

GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

JUNE 2016

Integrity, Innovation, Inspiration

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

MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

Registered Office: 1 -2 Frecheville Court, off Knowsley Street, Bury BL9 0UF

T: 0161 764 7040 E: mail@kcp.co.uk www.kcp.co.uk



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GLOSSARY

3G	Third Generation (artificial turf)
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
FA	Football Association
FE	Further Education
FPM	Facilities Planning Model
GBC	Gravesham Borough Council
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
HE	Higher Education
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
LDF	Local Development Framework
LTA	Lawn Tennis Association
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
RFU	Rugby Football Union
S106	Section 106
TGR	Team Generation Rate

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

This is the Playing Pitch Assessment Report prepared by Knight Kavanagh & Page (KKP) for Gravesham Borough Council and its partners. This report presents a supply and demand assessment of playing pitch facilities in accordance with Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance: An approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy. It has been followed to develop a clear picture of the balance between the local supply of, and demand for, playing pitches and other outdoor sports facilities.

The guidance details a stepped approach to developing a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS). These steps are separated into five distinct sections:

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

Stages A to C are covered in this report. The context of the study in terms of the priority for National Governing Bodies of Sport is set out in Appendix 1.

Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach

Why the PPS is being developed

As outlined by the Council in the preparation stages it is undertaking an update of its open space, sport and recreation study. This PPS study will be one of a number of technical studies to help inform future planning policies, planning application negotiations, priorities for improving existing sites and providing new sites, and applications for external funding.

This PPS is also in line with targets set out by the Government and Sport England as well as local priorities and plans. All of which are set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

The purpose of the updated multi-faceted study is to inform, provide evidence for and make recommendations in context to the:

- ◀ Planning policies on:
 - ◀ Locally derived green space, playing pitch and sports provision
 - ◀ Protection of existing open space, sports and recreation sites
 - ◀ Allocation of sites for new and/or improved open space, sports and recreation facilities, if necessary;
- ◀ Assessment of sites in the updated Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA);
- ◀ Infrastructure required to support development set out in an updated Infrastructure Delivery Schedule;
- ◀ List of infrastructure which could be funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) under Regulation 123 if it is decided that CIL is to be charged ;
- ◀ Development management decisions, including assisting in negotiations for financial contributions and/or direct provision on site;
- ◀ Applications for external funding for improvements to existing facilities and new projects.

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Key objectives

For the PPS, its key objectives are to:

- ◀ Achieve a minimum 75% response rate for all surveys distributed to sports clubs and schools.
- ◀ All relevant stakeholders and council departments will be consulted as part of the assessment stages.
- ◀ To ascertain the quality of all sites accommodating playing pitches (football, rugby union and cricket) and non pitch facilities (tennis, bowls and athletics) regardless of ownership or management.
- ◀ To identify key issues from consulting with key clubs (identified by each NGB) during meetings.
- ◀ To take into account pitch facilities provided in neighbouring local authorities that presently service the sporting and recreational needs of Gravesham residents and vice versa in terms of cross-boundary demand issues.
- ◀ To identify future need arising from changes in participation and housing growth
- ◀ To prepare scenario's that will help inform the policy recommendations, action plan and strategy
- ◀ To produce a five year strategy which will include identifying current and future provision requirements.

Agreed scope

The following types of outdoor sports facilities were agreed by the steering group for inclusion in the Assessment and Strategy:

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| ◀ Football pitches | ◀ Bowling greens |
| ◀ Cricket pitches | ◀ Tennis courts |
| ◀ Rugby union pitches | ◀ Golf courses |
| ◀ Hockey/artificial grass pitches (AGPs) | ◀ Athletics |

Management arrangements

A Project Team from the Council has worked with KKP to ensure that all relevant information is readily available and to support the consultants as necessary to ensure that project stages and milestones are delivered on time, within the cost envelope and to the required quality standard to meet Sport England methodology.

Further to this, the Steering Group is and has been responsible for the direction of the PPS from a strategic perspective and for supporting, checking and challenging the work of the project team. The Steering Group is made up of representatives from Gravesham Council, Sport England and NGBs. It will be important for the Steering Group to continue once the PPS has been finalised for several reasons, including a continuing responsibility to:

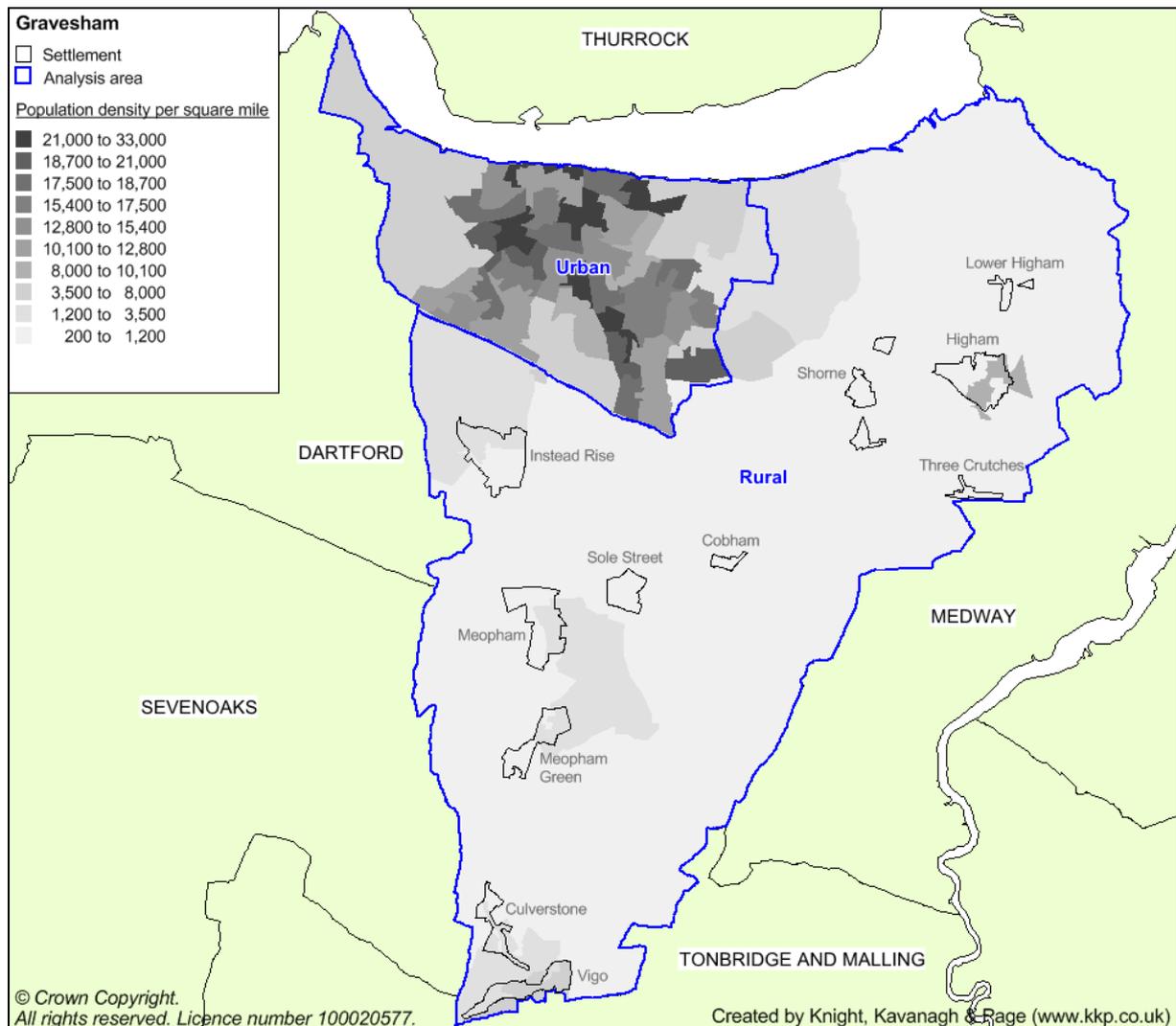
- ◀ Be a champion for playing pitch provision in the area and promote the value and importance of the PPS.
- ◀ Ensure implementation of the PPS's recommendations and action plan.
- ◀ Monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the PPS.
- ◀ Ensure that the PPS is kept up to date and refreshed.

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Study area

The study area covered by the PPS is the Gravesham Borough Council boundary. Further to this sub areas or analysis areas have been created to allow a more localised assessment of provision and examination of playing pitch surplus and deficiencies at a local level. Use of analysis areas also allows local circumstances and issues to be taken into account. Gravesham is divided into the following two analysis areas:

Figure 1.1: Map of study area



Source: Annual 2014 Mid-Year Population Estimates for the UK, ONS

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Table 1.1: Analysis areas

Analysis area	Ward
Rural	Higham
	Istead Rise
	Meopham North
	Meopham South and Vigo
	Shorne, Cobham and Luddesdown
Urban	Central
	Chalk
	Coldharbour
	Northfleet North
	Northfleet South
	Painters Ash
	Pelham
	Riverside
	Riverview
	Singlewell
	Westcourt
	Whitehill
	Woodlands

Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision

It is essential that a PPS is based on the most accurate and up-to-date information available for the supply of and demand for playing pitches. This section provides details about how this information has been gathered in Gravesham.

Gather supply information and views – an audit of playing pitches

PPS guidance uses the following definitions of a playing pitch and playing field. These definitions are set out by the Government in the 2010 ‘Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order’.¹

- ◀ ***Playing pitch*** – a delineated area which is used for association football, rugby, cricket, hockey, lacrosse, rounders, baseball, softball, American football, Australian football, Gaelic football, shinty, hurling, polo or cycle polo.
- ◀ ***Playing field*** – the whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch.

This PPS counts individual grass pitches (as a delineated area) as the basic unit of supply. The definition of a playing pitch also includes artificial grass pitches (AGPs).

Quantity

All playing pitches in existence, autumn 2015, are included irrespective of ownership, management and use. Playing pitch sites were initially identified using Sport England’s Active Places web based database. The Council and NGBs supported the process by checking and updating this initial data. This was also verified against club information.

¹ www.sportengland.org>Facilities and Planning> Planning Applications

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For each site the following details were recorded in the project database (which will be supplied as an electronic file):

- ◀ Site name, address (including postcode) and location
- ◀ Ownership and management type
- ◀ Security of tenure
- ◀ Total number, type and quality of pitches

Accessibility

Not all pitches offer the same level of access to the community. The ownership and accessibility of playing pitches also influences their actual availability for community use. Each site is assigned a level of community use as follows:

- ◀ **Community use** - pitches in public, voluntary, private or commercial ownership or management (including education sites) recorded as being available for hire and currently in use by teams playing in community leagues.
- ◀ **Available but unused** - pitches that are available for hire but are not currently used by teams which play in community leagues; this most often applies to school sites but can also apply to sites which are expensive to hire.
- ◀ **No community use** - pitches which as a matter of policy or practice are not available for hire or used by teams playing in community leagues. This should include professional club pitches along with some semi-professional club pitches, where play is restricted to the first or second team.

Quality

The capacity of pitches to regularly provide for competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by their quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of a pitch affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment of a sport. In extreme circumstances it can result in a pitch being unable to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off peak times.

It is not just the quality of the pitch itself which has an effect on its capacity but also the quality, standard and range of ancillary facilities. The quality of both the pitch and ancillary facilities will determine whether a pitch is able to contribute to meeting demand from various groups and for different levels and types of play.

The quality of all pitches identified in the audit and the ancillary facilities supporting them are assessed regardless of ownership, management or availability. Along with capturing any details specific to the individual pitches and sites, a quality rating is recorded within the audit for each pitch.

These ratings are used to help estimate the capacity of each pitch to accommodate competitive and other play within the supply and demand assessment.

Non-technical assessments using the templates provided within the Sport England guidance and as determined by NGBs were used by KKP's in house site researcher to carry out site assessments. Visits were carried out within the playing season for each sport. Users and providers were also consulted on the quality, and in some instances the quality rating was adjusted to reflect this.

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Gather demand information and views

Presenting an accurate picture of current demand for playing pitches (i.e. recording how and when pitches are used) is important when undertaking a supply and demand assessment. Demand for playing pitches in Gravesham tends to fall within the following categories:

- ◀ Organised competitive play
- ◀ Organised training
- ◀ Informal play

In addition, unmet and displaced demand for provision is also identified on a sport by sport basis. Unmet demand is defined as the number of additional teams that could be fielded if access to a sufficient number of pitches (and ancillary facilities) was available. Displaced demand refers to teams that are generated from residents of the area but due to any number of factors do not currently play within the area.

Alongside current demand, it is important for a PPS to assess whether the future demand for playing pitches can be met. Using population projections, and proposed housing growth (if available), an estimate can be made of the likely future demand for playing pitches.

The resident population in Gravesham is recorded as 105,261 (these are the ONS 2014 mid-year estimates). By 2028, the population is projected to increase to 115,902 (ONS 2012-based projections 2012-2037).

Team generation rates are used to provide an indication of how many people it may take to generate a team (by gender and age group), in order to help estimate the change in demand for pitch sports that may arise from any population change in the study area. For this report the data source of this information is Mid-2014 Lower Layer Super Output Area population estimates for England and Wales by Single Year of Age and Sex. Future population data is sourced from ONS 2012-based projections 2012-2037 (Released 29 May 2014).

Future demand for pitches is calculated by adding the percentage increases, to the ONS population increases in each analysis area. This figure is then applied to the TGRs and is presented on a sport by sport basis within the relevant sections of this report.

Other information sources that were used to help identify future demand include:

- ◀ Recent trends in the participation in playing pitch sports.
- ◀ The nature of the current and likely future population and their propensity to participate in pitch sports.
- ◀ Feedback from pitch sports clubs on their plans to develop additional teams.
- ◀ Any local and NGB specific sports development targets (e.g. increase in participation).

Current and future demand for playing pitches is presented on a sport by sport basis within the relevant sections of this report.

A variety of consultation methods were used to collate demand information about leagues, clubs, county associations and national/regional governing bodies of sport. Face to face consultation was carried out with key clubs from each sport. This allowed for the collection of detailed demand information and an exploration of key issues to be interrogated and more accurately assessed.

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For data analysis purposes an online survey was utilised. This was sent to all clubs not covered by face to face consultation.

A variety of consultation methods were used to collate information about leagues, clubs, county associations and national/regional governing bodies of sport.

These were as follows:

Consultation summary - methods and response rates

Sport	Total number of clubs	No. of responding clubs/teams	Response rate	Methods of consultation
Football clubs	42	23	55%	Face to Face, Online Survey
Football teams	159	133	83%	
Cricket clubs	10	9	90%	Face to Face, Online Survey
Rugby union clubs	3	3	100%	Face to Face, Online Survey
Hockey clubs	3	3	100%	Face to Face, Online Survey
Bowls clubs	9	5	56%	Online Survey
Tennis clubs	3	3	100%	Online Survey
Secondary schools	10	9	90%	Face to Face
Primary schools	26	19	73%	Online Survey

Local sports development officers, county associations and regional governing body officers advised which of the clubs to include in the face to face consultation. Sport England was also included within the consultation process prior to the project commencing. Issues identified by clubs returning questionnaires were followed up by telephone or face to face interviews.

Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views

Supply and demand information gathered within Section B was used to assess the adequacy of playing pitch provision in Gravesham. It focused on how much use each site could potentially accommodate (on an area by area basis) compared to how much use is currently taking place.

Understand the situation at individual sites

Qualitative pitch ratings are linked to a pitch capacity rating derived from NGB guidance and tailored to suit a local area. The quality and use of each pitch is assessed against the recommended pitch capacity to indicate how many match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket) a pitch could accommodate.

This is compared to the number of matches actually taking place and categorised as follows, to identify:

Potential spare capacity: Play is below the level the site could sustain.	
At capacity: Play is at a level the site can sustain.	
Overused: Play exceeds the level the site can sustain.	

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Develop the current picture of provision

Once capacity is determined on a site by site basis, actual spare capacity is calculated on an area by area basis via further interrogation of temporal demand. Although this may have been identified, it does not necessarily mean that there is surplus provision. For example, spare capacity may not be available when it is needed or the site may be retained in a 'strategic reserve' to enable pitch rotation to reduce wear and tear.

Capacity ratings assist in the identification of sites for improvement/development, rationalisation, decommissioning and disposal.

Develop the future picture of provision - scenario testing

Modelling scenarios to assess whether existing provision can cater for unmet, displaced and future demand is made after the capacity analysis. This will also include, for example, removing sites with unsecured community use to demonstrate the impact this would have if these sites were to be decommissioned in the future. scenario testing will be set out within the Strategy document.

Identify the key findings and issues

By completing Steps 1-5 of the methodology (as shown on page 2) it is possible to identify several findings and issues relating to the supply, demand and adequacy of playing pitch provision in Gravesham. This report seeks to identify and present the key findings and issues, which should now be checked, challenged and agreed by the Steering Group prior to development of the Strategy (Section D).

The following sections summarise the local administration of the main grass pitch sports in Gravesham. Each provides a quantitative summary of provision and a map showing the distribution of facilities. It also provides information about the availability of facilities to/for the local community and, the governing body of each sport and regional strategic plan (where they exist). Details are also provided in order to outline the competitive structure for each sport. The findings of club consultation and key issues for each sport are summarised.

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PART 2: FOOTBALL

2.1: Introduction

Kent FA is the primary organisation responsible for the development (and some elements of administration) of football in Gravesham. They are also responsible for the administration, in terms of discipline, rules and regulations, cup competitions and representative matches, development of clubs and facilities, volunteers, referees, coaching courses and delivering national football schemes.

This section of the report focuses on the supply and demand for grass football pitches. Part 3 captures supply and demand for artificial grass pitches (AGPs). In the future it is anticipated that there will be a growing demand to use rubber crumb third generation artificial turf (3G pitches) for competitive fixtures.

Consultation

In addition to face to face consultation with key football clubs, an electronic survey was sent to all clubs playing in Gravesham. Contact details were provided by the County FA and GBC with the invitation to complete the survey being distributed via email. Consultation was completed with 23 clubs which equates to a team response rate of 85%.

Results from all consultation are used to inform key issues within this section of the report.

2.2: Supply

The audit identifies a current total of 88 grass football pitches within Gravesham across 45 sites. Of these, 76 pitches are available for community use across 35 sites, as presented in the table below. The majority of community available pitches are found in the Urban Analysis Area (55), whilst the Rural Analysis Area is serviced by the 21 pitches. All sites are listed in Table 2.18.

Table 2.1: Summary of grass football pitches available to the community

Analysis area	Available for community use					Totals
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	
Rural	6	4	7	3	1	21
Urban	28	3	8	11	5	55
GRAVESHAM	34	7	15	14	6	76

The table identifies a larger number of adult pitches in Gravesham when compared to other pitch sizes, which reflects that the majority of teams use adult pitches. It should be noted that many youth 11v11 teams are playing on adult pitches; which is not ideal for players and is not in line with the FA Youth Review. In total, 36 of the 81 teams using adult pitches are youth teams, which may be in part due to a lack of dedicated youth 11v11 pitches rather than a preference for adult pitches.

In accordance with the FA Youth Review, u17s and u18s can play on adult pitches. The FA's recommended pitch size for adult football is 100x64 metres. The recommended size of a youth 11v11 pitch for u16s and u15s is 91x55 metres, an 11v11 for u14s and u13s is 82x50 metres and a youth 9v9 pitch for u12s and u11s is 73x46 metres.

The recommended size for mini 7v7 pitches for u9s and u10s is 55x37 metres, and for mini 5v5 pitches for u7s and u8s it is 37x27 metres.

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The sites below contain adult pitches that are used by u13s -u16s teams:

- ◀ Elite Sports Ground
- ◀ Guru Nanak FC
- ◀ Higham Recreation Ground
- ◀ Northfleet Sports & Youth Centre
- ◀ Northfleet Technology College
- ◀ St Georges Church of England School
- ◀ Southfields
- ◀ St John's Comprehensive School
- ◀ Thamesview School

As a starting point, adult pitches at Northfleet Technology College, St Georges Church of England School and St John's Comprehensive School are used solely by youth 11v11 teams (u13s-u16s). As a result, no adult teams would be adversely affected by re-configuring the pitches at these sites (although there may be a need to retain adult pitches if shortfalls are identified).

Lapsed/Disused Sites

A lapsed site is any site which has been identified as not currently being marked or in use but where the last known use was as a playing field. The following lapsed sites are identified in Gravesham.

Table 2.2: Lapsed/Disused sites which previously accommodated football pitches

Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type
Copperfield Academy	Urban	1x Mini (7v7)
Culverstone Recreation ground	Rural	1x Mini
Former Fleet Leisure	Urban	2x Adult 2x Youth 1x Mini
North Kent College	Urban	1x Youth (11v11) 1x Youth (9v9)
Holy Trinity Primary School	Urban	1x Youth (9v9)
Shears Green Junior School	Urban	1x Youth (9v9)
Whitehill Primary School (Detached Pitch)	Urban	1x Mini (7v7)

The Former Fleet Leisure site is intending to be brought back in to use by the Council in the near future. Options regarding this are still being discussed.

Both the Culverstone Recreation Ground and Shears Green Junior School sites have previously had pitches marked out but which are currently not used. The sites do contain other existing marked pitches in use by clubs. However, at the Culverstone Recreation site drainage is identified as poor leading to matches often being cancelled. Therefore the potential to fully maximise the sites use is limited without further improvements.

Pitches also previously marked out at the Copperfield Academy, Whitehill Primary School and North Kent College will be considered within the scenarios and requirements for future provision and need.

