community access to school courts	Negotiate access to tennis courts on school sites.	MBC	Schools	-	Medium
Funding for future tennis court needs.	Include tennis courts as 'relevant infrastructure' under CIL regulation 123.	MBC	-	-	High

### 9.18.3 Site-specific actions

<i>Site</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Estimated costs</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Allington Chestnuts TC	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Bearsted and Thurnham TC	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Clare Park tennis courts	Poor quality court surface	Resurface courts	MBC	External funders	£20,000	Medium
Feel Good Health Club	Poor quality general access	Improve court access	Feel Good	-	£5,000	Medium
Freedom Leisure Maidstone	Poor quality court surface	Resurface courts	Freedom Leisure	LTA	£50,000	High
Headcorn Tennis Club	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Maidstone Tennis Club	Poor quality disabled access	Improve disabled access	MTC	External funders	£5,000	Medium
Marden tennis courts	Poor quality court fencing and disabled access	Improve court fencing and disabled access	Parish Council	External funders	£8,000	Medium
Marriott Health Club	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-

<i>Site</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Estimated costs</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Penenden Heath tennis courts	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
South Park tennis courts	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Staplehurst Tennis Club	Poor quality court fencing, disabled access and floodlighting.	Improve court fencing, disabled access and floodlighting	STC	External funders	£15,000	Medium
Sutton Valance Tennis Club	Poor quality court surface, fencing, disabled access and floodlighting.	Improve court surface fencing, disabled access and floodlighting	SVTC	External funders	£50,000	Medium

## 10 INDOOR AND OUTDOOR BOWLS FACILITIES

### *Key findings:*

- **Quantity:** There is one 8-rink indoor bowls hall and ten outdoor bowls greens in Maidstone. There is sufficient spare capacity at existing indoor and outdoor facilities to cater for all additional demand to 2031.
- **Quality:** The quality of facilities is generally good, with the only ‘poor’ elements being disabled and general access at Hunton Bowls Club.
- **Accessibility:** The whole population is within the 30-minute drivetime catchment of Mote Park Indoor Bowls Club. A small area in the east of the borough is more than 15-minutes’ drive from the nearest outdoor bowls green.
- **Availability:** All facilities operate on a membership basis, although several clubs run weekly introductory coaching sessions to attract new members

### 10.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of indoor and outdoor bowls facilities in Maidstone.

- Indoor bowls halls are defined specialist indoor facilities with appropriate playing surface and rink dimensions for bowls.
- Outdoor bowls greens are defined as effectively flat, fine turf grassed areas, 40 yards x 40 yards, with regulation banks and ditches around the perimeter and ancillary facilities for changing and equipment storage.

### 10.2 Quantity

#### 10.2.1 Indoor bowls halls with community use

The location and number of rinks at the only indoor bowls hall with community use in Maidstone is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Rinks</i>
Mote Park Indoor Bowls Club	Mote Park, Willow Way Maidstone ME15 7RN	8

#### 10.2.2 Outdoor bowls greens with community use

The location and number of outdoor bowls greens with community use in Maidstone is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>
Bearsted and Thurnham BC	Church Landway, Bearsted ME14 4NE
Clare Park Bowls Club	Tonbridge Road, Maidstone ME16 8JS
Headcorn Bowls Club	Maidstone Road, Headcorn TN27 9RL
Hunton Bowls Club	West Street, Hunton ME15 0RR
Kent Police Bowls Club	Sutton Road, Maidstone ME15 9BZ
Loose Bowls Club	Loose Road, Maidstone ME15 9UA
Maidstone Bowls Club	Buckland Road, Maidstone ME16 0DT
Marden Bowls Club	Howland Road, Marden TN12 9DR
Penenden Heath Bowls Club	Recreation Ground, Penenden Heath ME14 2DH
Westborough Bowls Club	Cloudberry Close, London Road, Maidstone ME16 0LY

### 10.3 Quality

#### 10.3.1 The criteria assessed for indoor bowls halls

The quality of the indoor bowls hall was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit. The criteria that were assessed were as follows:

- ***The green:*** The overall condition, lighting, spectator provision, equipment storage and fitness for purpose.
- ***Changing facilities:*** The capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- ***Disability access:*** The extent of full disabled access to the facility, including the provision of access ramps, dedicated changing, toilets and car parking.
- ***Maintenance and cleanliness:*** The quality of maintenance and cleanliness standards.
- ***General access:*** Car parking, signposting, external lighting and proximity to public transport.

#### 10.3.2 The criteria assessed for outdoor bowls greens

The quality of outdoor bowls greens was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were assessed were as follows:

- ***The green:*** The quality of the grass, flatness and regulation ditches.
- ***Changing facilities:*** The capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- ***Disability access:*** The extent of full disabled access to the facility, including the provision of access ramps, dedicated changing, toilets and car parking.
- ***General access:*** Parking, signage and proximity to public transport.