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Future supply

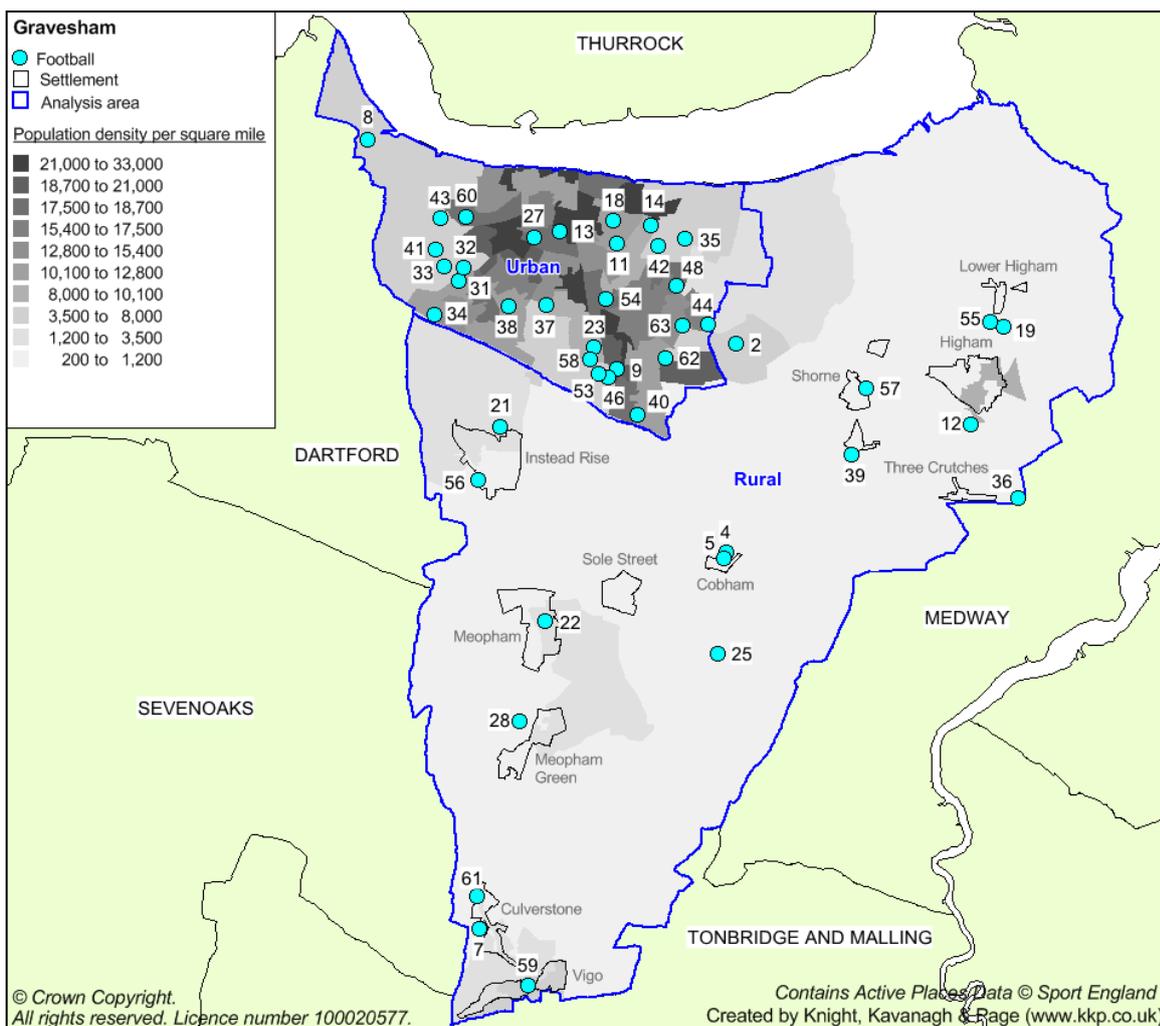
As highlighted above, the Former Fleet Leisure site is intending to be brought back in to use by the Council in the near future. Plans for the actual layout and uses is currently being developed.

It is also identified that additional playing field provision is to be provided as part of the proposals for the wider Ebbsfleet development. In addition, a small off site financial contribution towards the improvement of existing changing facilities at Springhead Recreation Ground has been secured via a legal agreement. This is in order to future proof the site, especially for anticipated increased demand in youth/mini football.

It is intended that this study will help to inform the decision as to what type of pitch provision will be required within this development area.

Figure 2.1 overleaf shows the location of football pitches currently servicing Gravesham. For a key to the map please refer to Table 2.13.

Figure 2.1: Location of football pitches in Gravesham



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Pitch quality

The quality of football pitches in Gravesham has been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by The FA) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

Pitch quality primarily influences the carrying capacity of a site; often pitches lack the drainage and maintenance necessary to sustain levels of use. It is likely that pitches which receive little to no ongoing repair or post-season remedial work will be assessed as poor, therefore limiting the number of games able to take place each week without it having a detrimental effect on quality. Conversely, pitches which are well maintained and are tended to regularly are likely to be of a higher standard; and therefore capable of taking a number of matches without a significant reduction in surface quality.

Private sites (e.g. sports clubs) typically offer better quality facilities than Council parks/playing fields and school pitches. In general, such sports clubs tend to have dedicated ground staff or volunteers working on pitches and the fact that they are often secured by fencing prevents unofficial use. In comparison the maintenance of Council sites tends to be less frequent and unofficial use of these sites can further exacerbate quality issues.

The table below summarises the quality of pitches that are available for community use. In total, three pitches are assessed as good quality, 60 as standard quality and 13 are deemed to be poor quality. The final quality ratings assigned to the sites take into account the user quality ratings gathered from consultation.

Table 2.3: Pitch quality assessments (community use pitches)

Adult pitches			Youth pitches			Mini pitches		
Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor
2	28	4	1	19	2	-	13	7

The non-technical pitch quality audit shows that the majority of pitches are standard quality. All sites managed by the Council receive a basic level of maintenance, with budgets not allowing for any further level of upkeep. The majority of pitches within schools also tend to receive basic maintenance that in most cases is contracted to external companies. Maintenance of pitches at club sites varies; some clubs hire dedicated ground staff whilst others depend on remedial work by volunteers that is often limited by cost and a lack of specialised equipment.

Of responding clubs, the majority (74%) rate the overall quality of their home pitches as adequate quality. A further 17% rate quality as poor and 9% rate quality as good. Clubs assessing their pitches as poor quality are using either local authority sites (e.g. Culverstone Recreation Ground or Kings Farm) or Elite Sports Venue site. Many report that maintenance works are not carried out enough particularly in the winter. At the latter, it is highlighted that in addition to a poor level of maintenance, a high volume of matches occur even in periods of bad weather conditions; further adding to a reduction in the quality of pitches. All three sites are however assessed as standard in terms of quality.

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Just over half of clubs (53%) state they have seen no difference in the quality of pitches since last season, whilst just over a quarter (26%) of clubs report quality has got slightly better. The rest view quality as having got slightly poorer (17%) or much worse (4%). The most common factors attributed to improved quality is due to investment and/or remedial works being carried out.

Specific comments relating to pitch conditions at individual sites can be seen in the table below. The comments are a combination of club feedback and site assessment information.

Table 2.4: Site specific comments

Site ID	Site	Comments
9	Elite Sports Ground	Number of clubs highlight heavy use of the pitches impacting on their level of quality.
13	Bat and Ball Ground	Grass observed as long with feint line markings.
28	Meopham School	Adult pitches on site have previously all been available for community use. However, this has been stopped due to community use impacting on the ability for school use. The 9v9 on site is still available for community use.
42	St John's Catholic Comprehensive School	Some wear and tear near goal mouths.

Over marked pitches

Over marking of pitches can cause notable damage to surface quality and lead to overuse beyond recommended capacity. In some cases mini pitches may be marked onto senior pitches or mini matches may be played widthways across adult or youth pitches. This can lead to targeted areas of surface damage due to large amounts of play focused on high traffic areas, particularly the middle third of the pitch.

Over marking of pitches not only influences available capacity, it may also cause logistical issues regarding kick off times; for example, when two teams of differing age formats are due to play at the same site at the same time.

Any spare capacity identified later in this section on pitches that are over marked or contain over markings is discounted. The table below highlights all sites containing over marked pitches.

Table 2.5: Sites containing over marked pitches

Site ID	Site	Comments
9	Elite Sports Ground	A 7v7 pitch overmarked an adult pitch.
27	Mayfield Grammar School	A Youth (11v11) pitch is overmarked with rounders and athletics markings.
33	Northfleet Technology College	An adult pitch is overmarked with rugby.
53	Southfields	A 9v9 pitch is overmarked with a 7v7 pitch.

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Ancillary facilities

The non-technical assessment assesses ancillary facilities servicing pitches. This includes the condition of clubhouses, changing accommodation, toilets, showers, car parking and boundary fencing.

Eagles FC report plans to continue to develop the changing facilities at Higham Recreation Ground. There is currently only one shower in each changing room available for use.

Parish Council and Local authority sites such as Higham Recreation Ground, Judson's Recreation Ground and Kings Farm Playing Fields are assessed as being currently serviced by changing facilities of a poor quality. In addition, Judson's Recreation Ground and Kings Farm Playing Fields are rated as poor by club users.

The main comment by clubs is that facilities could be better maintained. Judson's Recreation Ground is viewed by clubs as only having one toilet facility. In addition, whilst the club house facilities at Elite Sports Ground are assessed as good, clubs highlight that they are not always available to access on match days.

All facilities assessed as good quality are located at sports clubs such as Ebbsfleet United Football Club and Elite Sports Ground.

Training

Getting access to good quality, affordable training facilities is a problem for many clubs throughout the Country. In the winter months, midweek training is only possible at floodlit facilities.

Of clubs in Gravesham that responded to consultation, 83% report that they require additional training facilities. Of these, 89% specifically mention demand for 3G pitches.

A few teams highlight using the small sided facilities at Legends (next to Cascades Leisure Centre) and the existing sand based AGP (on the Gravesend RFC site) for training purposes (see Figure 6.1). There are also a number of clubs that train on match sites albeit away from match pitches (e.g. Elite Sport Ground, St John's Catholic School). There are, however, some that train on match pitches. For instance Guru Nanak FC use its floodlit pitch for training during the week for its senior teams; this is due to a lack of alternatives.

Furthermore, several teams identified that they currently travel outside of Gravesham in order to access more suitable training provision, most commonly 3G provision at Strood Leisure Centre (Medway) and Ebbsfleet Academy (Swanscombe).

Security of tenure

Tenure of sites in Gravesham is generally secure i.e. through a long term lease or a guarantee that pitches will continue to be provided over the next three years. An exception to this is found at schools and academies that state their own policies and are more likely to restrict levels of community use. For example, Meopham School has stopped letting out its adult pitches in order to protect them for school use. It does however still allow community use on the Youth (9v9) pitch on site.

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The following is a full list of schools that have grass football pitches but do not allow community use:

- ◀ Cobham Primary School
- ◀ Culverstone Green Primary School
- ◀ Gad's Hill School
- ◀ Riverview Junior School
- ◀ Singlewell Primary School
- ◀ St Botolph's C of E Primary School
- ◀ St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
- ◀ Tymberwood Academy
- ◀ Vigo Primary School
- ◀ Westcourt Primary School

Security of tenure is also considered unsecure at the Southfields site. Several teams currently use the site (e.g. Gravesham Youth FC, Greenways FC and Gravesend Spartans). It is believed that the site is owned by Hyde Housing Association who lease it to Gravesend Spartans; the Club then sub-rents to the other clubs.

Gravesham Youth FC reports a need for a longer term agreement at a site in order to secure funding and to help the Club to continue to grow. The club currently uses Southfields.

Northfleet Eagles FC and Guru Nanak Youth FC also report demand to acquire a site on a long term lease so that all club teams can play on one venue. Both clubs have to play across more than one site in order to currently accommodate all teams.

Pitch hire costs

The maximum cost for an adult football pitch (per season) in Gravesham is £530. Cost for hire of a single adult football pitch is £77.70. The neighbouring authority of Medway, charges between £24.40 and £80 per match dependent on pitch size and facilities. The top end of these rates are in line with those of Gravesham.

Table 2.6: Football pitch costs in Gravesham

Pitches	Adult teams		Youth teams		Mini teams	
	Season	Casual	Season	Casual	Season	Casual
Gravesham Borough Council	£530.00	£77.70	£433.00	£66.30	£323.00	£55.20

Noticeably the cost of casual hire for mini teams in Gravesham (£55.20) is significantly greater than the lowest charge in Medway.

Football pyramid

The football pyramid is the league structure for English Football. There are four Gravesham clubs playing to a notable level within the National League System (NLS), which consists of 140 leagues containing over 480 divisions. Ebbsfleet United are Step 2 of the NLS (Vanarama National League South) and Gravesham Borough FC are Step 6 (Southern Counties East Division 1). Greenways FC and Guru Nanak FC are Step 7 clubs playing in the Kent County League.

Clubs within the step system must adhere to ground grading requirements set out by the FA. The higher the level of football being played the higher the requirements. Clubs cannot progress in the step system if the ground requirements do not meet the correct specifications. The ground grading assesses grounds from A to H, with 'A' being the requirements for Step 1 clubs.

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All clubs currently meet the ground requirements for the step they play at. However, Gravesham Borough FC is currently accessing pitch provision to play its home matches at a site perceived to be outside of the area (Rochester United Sports Ground, Strood). The site is technically on the boundary of the borough. Regardless of whether the site is in or out of the borough, the Club cites a desire to play its matches in a more central location of Gravesend. In addition, Greenways FC highlight that if it were to be promoted its ground would not satisfy league specifications (club currently uses Southfields). A similar situation is noted for Punjab United FC; which if promoted may look to play its home matches outside of Gravesham in Dartford.

Ebbsfleet United FC have just begun developments on its stadium. The new stadium will have a capacity of 6,000 and be made up of three main stands. This will see the grade of the ground increase.

2.3: Demand

Through the audit and assessment a total of 160 teams within 42 clubs are identified as playing within Gravesham. This consists of 37 adult teams (all men's teams), 80 youth teams (72 boys' and eight girls') and 43 mini teams.

The majority of teams play in the Urban Analysis Area (78%), whilst just over a fifth of teams play in the Rural Analysis Area. The most prevalent playing format across all analysis areas is the youth 11v11 category with 53 teams.

Table 2.7: Summary of competitive teams currently playing in Gravesham

Analysis area	No. of teams playing					Total
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	
Rural	5	15	11	5	-	36
Urban	32	38	16	23	15	124
GRAVESHAM	37	53	27	28	15	160

Responding clubs were asked whether there has been a change in the number of teams over the previous three years. The response rates for those that answered this question can be seen in table 2.8.

The highest increase in teams is seen in mini football; 22% of clubs report an increase over the last three years. In general, across all formats of the game, clubs identify the number of teams have approximately stayed the same.

Table 2.8: Change in the number of teams over the previous three years

Team type	Clubs response		
	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased
Adult	13%	74%	13%
Youth	13%	43%	26%
Mini	22%	39%	17%

A slightly greater decrease in teams is seen in youth football. Clubs cite this is down to players losing interest and other competing lifestyle factors resulting in members not being able to commit.

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The way in which people, often adult men, want to play football is changing. There is a national trend of players opting to play small sided versions of the game as people want to be able to fit it into busy lifestyles. Shorter versions of the sport allow players to do this and if this trend continues there is likely to be demand for more access to 3G pitches.

Local leagues

The North Kent Youth Football League is the biggest provider for mini and youth football across Gravesham with 71 teams currently competing within it. The South East London and Kent League (Selkent) also provides league structure for a further 34 mini and youth teams. Leagues in Maidstone and Medway also feature a handful of teams from Gravesham.

For the adult game, the North Kent Sunday League is used by the majority of adult teams (81%). The League books a number of venues from the Council for its matches. Sites used include Cascades, Culverstone Recreation Ground, Kings Farm Playing Fields and Springhead Recreation Ground.

The peak time for each form of pitch type in Gravesham is considered to be Sundays; accommodating the majority (94%) of football matches. This results in demand for pitches to be used all at the same time; adding to the pressure for pitch availability.

Displaced demand

Displaced demand refers to teams that are currently accessing pitches for their home fixtures outside of the area in which they are registered, normally because their pitch requirements cannot be met. There are instances of displaced demand in Gravesham as shown below.

Table 2.9: Displaced demand

Club	Team	Where displaced to?
AEI Sports	1 x mens	Cliffe Woods Recreation Ground, Medway
Eagles FC	U13s	APCM Recreation Ground, Medway
	U14s	
	U18s	
Gravesham Borough FC	1 x mens	Rochester United Sports Ground, Strood

In total there are five teams registered to Gravesham that currently highlight as displaced demand. As a breakdown (based on teams playing home and away) this equates to 1.5 match equivalent sessions on adult pitches (three teams) and one match equivalent on youth 11v11 pitches (two teams).

Reasons for the displaced demand varies. Gravesham Borough FC access the Rochester site in order to meet specifications of the league. The site is partly within the boundary of the borough; it is therefore technically still playing within Gravesham. However, the Club wishes to play its home matches in a more central location to Gravesend and can therefore still be counted as being displaced (as it is not playing where it wishes to).

Similarly the teams from Eagles FC use the APCM site in Medway as it believes there is not the pitches and facilities available in Gravesham. All clubs and teams state a willingness to play matches in the area if suitable provision was available.

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In addition, Meopham Colts and Nurstead FC both highlight a preference to play home games in Meopham. The latter plays its matches in Culverstone Recreation Ground whilst Meopham Colts currently use four venues across Gravesham.

Latent demand

During the consultation process a number of clubs identify that if more pitches were available at their home ground or in the local area they could develop more teams in the future (latent demand). The table below highlights latent demand expressed by the clubs (where quantified) that could *potentially* be fielded if more pitches were available.

Table 2.10: Summary of latent demand expressed by clubs

Club	Analysis area	Latent demand	Pitch type	Match equivalents
Gravesham Borough FC	Urban	3 x Youth	Youth 11v11 Youth 9v9	1 0.5
Gravesham Town FC	Urban	1 x Adult 2 x Mini	Adult Mini 7v7	0.5 1
Greenways FC	Urban	2 x Adult	Adult	1
Meopham Colts	Rural	2 x Youth	Youth 11v11	1
Northfleet Eagles FC	Urban	1 x Youth	Youth 11v11	0.5
Punjab United FC	Urban	1 x Adult 1 x Youth	Adult Youth 11v11	0.5 0.5
Youth Ngage FC	Urban	3 x Youth	Youth 11v11 Youth 9v9	0.5 1.0
Totals			Adult	2
			Youth 11v11	3.5
			Youth 9v9	1.5
			Mini 7v7	1
			Mini 5v5	-

The largest amount of latent demand is expressed in the Urban Analysis Area, equating to 2 match equivalent session on adult pitches, 2.5 match equivalents on youth 11v11 pitches, 1.5 match equivalents on 9v9 pitches and 1 match equivalent on 7v7 pitches. There is latent demand amounting to 1 match equivalent on youth 11v11 pitch type in the Rural Analysis Area.

In addition, ten clubs indicate that they would field more teams if more or better training facilities were available.

Future demand

Future demand can be defined in two ways, through participation increases and using population forecasts.

Population increases

Team generation rates are used to calculate the number of teams likely to be generated in the future (2028) based on population growth. It is predicted that there will be an increase of two adult mens teams (one match equivalent), 11 youth boys' teams (six match equivalents), two youth girls' teams (one match equivalent) and four mini teams (two match equivalents).

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The majority of this is attributed to the Urban Analysis Area which is predicted to increase by two adults mens, seven youth boys, two youth girls and four mini teams. The Rural Analysis Area is predicted to increase by four youth boys teams (two match equivalents).

Table 2.11: Team generation rates

Age group	Current population within age group	Current no. of teams	Team Generation Rate	Future population within age group (2028)	Predicted future number of teams	Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population
Adult Men (16-45)	20,366	37	1:550	21,671	39.4	2.4
Adult Women (16-45)	20,772	2	1:10386	21,676	2.1	0.1
Youth Boys (10-15)	3,951	72	1:55	4,565	83.2	11.2
Youth Girls (10-15)	3,549	8	1:444	4,438	10.0	2.0
Mini-Soccer Mixed (6-9)	5,449	43	1:127	5,994	47.2	4.2

Source: Mid-2014 Lower Layer Super Output Area population estimates

Participation increases

A number of clubs report aspirations to increase the number of teams they provide. Of the clubs that quantify their *potential* increase, there is a predicted growth of six adult, nine youth and eight mini teams. The table below discounts any latent demand highlighted earlier in the report as it is presumed to be absorbed in future growth (also ensures no double counting).

Table 2.12: Potential team increases identified by clubs

Club	Analysis area	Aspiration increase	Pitch type	Match equivalents
AEI Sports	Urban	1 x Adult	Adult	0.5
Cobham Colts	Rural	2 x Youth	Youth 11v11 Youth 9v9	0.5 0.5
Eagles FC	Rural	2 x Mini	Mini 7v7 Mini 5v5	0.5 0.5
Gravesham Borough FC	Urban	1 x Mini	Mini 7v7	0.5
Gravesham Girls & Ladies FC	Urban	1 x Adult 1 x Youth 1 x Mini	Adult Youth 9v9 Mini 7v7	0.5 0.5 0.5
Guru Nanak FC	Urban	1 x Adult 2 x Youth 1 x Mini	Adult Youth 11v11 Mini 7v7	0.5 1 0.5
Istead Rise Colts	Rural	1 x Mini	Mini 5v5	0.5
Punjab United FC	Urban	1 x Youth	Youth 9v9	0.5
Northfleet Eagles FC	Urban	1 x Adult 3 x Youth 2 x Mini	Adult Youth 11v11 Youth 9v9 Mini 7v7 Mini 5v5	0.5 0.5 1 0.5 0.5
Youth Ngage FC	Urban	2 x Adult	Adult	1.0

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The total future demand expressed equates to 11.5 match equivalent sessions. This is broken down by pitch type and by analysis area in table 2.13. The majority of potential future club demand is expressed in the Urban Analysis Area; with the most being for adult pitches.

Table 2.13: Summary of potential demand identified by clubs by analysis area

Analysis area	Potential club demand (match equivalent sessions)					
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
Rural	-	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	2.5
Urban	3	1.5	2	2	0.5	9
Total	3	2	2.5	2.5	1.5	11.5

Table 2.14 shows a total for the future demand likely to be expressed through combining the figures from the TGRs (table 2.11) and the potential demand identified by clubs (table 2.13). These are used in the supply and demand analysis tables later in the report (table 2.22-2.26)

Table 2.14: Future demand by analysis area

Analysis area	Adult		Youth 11v11		Youth 9v9		Mini 7v7		Mini 5v5	
	TGR	Club	TGR	Club	TGR	Club	TGR	Club	TGR	Club
Rural	-	-	1	0.5	1	0.5	-	0.5	-	1
Urban	1	3	3	1.5	2	2	1	2	1	0.5
Totals	1	3	4	2	3	2.5	1	2.5	1	1.5
Future demand	4		6		5.5		3.5		2.5	

2.4: Capacity analysis

The capacity for pitches to regularly provide for competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of a pitch affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment of playing football. In extreme circumstances it can result in the inability of a pitch to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off peak times. Pitch quality is often influenced by weather conditions, drainage and maintenance.

As a guide, The FA has set a standard number of match equivalent sessions that each grass pitch type should be able to accommodate without adversely affecting current quality (pitch capacity).

Taking into consideration the guidelines on capacity the following ratings are used in Gravesham:

Table 2.15: Pitch capacity based on quality rating

Adult pitches		Youth pitches		Mini pitches	
Pitch quality	Matches per week	Pitch quality	Matches per week	Pitch quality	Matches per week
Good	3	Good	4	Good	6
Standard	2	Standard	2	Standard	4
Poor	1	Poor	1	Poor	2

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Table 2.17 applies the above pitch ratings against the actual level of weekly play recorded to determine a capacity rating as follows:

Potential capacity	Play is below the level the site could sustain
At capacity	Play matches the level the site can sustain
Overused	Play exceeds the level the site can sustain

Peak time

Spare capacity can only be considered as such if pitches are available at peak time (actual spare capacity). The peak time for each form of pitch type in Gravesham is considered to be Sundays.

In total, 25 teams access adult pitches on Sunday mornings, compared to five on Saturday afternoons, three on Saturday mornings and two mid-week. A further 43 teams identify playing on Sundays but do not specify time of day. Of teams accessing adult pitches, 36 are youth 11v11 teams (u13s-u16s) and should ideally be accessing youth 11v11 pitches.

Of teams that do access youth 11v11 pitches, seven access pitches on Sunday afternoons compared to three on Sunday mornings. For 9v9 pitches, 20 (out of 32) teams access pitches on Sunday mornings, whilst the majority of all mini football is played on Sunday mornings.

Education sites

To account for curricular/extra-curricular use of education pitches it is likely that the carrying capacity at such sites will need to be adjusted. This adjustment is dependent on the amount of play carried out and also the number of pitches on site. The only time this would not happen is when a school does not use its pitches at all and the sole use is community use. The table below identifies the school sites with community use and adjusted capacity where required.

Table 2.16: Capacity adjustment of educational sites

Site ID	School/College name	Capacity comments/actions
14	Gravesend Grammar School	One adult pitch available for community use but not used. School use reduces capacity by one match equivalent.
27	Mayfield Grammar School	The site has a youth 11v11 pitch available for community use. Is used by Real Gima FC on Sundays. School use reduces capacity by one match equivalent session.
28	Meopham School	School has two adult pitches and a youth 9v9 pitch. No community use is allowed on the adult pitches as it impacted too much on school use. Youth 9v9 is used by Meopham Colts. School use reduces its capacity by one match equivalent.
31	Northfleet School for Girls	Adult pitch and two mini 5v5 pitches are available but not used. Capacity is reduced by one match equivalent session per pitch.
33	Northfleet Technology College	Three adult pitches on site with one being overmarked for rugby. Community use is allowed on the pitches. School use reduces capacity by one match equivalent sessions per pitch.
34	Painters Ash Primary School	Community is available on the youth 9v9 and mini 7v7 pitches. Both used by Real Gima FC. School use reduces capacity by one match equivalent session per pitch.

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Site ID	School/College name	Capacity comments/actions
37	Saint Georges Church of England School	Has two adult pitches and a youth 9v9 pitch. Used by Meopham Colts. School use reduces capacity by one match equivalent session per pitch.
38	Shears Green Junior School	The School has a mini 7v7 pitch used by Northfleet Eagles. School use reduces capacity by one match equivalent session
42	St John's Catholic Comprehensive School	Adult pitch and youth 9v9 on site. used by Gravesham Town FC. Capacity reduced by one match equivalent sessions per pitch.
44	Thamesview School	The School has an adult pitch used by the community. Also has two 9v9 pitches that are not in use. School use reduces capacity by one match equivalent session.
46	lfield School	Two mini 7v7 pitches and a mini 5v5 pitch; being used by Guru Nanak FC. Capacity reduced by one match equivalent sessions per pitch.
54	Whitehill Primary School	Has a mini 5v5 pitch available and used by Northfleet Eagles. School use reduces capacity by one match equivalent session.
55	Higham Primary School	School has a youth 9v9 and mini 7v7. Used by Eagles FC. Capacity reduced by one match equivalent session.
56	Istead Rise Primary School	Has a junior pitch which is used by a local team at the weekend. Capacity reduced by one match equivalent session.
57	Shorne C of E Primary School	The school has a mini 5v5 pitch available. This is not used due to a lack of demand and no access to school facilities outside of school hours. Capacity reduced by one match equivalent session.
58	Kings Farm Primary School	The school has a youth 9v9 pitch available. This used to be used at weekends. However, it is no longer used due to team needing a bigger pitch. There is also low demand for the pitch as Spartan FC and Kings Farm Playing Fields are nearby. Capacity reduced by one match equivalent session.

Primary school sites signalling no community use is present or allowed, have also had the capacity adjusted by one match equivalent session to reflect curriculum use.

There are also a few education sites which are identified as having lapsed/disused pitches (table 2.2). The capacity of such pitches cannot be adjusted as they are no longer in use. However, the Strategy will consider whether these pitches need to be retained in order to help meet future requirements.

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Table 2.17: Football pitch capacity analysis

Site ID	Site name <i>*Indicates adult pitches that accommodate u13-u16 youth teams</i>	Available for community use?	Type of tenure ²	Management	Analysis area	Pitch type	Pitch size	Quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play (match sessions)	Site capacity ³ (match sessions)	Overused (+), At Capacity (/) or Potential to Accommodate additional play (-)	Pitches available in peak period
2	Cascades Leisure Centre	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Urban	Adult		Standard	4	4	8	4	0
4	Cobham Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Parish Council	Rural	Adult		Standard	1	2.5	2	0.5	1
4	Cobham Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Parish Council	Rural	Youth	11v11	Standard	2	3.5	4	0.5	1
4	Cobham Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Parish Council	Rural	Youth	9v9	Standard	1	1	2	1	0
5	Cobham Primary School	No	-	School	Rural	Mini	7v7	Good	1	0	6	6	-
7	Culverstone Recreation Ground	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Rural	Adult		Standard	1	0.5	2	1.5	0.5
7	Culverstone Recreation Ground	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Rural	Youth	11v11	Standard	1	1	2	1	1
7	Culverstone Recreation Ground	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Rural	Youth	9v9	Standard	1	1	2	1	1
8	Ebbsfleet United FC	Yes	Secure	Club	Urban	Adult		Good	1	1.5	3	1.5	0.5
9	Elite Sports Ground *	Yes	Secure	Private	Urban	Adult		Standard	3	9.5	6	3.5	0
9	Elite Sports Ground	Yes	Secure	Private	Urban	Youth	9v9	Standard	1	4.5	2	2.5	0
9	Elite Sports Ground	Yes	Secure	Private	Urban	Mini	7v7	Standard	1	3.5	4	0.5	0
11	Fleetway Sports Ground	Yes	Secure	Club	Urban	Youth	11v11	Poor	1	1	1	-	0
12	Gad's Hill School	No	Secure	School	Rural	Mini	7v7	Poor	1	0	1	1	-
13	Bat and Ball	Yes	Secure	Club	Urban	Mini	7v7	Poor	5	6.5	10	3.5	0
14	Gravesend Grammar School	Yes - unused	-	School	Urban	Adult		Poor	1	0	0	-	-
18	Guru Nanak FC *	Yes	Secure	Club	Urban	Adult		Good	1	4	3	1	1
18	Guru Nanak FC	Yes	Secure	Club	Urban	Youth	11v11	Good	1	1	4	3	0
19	Higham Recreation Ground *	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Rural	Adult		Standard	1	1.5	2	0.5	0
21	Istead Rise Community Centre	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Rural	Adult		Standard	1	0	2	2	1
21	Istead Rise Community Centre	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Rural	Youth	11v11	Standard	1	1.5	2	0.5	0
21	Istead Rise Community Centre	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Rural	Youth	9v9	Standard	1	1.5	2	0.5	0
22	Judson's Recreation Ground	Yes	Secure	Parish Council	Rural	Youth	9v9	Poor	1	1	1	-	0
22	Judson's Recreation Ground	Yes	Secure	Parish Council	Rural	Mini	5v5	Poor	1	0	2	2	1
23	Kings Farm Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Urban	Adult		Standard	5	4	10	6	2
25	Luddesdown Recreation Ground	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Rural	Youth	9v9	Standard	1	1	2	1	0
27	Mayfield Grammar School	Yes	Secure	School	Urban	Youth	11v11	Standard	1	2	1	1	0
28	Meopham School	No	-	School	Rural	Adult		Poor	2	0	2	2	-
28	Meopham School	Yes	Secure	School	Rural	Youth	9v9	Standard	1	2.5	1	1.5	0
31	Northfleet School for Girls	Yes - unused	Secure	School	Urban	Adult		Poor	1	0	0	-	0
31	Northfleet School for Girls	Yes - unused	Secure	School	Urban	Mini	5v5	Standard	2	0	6	6	2

² Unless local information suggests otherwise it can be assumed that the availability of all pitches in Local Authority and private/sports club ownership will be secure.

³ Based on pitch quality The FA recommends a maximum number of match sessions to be accommodated per pitch type. Please refer to Section 2.4 for the full breakdown.

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Site ID	Site name <i>*Indicates adult pitches that accommodate u13-u16 youth teams</i>	Available for community use?	Type of tenure ²	Management	Analysis area	Pitch type	Pitch size	Quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play (match sessions)	Site capacity ³ (match sessions)	Overused (+), At Capacity (/) or Potential to Accommodate additional play (-)	Pitches available in peak period
32	Northfleet Sports and Youth Centre *	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Urban	Adult		Standard	1	1.5	2	0.5	0
33	Northfleet Technology College *	Yes	Secure	College	Urban	Adult		Standard	2	0.5	2	1.5	2
33	Northfleet Technology College	Yes	Secure	College	Urban	Adult		Poor	1				
34	Painters Ash Primary School	Yes	Secure	School	Urban	Youth	9v9	Standard	1	1	1	-	0
34	Painters Ash Primary School	Yes	Secure	School	Urban	Mini	7v7	Standard	1	1	3	2	0
35	Riverside Community Centre	Yes - unused	Secure	Trust	Urban	Mini	7v7	Poor	1	0	2	2	1
36	Rochester United FC	Yes	Secure	Club	Rural	Adult		Standard	1	1	2	1	0
37	Saint Georges Church of England School *	Yes	Secure	School	Urban	Adult		Standard	2	2.5	2	0.5	0
37	Saint Georges Church of England School	Yes	Secure	School	Urban	Youth	9v9	Standard	1	0	1	1	1
38	Shears Green Junior School	Yes	Secure	School	Urban	Mini	7v7	Standard	1	1	3	2	0
39	Shorne Football Club	Yes	Secure	Club	Rural	Adult		Poor	1	1	1	-	0
40	Singlewell Primary School	No	-	School	Urban	Mini	7v7	Standard	1	0	4	4	-
41	Springhead Recreation Ground	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Urban	Adult		Standard	2	2	4	2	0
42	St John's Catholic Comprehensive School *	Yes	Secure	School	Urban	Adult		Standard	1	2	1	1	0
42	St John's Catholic Comprehensive School	Yes	Secure	School	Urban	Youth	9v9	Standard	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5
43	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	No	Secure	School	Urban	Mini	5v5	Standard	1	0	4	4	-
44	Thamesview School *	Yes	Secure	School	Urban	Adult		Standard	1	2	1	1	0
44	Thamesview School	Yes - unused	Secure	School	Urban	Youth	9v9	Standard	2	0	2	2	2
46	The Ifield School	Yes	Secure	School	Urban	Mini	7v7	Standard	2	4	6	2	0
46	The Ifield School	Yes	Secure	School	Urban	Mini	5v5	Standard	1	0.5	3	2.5	0.5
48	Westcourt Primary School	No	-	School	Urban	Mini	7v7	Good	1	0	5	5	-
53	Southfields *	Yes	Unsecure	Private	Urban	Adult		Standard	2	2	4	2	0.5
53	Southfields	Yes	Unsecure	Private	Urban	Youth	9v9	Standard	1	2	2	-	0
53	Southfields	Yes	Unsecure	Private	Urban	Mini	5v5	Standard	1	0.5	4	3.5	1
54	Whitehill Primary School	Yes	Secure	School	Urban	Mini	5v5	Standard	1	1	3	2	0
55	Higham Primary School	Yes	Secure	School	Rural	Youth	9v9	Standard	1	1	1	-	0
55	Higham Primary School	Yes	Secure	School	Rural	Mini	7v7	Standard	1	0.5	3	2.5	1
56	Istead Rise Primary School	Yes - unused	Secure	School	Rural	Mini	7v7	Standard	1	0	3	3	1
57	Shorne C of E Primary School	Yes - unused	Secure	School	Rural	Mini	7v7	Standard	1	0	3	3	1
58	Kings Farm Primary School	Yes - unused	Secure	School	Urban	Youth	9v9	Standard	1	0	1	1	1
59	Vigo Primary School	No	-	School	Rural	Mini	7v7	Good	1	0	6	6	-
60	St Botolph's C of E Primary School	No	-	School	Urban	Mini	7v7	Standard	1	0	4	4	-
61	Culverstone Green Primary School	No	-	School	Rural	Mini	7v7	Standard	1	0	4	4	-
62	Riverview Junior School	No	-	School	Urban	Mini	7v7	Standard	1	0	4	4	-
63	Tymberwood Academy	No	-	School	Urban	Mini	7v7	Standard	1	0	4	4	-

2.5: Supply and demand analysis

Spare capacity

The next step is to ascertain whether or not any identified 'potential capacity' can be deemed 'actual spare capacity'. There may be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to regularly operate slightly below full capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of regular friendly matches and activities that take place but are difficult to quantify on a weekly basis.

The table below considers site by site the capacity of the pitches to accommodate further play and for them to be deemed as having 'actual spare capacity'. A pitch is only said to have 'actual spare capacity' if it is available for community use and available at the peak time for that format of the game. Any pitch not meeting the criteria has been discounted.

Pitches that are of a poor quality or are over marked in any way are not deemed to have actual spare capacity due to the already low carrying capacity of the pitches. Any identified spare capacity should be retained in order to relieve the pitches of use, which in turn will aid the improvement of quality. It must also be taken into account that teams do not want to play on poor quality pitches.

Spare capacity has also been discounted at education sites that were not consulted through face to face meetings (i.e. primary schools). Although these sites may have potential future capacity it is not currently classified as actual spare capacity. Further investigation with the schools is recommended in order to fully understand community use aspects.

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Table 2.18: Actual spare capacity

Site ID	Site name	Available for community use?	Type of tenure	Analysis area	Pitch type	Pitch size	No. of pitches	Current play (match sessions)	Overused (+), At Capacity (!) or Potential to Accommodate additional play (-)	Pitches available in peak period	Comments
4	Cobham Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Rural	Adult		1	2.5	0.5	1	Spare capacity discounted due to training on pitch occurring outside of peak period.
4	Cobham Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Rural	Youth	11v11	2	3.5	0.5	1	Actual spare capacity during peak time.
7	Culverstone Recreation Ground	Yes	Secure	Rural	Adult		1	0.5	1.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity during peak time.
7	Culverstone Recreation Ground	Yes	Secure	Rural	Youth	11v11	1	1	1	1	Spare capacity discounted due to poor quality and match play occurring outside of peak period.
7	Culverstone Recreation Ground	Yes	Secure	Rural	Youth	9v9	1	1	1	1	Spare capacity discounted due to poor quality and match play occurring outside of peak period.
8	Ebbsfleet United FC	Yes	Secure	Urban	Adult		1	1.5	1.5	0.5	Spare capacity discounted due to nature of use by high standard club for Saturday PM matches.
18	Guru Nanak FC	Yes	Secure	Urban	Adult		1	4	1	1	Spare capacity discounted as site is overplayed due match play occurring outside of peak period.
21	Istead Rise Community Centre	Yes	Secure	Rural	Adult		1	0	2	1	Actual spare capacity during peak time.
22	Judson's Recreation Ground	Yes	Secure	Rural	Mini	5v5	1	0	2	1	Spare capacity discounted due to poor quality.
23	Kings Farm Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Urban	Adult		5	4	6	2 reduced to 1	Actual spare capacity equivalent to one pitch during peak time; due to league use of site.
31	Northfleet School for Girls	Yes - unused	Secure	Urban	Mini	5v5	2	0	6	2	Actual spare capacity during peak time.
33	Northfleet Technology College	Yes	Secure	Urban	Adult		2	0.5	1.5	2 reduced to 1	Actual spare capacity equivalent to one pitch during peak time
33	Northfleet Technology College	Yes	Secure	Urban	Adult		1				Spare capacity of one pitch discounted due to poor quality.
35	Riverside Family Learning Centre	Yes - unused	Secured	Urban	Youth	7v7	1	0	2	1	Spare capacity discounted due to poor quality.
37	Saint Georges Church of England School	Yes	Secure	Urban	Youth	9v9	1	0	1	1	Actual spare capacity during peak time.
42	St John's Catholic Comprehensive School	Yes	Secure	Urban	Youth	9v9	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity during peak time.
44	Thamesview School	Yes - unused	Secure	Urban	Youth	9v9	2	2	2	2	Actual spare capacity during peak time.
46	The Ifield School	Yes	Secure	Urban	Mini	5v5	1	0.5	2.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity during peak time.
53	Southfields	Yes	Unsecure	Urban	Adult		2	2	2	0.5	Spare capacity discounted due to match play also occurring outside of peak period. Secure tenure of site is also not confirmed.
53	Southfields	Yes	Unsecure	Urban	Mini	5v5	1	0.5	3.5	1	Spare capacity discounted; secure tenure of site is not confirmed.
55	Higham Primary School	Yes	Secure	Rural	Mini	7v7	1	0.5	2.5	1	Actual spare capacity during peak time.
56	Istead Rise Primary School	Yes - unused	Secure	Rural	Mini	7v7	1	0	3	1	Actual spare capacity during peak time.
57	Shorne C of E Primary School	Yes - unused	Secure	Rural	Mini	7v7	1	0	3	1	Actual spare capacity during peak time.
58	Kings Farm Primary School	Yes - unused	Secure	Urban	Youth	9v9	1	0	3	1	Actual spare capacity during peak time.

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Actual spare capacity has been aggregated up by area and by pitch type in the table below.

Table 2.19: Actual spare capacity summary

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match sessions per week)				
	Adult	Youth (11v11)	Youth (9v9)	Mini (7v7)	Mini (5v5)
Rural	1.5	1	-	3	-
Urban	2	-	4.5	-	2.5
GRAVESHAM	3.5	1	4.5	3	2.5

The table shows a total of 14.5 match equivalent sessions of actual spare capacity across Gravesham, the majority of which is on Youth 9v9 pitches (4.5).

Overplay

Overplay occurs when there is more play accommodated on a site than it is able to sustain. There are seven pitches overplayed in Gravesham across six sites by a total of eight match equivalent sessions. Two of these are private sites (Guru Nanak FC and Elite Sports Ground) the rest are education sites.

The majority of these are standard in quality. An improvement in quality at these sites may result in a reduction in overplay. The exception is Guru Nanak which is assessed as good quality.

The overplayed playing pitches on education sites are likely to be overplayed due to a combination of curriculum PE use and extra-curricular use including school fixtures that results in only minimal (if any) spare capacity remaining for the community. None of the pitches being overplayed are located on local authority sites.

Table 2.20: Overplay on pitches

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	Pitch size	No. of pitches	Capacity rating
4	Cobham Playing Fields	Rural	Adult		1	0.5
9	Elite Sports Ground	Urban	Adult		3	3.5
			Youth	9v9	1	2.5
18	Guru Nanak FC	Urban	Adult		1	1
27	Mayfield Grammar School	Urban	Youth	11v11	1	1
28	Meopham School	Rural	Youth	9v9	1	1.5
37	Saint Georges Church of England School	Urban	Adult		2	0.5
42	St John's Catholic Comprehensive School	Urban	Adult		1	1
44	Thamesview School	Urban	Adult		1	1

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Most overplay occurs on adult pitches and is particularly evident in the Urban Analysis Area. The majority of overplayed adult pitches are also accessed by youth 11v11 teams. Transferring this play to dedicated youth 11v11 pitches will result in overplay reducing across Gravesham.

Table 2.21: Overplay summary

Analysis area	Overplay (match sessions per week)				
	Adult	Youth (11v11)	Youth (9v9)	Mini (7v7)	Mini (5v5)
Rural	0.5	-	1.5	-	-
Urban	7	1	2.5	-	-
GRAVESHAM	7.5	1	4	-	-

2.6: Conclusions

Having considered supply and demand, the tables below identify the extent to which the current stock of pitches can meet demand both currently (i.e. spare capacity taking away overplay) and in the future (based on latent demand, displaced demand and future demand) in each of the analysis areas.

The future demand column includes potential growth expressed by clubs and predicted growth as a result of population increases for each pitch type.

Table 2.22: Spare capacity/overplay of adult pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Demand (match equivalent sessions)					Total
		Overplay	Current total	Latent demand	Displaced demand	Future demand	
Rural	1.5	0.5	1	-	0.5	-	0.5
Urban	2	7	5	2	1	4	12
GRAVESHAM	3.5	7.5	4	2	1.5	4	11.5

Overall in Gravesham there is currently an insufficient amount of match equivalent sessions on adult pitches (four match equivalents). In the future there is a greater shortfall of 11.5 match equivalent sessions due to predicted demand. In particular, the Urban Analysis Area shows a current and future shortfall. However, the Rural Analysis Area appears to be generally sufficient.

Exploring ways to address instances of overplay through quality improvements, introducing new provision via the Ebbsfleet development and reintroduction of the Fleet Leisure site as well as looking to remove youth 11v11 play from adult pitches will help to address the identified shortfalls.

The Strategy document will look to explore and test the options regarding these planned and potential scenarios.

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Table 2.23: Spare capacity/overplay of youth 11v11 pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Demand (match equivalent sessions)					
		Overplay	Current total	Latent demand	Displaced demand	Future demand	Total
Rural	1	-	1	1	1	1.5	2.5
Urban	-	1	1	2.5	-	4.5	8
GRAVESHAM	1	1	-	3.5	1	6	10.5

The table above shows that youth 11v11 pitches are currently being played to capacity across Gravesham, especially in the Urban Analysis Area where overplay leads to a shortfall. Due to levels of predicted latent and future demand in both analysis areas, there is a future shortfall amounting to 10.5 match equivalent sessions.