### 10.3.3 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to ‘very good’ (highlighted in green below), 4 to ‘good’ (also highlighted in green below), 3 to ‘average’ (highlighted in yellow below), 2 to ‘poor’ (highlighted in red below) and 1 to ‘very poor’.

### 10.3.4 Indoor bowls hall assessment

The ratings for the indoor bowls facility in Maidstone are shown in the table below.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Disability Access</i>	<i>Maintenance</i>	<i>General access</i>
Mote Park Indoor Bowls Club	5	5	4	5	5

### 10.3.5 Outdoor bowls greens assessment

The ratings for the outdoor bowls greens in Maidstone are shown in the table below.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Disability Access</i>	<i>General access</i>
Bearsted and Thurnham BC	5	5	4	5
Clare Park BC	3	4	4	5
Headcorn BC	5	4	4	5
Hunton BC	4	3	2	2
Kent Police BC	4	3	3	3
Loose BC	4	4	4	5
Maidstone BC	4	4	4	5
Marden BC	4	3	3	3
Penenden Heath BC	4	4	3	4
Westborough BC	4	3	3	3

## 10.4 Accessibility

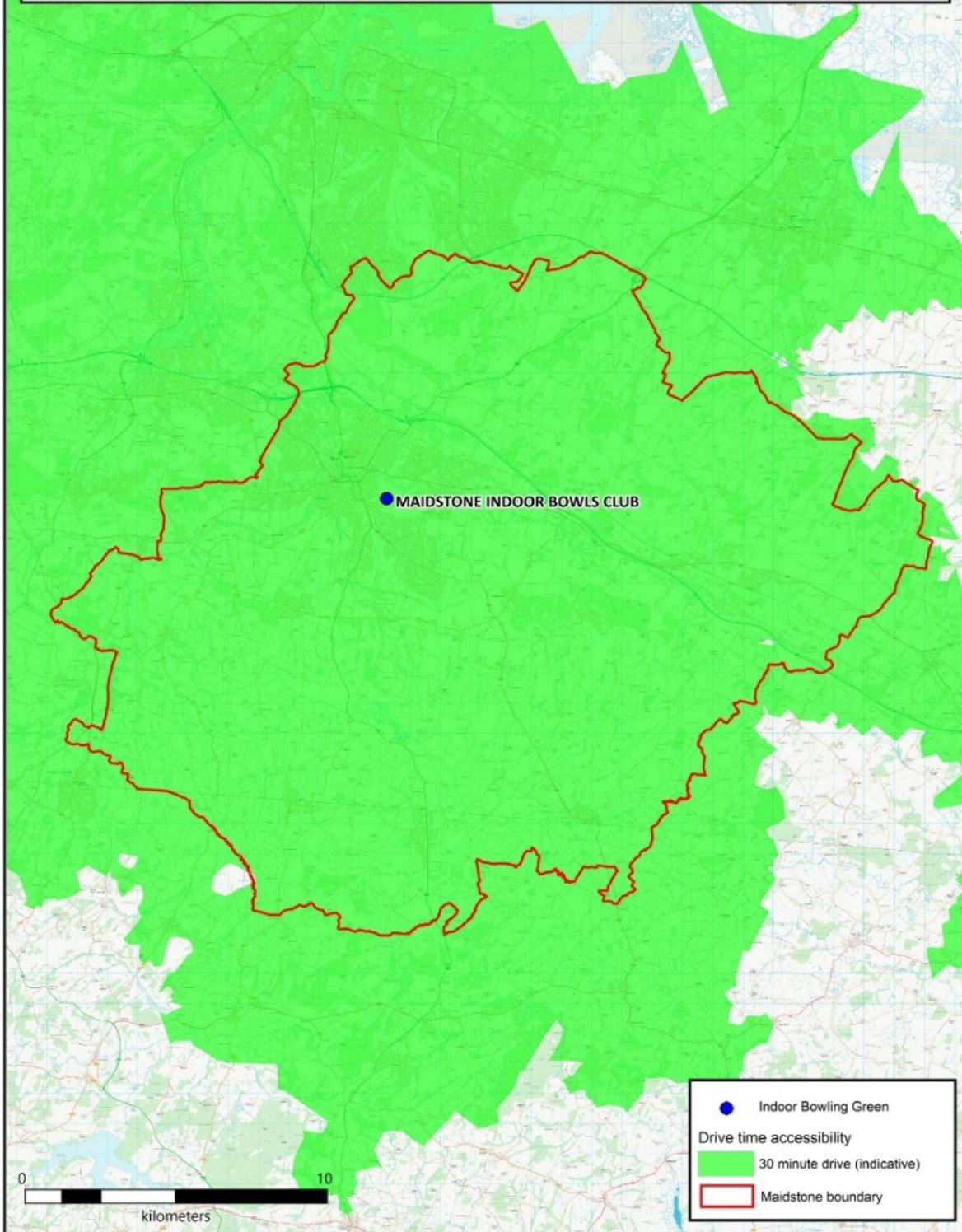
### 10.4.1 Indoor bowls hall

Based on Sport England research, the ‘effective catchment’ for indoor bowls facilities (defined as the time/distance travelled and the prevailing mode of transport used by up to 90% of facility users) is 30 minutes driving time. The map shows the location of the indoor bowls hall, with a 30-minute drivetime catchment:



# MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

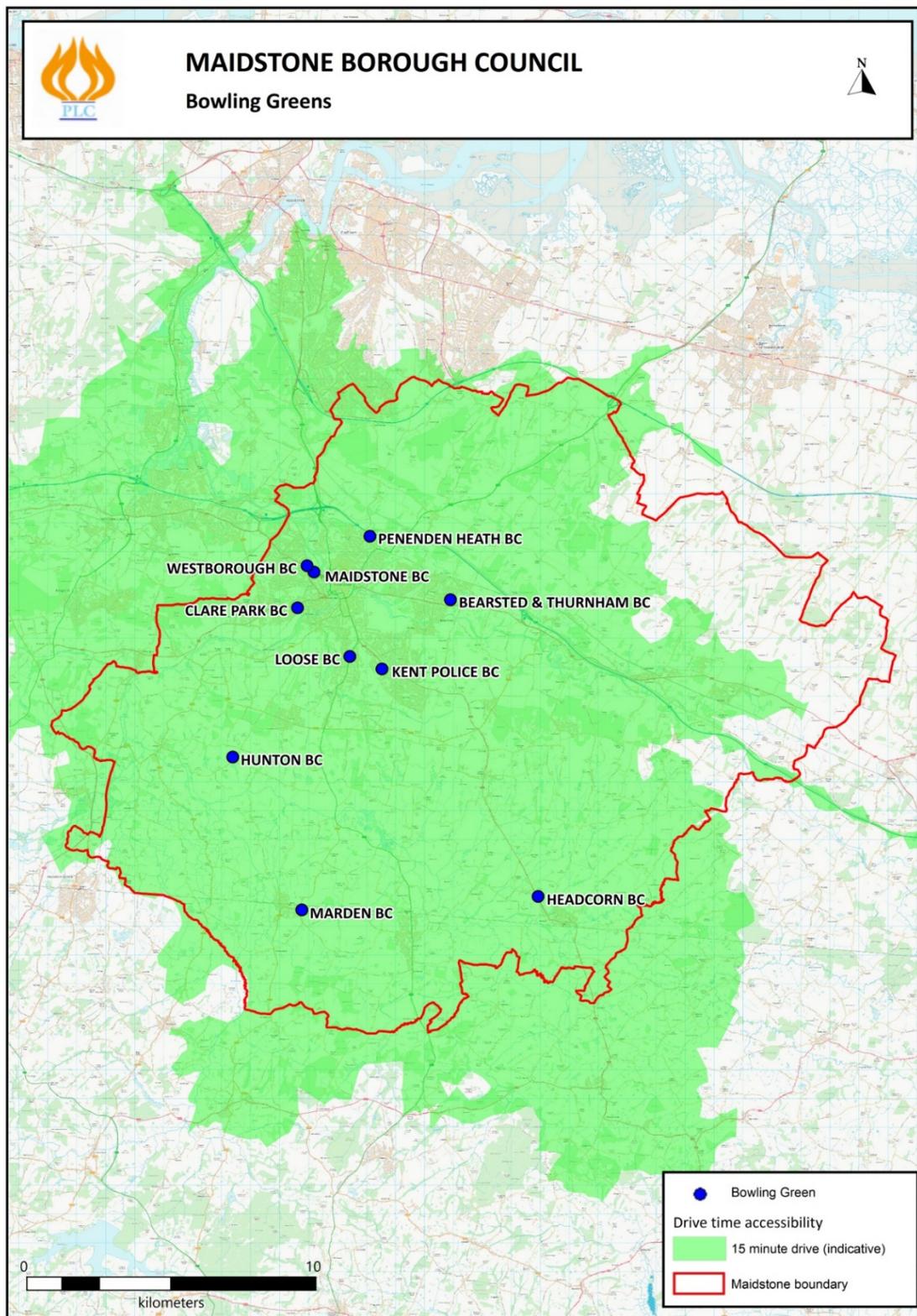
## Indoor Bowling Greens



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## 10.4.2 Outdoor bowls greens

Based on Sport England research, the ‘effective catchment’ for outdoor bowls greens (defined as the time/distance travelled and the prevailing mode of transport used by up to 90% of facility users) is 15 minutes driving time. The map below shows the location of the outdoor bowls greens in Maidstone, with a 15-minute drivetime catchment:



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## 10.5 Availability

### 10.5.1 Indoor bowls hall

The use of the facility is confined to members of Mote Park Indoor Bowls Club, although the club has an extensive programme of coaching and introductory sessions, including free open days.

### 10.5.2 Outdoor bowls greens

The table below identifies the basis of use of outdoor bowls greens in Maidstone:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Basis of use</i>
Bearsted and Thurnham BC	Membership only Junior coaching provided
Clare Park BC	Membership only
Headcorn BC	Membership only
Hunton BC	Membership only Introductory sessions provided
Kent Police BC	Membership only
Loose BC	Membership only Introductory sessions provided
Maidstone BC	Membership only
Marden BC	Membership only Introductory sessions provided
Penenden Heath BC	Membership only
Westborough BC	Membership only

## 10.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There is one 8-rink indoor bowls hall and ten outdoor bowls greens in Maidstone.
- The quality of facilities is generally good, with the only ‘poor’ elements being disabled and general access at Hunton Bowls Club.
- The whole population is within the 30-minute drivetime catchment of Mote Park Indoor Bowls Club.
- A small area in the east of the borough is more than 15-minutes’ drive from the nearest outdoor bowls green.
- All facilities operate on a membership basis, although several clubs run weekly introductory coaching sessions to attract new members.

## 10.7 Current demand for bowls facilities

### 10.7.1 Expressed demand

- **Indoor bowls:** Mote Park IBC currently has 550 members. Sport England's *Indoor Bowls Guidance Note* (2005) stipulates that full capacity is reached at 80 - 100 members per rink, so as an eight-rink facility, the indoor hall can accommodate 640 - 800 members. This suggests that expressed demand amounts to around 69% based on 100 members per rink.
- **Outdoor bowls:** Bowls participation has been in long-term decline and the national picture of falling demand is reflected in the Maidstone area, with Tovil Bowls Club closing in 2016 due to a shortage of members. Four clubs have made significant efforts to attract new participants, in particular juniors, with some success, but all local outdoor clubs have indicated that they have significant spare capacity.

### 10.7.2 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to users of bowls greens from within the study area which takes place outside of the area. There is no evidence of exported demand for indoor or outdoor bowls facilities from Maidstone.

### 10.7.3 Unmet demand

All clubs in the borough have indicated that they can accommodate new users/members, so facility capacity is not an issue. The whole borough population is within the catchment of the indoor facility, but a small area in the east of the borough is outside the 15-minute drivetime catchment of an outdoor green, so there is a limited amount unmet geographical demand.

## 10.8 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in Maidstone, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. As an activity appealing primarily to older age groups, bowls is likely to have some appeal to new and lapsed sports participants in an expanding proportion of the population.

## 10.9 Sport-specific priorities

The Bowls Development Alliance commented that Maidstone is not a development priority area for bowls and that none of the clubs in the borough has been prioritised for support through its Club Development Programme, but all are eligible for support through its Play Bowls package.

## 10.10 Future demand for bowls

### 10.10.1 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.

## 10.10.2 Participation rates

One factor in considering future sports participation rates is to track historical trends, as a guide to possible future developments. Sport England's 'Active People' survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for bowls at national level on an annual basis since 2005. The results are tabulated below and show that participation has declined significantly over the past decade, with the number of regular (at least once a week) players falling by more than 98,000, from 309,800 in 2005 to 211,900 in 2016. The participation rates are detailed below:

2005/06	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	% Change
2.21%	2.32%	2.10%	2.02%	1.54%	1.57%	1.73%	1.58%	1.33%	1.30%	-0.91%

## 10.10.3 Future projections

Sport England has developed the Sport Facility Calculator (SFC), to help to quantify how much additional demand for key community facilities like indoor bowls halls, will be generated by population increases. The SFC uses Sport England survey data on who uses facilities and applies this to the population profile of the local area. This builds up a profile of usage, which can be then applied to estimate how much demand any given population would generate. This demand is then converted into the quantity of facilities needed and expressed as rinks to define indoor bowls needs. Based upon this, the SFC calculates demand equivalent to an additional 1.58 indoor bowls rinks by 2031.

## 10.11 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Expressed demand for indoor and outdoor bowls in Maidstone has fallen in the past decade.
- Population growth of 14.4% in Maidstone by 2031 is likely increase demand for indoor and outdoor bowls green capacity by a similar amount, assuming static participation rates in the future.
- In terms of indoor bowls, the Sport Facility Calculator assesses that the extra demand is equivalent to 1.58 indoor rinks.

## 10.12 The balance between bowls supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between indoor and outdoor bowls green supply and demand in Maidstone:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough greens with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the greens fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the greens in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?