In addition, please note that a further 18 youth 11v11 match equivalent sessions (36 teams) are recorded as taking place on adult pitches and as such the shortfall of youth pitches is likely to be exacerbated. There is a clear need for an increase in provision should this current play be transferred to dedicated youth 11v11 pitches.

Table 2.24: Spare capacity/overplay of youth 9v9 pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Demand (match equivalent sessions)					
		Overplay	Current total	Latent demand	Displaced demand	Future demand	Total
Rural	-	1.5	1.5	-	-	1.5	3
Urban	4.5	2.5	2	1.5	-	4	3.5
GRAVESHAM	4.5	4	0.5	1.5	-	5.5	7.5

The current picture on 9v9 pitches shows that there is some current actual spare capacity (totalling 4.5 match equivalent sessions), which can be attributed solely to the Urban Analysis Area. However, a shortfall in the Rural Analysis Area due to overplay is identified; resulting in only a small amount of spare capacity across Gravesham (0.5 match sessions).

With predicted latent and future demand taken into consideration, there is a future shortfall of 7.5 match equivalent sessions overall. Attempts to reintroduce identified lapsed sites in the future should be made to try and meet future demand.

Table 2.25: Spare capacity/overplay of mini 7v7 pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Demand (match equivalent sessions)					
		Overplay	Current total	Latent demand	Displaced demand	Future demand	Total
Rural	3	-	3	-	-	0.5	2.5
Urban	-	-	-	1	-	3	4
GRAVESHAM	3	-	3	1	-	3.5	1.5

There is currently actual spare capacity amounting to three match equivalent sessions overall on 7v7 pitches. All can be attributed to the Rural Analysis Area. Taking into account predicted latent and future demand, shows a future shortfall of 1.5 match

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equivalent sessions across Gravesham. However, the Urban Analysis Area is shown to have a future shortfall equivalent to four match sessions.

Table 2.26: Spare capacity/overplay of mini 5v5 pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Demand (match equivalent sessions)					
		Overplay	Current total	Latent demand	Displaced demand	Future demand	Total
Rural	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Urban	2.5	-	2.5	-	-	1.5	1
GRAVESHAM	2.5	-	2.5	-	-	2.5	-

Current spare capacity exists on 5v5 pitches amounting to 2.5 match equivalent sessions. A future shortfall of one match equivalent session exists in the Rural Analysis Area. Taking into account future demand results in Gravesham being at capacity in the future. .

In order to reduce shortfalls on both 7v7 and 5v5 pitches it is recommended that community use options are explored and encouraged at unused primary school sites, which will be explored further within the Strategy.

Current demand for most smaller sided formats of the game (e.g. 9v9, 7v7 and 5v5) show minor levels of spare capacity. Youth 11v11 format is currently being played at capacity. Looking to improve quality at poor rated sites will help to meet short term demand. However, this will not be enough to satisfy long term future demand. In addition to club demand for training facilities and identification of some training taking place on match pitches, it is likely that provision of a 3G facility will considerably help to alleviate the pressure for pitches in the future.

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Football – grass pitch summary

- ◀ The audit identifies a total of 88 football pitches across 45 sites in Gravesham. Of these, 76 are available, at some level, for community use. In total, three pitches are assessed as good quality, 60 as standard quality and 13 are deemed to be poor quality.
- ◀ Local authority sites with changing facilities are viewed as poor quality. Club consultation suggests provision could be better maintained with greater access to shower/toilet facilities.
- ◀ Tenure is considered unsecure at Southfields; site is owned by Hyde Housing Association who lease it annually to Gravesend Spartans. Several other teams also use the site.
- ◀ A total of 160 teams within 42 clubs are identified as playing within Gravesham. This consists of 37 adult teams, 80 youth teams and 43 mini teams.
- ◀ There are five teams registered to Gravesham that currently identify being displaced.
- ◀ There is latent demand expressed by clubs equating to two adult, 3.5 youth 11v11, 1.5 9v9 and one 7v7 match equivalent sessions.
- ◀ TGRs predict growth of two adult men's, 11 youth boys', two youth girls' & four mini teams.
- ◀ Future demand expressed by clubs equates to three adult, two youth 11v11, 2.5 youth 9v9, 2.5 mini 7v7 and 1.5 mini 5v5 match equivalent sessions.
- ◀ There is a total of 14.5 match equivalent sessions of actual spare capacity, the majority of which is on youth 9v9 pitches.
- ◀ There are 12 pitches overplayed across eight sites by a total of 12.5 match equivalents.
- ◀ Adult pitches are overplayed with youth 11v11 pitches being played to capacity. There is minor spare capacity on most pitch types. However, individual analysis areas do still have current shortfalls.
- ◀ Therefore, there is not enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet current demand in Gravesham.
- ◀ Subsequently, there is an insufficient supply of quality and appropriately maintained pitches in Gravesham.
- ◀ Factoring in future demand results in shortfalls across all football pitch types.
- ◀ Subsequently, there is not enough accessible and secured community use to meet future demands in Gravesham.

PART 3: ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCHES (AGPS)

3.1 Introduction

There are several surface types that fall into the category of artificial grass pitch (AGP). The three main groups are rubber crumb (third generation turf 3G), sand (filled or dressed) and water based.

Competitive football can take place on 3G surfaces with an FA approved certificate and a growing number of 3G pitches are now used nationally for competitive match play at mini and youth level. The preferred surface is medium pile 3G (55-60mm). Only competition up to (but not including) regional standard can take place on short pile 3G (40mm).

Table 3.1: Type and sport suitability

Surface	Category	Comments
Rubber crumb	Long pile 3G (65mm with shock pad)	Rugby surface – must comply with World Rugby type 22, requires a minimum of 60mm. Football surface.
Rubber crumb	Medium pile 3G (55-60mm)	Preferred football surface.
Rubber crumb	Short pile 3G (40mm)	Acceptable surface for some competitive football.

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Surface	Category	Comments
Sand	Sand filled	Competitive hockey and football training
Sand	Sand dressed	Preferred hockey surface and suitable for football training
Water	Water based	Preferred hockey surface and suitable for football training if irrigated.

3.2 Current provision

As seen in the table below, there is only one full size AGP within Gravesham, which is floodlit.

Table 3.2: Full size AGPs in Gravesham

Site ID	Site name	Community use?	Analysis area	Pitch type	Floodlit?
16	Gravesend AGP	Yes	Urban	Sand dressed	Yes

The pitch is available for community use after school hours on weekdays (6pm until 9pm) and 10am until 6pm at weekends. Gravesend Grammar school has use of the AGP from 9am until 6pm Monday to Friday.

The pitch is mainly used for hockey, however, it is also used for football five hours a week spread over three evenings: Monday, Thursday and Friday. This is mostly football club training, with ten clubs reported to be using the pitch. Occasional users include Old Gravesendians Rugby Club, which uses the pitch for training during poor weather.

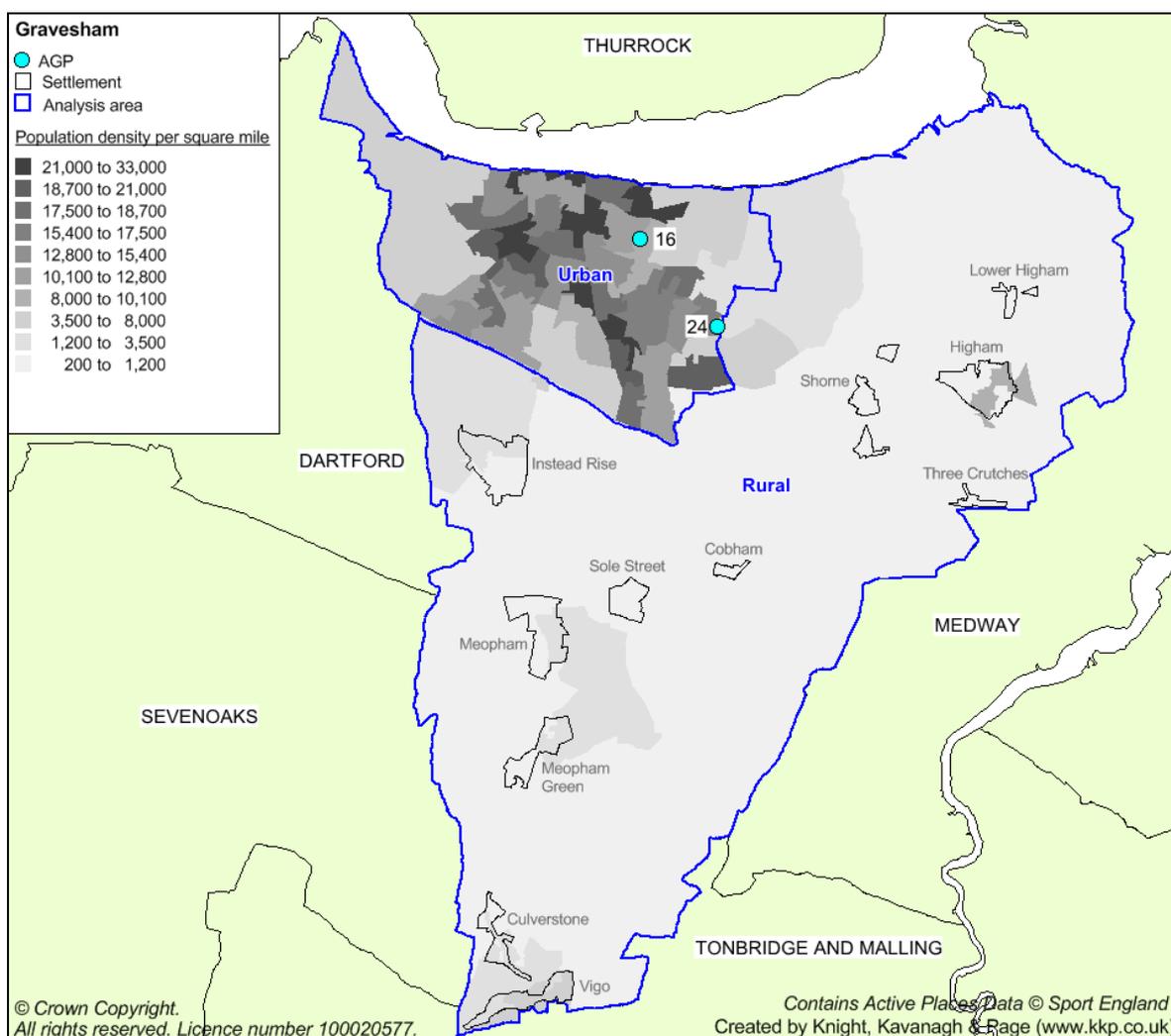
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Table 3.3: Additional supply of smaller AGPs

Site ID	Site	No. of pitches	Size (yards)	Analysis area	Pitch type	Floodlit?
24	Legend Sports Club	1	60 x 40	Urban	Short pile 3G (marked as 2x 5v5)	Yes
		1	60 x 40	Urban	Sand dressed (marked as 1x 7v7)	Yes

Figure 3.1 shows all provision of AGPs within Gravesham, regardless of size.

Figure 3.1: Location of AGPs in Gravesham



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Future provision

The Former Fleet Leisure site is intending to be brought back in to use by the Council in the near future. Options regarding this are still being discussed. However, the preferred option is for a combination of grass pitches (potentially adult) with small sided 3G provision; anticipated to be two mini 3Gs and one 7v7 3G.

Gravesend Grammar School has aspirations to develop a new 3G facility to World Rugby specifications. This would be as part of a wider plan to improve the pitches at the school. The School is looking at options to do this in association with Gravesend RFC. As part of the aspirations the School would also look to improve the existing AGP carpet.

It is also believed that Guru Nanak FC has aspiration to develop a 3G facility. This is in order to meet demand from its growing number of teams and to help meet training requirements.

Quality

The Gravesend AGP is rated as poor quality. This is due to a number of reasons: the seams and lines on the pitch lifting, areas of subsidence, sections of the carpet being ripped and moss being present around the edges. Consultation with clubs suggests that the moss and subsidence is made worse by the fact the pitch often floods due to drainage issues in the car park. This can also result in the postponement of matches. Evidence of this issue is also noted within the non-technical assessment of the site.

Some of the issues highlighted can be attributed to the age of the carpet (21 years) and heavy usage of the AGP, with hockey, rugby and football clubs training midweek, as well as Gravesend Grammar school using it on a weekly basis. It is considered that the carpet of an AGP usually lasts for approximately ten years (dependant on levels of use).

Another key issue highlighted during consultation is vandalism to the pitch. This is mainly in relation to the floodlights which in turn can cause a health and safety issue with broken glass on the carpet.

No quality issues are highlighted at the smaller sized AGPs at Legends.

3.3 Demand

The FA considers high quality 3G pitches as an essential tool in promoting coach and player development. The pitches can support intensive use and as such are great assets for football use. Primarily, such facilities have been installed for social use and training, however, they are increasingly used for competition which The FA wholly supports.

Training demand

Getting access to good quality, affordable training facilities is a problem for many clubs throughout the Country. In the winter months, midweek training is only possible at floodlit facilities.

The FA's long term ambition is to provide every affiliated team in England the opportunity to train once per week on a floodlit 3G surface, together with priority access for every Charter Standard Community Club through a partnership agreement.

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In order to calculate the number of football teams a 3G pitch can service for training, peak time access is considered to be 6pm-10pm Tuesday-Thursday resulting in an overall peak period of 12 hours per week. Mondays and Fridays are not included within this calculation as it is considered that most teams do not want to train in such close proximity to a weekend match.

Full size 3G pitches are divided into thirds or into quarters for training purposes meaning they can accommodate either three or four teams per hour and either 36 or 48 teams per week (during the peak training period). Based on an average of these numbers it is therefore estimated that 42 teams can be accommodated on one full size 3G pitch for training. As there are 160 teams currently playing in Gravesham, there is a potential demand for four pitches (rounded up from 3.81).

Proportionally, with most teams playing in Urban Analysis Area (124 teams) it would be recommended that three are located here and one within Rural Analysis Area.

Of clubs in Gravesham that responded to consultation, 83% report that they require additional training facilities. Of these, 89% specifically mention demand for 3G pitches.

A few teams highlight using the small sided facilities at Legends and the existing sand based AGP for training purposes. There are also a number of clubs that train on match sites albeit away from match pitches (e.g. Elite Sport Ground, St John's Catholic School). There are, however, some that train on match pitches. For instance Guru Nanak FC use its floodlit pitch for training during the week for its senior teams; this is due to a lack of alternatives.

Furthermore, several teams identify that they currently travel outside of Gravesham in order to access more suitable training provision, most commonly 3G provision at Strood Leisure Centre (Medway) and Ebbsfleet Academy (Swanscombe).

Competitive demand

Improving pitch quality is one way to increase the capacity at sites but given the cost of doing such work and the continued maintenance required (and associated costs) alternatives need to be considered that can offer a more sustainable model for the future of football.

The alternative to grass pitches is the use of 3G pitches for competitive matches and this is something that the FA is supporting.

In order for competitive matches to be played on 3G pitches, the pitch should be FA tested and approved (to either FIFA Quality/One Star accreditation or equivalent International Artificial Turf Standards (IATS) as a minimum). All provision should be tested and registered on the FA Register for 3G Football Turf Pitches: <http://3g.thefa.me.uk/>.

3.4 Supply and demand analysis

There is limited spare capacity on the current supply of AGPs and no 3G facility with the area. Furthermore, football clubs highlight a desire to access such provision with 83% of consulted clubs reporting a need for provision for training purposes.

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The FA model suggests that to meet training demand there is a need for potentially four community available pitches within Gravesham, of which there are currently none. As such, there is a clear need for 3G pitches to be developed.

3.5 Conclusions

Priority should therefore be placed on the creation of new full size 3G pitches in order to reduce shortfalls; especially in the future.

A full size 3G pitch provides greater flexibility, increasing the range of the offer (competitive and recreational) and should be located on sites that can maximise its use whilst ensuring it is financially sustainable.

Any potential new pitches should undergo FA testing when they are provided. Community use agreements should look to be agreed with Kent FA in line with the intended usage levels of the pitch. Specifically this should ensure pricing policies are in place that do not deter grass roots football club usage (i.e. match rates at weekends consistent with fees for grass pitches).

It is also vital that sinking funds formed by periodically setting aside money over time ready for surface replacement when required (FA recommend £25k per annum) are in place to maintain 3G pitch quality in the long term.

AGP summary

- ◀ There is one full size AGP within Gravesham, which is floodlit. It has a sand dressed surface and is predominantly used for hockey. It does also accommodate football training during the week and occasionally rugby training.
- ◀ Quality of the site is deemed poor; with the lifespan of the surface being over ten years and showing signs of rips, subsidence and moss growth
- ◀ Of clubs in Gravesham that responded to consultation, 83% report that they require additional training facilities, of which, 89% specifically mentioned demand for 3G pitches.
- ◀ In order to satisfy football training demand, there is a need for potentially four community available full size 3G pitches.
- ◀ Priority should be placed on the creation of new full size 3G pitches in order to help reduce future shortfalls identified for football.
- ◀ Although Gravesham has a sufficient amount of provision to meet current needs for hockey, there is no capacity for growth at peak times. Quality of provision is the key priority as it is likely to act as a barrier to increased participation and even to the sustainability of hockey.

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PART 4: CRICKET

4.1: Introduction

Kent Cricket (KC) manages cricket in Kent, under which Gravesham falls, from grassroots level upwards. This is done through the Community Team at KC which works closely with the ECB and aims are to increase participation at all levels of the game and promote excellence in all areas including playing surfaces. This will create long-term sustainability for cricket in all areas of Kent including Gravesham. Consultation with the Community Team reports that Kent is the second largest playing county in the country, with 62,000 people playing cricket.

Gravesham has the highest number and proportion of residents from a BME group across Kent; approximately 17,494 (17.2%). This is much higher in comparison to national and regional proportions. It has the highest number and proportion of residents from both the 'Asian/Asian British' ethnic group across Kent; approximately 10,604 (10.4%).

In terms of cricket this is particularly of significance as ECB identifies that up to a quarter of its playing population comes from the South Asian Community. Therefore the demand for cricket is likely to be higher in comparison to other local authority areas. It is thought that whilst some individuals will be playing within traditional club format, many will be playing outside the Borough or in formats not affiliated to the traditional cricket structure. More on this is set out in section 4.3.

Consultation

There are 11 clubs identified as playing within Gravesham. Of these, four were consulted with face to face. The other clubs were consulted with via an online survey. This resulted in a total response rate of 82%. Results are used to inform key issues within this section of the report. The clubs which responded to consultation are as follows:

- ◀ Cobham CC
- ◀ Gravesend CC
- ◀ Gravesend RFCC
- ◀ Harvel CC
- ◀ Luddesdown CC
- ◀ Meopham CC
- ◀ Nurstead CC
- ◀ New Ifield CC
- ◀ Old Gravesendians CC

The two clubs to not to respond are Gargan CC and Northfleet CC. Information in this report relating to the clubs has been gathered from online research and information from Gravesham Borough Council.

In addition, there is also believed to be the Gravesend Asian Cricket Club playing in the Last Man Stand (LMS) league. However, no active fixtures or recent activity is identified for the club.

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4.2: Supply

Quantity

In total, there are 13 cricket pitches in Gravesham located across 12 sites. Nearly all of these pitches are available for community use. However, two unused pitches are both located at Gravesend Grammar School. The one pitch not available for community use is located at Meopham School.

Table 4.1: Summary of pitches

Analysis area	Total pitches	Available for community use
Rural	7	6
Urban	6	6
GRAVESHAM	13	12

Spread of provision is fairly evenly weighted with seven pitches being located in the Rural Analysis Area and six in the Urban Analysis Area.

It is worth noting that there is another pitch just outside the study area in Southfleet. The pitch is located on New Barn Road and is used by Gravesend CC third team.

The two unused pitches at Gravesend Grammar School are both available for community use but currently unused by any community clubs. The School is open to potential future club use.

Non-turf wickets

There are three non turf wickets which are located over two school sites and one community site in Gravesham:

- ◀ Cobham Playing Fields
- ◀ Gravesend Grammar School
- ◀ Meopham School

Two of these non turf wickets are available for community use (Cobham Playing Fields and Gravesend Grammar School). However, the Gravesend Grammar School site is currently unused. The non turf wicket at Meopham Grammar School is unavailable for community use. One site is situated in the Urban Analysis Area (Gravesend Grammar School) and the other two are located in the Rural Analysis Area (Cobham Playing Fields and Meopham School).

The non turf wickets at Meopham School and Cobham Playing Fields are assessed as being standard quality. However, the non turf wicket at the Gravesend Grammar School site is rated as poor quality. This will affect its ability to accommodate both match play and training.

Competitive senior cricket is not generally sanctioned (by the leagues) on non turf wickets. However, they can be used for junior cricket and for training purposes with the aid of mobile nets.

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The ECB's TS6 Guidance on performance standards sets requirements for match pitches that are non-turf wickets. The ECB highlights that pitches which follow this guidance are suitable for high level play. It should be noted that this is guidance for clubs and not standards.

Figure 4.1 identifies the location of cricket pitches within Gravesham. For a key to the map see table 4.2.