- **Availability:** Are the greens available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

## 10.13 Quantity

### 10.13.1 Current needs

Current indoor and outdoor bowls facilities in Maidstone are assessed to be at operating with significant spare capacity, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used capacity:** All local clubs have indicated that there is significant spare capacity to attract additional members.
- **Satisfied demand:** There is no evidence of unmet demand in the borough.
- **Changes in supply:** There are no know planned changes to bowls green supply.

### 10.13.2 Future needs

Spare capacity at the existing indoor and outdoor bowls facilities should be able to accommodate all additional future demand, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Demand increases:** 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.
- **Participation trends:** Local bowls participation rates have been projected to remain static until 2031.
- **Additional indoor bowls needs:** The Sport Facility Calculator assesses that the extra demand for indoor bowls is equivalent to 1.58 indoor rinks (accommodating 126 - 158 members) Existing spare capacity at Mote Park. IBC amounts to the equivalent of 2.5 rinks (or 250 members), so additional demand to 2031 can all be accommodated by the current facility.
- **Additional outdoor bowls needs:** There is sufficient spare capacity at existing bowls clubs to accommodate all additional demand to 2031 and this should add to the long-term viability of the current clubs.

## 10.14 Quality

### 10.14.1 Current quality

Disability and general access are rated as 'poor' at Hunton Bowls Club, but all other aspects of all other facilities are rated as at least 'average' quality.

### 10.14.2 Future quality

All providers will need to continue to invest in maintaining and improving their facilities, so if this process can be assisted with funding from developer contributions in the future, it seems reasonable to assume that local provision will continue to be upgraded regularly.

## 10.15 Accessibility

### 10.15.1 Current accessibility

The whole population is within the 30-minute drivetime catchment of Mote Park Indoor Bowls Club, but a small area in the east of the borough is more than 15-minutes' drive from the nearest outdoor bowls green.

### 10.15.2 Future accessibility

It is unlikely that new outdoor bowls greens will be provided in the areas outside the catchment of the current facilities.

## 10.16 Availability

### 10.16.1 Current availability

Sessions for non-members are run at four of the ten outdoor bowls clubs in the borough. Club membership fees are generally set at reasonable rates.

### 10.16.2 Future availability

It is reasonable to assume that a similar balance of arrangements for use by non-members will be offered in the future and if developer contribution funding is offered to enhance the facilities at club sites, it could be conditional on the provision of 'pay-and-play' access.

## 10.17 The options for securing additional bowls capacity

The options for securing existing and additional bowls capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

### 10.17.1 Protect

Protecting existing indoor and outdoor bowls facilities through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

### 10.17.2 Provide

There is no identified strategic need to provide additional indoor or outdoor bowls facilities, although the indoor bowls position in particular should be regularly reviewed over the lifespan of the strategy.

### 10.17.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing bowls facility capacity by:

- Ensuring that the greens and ancillary facilities receive regular maintenance and improvements, funded by developer contributions where appropriate.
- Making the provision of access for non-members a condition of any developer contribution funding offered towards bowls facilities improvements.

### 10.18 Action Plan

#### 10.18.1 Introduction

The tables below set out the action plan for indoor and outdoor bowls facilities to guide the implementation of the strategy. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England's *Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2016*' (2016).

#### 10.18.2 Key strategic actions

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Estimated costs</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Protection of existing bowls facilities	Include a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing bowls facilities	MBC	-	-	High
Funding for future bowls facilities needs.	Include bowls facilities as 'relevant infrastructure' under CIL regulation 123.	MBC	-	-	High

#### 10.18.3 Site-specific actions

<i>Site</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Estimated costs</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Bearsted and Thurnham BC	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Clare Park BC	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Headcorn BC	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Hunton BC	Poor quality disabled and general access	Improve disabled and general access	HBC	-	£5,000	Medium
Kent Police BC	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Loose BC	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Maidstone BC	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Marden BC	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Penenden Heath BC	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Westborough BC	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-

## 11 ATHLETICS TRACKS

### *Key findings:*

- **Quantity:** There is one 8-lane synthetic athletics track in Maidstone. There is sufficient spare capacity at the existing track to cater for all additional demand to 2031.
- **Quality:** The quality of the facility is generally good, although general access to the track is rated as only 'average'.
- **Accessibility:** The whole population is within the 30-minute drivetime catchment of the track.
- **Availability:** The track is only accessible by Medway and Maidstone Athletics Club on a membership basis, although as a specialist facility type athletics tracks generally attract minimal casual usage.

### 11.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of athletics tracks in Maidstone. Athletics tracks are defined as 400m synthetic surfaced tracks with full field events provision.