Figure 4.1: Location of cricket pitches in Gravesham

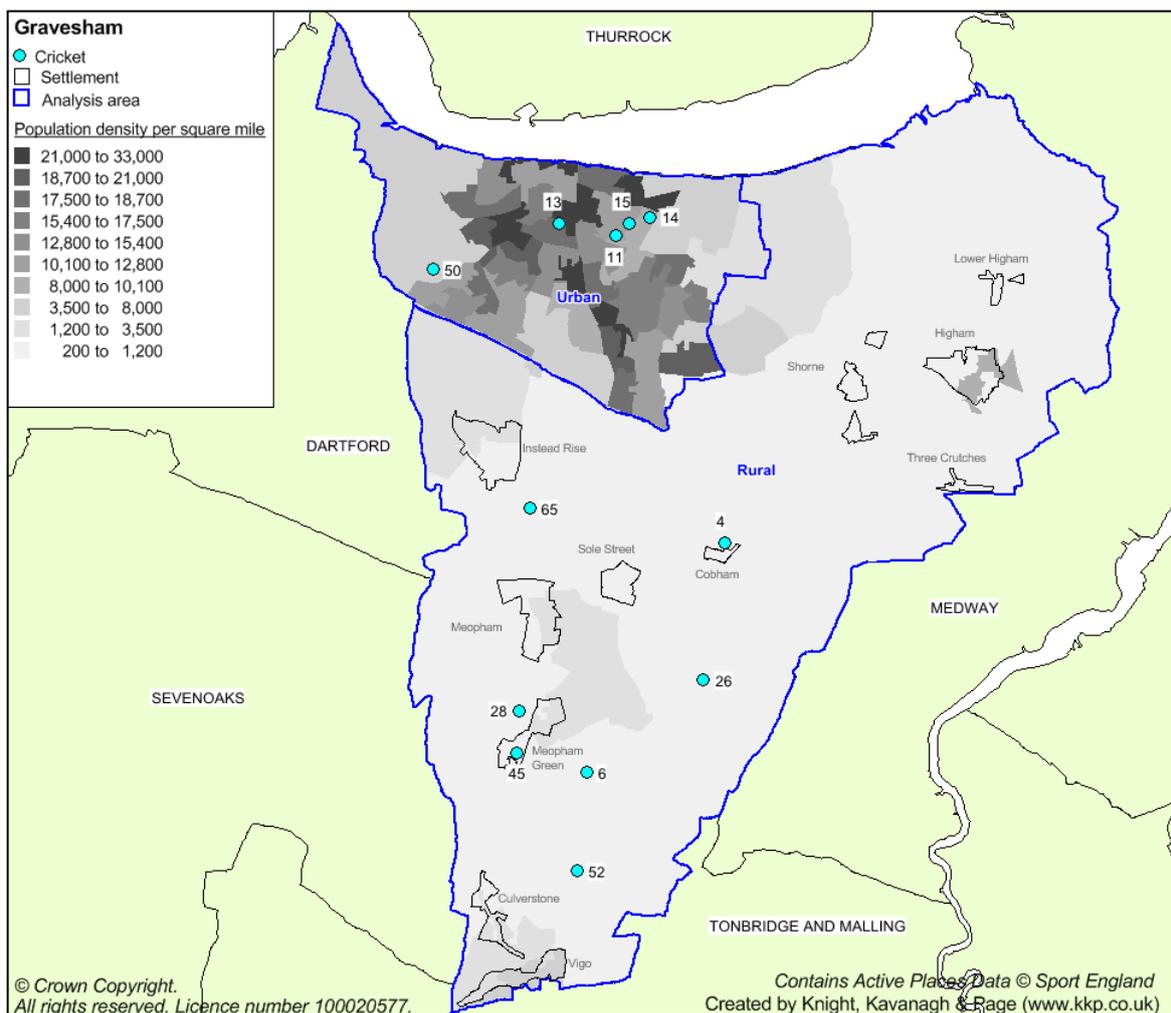


Table 4.2: Key to map

Site ID	Site	Analysis area	No. of pitches	Grass wickets	Artificial wickets
4	Cobham Playing Fields	Rural	1	Yes	Yes
6	Crispin Ground	Rural	1	Yes	-
11	Fleetway Sports Ground	Urban	1	Yes	-
13	Bat and Ball	Urban	1	Yes	-
14	Gravesend Grammar School	Urban	2	Yes	Yes
15	Gravesend Rugby Football Club	Urban	1	Yes	-
26	Luddesdowne Cricket Club	Rural	1	Yes	-

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Site ID	Site	Analysis area	No. of pitches	Grass wickets	Artificial wickets
28	Meopham School	Rural	1	-	Yes
45	The Green	Rural	1	Yes	-
50	Wombwell Park	Urban	1	Yes	-
52	Desmond Wood Ground	Rural	1	Yes	-
65	Nurstead Cricket Club	Rural	1	Yes	-

Security of tenure

All cricket pitch sites in Gravesham are currently considered to be secured i.e. pitches will continue to be provided over the next three years. In addition security of tenure is generally not an issue for clubs. The only club which may have issues with regards to security of tenure is Meopham CC, which uses 'The Green' owned by Meopham Parish Council. The Club operates with an annual rental agreement and as such struggles to make any changes/improvements to the facilities as it has to have permission from the parish council.

Of the clubs consulted with, two lease their ground from parish councils and have between 10 and 25 years remaining. Gravesend CC at the Bat and Ball Ground has 943 years remaining on its lease. The remaining clubs either own their ground or use a pitch owned by the parish council (Meopham CC).

Table 4.3: Tenure of cricket clubs

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Club based at site	Tenure
4	Cobham Playing Fields	Rural	Cobham CC and Meopham CC	Leased from Cobham Parish Council. Cobham CC has 25 years remaining on lease.
6	Crispin Ground	Rural	New Ifield CC	Club owned.
11	Fleetway Sports Ground	Urban	Old Gravesendians CC	Old Gravesendians Association lease Fleetway Sports Ground from the Council. Ten years remaining on lease.
13	Gravesend Cricket Club	Urban	Gravesend CC	Lease from the Billings family. 943 years remaining on lease.
15	Gravesend Rugby Football Club	Urban	Gravesend RFCC	Land leased by Gravesend RFC.
26	Luddesdowne Cricket Club	Rural	Luddesdowne CC	Club owned.
45	The Green	Rural	Meopham CC	Owned by Meopham Parish Council. Annual rental agreement in place.
52	Desmond Wood Ground	Rural	Harvel CC	Club own ground.
65	Nurstead Cricket Club	Rural	Nurstead CC and Gravesend CC	Club owns and maintains ground

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Quality

As part of the PPS methodology there are three levels to assess quality; good, standard and poor. In order to bring the assessment in line with Performance Quality Standards (PQS) assessments, pitches assessed as very good or good are considered 'good'. Above average and below average are considered 'standard' quality and poor and unsuitable pitches considered 'poor' quality. A PQS assessment looks at a cricket square to ascertain whether the pitch meets the Performance Quality Standards which are benchmarked by the Institute of Groundsmanship.

The audit of cricket pitches in Gravesham finds the majority to be of a standard quality (12 pitches). One pitch is rated as good quality and no pitches are assessed as being poor quality.

Table 4.4: Pitch quality of all pitches

Good	Standard	Poor
1	12	-

The quality score from the non technical assessment for each individual site is show in the table below.

Table 4.5: Individual site quality scores

Site	Community use allowed?	Club using site	Non technical assessment quality score
Cobham Playing Fields	Yes	Cobham CC and Meopham CC	Standard
Crispin Ground	Yes	New Ifield CC	Standard
Desmond Wood Ground	Yes	Harvel CC	Standard
Fleetway Sports Ground	Yes	Old Gravesendians CC	Good
Gravesend Cricket Club	Yes	Gravesend CC	Standard
Gravesend Grammar School	Yes	-	Standard
Gravesend Rugby Football Club	Yes	Gravesend RFCC	Standard
Luddesdowne Cricket Club	Yes	Luddesdowne CC	Standard
Meopham School	No	-	Standard
Nurstead Cricket Club	Yes	Nurstead CC and Gravesend CC	Standard
The Green	Yes	Meopham CC	Standard
Wombwell Park	Yes	Northfleet CC	Standard

In support of the pitch assessment findings, all but one responding club report their pitch as being standard quality. Gravesend CC believes its pitch is of good quality. However, non technical assessment reports it to be standard. In contrast Old Gravesendians CC describe its pitch (Fleetway Sports Ground) as standard, whereas results of assessment rate it as good.

During consultation, Gravesend RFCC explain that the pitch is below average, as it struggles to afford the maintenance. Furthermore, the rugby club sometimes use the outfield as a training pitch.

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Cobham CC appear to have the biggest issue with unofficial use of its pitch. The Club report issues with dog fouling, litter and motorbikes being driven over the wickets at Cobham Playing Fields.

Meopham CC believe that its ground is of good quality for a village green. However, in relation to other cricket pitches it is only standard. The Club also express that grass length and coverage could be an area for improvement.

Luddesdowne CC and Nurstead CC report having specific issues. Luddesdowne CC has an infestation of Tawny Mining Bees on its pitch. Nurstead CC has diseased patches of grass causing 'fairy rings'.

Maintaining high pitch quality is the most important aspect of cricket. If the wicket is poor, it can affect the quality of the game and can, in some instances, become dangerous. To obtain a full technical assessment of wicket and pitches, the ECB recommends a Performance Quality Standard (PQS) assessment. The PQS looks at a cricket square to ascertain whether the pitch meets the Performance Quality Standards which are benchmarked by the Institute of Groundsmanship.

The report identifies surface issues and suggests options for remediation together with likely costs. For further guidance on this, please contact the ECB.

Ancillary facilities

All clubs in Gravesham have access to changing room facilities at their home ground. All clubs report their clubhouse/pavilion being good (20%) or acceptable (80%).

Cobham CC and Gravesend RFCC report having good ancillary facilities. This is due to having a good number of changing rooms, including officials changing which is a requirement of some leagues. Cobham CC also has disabled access to its ancillary facilities and Gravesend CC is in the process of having disabled access installed.

All but one club maintain their clubhouse or pavilion. The exception is Gravesend RFCC which has its pavilion maintained by the rugby club.

In the last few years Gravesend CC has received some funding from Waitrose and the Kent County Cricket Club in order to improve its ancillary facilities.

Training facilities

Access to cricket nets is important, particularly for pre-season and on training nights. In Gravesham three clubs (38%) report a demand for additional training facilities.

Three clubs report a need for artificial training areas and nets to help accommodate demand when the pitch is at capacity on scheduled training nights. These clubs are Cobham CC, Gravesend RFCC and Nurstead CC.

Gravesend CC received funding worth £43,500 within the last few years towards portable nets. This funding came through a Sport England Inspired Facilities Grant.

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Indoor training

During consultation clubs highlight three facilities where they undertake indoor training:

- ◀ Gravesend Grammar School
- ◀ St Georges C of E School
- ◀ Longfield Academy (in Dartford Borough)

Usage of these facilities mainly takes place during the winter months and pre season. Gravesend CC, Cobham CC, Gravesend RFCC and Meopham CC all access Gravesend Grammar School.

Some clubs express difficulty in booking time slots at suitable indoor cricket venues due to their popularity. Gravesend CC report having to book slots nearly a year in advance to secure a place.

Table 4.6: Expressed demand for cricket training facilities

Club	Demand expressed
Cobham CC	New practice nets due to its nets now being of poor quality due to excessive use
Gravesend RFCC	Practice nets
Gravesend CC	Improved access to indoor facilities
Nurstead CC	Practice nets

Furthermore, Street Cricket sessions have recently been established at the sports hall at the Guru Nanak Gurdwara. Delivered by Kent County Cricket, the sessions are part of an initiative to capture and develop the significant amount of informal play believed to occur in the local community. Demand for practice nets are identified as part of the aim to grow numbers and participation.

Gravesham Indoor Cricket Academy

Gravesham also has an indoor cricket academy. This runs from the Gravesend Grammar School and St Georges C of E sites. The academy runs sessions for u10's through to u14's and takes place between two and three times a week during the winter months. The groups which attend are made up of junior players from a number of clubs within the local area. Gravesham Indoor Cricket Academy aims to maintain development all year round and prevent loss of interest and learnt skills during the 'off' season.

4.3: Demand

In total there are 32 senior teams making up 69% of the cricket teams playing in Gravesham and 14 junior teams, making up the remaining 31% of teams in the area.

Cricket clubs in Gravesham vary in size. For example, Gravesend CC has 17 teams whereas Old Gravesendians CC and Nurstead CC comprises of just one senior team. Three of the clubs in Gravesham have over six teams each. These clubs also tend to have good junior sections. For example, Gravesend CC has ten senior teams and seven junior teams ranging from u17's to u10's.

Table 4.7 shows that more senior cricket is played in the Rural Analysis Area but slightly more junior cricket is played in the Urban Analysis Area..

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Table 4.7: Summary of teams by analysis area

Analysis area	No. of competitive teams		
	Senior men	Senior women	Junior
Rural	17	-	6
Urban	15	-	8
GRAVESHAM	32	-	14

The above table is further broken down in table 4.8 below. Table 4.8 shows how many teams, as well as the type of team which play at the club

Table 4.8: Summary of teams per club

Club	Analysis area	No. of cricket teams		
		Senior men	Senior women	Junior
Meopham CC	Rural	4	-	3
Cobham CC	Rural	4	-	3
Gravesend CC	Urban	9	-	8
Gravesend RFCC	Urban	4	-	-
Harvel CC	Rural	3	-	-
New Ifield CC	Rural	2	-	-
Old Gravesendians CC	Urban	1	-	-
Gargan CC	Urban	1	-	-
Nurstead CC	Rural	1	-	-
Northfleet CC	Rural	1	-	-
Luddesdowne CC	Rural	2	-	-
GRAVESHAM		32	-	14

Club consultation indicates that the number of senior cricket teams in Gravesham has predominantly stayed the same within the last three years. However, three clubs: Harvel CC, Old Gravesendians CC and Gravesend RFCC report a decrease in senior male members. This has resulted in Gravesend RFCC sometimes struggling to field a second team.

Both Meopham CC and Gravesend CC report that junior members have increased. Gravesend CC now has 110 junior members. Meopham CC attributed its junior section growth to its coaching sessions. The remaining clubs report numbers of junior members staying the same.

Two clubs: Cobham CC and Meopham CC report having some problems retaining an u15s and u17s team due to cricket season running through exam season.

Women's and girls' cricket

Women's and girls' cricket is a national priority for the ECB and there is a target to establish more female teams in every local authority over the next five years. 8-10% of the Whole Sport Plan funding is focused around women and girls and talent identification.

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There are currently no senior womens teams within Gravesham. However, clubs report some girls in their junior sections. Gravesham CC has expressed a desire to develop girls' cricket as it believes there is a good girls' league structure in Kent.

Unmet demand

None of the clubs report current unmet demand for pitches i.e. no clubs report that teams were unable to play due to a lack of pitches.

Latent demand

Two clubs express latent demand; Cobham CC and Meopham CC explain how they would like to expand but would need access to additional cricket grounds, ideally within Gravesham, in order to do this.

Displaced demand

Gravesend CC and Meopham CC report having displaced demand. Gravesend CC third team has to travel outside of the study area to access a pitch. The team travel to New Barn Road in Southfleet. Meopham CC plays approximately 12 of its matches a season at Longfield Hill, again just outside the study area. Both clubs express a desire not to have to travel outside of Gravesham to access additional provision.

Future demand

Future demand can be defined in two ways, through participation increases and using population forecasts. Team generation rates (TGRs) are used below as the basis for calculating the number of teams likely to be generated in the future (2028) based on population growth.

Table 4.9: Team generation rates based on population growth

Age group	Current population within age group	Current no. of teams	TGR (2028)	Future population within age group	Predicted future number of teams	Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population
Senior Mens (18-55)	26,390	32	1:825	27,058	32.8	0.8
Senior Womens (18-55)	26,725	0	0	27,096	0.0	0.0
Junior Boys (7-17)	7,485	13	1:576	8,433	14.6	1.6
Junior Girls (7-17)	6,916	1	1:691 6	8,144	1.2	0.2

Increases in population equates to the potential creation of one new senior men's teams and two new junior boys' teams across Gravesham. The increase is split equally between the two analysis areas.

In addition to potential increases from population growth, five clubs state they wish to increase the number of teams as outlined in Table 4.10.

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Table 4.10: Club growth aspirations

Club	Analysis area	No. of competitive teams		
		Senior men	Senior women	Junior
Cobham CC	Rural	1	-	-
Gravesend CC	Urban	1	1	-
Gravesend RFCC	Urban	1	-	1
Meopham CC	Rural	1	-	1
New Ifield CC	Rural	1	-	1

There are clubs within both analysis areas that wish to grow. Three of the clubs: Gravesend RFCC, Meopham CC and New Ifield CC would like to gain both a senior men's team and a junior team. Gravesend CC would like to add both a men's and women's senior team and for Cobham CC it is important to establish an additional men's senior team. Attempts to provide an additional team in the past have failed due to a lack of volunteers. As a result the Club currently has some u18s playing in the senior section.

Table 4.11 shows a total for the future demand likely to be expressed through combining the figures from the TGRs (table 4.9) and the potential demand identified by clubs (table 4.10). These are used in the capacity analysis table later in the report.

Table 4.11: Summary of future demand

Analysis area	Senior teams		Junior teams		Future demand (match sessions) ⁴
	TGR	Club	TGR	Club	
Rural	0.5	3	1	2	50
Urban	0.5	3	1	1	45
GRAVESHAM	1	6	2	3	95

It must be noted that these plans are aspirations and, given that participation in traditional forms of cricket (i.e. club based league cricket) is declining nationally, such a large increase may be unlikely to be fully realised. However, in the National Player Survey commissioned by ECB in 2013/14/15 the growth in shorter formats (such as Last Man Stands) and the 'hidden' demand from South Asian Communities (who sit outside the traditional structures of cricket) make up approximately 30% of cricket participation. This is likely to be of significance for Gravesham given the demographic of the population.

It is believed that some existing members of the community, attending the Guru Nanak Temple, play cricket locally (for cricket clubs within and outside of Gravesham) but that there are a significant number of young people not active as travel to and from training and for matches is difficult.

⁴ Based on an average of 10 matches per season for senior and 5 matches per season for juniors.

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Guru Nanak Cricket Club/Street Cricket

To realise this potential and in order to capture informal play, Kent County Cricket has been working with the Guru Nanak Gurdwara to create the Guru Nanak Cricket Club.

As part of this initiative Kent County Cricket are funding and delivering a series of Street Cricket sessions using the sports hall at the Gurdwara; starting in April 2016 and running initially for 10 weeks. The aim is to create a long term relationship with the club and volunteers in order to engage with young people and to develop the game in new communities.

Currently the Guru Nanak Cricket Club does not have any teams or a dedicated ground. The Street Cricket sessions are played indoors at the existing sports hall. As numbers grow and teams begin to form it is envisaged that an outside practice facility will be needed followed by a cricket ground for use. The vision is to establish a practice facility on the school playing fields next to the temple and to identify a potential site as a ground for the future.

Peak time demand

An analysis of match play identifies that peak time demand for cricket in Gravesham is Saturday afternoon, with 19 teams playing during this time period. This is compared to 14 teams which play on a Sunday and 10 teams which play mid week fixtures.

All junior teams in the area play in the Medway Youth League, within various age groups. All junior fixtures are played midweek or on a Sunday morning. The majority of senior teams (72%) play in the Kent Regional League in varying divisions. Other leagues in the area include the Kent County Village League.

4.4: Capacity analysis

Capacity analysis for cricket is measured on a seasonal rather than weekly basis. This is due to playability (i.e., only one match is generally played per pitch per day at weekends or weekday evening). Wickets are rotated throughout the season to reduce wear and allow repair. Therefore, it is more accurate to assess capacity seasonally rather than weekly. The capacity of a pitch to accommodate matches is driven by the number and quality of wickets. This section presents the current pitch stock available for cricket. It illustrates the:

- ◀ Number of grass and artificial cricket wickets per pitch
- ◀ Number of competitive matches per season per pitch

To help calculate pitch capacity, the ECB suggests that a good quality wicket should be able to take:

- ◀ 5 matches per season per grass wicket (adults).
- ◀ 60 matches per season per synthetic wicket (adults).

This information is used to allocate capacity ratings as follows:

Potential capacity	Play is below the level the site could sustain
At capacity	Play matches the level the site can sustain
Overused	Play exceeds the level the site can sustain

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Table 4.12: Cricket pitch capacity for pitches

Site ID	Site name	Community use	Clubs playing at the site	Analysis area	No. of pitches	No. of grass wickets	Quality	Actual play	Capacity	Capacity rating
								(sessions per season)		
4	Cobham Playing Fields	Yes	Cobham CC and Meopham CC	Rural	1	14	Standard	40	70	30
6	Crispin Ground	Yes	New Ifield CC	Rural	1	14	Standard	30	70	40
11	Fleetway Sports Ground	Yes	Old Gravesendians CC	Urban	1	8	Good	10	40	30
13	Bat and Ball	Yes	Gravesend CC	Urban	1	16	Standard	100	80	20
14	Gravesend Grammar School	Yes – unused	-	Urban	2	16	Standard	30 ⁵	80	80
15	Gravesend Rugby Football Club	Yes	Gravesend RFCC	Urban	1	9	Standard	26	45	19
26	Luddesdowne Cricket Club	Yes	Luddesdowne CC	Rural	1	7	Standard	38	35	3
28	Meopham School ⁶	No	-	Rural	1	0	Standard	-	-	-
45	The Green	Yes	Meopham CC	Rural	1	12	Standard	25	60	35
50	Wombwell Park	Yes	Northfleet CC	Urban	1	7	Standard	9	35	26
52	Desmond Wood Ground	Yes	Harvel CC	Rural	1	10	Standard	30	50	20
65	Nurstead Cricket Club	Yes	Nurstead CC and Gravesend CC	Rural	1	8	Standard	40	40	

⁵ Play on site is estimated to 30 match equivalent sessions based on school P.E lessons

⁶ Site contains an artificial wicket only

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4.5: Supply and demand analysis

Spare capacity

Eight sites in Gravesham are identified as having spare capacity. The next step is to ascertain whether or not any identified 'potential capacity' can be deemed 'spare capacity'. There may be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to regularly operate slightly below full capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of regular training sessions, or to protect the quality of the site.

Calculations for actual spare capacity are done in relation to the peak period for competitive play in Gravesham (Saturday afternoon).

For the time being the two unused pitches at Gravesend Grammar School have not been included in the spare capacity calculations due to them not currently being used by any community clubs.

Saturday afternoon

Table 4.13: Actual spare capacity Saturday afternoon

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	No. of pitches	Spare capacity (sessions per season)	Pitches available in peak period (Saturday afternoon)	Comments
4	Cobham Playing Fields	Rural	1	30	1	Capacity for two more teams on Saturday afternoon.
6	Crispin Ground	Rural	1	40	0.5	Capacity for one more team on Saturday afternoon.
52	Desmond Wood Ground	Rural	1	20	1	Capacity for two more teams on Saturday afternoon.
11	Fleetway Sports Ground	Urban	1	30	0.5	Capacity for one more team on Saturday afternoon.
15	Gravesend Rugby Football Club	Urban	1	19	1	Capacity for two more teams on Saturday afternoon.
45	The Green	Rural	1	35	1	Capacity for two more teams on Saturday afternoon.
50	Wombwell Park	Urban	1	26	0.5	Capacity for one more team on Saturday afternoon.

There are seven sites that show potential spare capacity during peak period for competitive play. However, all these pitches except Fleetway Sports Ground are assessed as standard quality and as such improving quality should be the priority.

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Further to this, Nurstead Cricket Club site (Nurstead CC and Gravesend CC) is played to capacity and as such is unable to accommodate any additional play. The pitch is also assessed as standard quality.