### 11.2 Quantity

The location and number of lanes at the athletics track with community use in Maidstone is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Lanes</i>
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	North Street, Sutton Valence ME17 3HN	8

### 11.3 Quality

#### 11.3.1 The criteria assessed for athletics tracks

The quality of the athletics track was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit. The criteria that were assessed were as follows:

- **The track:** The overall condition of the track surface, line markings, lighting, spectator provision, equipment storage and fitness for purpose.
- **Changing facilities:** The capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- **Disability access:** The extent of full disabled access to the facility, including the provision of dedicated changing, toilets and car parking.
- **Maintenance and cleanliness:** The quality of maintenance and cleanliness standards.

- **General access:** Car parking, signposting, external lighting and proximity to public transport.

### 11.3.2 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to ‘very good’ (highlighted in green below), 4 to ‘good’ (also highlighted in green below), 3 to ‘average’ (highlighted in yellow below), 2 to ‘poor’ and 1 to ‘very poor’.

### 11.3.3 Athletics track assessment

The ratings for the athletics track in Maidstone are shown in the table below.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Track</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Disability Access</i>	<i>Maintenance</i>	<i>General access</i>
Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre	4	5	4	5	3

## 11.4 Accessibility

As a specialist facility, athletics tracks typically attract users from within a 30-minute drivetime catchment. The catchment of the track at the Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre covers the whole of the local population and the facility at Medway Park just to the north of the borough boundary is also used by the local club.

## 11.5 Availability

The track is not available to the general public on a ‘pay-and-play’ basis, but is hired by Medway and Maidstone Athletics Club for junior squad training sessions two evenings per week. There is no security of tenure for this arrangement. The Club’s main base is at the Medway Park Track in Gillingham.

## 11.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There is one 8-lane synthetic athletics track in Maidstone.
- The quality of facility is generally good, although general access to the track is rated as only ‘average’.
- The whole population is within the 30-minute drivetime catchment of the track.
- The track is only accessible by members of Medway and Maidstone Athletics Club, although as a specialist facility type athletics tracks generally attract minimal casual usage.

## **11.7 Current demand for athletics tracks**

### **11.7.1 Expressed demand**

Medway and Maidstone Athletics Club currently has 300 members and 300 members and runs teams at age groups from Young Athletes to veterans. As its name suggests, in addition to Maidstone residents it also serves athletics demand from the Medway area (Gillingham, Chatham, Rochester and Rainham). The club has currently closed its waiting list for prospective members aged 7 - 11 due to the high demand, although the key constraint is a shortage of coaches rather than a lack of facility capacity.

### **11.7.2 Displaced demand**

Displaced demand relates to users of athletics tracks from within the study area which takes place outside of the area. With the local athletics club's main base being in Gillingham, all athletes from Maidstone make extensive use of the Medway Park track.

### **11.7.3 Unmet demand**

There is significant unmet demand from 7 - 11 year olds, but no evidence of surplus demand from other age groups.

## **11.8 Local sports participation priorities**

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in Maidstone, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. Track and field athletics is a specialist subset of activities, which whilst increasingly appealing to participants from the older age groups is still a relatively minority interest.

## **11.9 Sport-specific priorities**

England Athletics has not identified Maidstone as a priority area for development. As per the UK Athletics *Facilities Strategy 2014 - 2019* (2014), it believes that there are sufficient 400m tracks in the area to meet current and future needs.

## **11.10 Future demand for athletics**

### **11.10.1 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.

### 11.10.2 Participation rates

One factor in considering future sports participation rates is to track historical trends, as a guide to possible future developments. Sport England's 'Active People' survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for running (which includes track and field athletics) at national level on an annual basis since 2005. The results are tabulated below and show that participation has increased significantly over the past decade, with the number of regular (at least once a week) runners growing by 864,000. The participation rates are detailed below:

2005/06	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	% Change
3.33%	3.89%	4.16%	4.45%	4.47%	4.72%	4.65%	4.96%	5.29%	5.37%	+2.04%

### 11.10.3 Future projections

Whilst demand for running in general is growing, this primarily involves recreational running on roads and footpaths, rather than participation in track and field athletics with its dependence on specialist track facilities, where participation has been broadly static. In relation to additional future demand for tracks, therefore, it seems reasonable to project needs based on the current participation rates.

### 11.11 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Expressed demand for athletics is relatively high in Maidstone, with unmet demand amongst 7 - 11 year olds that relates to a shortage of coaches rather than a lack of track capacity.
- Population growth of 14.4% in Maidstone by 2031 is likely increase demand for athletics track capacity by a similar amount, assuming static participation rates in the future.

### 11.12 The balance between athletics supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between athletics track supply and demand in Maidstone:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough tracks with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the tracks fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the tracks in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the tracks available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

## 11.13 Quantity

### 11.13.1 Current needs

The current athletics track in Maidstone is assessed to be at operating with significant spare capacity, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used capacity:** The track is used by Maidstone and Medway AC on two evenings per week only. This represents 25% of the available capacity in the peak period.
- **Satisfied demand:** Whilst there is unmet demand amongst the younger age groups, this is due to a lack of coaching capacity rather than a shortage of track capacity.
- **Changes in supply:** There are no know planned changes to athletics track supply, although the lack of secured community use at the Sydney Wooderson track means that access could, in theory, be withdrawn at any time.

### 11.13.2 Future needs

Spare capacity at the existing tracks in Sutton Valance and Gillingham should be able to accommodate all additional future demand, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Current spare capacity:** Current peak time spare capacity at the Sydney Wooderson track is 75%.
- **Demand increases:** 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.
- **Participation trends:** Local athletics participation rates have been projected to remain static until 2031.

## 11.14 Quality

### 11.14.1 Current quality

The current quality of the track and ancillary facilities is good, although general access is only 'average'.

### 11.14.2 Future quality

Tracks need to be resurfaced regularly to Sutton Valance School will need to continue to invest in maintaining and improving the facilities.

## 11.15 Accessibility

### 11.15.1 Current accessibility

The whole population is within the 30-minute drivetime catchment Sydney Wooderson and Medway Park tracks.

### 11.15.2 Future accessibility

Assuming that both tracks remain operational and have community use, the whole population will continue to have access to an athletics track.

## 11.16 Availability

### 11.16.1 Current availability

The track is not available to the general public on a ‘pay-and-play’ basis, but is hired by Medway and Maidstone Athletics Club for junior squad training sessions two evenings per week. There is no security of tenure for this arrangement.

### 11.16.2 Future availability

Although there is no reason to suppose that community access will be withdrawn in the future, there is no guarantee at present that this will not happen. Efforts should be made to secure community access.

## 11.17 The options for securing athletics track capacity

The options for securing existing and additional athletics track capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

### 11.17.1 Protect

Protecting existing athletics tracks through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

### 11.17.2 Provide

There is no identified strategic need to provide an additional track.

### 11.17.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing athletics track capacity by securing community use through a formal Community Use Agreement.

## 11.18 Action Plan

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Estimated costs</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Protection of existing athletics tracks	Include a policy in the Local Plan to protect the existing athletics track	MBC	-	-	High
Securing community use of the track	Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement with Sutton Valance School	MBC	Sutton Valance School	-	High
Funding for future athletics needs	Include athletics tracks as ‘relevant infrastructure’ under CIL regulation 123.	MBC	-	-	High

## 12 POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 12.1 Introduction

This section contains policies and recommendations for the protection, enhancement and provision of sports facilities in Maidstone.

### 12.2 Policy context

The recommendations made in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 74, which stipulates that existing sports facilities, should not be built upon unless:

- An assessment has taken place which has clearly shown the facility 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.

### 12.3 Protect

#### 12.3.1 Recommendation 1: Safeguarding existing provision

The Maidstone Sports Facilities Strategy comprises a robust and evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for sports facilities in the district. The Strategy has identified a need for all current facilities to be retained, on the basis of the specific identified roles that each can play in delivering the needs of sport in the borough 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 Sports Facilities Strategy.

#### 12.3.2 Recommendation 2: Community access to education sports facilities

A significant proportion of some types of sports facility in Maidstone are located on school sites (in particular eight out of nine sports halls and the only athletics track in the borough). None of these facilities are subject to formal Community Use Agreements and external use could, therefore in theory be withdrawn at any time. Some education sports facilities have no community use at all at present, which does not optimise the use of public resources. Furthermore, the management arrangements for many school sports facilities with external use are not conducive to maximising that use. It is therefore recommended that:

- Efforts are made to secure formal Community Use Agreements at existing education sports facilities.
- Where appropriate, Community Use Agreements become a condition of planning consent at new education sports facilities, along with a design and specification that is consistent with maximising school and community use.

- Encourage schools with their community use management arrangements.

## **12.4 Enhance**

### **12.4.1 Recommendation 3: Capacity improvements**

Some of the current and future demand for sports facilities in Maidstone can be accommodated through enhancements to existing facilities. Improvements to playing surfaces to increase carrying capacity, provision of floodlights for some outdoor facilities, extended and reconfigured changing facilities to cater for simultaneous adult/junior and male/female usage will all facilitate extra usage at existing sites. It is recommended that the site-specific action plan in the Maidstone Sports Facilities Strategy be used as the basis for prioritising facilities enhancements that will help to alleviate the current identified and future projected deficits.