Table 4.14: Spare capacity analysis area summary

Analysis area	Spare capacity (sessions per season)
Urban	75
Rural	125

Overplay

Overplay occurs when more play is accommodated at a site than it is able to sustain. In Gravesham, there is overplay recorded at two sites; Gravesend Cricket Club and Luddesdowne Cricket Club. The table below highlights the extent to which the two sites are currently overplayed.

Table 4.15: Overplay summary

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Capacity rating	Comments
15	Bat and Ball	Urban	20	Large amount of overplay
26	Luddesdowne Cricket Club	Rural	3	Small amount of overplay

The site with the most significant overplay is Gravesend Cricket Club. It should be noted that a percentage of this usage comes from junior cricket. In general, junior cricket will not have as much of an adverse effect on quality as senior cricket due to the shorter format of matches. However, Gravesend CC does have a large number of senior teams (seven teams). The Club is already attempting to reduce overplay by accessing additional grounds for its third and fourth team.

Overplay at Luddesdowne Cricket Club (three match sessions per season) although a small amount could potentially be accommodated through improvements to pitch quality (pitch assessed as standard quality).

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Table 4.16: Overplay analysis area summary

Analysis area	Overplay (sessions per season)
Rural	3
Urban	20
GRAVESHAM	23

The majority of overplay (87%) is located in the Urban Analysis Area.

4.6 Conclusions

Consideration must be given to the extent in which current provision can accommodate current and future demand. The table below looks at available spare capacity considered against overplay and the future demand highlighted. Future demand includes clubs growth aspirations for analysis area. Team generation rates based on population growth are then added to the overall future demand for Gravesham.

Table 4.17: Capacity of cricket pitches on Saturday afternoon

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match equivalents)	Demand (match session equivalents)				Total
		Overplay	Current total	Displaced demand ⁷	Future demand ⁸	
Rural	125	3	122	5	50	67
Urban	75	20	55	12	45	2
GRAVESHAM	200	23	177	17	95	65

Analysis suggests there is an overall spare capacity of 65 match equivalent sessions in Gravesham once displaced and future demand has been accounted for. However, a small shortfall in the future is identified in the Urban Analysis Area.

Notwithstanding overall spare capacity in the Borough, there is still a need to address overplay and displaced demand expressed by Gravesend Cricket Club (which uses the Bat and Ball site). An option could be to explore spare capacity at Fleetway Sports Ground (currently only used by Old Gravesendians CC) which is located close to its home ground (five minute drive).

It is also worth noting that Gravesend Grammar School site has two pitches which are available but not in use by the community. This could provide further spare capacity for Gravesham in the future; particularly in light of the potential future shortfall for the Urban Analysis Area and the vision for the recently established Guru Nanak Cricket Club.

⁷ Gravesend CC 5 matches per season and Meopham CC 12 matches per season.

⁸ Taken from participation growth as expressed by clubs (see table 4.11) and based on an average of 10 matches per season for senior and 5 matches per season for juniors.

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Cricket summary

- ◀ There are 13 senior cricket pitches in Gravesham, across 12 sites. The artificial wicket at Meopham School is not available for community use. 11 sites are used by the community. Gravesend Grammar School although available is not used by the community.
- ◀ There are 11 clubs generating 46 teams with a total of 32 senior and 14 junior teams.
- ◀ All but one (Fleetway Sports Ground) of the pitches are considered to be standard quality, indicating that on the whole the pitches are fit for purpose. Fleetway Sports Ground is rated as good quality.
- ◀ There are a total of three non-turf wickets in Gravesham. Two are stand-alone non-turf wickets at education sites. One is located on a community site. All three are rated as standard quality. The non turf wicket at Meopham School is not available for community use.
- ◀ All clubs report that ancillary facilities are good or standard.
- ◀ Four clubs; Cobham CC, Gravesend CC, Gravesend RFCC and Nurstead CC report demand for additional, or new, training provision. as does the recently formed Guru Nanak Cricket Club
- ◀ All clubs in Gravesham have at least one adult team. However, the majority have more than one. There are eight clubs who do not have any junior teams (Gravesend RFCC, New Ifield CC, Harvel CC, Old Gravesendians CC, Gargan CC, Nurstead CC, Northfleet CC and Luddesdowne CC). However, New Ifield CC have aspirations to create a junior section.
- ◀ There are clubs within each analysis area that wish to grow.
- ◀ As there is actual spare capacity available at seven sites during peak time in both analysis areas. This means Gravesham could cope with increased demand for cricket.
- ◀ Total overplay equates to 23 match sessions per season across two sites, Bat and Ball (home of Gravesend CC), and Luddesdowne CC.
- ◀ Analysis suggests there is an overall spare capacity of 65 match equivalent sessions in Gravesham in the future. However, all spare capacity is in the Rural Analysis Area. This may offer Meopham CC and potentially Gravesend CC additional provisions to accommodate overplay and displaced demand.
- ◀ Further to this Gravesend Grammar School may offer future spare capacity (as the site is currently not used by a club).
- ◀ The majority of sites with spare capacity are assessed as standard quality and as such ensuring quality is maintained should be the priority before considering additional usage.

GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

PART 5: RUGBY UNION

5.1: Introduction

The Rugby Football Union (RFU) is the governing body for the sport across England. It is split into six areas across the country with a workforce team that covers development, coaching, governance and competitions.

Consultation

The following three clubs are based in Gravesham:

- ◀ Gravesend RFC
- ◀ Old Gravesendians RFC
- ◀ Vigo RFC

All clubs were consulted through a face-to-face consultation.

5.2: Supply

Within Gravesham there are six sites containing a total of 13 senior and six mini rugby union pitches (five of which are over marked on senior pitches at Gravesend RFC).

Despite five sites being available for community use, only four are in use with St John's Catholic Comprehensive School currently being unused. Gravesend Grammar School is also only occasionally used by Gravesend RFC.

The only site which does not have community use is Gad's Hill School. On this site there is one senior pitch. However, the pitch is not full size.

There are senior pitches available for community use in both the Rural Analysis Area and the Urban Analysis Area. However, there are no mini pitches available within the Rural Analysis Area.

Table 5.1: Summary of grass rugby union pitches available for community use

Analysis area	No. of senior pitches	No of mini/midi pitches
Rural	3	-
Urban	9	6
GRAVESHAM	12	6

Figure 5.1 highlights all rugby union pitches within Gravesham, regardless of community use. For a key to the map see Table 5.2.

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Figure 5.1: Location of rugby union pitches within Gravesham

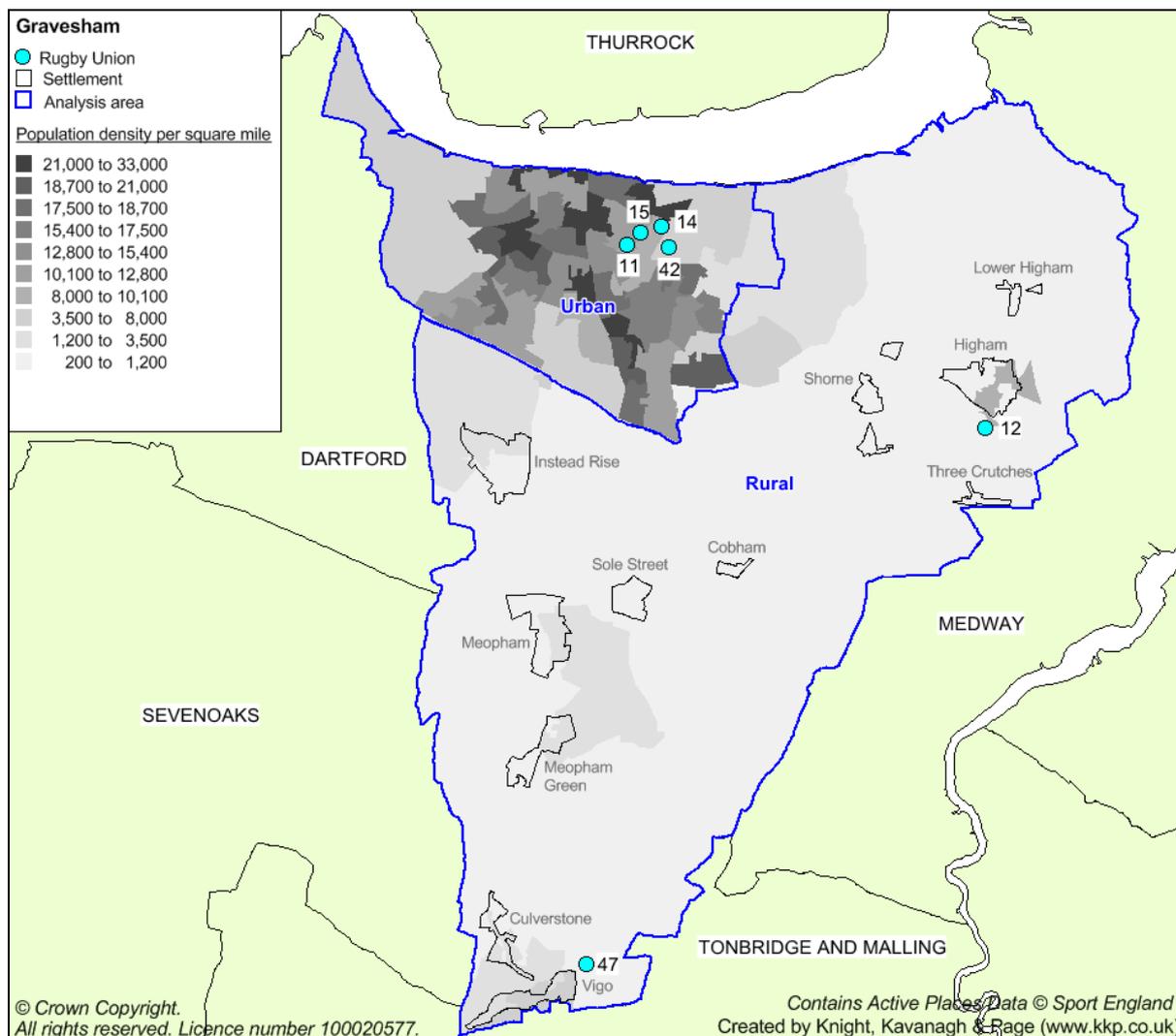


Table 5.2: Key to sites in figure 5.1

Site ID	Site	Analysis area
11	Fleetway Sports Ground	Urban
12	Gad's Hill School	Rural
14	Gravesend Grammar School	Urban
15	Gravesend Rugby Football Club	Urban
42	St John's Catholic Comprehensive School	Urban
47	Vigo Rugby Football Club	Rural

Pitch quality

The methodology for assessing rugby pitch quality looks at two key elements; the maintenance programme and the level of drainage on each pitch. An overall quality based on both drainage and maintenance can then be generated.

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The agreed rating for each pitch type also represents actions required to improve pitch quality. A breakdown of actions required based on the ratings can be seen below:

Table 5.3: Definition of maintenance categories

Category	Definition
M0	Action is significant improvements to maintenance programme
M1	Action is minor improvements to maintenance programme
M2	Action is no improvements to maintenance programme

Table 5.4: Definition of drainage categories

Category	Definition
D0	Action is pipe drainage system is needed on pitch
D1	Action is pipe drainage is needed on pitch
D2	Action is slit drainage is needed on pitch
D3	No action is needed on pitch drainage

Table 5.5: Quality ratings based on maintenance and drainage scores

		Maintenance		
		Poor (M0)	Adequate (M1)	Good (M2)
Drainage	Natural Inadequate (D0)	Poor	Poor	Standard
	Natural Adequate (D1)	Poor	Standard	Good
	Pipe Drained (D2)	Standard	Standard	Good
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	Standard	Good	Good

The figures are based upon a pipe drained system at 5m centres that has been installed in the last eight years and a slit drained system at 1m centres completed in the last five years.

Overall in Gravesham, there are four senior pitches assessed as good quality and eight as standard. In terms of mini pitches, five are assessed as good quality and one as standard.

Whilst maintenance varies on a site by site basis, no pitch is recorded as having an adequate drainage system in place. All drainage recorded is therefore either natural adequate or natural inadequate.

Table 5.6: Quality of pitches available for community use

Senior pitches			Mini pitches		
Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor
4	8	-	5	1	-

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The table below shows the agreed quality ratings for each of the pitches in Gravesham based on a combination of non-technical site assessment scores as well as user ratings.

Table 5.7: Site quality ratings

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use?	Tenure	Pitch type	Non tech score	Quality rating	Floodlit?	Comments
11	Fleetway Sports Ground (Old Gravesendians RFC)	Urban	Yes	Secured	Senior	M2/D1	Good	No	Senior pitch used for matches. Well maintained by grounds man and has good drainage.
			Yes	Secured	Senior	M2/D1	Good	No	Senior pitch used for matches. Well maintained by grounds man and has good drainage.
12	Gad's Hill School	Rural	No	Secured	Senior	M0/D1	Poor	No	Senior pitch on education site. Not available for community use and slightly undersize.
14	Gravesend Grammar School	Urban	Yes	Secured	Senior	M1/D1	Standard	No	Senior pitch on education site. Available for community use. Used for school matches and occasionally used by Gravesend RFC.
		Urban	Yes	Secured	Senior	M1/D1	Standard	No	Senior pitch on education site. Available for community use. Used for school matches and occasionally used by Gravesend RFC.
		Urban	Yes	Secured	Senior	M1/D1	Standard	No	Senior pitch on education site. Available for community use. Used for school matches and occasionally used by Gravesend RFC. Slightly undersize and used by younger age groups.
15	Gravesend RFC	Urban	Yes	Secured	Senior	M2/D0	Standard	Yes	Main pitch at Gravesend RFC with floodlighting. Pitch used for matches and four hours of training a week. Gravel drainage under pitch but is not adequate as one half of pitch floods.
		Urban	Yes	Secured	Senior	M2/D1	Good	No	Senior pitch over marked with mini pitches. Used for matches.
		Urban	Yes	Secured	Senior	M2/D1	Good	Half	Senior pitch over marked with mini pitches. Used for matches and eight hours of training a week. Half of pitch is floodlit.
42	St John's Catholic Comprehensive School	Urban	Yes-unused	Un-secured	Senior	M1/D1	Standard	No	Senior pitch available for community use, but unused.
		Urban	Yes unused	Un-secured	Mini	M1/D1	Standard	No	Mini pitch available but unused
47	Vigo Rugby Club	Rural	Yes	Secured	Senior	M2/D0	Standard	No	Senior pitch used for matches.
		Rural	Yes	Secured	Senior	M2/D0	Standard	No	Senior pitch used for matches.
		Rural	Yes	Secured	Senior	M2/D0	Standard	Yes	Senior pitch with floodlights. Used for training.

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Ancillary facilities

All clubs in Gravesham have access to changing room provision for matches and training.

Vigo RFC owns its own clubhouse which it describes along with the changing facilities as good quality. The clubhouse is DDA compliant and has recently (five years ago) undergone an extension providing extra space, bigger changing rooms and male, female and disabled toilets. The Club also received funding from Gravesham Borough Council for new kitchen facilities.

Gravesend RFC does not own its clubhouse. It is owned by the Billings family who own the land the club is situated on. However, the Club is ultimately responsible for its maintenance. It believes its changing facilities are adequate but could do with improvements and modernisation. The clubhouse has six changing rooms with communal showers and a separate referee's room. Although the changing rooms do have hot water, the hot water system needs replacing and there is no heating. The changing facilities are also used by the three hockey teams on match days (Saturday).

Old Gravesendians RFC expresses a desire to improve its changing facilities as they do not currently meet RFU regulations. It is trying to gain funding to replace the boiler and shower pipes. The clubhouse is DDA compliant and managed by Old Gravesendians Sport Association Limited.

Security of tenure

Both Gravesend RFC and Vigo Rugby Club have long term lease agreements in place which provide security of tenure.

Old Gravesendians RFC is part of the Old Gravesendians Sports Association. The Association currently lease Fleetway Sports Ground from the Council. This lease is a long term agreement and provides security of tenure for all clubs part of the association.

5.3: Demand

Demand for rugby pitches in Gravesham tends to fall within the categories of organised competitive play and organised training.

Competitive play

Three rugby union clubs play within Gravesham, consisting of 12 senior men's, ten junior boys' and eight (mixed) mini teams. Gravesend RFC is the only club with mini teams.

Table 5.8: Summary of demand

Club	Analysis area	No. of rugby union teams		
		Senior	Juniors	Mini
Gravesend RFC	Urban	6	5	8
Old Gravesendians RFC	Urban	3	1	-
Vigo RFC	Rural	3	4	-
GRAVESHAM		12	10	8

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All clubs report no change in numbers of senior teams over the previous three years. Vigo RFC and Old Gravesendians RFC report a decrease in junior teams. However, Vigo RFC explains this is due to a coach leaving to go to a different club and taking players with them. Aside from this, the Club is gaining junior players on a regular basis. Old Gravesendians RFC believe some of its mini and junior players have gone to Gravesend RFC due to its success and close proximity.

Gravesend RFC is the biggest club in the area, reporting to have 174 senior members and up to 400 youth members. This is reflected in the Club having teams at all age groups.

Training

Only Gravesend RFC trains on its match pitches. Club training takes place on the main pitch and on the third pitch. This is adding up to, on average, four additional hours of usage (two training sessions) on the main pitch, and eight additional hours (four training sessions) on the third pitch per week. A key factor in determining the extent of training on match pitches is the presence of floodlighting. The main pitch and half of the third pitch at Gravesham RFC is floodlit.

Training on match pitches can mean usage is concentrated which reduces the capacity for match play on these pitches and means they are more likely to be overplayed. To combat a lack of floodlighting on other pitches, clubs can use portable floodlights.

Vigo RFC has both a floodlit training pitch and an additional training area. Senior teams at the Club train on average for three hours (two training sessions) a week. Junior teams either train or play on a Sunday morning for approximately two hours.

Old Gravesendians RFC only train on match pitches over the summer months. During the season it uses its floodlit training area (70mx50m in size). If the training area becomes unplayable the AGP at Gravesend RFC is used. The senior section has two training sessions a week and the junior section has one (either training or match play) which equates to six hours of training a week.

Additional usage

Both Vigo RFC and Gravesend RFC report additional usage. The Vigo RFC pitches are used by a bike polo club and an archery club during the summer months. Gravesend RFC is occasionally used by the Gravesham Grammar School's rugby teams on school match days.

Unmet demand

Unmet demand is existing demand that is not getting access to pitches. It is usually expressed, for example, where a team is already training but is unable to access a match pitch or where a league has a waiting list due to a lack of pitch provision, which in turn is hindering its growth. No current unmet demand was identified in Gravesham.

Despite this Gravesend RFC does report operating at capacity. Therefore, should membership increase, unmet demand is likely to be produced.

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Latent demand

No clubs in Gravesham report having latent demand i.e. if there were access to more pitches there could be more teams.

Future demand

Future demand can be defined in two ways, through participation increases and using population forecasts. Team generation rates are used below as the basis for calculating the number of teams likely to be generated in the future based on population growth (2028).

Table 5.9: Team generation rates

Age group	Current population within age group	Current no. of teams	Team generation rate	Future population within age group (2028)	Predicted future number of teams	Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population
Senior Men (19-45)	18,225	12	1519	19,308	12.7	0.7
Senior Women (19-45)	18,800	0	0	19,454	0.0	0.0
Junior Boys (13-18)	4,149	10	415	4,657	11.2	1.2
Junior Girls (13-18)	3,816	0	0	4,437	0.0	0.0
Mini rugby mixed (7-12)	7,718	8	965	8,957	9.3	1.3

It is predicted that there will be a growth of one men's' senior team, one junior boys' teams and one mini rugby team.

Future demand expressed by clubs can also be seen in the table below. Where quantified, planned growth amounts to one male senior, two junior boys' and two mini teams. This amounts to the need for 1.5 senior pitches and 0.5 mini pitch (based on one senior or junior team requiring 0.5 of a pitch and one mini team requiring 0.25 of a pitch when playing home and away).

Table 5.10: Future demand expressed by clubs

Club	Future demand			Comments
	Senior	Juniors	Mini	
Gravesend RFC	-	-	-	Club report being at capacity.
Old Gravesendians RFC	-	1	1	The Club would like to gain junior and mini teams.
Vigo RFC	1	1	1	Club report wanting to have more teams in senior and youth section.
GRAVESHAM	1	2	2	

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5.4: Capacity analysis

The capacity for pitches to regularly accommodate competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality, and therefore the capacity, of a pitch affect the playing experience and people's enjoyment of playing rugby. In extreme circumstances it can result in the inability of the pitch to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off peak times. To enable an accurate supply and demand assessment of rugby pitches, the following assumptions are applied to site by site analysis:

- ◀ All sites that are used for competitive rugby matches (regardless of whether this is secured community use) are included on the supply side.
- ◀ All competitive play is on senior sized pitches (except for where mini pitches are provided).
- ◀ From U13 upwards, teams play 15 v15 and use a full pitch.
- ◀ Mini teams (U6-12) play on half of a senior pitch i.e. two teams per senior pitch or a dedicated mini pitch.
- ◀ For senior and youth teams the current level of play per week is set at 0.5 for each match played based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis (assumes half of matches will be played away).
- ◀ For mini teams playing on a senior pitch, play per week is set at 0.25 for each match played based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis and playing across half of one senior pitch.
- ◀ All male adult club rugby takes place on a Saturday afternoon.
- ◀ All U13-18 rugby takes place on a Sunday morning.
- ◀ Training that takes place on club pitches is reflected by the addition of team equivalents.
- ◀ Team equivalents have been calculated on the basis that 30 players (two teams) train on the pitch for 90 minutes (team equivalent of one) per night.

As a guide, the RFU has set a standard number of matches that each pitch should be able to accommodate. Capacity is based upon a basic assessment of the drainage system and maintenance programme ascertained through a combination of the quality assessment and the club survey as follows:

Table 5.11: Pitch capacity (matches per week) based on quality assessments

		Maintenance		
		Poor (M0)	Adequate (M1)	Good (M2)
Drainage	Natural Inadequate (D0)	0.5	1.5	2
	Natural Adequate or Pipe Drained (D1)	1.5	2	3
	Pipe Drained (D2)	1.75	2.5	3.25
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	2	3	3.5

This guide should only be used as a very general measure of potential pitch capacity and does not account for specific circumstances at time of use and assumes average rainfall and an appropriate end of season rest and renovation programme.