### **12.4.2 Recommendation 4: Developer contributions (enhancements)**

Some of the additional demand arising from the proposed housing development in Maidstone, can be accommodated through enhancements to existing sports facilities. It is therefore recommended that:

- The site-specific action plan in the Maidstone Sports Facilities Strategy be used as the basis for determining facility enhancements that demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments.
- An appropriate level of financial contributions should then be sought under Section 106 or CIL arrangements, using Sport England’s Sports Facility Calculator tool as a guide, to cover the capital and revenue implications of the enhancements.
- To facilitate this, sports facilities should be listed as ‘relevant infrastructure’, under CIL Regulation 123 unless the Council considers it unlikely that CIL receipts would extend to delivering sports facilities projects, in which case they should be excluded and secured through planning obligations, having regard to the pooling restrictions.

## **12.5 Provide**

### **12.5.1 Recommendation 5: Maidstone Leisure Centre**

Maidstone Leisure Centre is the major community sports facility in the borough, of key strategic significance for swimming, but also ‘pay-and-play’ health and fitness provision. By 2031, the Centre will have reached the end of its planned lifespan. The current management contract with the Maidstone Leisure Trust expires in 2024, which will give the Council an important opportunity to review the scale and location of the facilities mix provided, to determine whether the current configuration is the most appropriate to deliver community leisure needs over the next few decades: It is therefore recommended that Maidstone Borough Council commissions a review of Maidstone Leisure Centre to examine whether:

- The current scale and configuration of swimming facilities is appropriate to current and future needs and if not, what alternatives should be provided.
- Other facilities should be considered for inclusion in a new or refurbished leisure centre.

- Provision of community sports facilities at the current site in the centre of the borough is the most appropriate way to meet current and future needs, compared with a more dispersed model of provision.
- The Council is the most appropriate provider of the facilities or whether other providers such as the education and/or commercial sectors could meet all identified needs.

### 12.5.2 Recommendation 6: Other new sports facilities

Whilst spare capacity in most types of sports facility can meet current and future needs to 2031, specific shortfalls identified in the Maidstone Sports Facilities Strategy by an evidence-based needs assessment, that would best be met through new provision include:

- The equivalent of 1.6 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access.
- The equivalent of one 25m x 4-lane pool with full community access.
- 187 health and fitness equipment stations.

It is recommended that Maidstone Borough Council should play an active role in encouraging the provision of these facilities, in conjunction with education providers and the commercial sector.

### 12.5.3 Recommendation 7: Developer contributions (new provision)

Some of the additional demand arising from the proposed housing development in Maidstone, can be accommodated through the provision of new sports facilities. It is therefore recommended that:

- The site-specific action plan in the Maidstone Sports Facilities Strategy be used as the basis for determining new facility provision that demonstrably relates to the scale and location of specific developments.
- An appropriate level of financial contributions should then be sought under Section 106 or CIL arrangements, using Sport England's Sports Facility Calculator tool as a guide, to cover the capital and revenue implications of providing the facilities.
- To facilitate this, sports facilities should be listed as 'relevant infrastructure', under CIL Regulation 123 unless the Council considers it unlikely that CIL receipts would extend to delivering sports facilities projects, in which case they should be excluded and secured through planning obligations, having regard to the pooling restrictions.

## 13 APPLYING AND REVIEWING THE STRATEGY

### 13.1 Introduction

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

### 13.2 Strategy applications

The success of the SFS will be determined by how it is used. While the use of the SFS 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, Kent Sport and the Maidstone Sports Trust. The SFS has a number of applications:

#### 13.2.1 Sports development planning

The SFS 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.

#### 13.2.2 Planning policy

The SFS 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.

#### 13.2.3 Planning applications

The SFS 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 sports facilities 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 SFS 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).

#### 13.2.4 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The SFS can be applied to help:

- Advocate the need for sports facilities 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).

#### 13.2.5 Funding bids

The SFS 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.

### 13.2.6 Facility and asset management

The SFS can be applied to help:

- Ensure a strategic approach is taken to the provision and management of sports facilities.
- Inform the current management, strategies and plans of sports facility 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.

### 13.2.7 Public health

The SFS can be applied to help:

- Understand how the community currently participates in sport, the need for sports facilities 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.

### 13.2.8 Co-ordinating resources and investment

The SFS can be applied to help:

- Raise awareness of the current resources and investment (revenue and capital) going into the management, maintenance and improvement of sports facilities 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.

### 13.2.9 Capital programmes

The SFS can be applied to help:

- Provide the evidence base to justify the protection and investment in sports facilities provision.
- Influence the development and implementation of relevant capital programmes (e.g. school refurbishment and new build programmes).

### 13.3 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 SFS has been applied should also form a key component of monitoring its delivery.

### 13.4 Keeping the strategy robust and up-to-date

Along with ensuring that the SFS 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 SFS 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 SFS 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 SFS. Taking into account the time to develop the SFS this should also help to ensure that the original supply and demand information is no more than two years old without being reviewed.

The Sport England guidance advocates that 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 SFS 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.