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The peak period

In order to fully establish actual spare capacity, the peak period needs to be established. The peak time for demand of senior rugby pitches is Saturday PM. The peak time for junior and mini teams is Sunday AM, although junior teams also play on senior pitches.

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Table 5.12: Rugby union provision and level of community use for pitches used by Gravesham teams

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Availability for community use?	Pitch type	Quality rating	Floodlit?	Match equivalent sessions per week	Pitch capacity	Capacity ratings	Comments
11	Fleetway Sports Ground	Urban	Yes	Senior	Good	No	2	6.5	4	Site has potential spare capacity.
			Yes	Senior	Good	No				
14	Gravesend Grammar School	Urban	Yes – unused	Senior	Standard	No	5	6	1	Match equivalent sessions per week based on school training and fixture. School uses pitches Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. Pitch has a small amount of potential spare capacity.
			Yes - unused	Senior	Standard	No				
			Yes- unused	Senior	Standard	No				
15	Gravesend Rugby Football Club	Urban	Yes	Senior	Standard	Yes	16.5	8	8.5	Five mini pitches marked across two senior pitches. Site overplayed. Most of overplay on main senior pitch as being used for training as well as matches due to floodlighting.
			Yes	Senior	Good	No				
			Yes	Senior	Good	Half				
42	St John's Catholic Comprehensive School	Urban	Yes- unused	Senior	Standard	No	1	4	3	Match equivalent sessions per week based on school usage. Site has potential spare capacity.
			Yes - unused	Mini	Standard	No				
47	Vigo Rugby Club	Rural	Yes	Senior	Standard	No	6	6		Pitch played to capacity.
			Yes	Senior	Standard	No				
			Yes	Senior	Standard	Yes				

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5.5: Supply and demand analysis

Spare capacity

The next step is to ascertain whether or not any identified ‘potential capacity’ can be deemed ‘actual capacity’. There may be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to regularly operate slightly below full capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of regular friendly matches and activities that take place but are difficult to quantify on a weekly basis.

Gravesend Grammar School, Fleetway Sports Ground and St John’s Catholic Comprehensive School all have spare capacity during peak time for senior matches (Saturday PM) amounting to 8 match equivalent sessions. Vigo Rugby Club is used to capacity during peak time, whilst Gravesend Rugby Football Club is overplayed.

The mini pitch at St John’s Catholic Comprehensive School has spare capacity available during the peak period for mini rugby (Sunday AM).

Overplay

The table below highlights the level of overplay on senior rugby pitches within Gravesham. In total; overplay amounts to 8.5 match equivalent sessions.

Table 5.13: Summary of overplay

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Capacity rating
15	Gravesend RFC	Urban	8.5

5.6: Conclusions

Having considered supply and demand, the table above identifies the overall spare capacity in each analysis area on senior pitches.

Table 5.14: Overall capacity of senior pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity ⁹	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current	Future demand	Total
Rural	-	-	-	3	3
Urban	8	8.5	0.5	2	2.5
GRAVESHAM	8	8.5	0.5	5	5.5

As it stands there is currently a shortfall of 0.5 match equivalents in Gravesham. The entire shortfall is identified in the Urban Analysis Area. The Rural Analysis area is currently at capacity, with no shortfall but also no spare capacity.

Taking into account future demand, there is an overall shortfall of senior pitches amounting to 5.5 match equivalent sessions. The largest shortfall is identified in the Rural Analysis Area

⁹ In match equivalent sessions

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(3 match sessions). This is the result of Vigo RFC having aspirations to increase the number of teams despite currently being at capacity. There is also a future shortfall of 2.5 match sessions in the Urban Analysis Area.

One of the main reasons for overplay in Gravesham is the amount of training on match pitches at Gravesend RFC. The Club currently trains for 12 hours a week across its main and third pitch. This equates to nine match equivalent sessions per week.

Clubs are often reluctant to hire secondary pitches for training due to the additional costs involved and instead look to develop their own grounds in order to accommodate demand. By removing all training demand from match pitches, overplay would significantly reduce. A solution to alleviate overplay could be to install additional floodlighting. By having more floodlit pitches, training demand can be spread across more pitches (or on separate land) therefore resulting in less overuse.

Another reason for overplay in the Urban Analysis Area is mini teams playing on senior pitches at Gravesend RFC. Mini teams account for two match equivalent sessions of usage on the senior pitches (in addition to training demand).

By potentially marking out additional mini pitches away from the senior pitches, overplay will be reduced. There was also suggestion during consultation that Gravesend RFC can access the Gravesend Grammar School site on Sunday morning for youth games. However, this site only has spare capacity of one match equivalent session. Therefore precaution must be taken not to cause overplay on a second site.

Rugby union summary

- ◀ There are six sites containing a total of 13 senior and six mini rugby union pitches. Of these, 12 senior and all six mini pitches are available for community use at five sites.
- ◀ There are four senior pitches available for community use assessed as good quality and eight as standard. In terms of mini pitches, five are assessed as good quality and one as standard. No pitches have a drainage system in place.
- ◀ Three rugby union clubs play within Gravesham, consisting of 12 senior men's, ten junior boys' and eight (mixed) mini teams.
- ◀ Future demand expressed by clubs amounts to one senior, two junior and two mini teams.
- ◀ Three sites: Gravesend Grammar School, Fleetway Sports Ground and St John's Catholic Comprehensive School have spare capacity on senior pitches during peak time (Saturday PM) amounting to eight match equivalent sessions.
- ◀ St John's Catholic Comprehensive School's mini pitch has spare capacity, apart from during peak time for mini rugby (Sunday AM).
- ◀ Overplay amounts to 8.5 match equivalent sessions all recorded at Gravesend RFC.
- ◀ One of the main reasons for overplay is training on match pitches but other reasons include mini teams playing on senior pitches.
- ◀ There is an overall future shortfall of senior pitches amounting to 5.5 match equivalent sessions; 3 are identified in the Rural Analysis Area and 2.5 in the Urban Analysis Area.
- ◀ A practical way to help alleviate overplay could be to install additional floodlighting at Gravesend RFC. Additionally, potential greater use of Gravesend Grammar School site for mini matches on a Sunday morning should be explored.

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PART 6: HOCKEY

6.1: Introduction

Hockey in England is governed by England Hockey (EH). Competitive league hockey matches can only be played on sand based, sand dressed or water based pitches. Although 40mm 3G can be considered suitable for some recreational and school use this surface is not suitable for club matches.

It is considered that a hockey pitch can accommodate a maximum of four matches on the peak day (Saturdays) provided that the pitch has floodlighting.

Club consultation

There are three community hockey clubs based within Gravesham; Gravesend Ladies HC, Meopham Ladies HC and Gravesend and Wellcome Mens HC. Face to face consultations were carried out with all three clubs.

6.2: Supply

There is one full size artificial grass pitch (AGP) in Gravesham suitable for competitive hockey, which is sand dressed and floodlit. See Part 3 for all AGP details including 3G pitches.

Table 6.1: Provision of hockey suitable AGPs in Gravesham

Site ID	Site name	Surface type	Floodlighting?	Quality rating
16	Gravesend AGP	Sand dressed	Floodlit	Poor

Figure 6.1 identifies the location of AGP's within Gravesham. For a key to the map see table 6.2. Legends Sports Club (site ID 24) is not included in table 6.1 above as it is not deemed suitable for hockey use due to its small size and type of surface.

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Figure 6.1: Location of AGP's in Gravesham

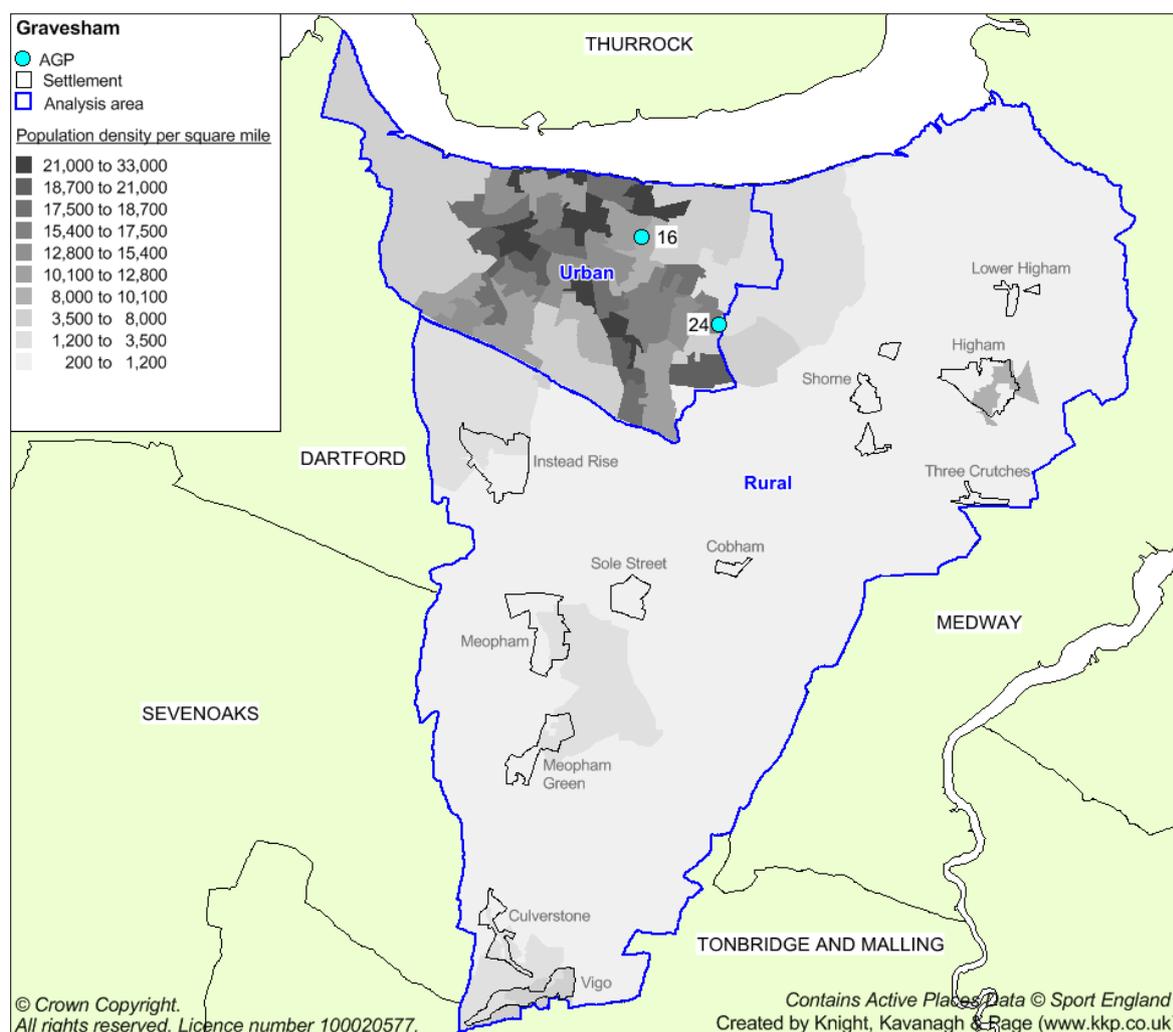


Table 5.2: Key to map

Site ID	Site	Analysis area
16	Gravesend Synthetic Turf Pitches	Urban
24	Legend Sports Club	Urban

Quality

The Gravesend AGP (site ID 16) is rated as poor quality. This is due to a number of reasons: the seams and lines on the pitch are lifting, areas of subsidence, sections of the carpet being ripped and moss being present around the edges. Consultation with clubs suggests that the moss and subsidence is made worse by the fact the pitch often floods due to drainage issues in the car park. This can also result in the postponement of matches. Evidence of this issue is also noted within the non-technical assessment of the site.

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Some of the issues highlighted can be attributed to the age of the carpet (21 years) and heavy usage of the AGP, with hockey, rugby and football clubs training midweek, as well as Gravesend Grammar school using it on a weekly basis. It is considered that the carpet of an AGP usually lasts for approximately 10 years (dependant on levels of use).

Another key issue highlighted during consultation is vandalism to the pitch. This is mainly in relation to the floodlights which in turn can cause a health and safety issue with broken glass on the carpet.

Changing facilities at the Club are described as functional but basic. Both Gravesend Ladies HC and Meopham Ladies HC also describe a need for heating in the changing rooms.

Ownership/management and maintenance

Gravesend AGP is located on the site of Gravesend RFC, which has 64 years remaining on its lease. The section of land where the AGP is situated is licensed to Gravesham Sports Trust. The Trust manages and maintains the pitch. However, Gravesend RFC is responsible for maintaining the car park and fencing surrounding the pitch.

The rugby club also maintain the club house which Gravesham Ladies HC can access as part of the licensing agreement. Meopham Ladies HC and Gravesham and Wellcome HC have to pay an additional fee for use of the rugby club's ancillary facilities.

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6.3: Availability and usage

The hockey suitable AGP in Gravesham is available for community use.

Table 6.3: Summary of availability and usage

Site ID	Site name	Surface type	Floodlit?	Quality	Total number of hours available for community use during peak period	Football usage	Hockey usage	Other usage	Spare capacity
16	Gravesend AGP	Sand Dressed	Floodlit	Poor	23	16%	32%	15%	37%

The pitch is available for community use after school hours on weekdays (6pm until 9pm) and 10am until 6pm at weekends. Gravesend Grammar school has use of the AGP from 9am until 6pm Monday to Friday.

The pitch is mainly used for hockey. All three hockey clubs in the area use the pitch on Saturday for matches. Furthermore, Meopham Ladies HC train on Monday evenings and Gravesend Ladies HC and Gravesend and Wellcome Mens HC train on Tuesday evenings. This equates to ten hours of hockey a week. The AGP is also used for football five hours a week spread over three evenings: Monday, Thursday and Friday. This is mostly football club training, with ten clubs reported to be using the pitch. Occasional users include Old Gravesendians Rugby Club, which is a trustee of the Gravesham Sports Trust. The Club uses the pitch for training during poor weather.

It is worth noting that although the pitch is available Sunday 10am until 6pm, it is only occasionally used and contributes to the pitch having spare capacity. Gravesham Sports Trust expresses a desire to increase usage of the pitch on a Sunday.

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6.4: Demand

Three clubs play competitive fixtures in Gravesham, fielding a total of eight senior teams. All match play takes place on a Saturday.

Table 6.4: Summary of hockey demand within Gravesham

Club	Number of teams		
	Mens	Ladies	Juniors
Gravesham Ladies HC	-	2	-
Meopham Ladies HC	-	2	-
Gravesham and Wellcome HC	4	-	-

The club with the most members is Gravesham and Wellcome HC with 70 players registered. Gravesham Ladies HC and Meopham Ladies HC have less with 35 and 36 members respectively.

All three clubs, report a decrease in members and a loss of teams. Gravesham Ladies HC report losing two teams in the space of a few years. In a hope to counteract this, the clubs are focusing on creating links with local schools and offering junior coaching sessions.

Gravesham and Wellcome HC used to be two separate clubs but recently merged. Despite this, the number of teams has reduced from six to four. Over the summer the Club is planning to run a free summer hockey camp for junior players. Consultation suggests that if it does not manage to establish a junior section it may fold as current players retire.

All three clubs suggest that the poor quality of the AGP is one reason for the decrease in players and lack of interest in joining. All three recognise that the clubs are competing with bigger clubs with better facilities on the outskirts of the study area such as Sevenoaks HC and Holcombe HC and even clubs further afield such as Canterbury HC.

Future demand

Team generation rates are used below as the basis for calculating the number of teams likely to be generated in the future based on population growth.

Table 6.5: Team generation rates

Age group	Current population within age group	Current no. of teams	Team Generation Rate	Future population within age group (2028)	Predicted future number of teams	Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population
Senior Mens (16-45)	20,366	4	1:5092	22,409	4.4	0.4
Senior Womens (16-45)	20,772	4	1:5193	22,383	4.3	0.3
Junior Boys (11-15)	3,278	0	0	3,894	0.0	0.0
Junior Girls (11-15)	3,005	0	0	3,780	0.0	0.0

Despite population analysis predicting little future growth in the number of hockey teams, all three clubs are hoping to create junior sections through school links and hockey camps. The clubs are also hoping to gain more senior members through promotion in the local area.

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6.5: Supply and demand analysis

Due to guidelines that suggest a floodlit hockey pitch can accommodate a maximum of four matches on the peak day (Saturdays) i.e. eight teams playing on a home and away basis, as it stands Gravesham has an adequate supply of hockey suitable AGP provision. However, there is no spare capacity to accommodate future growth on a Saturday. Further to this, quality is an issue and is likely to act as a barrier to increased participation, particularly for juniors and is a future risk for continued use of the site for competitive hockey.

6.6: Conclusions

Hockey summary

- ◀ There is one full size AGP suitable for competitive hockey within Gravesham, Gravesend AGP. The pitch is sand dressed and floodlit.
- ◀ The AGP is situated at Gravesend RFC and is rated as poor quality for a number of reasons including subsidence and rips in the carpet. Further to this the carpet is 21 years old which is considered to be eleven years over the recommended life span of a sand carpet. Vandalism of floodlights is also highlighted as a key issue.
- ◀ Three clubs use the AGP; Gravesend Ladies HC, Meopham Ladies HC and Gravesend and Wellcome Mens HC providing a total of eight teams. Gravesend and Wellcome Mens HC is the largest club with four teams.
- ◀ All three clubs report a decrease in members and a loss of teams over the last few years. Further to this all three clubs have plans to create a junior section as well as gain more senior members.
- ◀ It is recognised that the clubs are competing with bigger clubs with better facilities on the outskirts of the study area such as Sevenoaks HC and Holcombe HC.
- ◀ The clubs report the changing facilities as being functional but basic. Gravesham Ladies HC and Meopham Ladies HC describe a need for heating in the changing rooms.
- ◀ Although Gravesham has a sufficient amount of provision to meet current needs for hockey, there is no capacity for growth at peak times.
- ◀ Quality of provision is the key priority as it is likely to act as a barrier to increased participation and even to the sustainability of hockey.

GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

PART 7: BOWLS

7.1: Introduction

All bowling greens in Gravesham are flat greens. Bowls England is the National Governing Body for flat green lawn bowls with overall responsibility for ensuring effective governance of flat green bowls throughout the country. The bowling season runs from May to September.

Consultation

There are 10 bowling clubs identified in Gravesham, of which, six replied to an online survey request resulting in a response rate of 60%. The table below highlights clubs that responded.

Table 7.1: Summary of consultation

Name of club	Responded?
Belle Vue Bowls Club	No
GRFC Bowls Club	Yes
Gravesend Bowls Club	No
Northfleet Bowls Club	Yes
Cobham Bowls Club	No
Istead Rise Bowls Club	Yes
Woodlands Park Bowls Club	Yes
Windmill Bowls Club	Yes
Winget Bowls Club	Yes
Old Gravesendians Fleetway Bowls Club	No

7.2: Supply

There are nine flat bowling greens providing a total of approximately 50 rinks in Gravesham. These greens are located across eight sites. Gravesend Cricket Club contains two greens.

Table 7.2: Summary of the number of greens by analysis area

Analysis area	Number of greens
Rural	2
Urban	7
GRAVESHAM	9

Figure 7.1 shows the location of all bowling greens in Gravesham. See table 7.3 for key to map.

GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Figure 7.1: Distribution of bowling greens

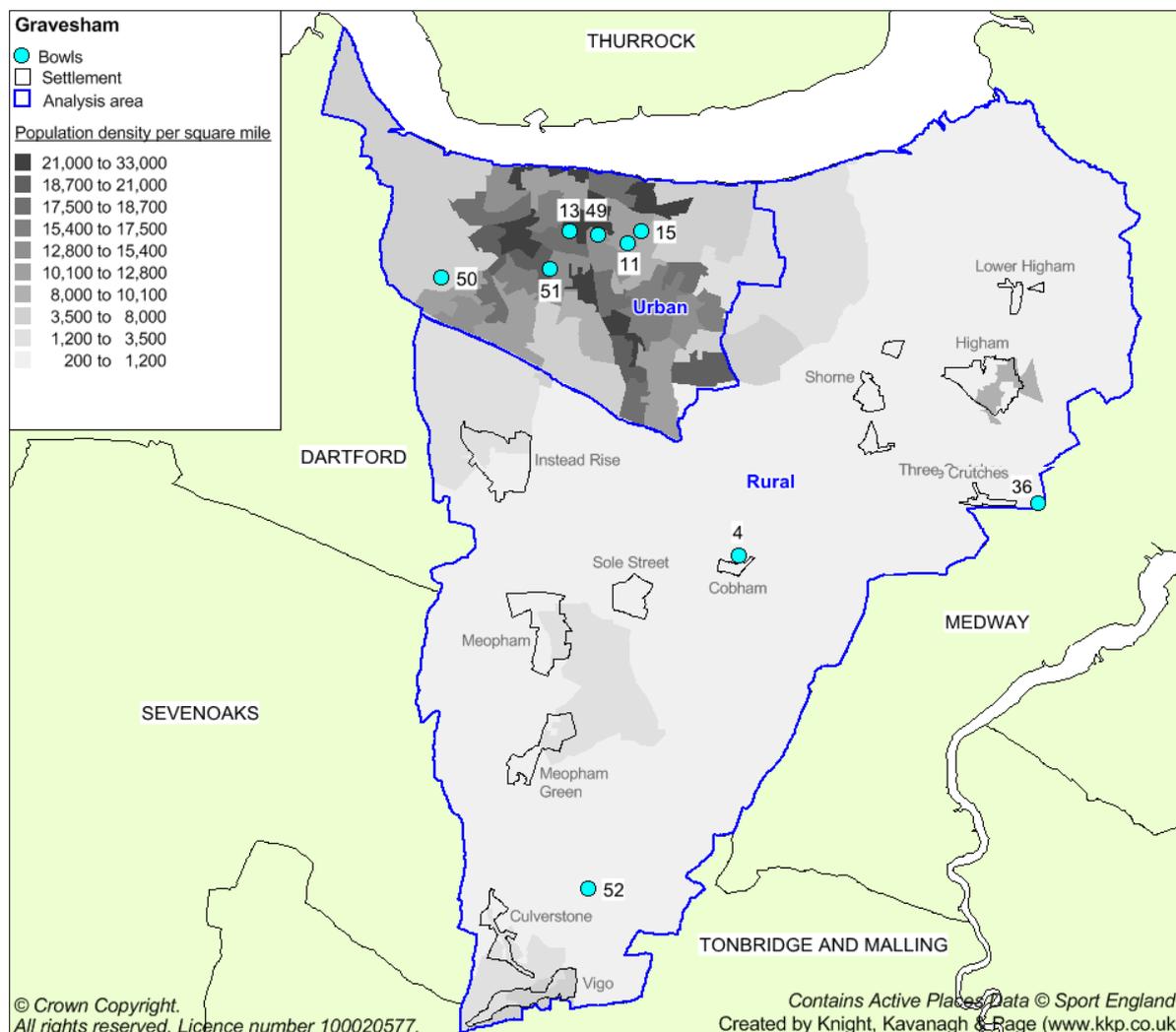


Table 7.3: Key to map

Site ID	Site	Analysis area	No. of greens	Quality
4	Cobham Playing Fields	Rural	1	Good
51	Woodlands	Urban	1	Good
11	Fleetway Sports Ground	Urban	1	Good
13	Bat and Ball	Urban	2	Good
15	Gravesend Rugby Football Club	Urban	1	Good
36	Winget Bowls Ground	Rural	1	Good
49	Windmill Hill Gardens	Urban	1	Good
50	Wombwell Park	Urban	1	Good
52	Istead Rise Bowling Club ¹⁰	Rural	-	-

¹⁰ Indoor facility.

GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Istead Rise Bowling Club uses an indoor facility at the Istead Rise Community Centre during the winter. In the summer, the Club uses a bowling green at Swanscombe Park (outside of Gravesham).

Quality

Following a non-technical assessment, all bowling greens are assessed as good quality. It is noted that all the greens are in good condition with only two sites: Gravesend Rugby Football Club and Windmill Hill Gardens showing minor wear and tear to the surface of the green. Gravesend Rugby Football Club is also highlighted as having slight unevenness to its greens. All sites have good grass coverage, ditchboards in good condition and no evidence of litter or leaf fall on the green. Furthermore, all sites have either good or adequate disabled access.

Of clubs responding to consultation, five rate the quality of its green as good. Only GRFC Bowling Club describes its green as average. Although 83% of responding clubs feel its green is of good quality, it is worth noting that Windmill Bowls Club highlights unevenness of the green and Northfleet Bowls Club report issues with drainage. This is the main reason the Club has to cancel home matches. Overall the views of the clubs reflect that of the non technical assessment.

It is believed that Cobham Bowls Club has aspirations to change their green to an artificial turf surface.

A total of five clubs report that green quality has either improved or stayed the same since last season, only Windmill Bowls club believe quality has decreased. The Club believes this is due to the Council reducing the frequency of cuts however the number of cuts has not changed. The perceived decrease may be as a result of recent warmer/wetter weather conditions. Management of the green has also recently changed although the green keeper is still the same.

The majority of clubs are maintained by the club itself. Windmill Bowls Club is the only site maintained by the Council.

Windmill Bowls Clubs has formed a partnership with the other users of Windmill Hill Gardens (Belle Vue Bowls Club). This is in the hope to secure funding to make improvements to both the green and the ancillary facilities at the ground.

Ancillary provision

Out of the responding clubs, five believe that quality of ancillary facilities decreases the overall quality of its facility. Access to satisfactory changing accommodation is reported to be an issue by many clubs within Gravesham, with changing facilities mainly being rated at average or poor. This is mirrored in clubs perceptions of clubhouse facilities. The only club reporting to be satisfied with its ancillary facilities is Northfleet Bowls Club.

It is worth noting that toilet facilities were more favourably rated with all six clubs who responded describing its toilet facilities as either average or good.

The clubhouse facilities at Windmill Hill Gardens are rated as poor by users. Windmill Bowls Club are currently the only club not responsible for maintaining its own ancillary facilities; this is the responsibility of the Council.

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Playing locations

There are 10 bowling clubs in Gravesham; nine of these use greens within the borough. The table below highlights the home green for each club.

Table 7.4: Playing locations of bowling clubs in Gravesham

Site ID	Site	Club users	
4	Cobham Playing Fields	Cobham Bowls Club	
11	Fleetway Sports Ground	Old Gravesendians Bowls Club	
13	Bat and Ball	Gravesend Bowls Club	
15	Gravesend Rugby Football Club	GRFC Bowls Club	
36	Winget Bowls Ground	Winget Bowls Club	
52	Istead Rise Bowling Club ¹¹ (also uses green at Swanscombe Park)	Istead Rise Bowls Club	
49	Windmill Hill Gardens	Windmill Bowls Club	Belle Vue Bowls Club
50	Wombwell Park	Northfleet Bowls Club	
51	Woodlands Park	Woodlands Park Bowls Club	

7.3: Demand

Current demand

Across responding clubs there are a total of 409 members, which consists of 258 men, 149 women and two juniors. The average club membership is 68 members.

Northfleet Bowls Club has the highest membership with 93 members overall. The lowest membership is at Windmill Bowls Club which has 52 members. Only one club: Northfleet Bowls Club currently service junior members.

Table 7.5: Summary of membership from responding clubs

Club name	Members		
	Men	Women	Juniors
GRFC Bowls Club	40	20	-
Istead Rise Bowls Club	35	29	-
Northfleet Bowls Club	52	39	2
Windmill Bowls Club	46	6	-
Winget Bowls Club	40	30	-
Woodlands Bowls Club	45	25	-
	Totals		
	258	149	2

¹¹ Indoor facility

GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

In contrast to a national trend of declining membership, Northfleet Bowls Club report that membership has increased over the previous three years, gaining its two junior members. Only Windmill Bowls Club report a decrease in the number of members. Four clubs have remained the same:

- ◀ G.R.F.C Bowls Club
- ◀ Istead Rise Bowls Club
- ◀ Winget Bowls Club
- ◀ Woodlands Park Bowls Club

Future demand

There are five clubs which express an aspiration to grow in the future with four clubs actively seeking new members. This is mainly through advertisement. Winget Bowls Club is the only respondent to state it is not planning to increase membership levels. Windmill Bowls Club is attending regular over fifties functions throughout Gravesham in order to attract new members.

Table 7.6: Future demand

Club name	Members	
	Seniors	Juniors
GRFC Bowls Club	10	-
Istead Rise Bowls Club	10	10
Northfleet Bowls Club	Unspecified	Unspecified
Windmill Bowls Club	Unspecified	Unspecified
Woodlands Bowls Club	10	-
Total	30	10

Latent demand

No clubs suggest that an additional bowling green at their ground or in the area would lead to an increase in club membership. In effect, the perception is that any planned increases can be accommodated on existing greens. No clubs currently have a waiting list and the majority would welcome new members.

7.4: Supply and demand analysis

Generally, through consultation, it is considered that most bowling greens have spare capacity, meaning an increase in membership could be sustained. No clubs express demand for an additional green to be provided, meaning all clubs deem the current stock of greens sufficient to meet demand both now and in the future. Priority should therefore be placed on sustaining the greens currently in use and improving green quality and ancillary provision where necessary such as at Windmill Bowls Club.

The average club membership in Gravesham is 68 members. The following three clubs are operating above this average:

- ◀ Northfleet Bowls Club
- ◀ Winget Bowls Club
- ◀ Woodlands Bowls Club

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Although none of these clubs express a need for more green space, it is recommended that they are given support in order to ensure their needs continue to be met. It is also recommended that greens which are home to more than one club, such as Windmill Hill Gardens are regularly reviewed as these greens are likely to sustain the most use and as a result be more prone to quality issues.

7.5: Conclusions

Bowls summary

- ◀ There are nine flat green bowling greens in Gravesham across eight sites.
- ◀ All of the greens are assessed as good quality.
- ◀ A total of five clubs report that green quality has improved or remained the same since last season, whilst only one club (Windmill Bowls Club) reports that quality has worsened.
- ◀ Access to satisfactory changing accommodation is reported as an issue by many clubs across Gravesham particularly at Windmill Hill Gardens.
- ◀ Across the five consulted clubs there are a total of 409 members, which consists of 258 men, 149 women and two juniors.
- ◀ In contrast to a national decline in bowls membership, five clubs report that membership has increased or remained the same over the last three years (only Northfleet Bowls Club report an increase). In addition, Windmill Bowls Club report a declining membership.
- ◀ Of the clubs consulted five of the six have aspirations to have more members in the future. Further to this with an ageing population, demand for bowling greens is likely to increase. However, any planned increases can be accommodated on existing greens.
- ◀ It is considered that most bowling greens have spare capacity, meaning an increase in membership could be sustained. However, three clubs are operating above the Gravesham average membership of 68 members.
- ◀ No clubs express demand for an additional green to be provided meaning all clubs deem the current stock of greens sufficient to meet demand both now and in the future.
- ◀ Sustaining the greens currently in use and improving green quality and ancillary provision where necessary such as at Windmill Bowls Club, should be the priority.

GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

PART 8: TENNIS

8.1: Introduction

The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) is the organisation responsible for the governance of tennis and administers the sport locally in Gravesham. Gravesham is not classed as a priority area for the LTA.

Consultation

All three active tennis clubs servicing Gravesham were consulted via an online survey request, resulting in a 100% response rate:

- ◀ Cobham Tennis Club
- ◀ Gravesham Lawn Tennis Club
- ◀ Meopham Lawn Tennis Club

Also identified was a Higham Tennis Club, however, it is believed this club has now folded.

8.2: Supply

There are a total of 53 tennis courts identified in Gravesham located across 13 sites including sports clubs, playing fields, parks and schools. Of the courts, 40 (75%) are categorised as being available for community use across 11 sites. All courts unavailable for community use are located within education sites.

Please note that for the purposes of this report, being available for community use refers to courts in public, voluntary, private or commercial ownership or management (including education sites) recorded as being available for hire by individuals, teams or clubs.

Table 8.1: Summary of the number of courts by analysis area

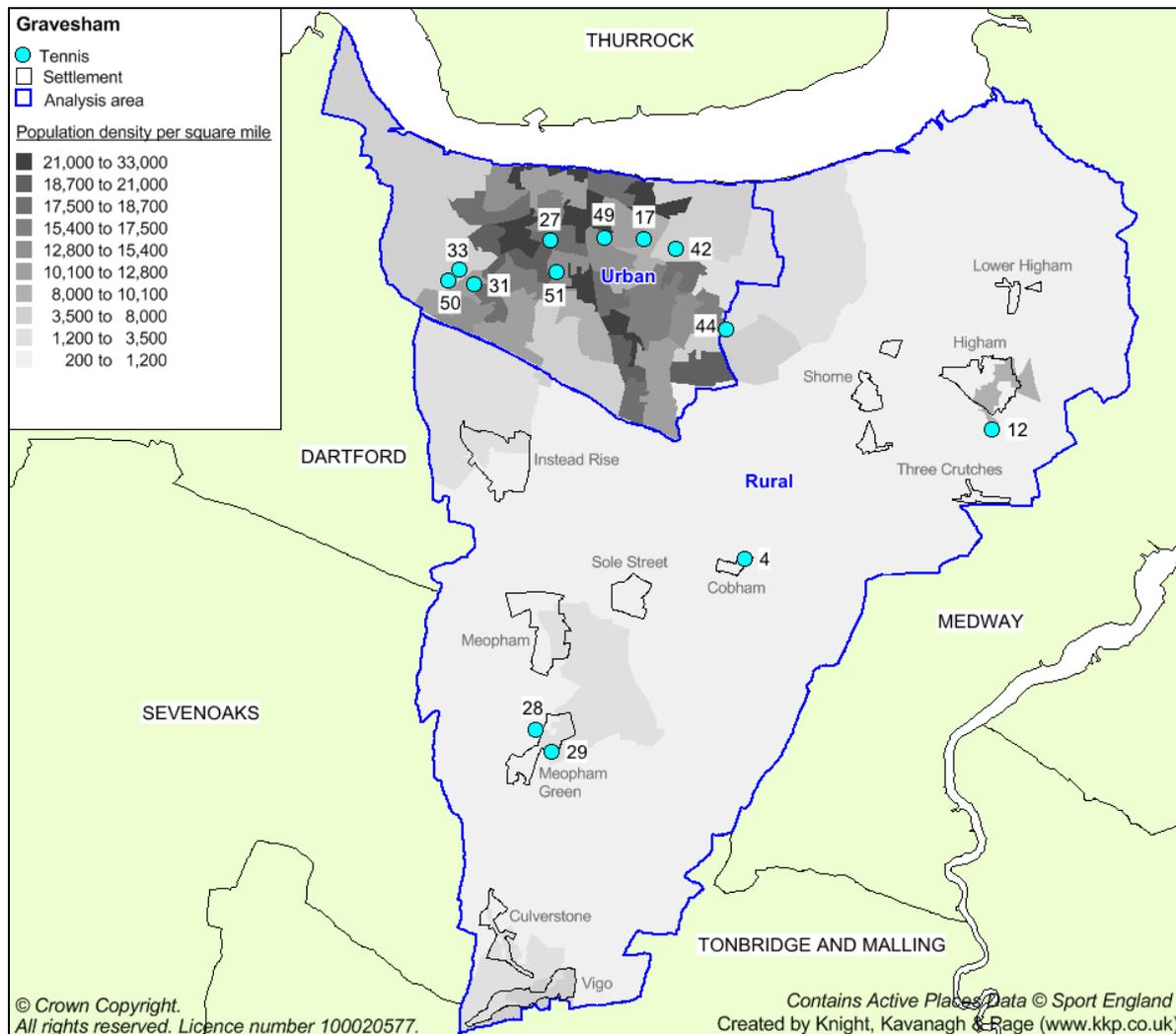
Analysis area	Courts available for community use	Courts unavailable for community use
Rural	7	10
Urban	33	3
GRAVESHAM	40	13

As indicated in Table 8.1, most of the community available tennis courts are located in the Urban Analysis Area (83%)

Figure 8.1 below shows the location of all outdoor tennis courts within Gravesham, regardless of community use. See table 8.2 for key to map.

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Figure 8.1: Location of tennis courts



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Table 8.2: Key to map

Site ID	Site name	Ownership	Analysis area	Availability for community use?	No. of courts	Floodlit	Court surface	Court quality ¹²
4	Cobham Playing Fields	Parish Council	Rural	Yes	2	Yes	Macadam	Good
12	Gad's Hill School	School	Rural	No	2	No	Tarmac	Good
17	Gravesham Lawn Tennis Club	Other	Urban	Yes	8	Yes - 6	Macadam	Good
27	Mayfield Grammar School - Gravesend	School	Urban	Yes	5	Yes	Tarmac	Good
				No	3	No	Tarmac	Standard
28	Meopham School	School	Rural	No	8	Yes	Tarmac	Good
29	Meopham Lawn Tennis Club	Club	Rural	Yes	5	No	Macadam	Good
31	Northfleet School For Girls	School	Urban	Yes	3	No	Tarmac	Standard
33	Northfleet Technology College	Private Contractor	Urban	Yes	4	No	Macadam	Good
42	St John's Catholic Comprehensive School	Private Contractor	Urban	Yes	5	No	Macadam	Good
44	Thamesview School	Private Contractor	Urban	Yes	1	No	Macadam	Good
49	Windmill Hill Gardens	Local Authority	Urban	Yes	3	No	Macadam	Good
50	Wombwell Park	Local Authority	Urban	Yes	2	No	Macadam	Standard
51	Woodlands Park	Local Authority	Urban	Yes	2	No	Macadam	Poor

¹² Assessed using a non-technical site assessment pro-forma and also takes account of user comments.

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Indoor tennis

In addition, there are also two indoor floodlit courts with an International Tennis Federation (ITF) approved artificial grass surface at Legends Sports Club; adjacent to Cascades Leisure Centre. Legends Sports Club owns and is responsible for maintaining the facility.

Table 8.3: Indoor court summary

Site ID	Site name	Owner-ship	Analysis area	Available community use?	No' of courts	Floodlit	Court surface	Court quality
29	Legends Sports Club	Club	Urban	Yes	2	Yes	Artificial grass	Good

There are also a number of other indoor tennis facilities near to the area. Figure 8.2 shows the indoor tennis facilities within a 20 minute drive time catchment to Gravesham.

Figure 8.2: Location of indoor tennis

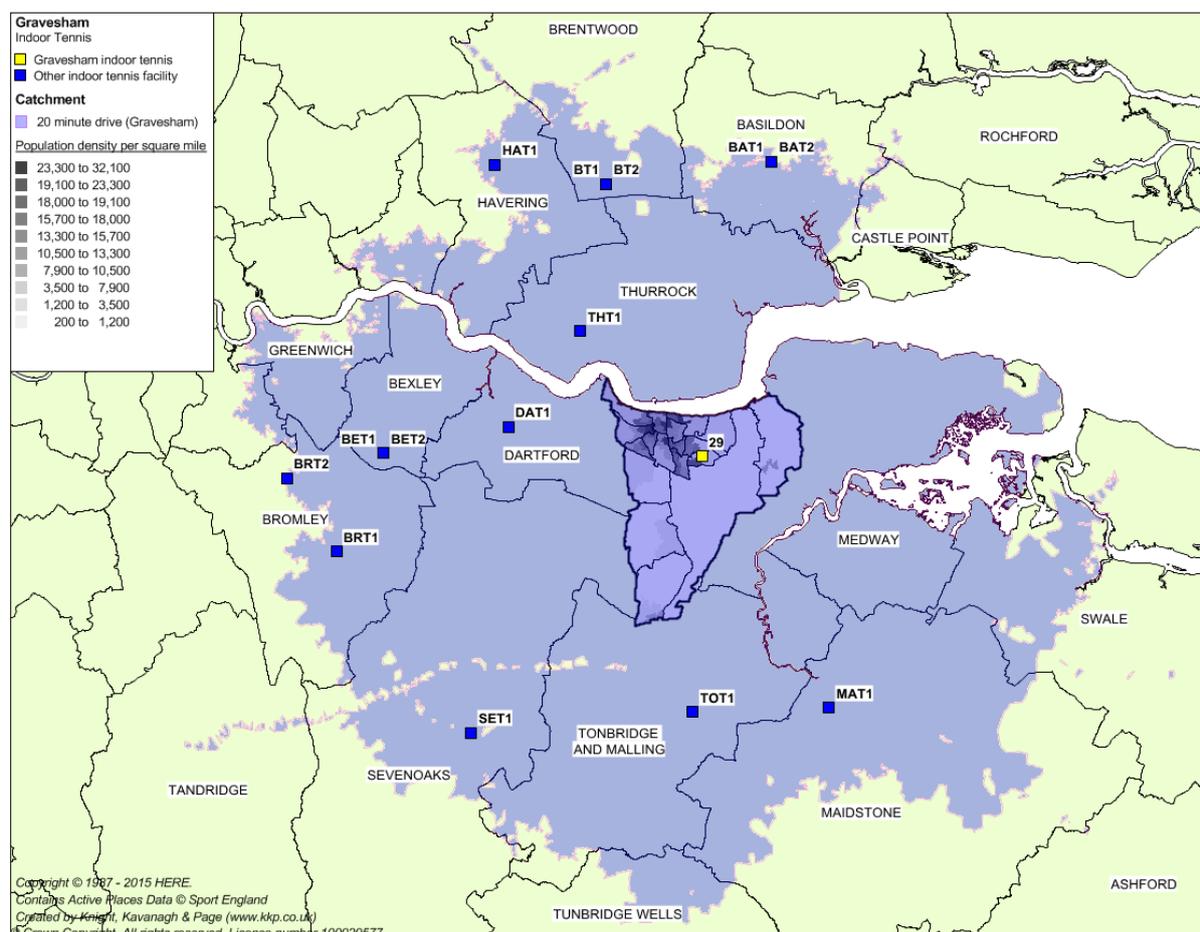


Table 8.4: Key to map

Map Ref	Site name	Local Authority	Courts	Access policy
29	Legends Sports Club	Gravesham	2	Pay and Play
BAT1	David Lloyd Club (Basildon)	Basildon	6	Registered Membership use

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Map Ref	Site name	Local Authority	Courts	Access policy
BAT2	David Lloyd Club (Basildon)	Basildon	2	Registered Membership use
BET1	David Lloyd Club (Sidcup)	Bexley	1	Registered Membership use
BET2	David Lloyd Club (Sidcup)	Bexley	2	Registered Membership use
BRT1	Bromley Tennis Centre At Newstead	Bromley	6	Pay and Play
BRT2	Bromley Cricket Club	Bromley	2	Sports Club / Community Association
BT1	Clearview Health & Racquets Club	Brentwood	1	Registered Membership use
BT2	Clearview Health & Racquets Club	Brentwood	6	Registered Membership use
DAT1	David Lloyd Club (Dartford)	Dartford	6	Registered Membership use
HAT1	David Lloyd Club (Gidea Park)	Havering	7	Registered Membership use
MAT1	Freedom Fitness Maidstone	Maidstone	4	Registered Membership use
SET1	Sennocke Centre	Sevenoaks	3	Registered Membership use
THT1	Bannatynes Health Club (Chafford Hundred)	Thurrock	2	Registered Membership use
TOT1	David Lloyd Club (Kings Hill)	Tonbridge and Malling	5	Registered Membership use

Quality of Outdoor Courts

During the audit assessment, of provision that is available for community use, 33 courts are assessed as good quality (83%), five are deemed standard (12%) and two are rated as poor (5%).

Table 8.5: Summary of court quality for community available courts

Good	Standard	Poor
33	5	2

The only courts available for community use and assessed as poor quality are located at Woodlands Park. The most notable reasons for this quality rating include the poor grip underfoot, a missing net, presence of loose gravel and glass, poor quality nets and a lack of disabled access.

Clubs were asked to rate the overall quality of their courts on a scale of good, standard and poor. Out of the three responding clubs two: Meopham TC and Cobham TC rate court quality as good. Both Meopham TC and Cobham TC, report this is due to courts being recently resurfaced; Gravesham LTC rate court quality as standard.

Clubs were also asked if court quality has improved since the previous season. Meopham Lawn TC state that quality has got "slightly better" due to the resurfacing. Gravesham Lawn TC reports that quality has got "slightly poorer". Cobham TC reports "no difference".

Gravesham Lawn TC believes its courts need resurfacing in the near future. Consultation suggests this may be done over the summer months.

As a priority club for the LTA, the LTA will be looking to work closely with the club to increase membership levels.

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Over markings

Many tennis courts within schools are over marked by netball courts. Courts which are over marked tend to receive higher levels of use which can result in a quicker deterioration in quality. This is the case at the following schools:

- ◀ Gad's Hill School
- ◀ Mayfield Grammar School
- ◀ Meopham School
- ◀ Northfleet School for Girls
- ◀ Northfleet Technology College
- ◀ St John's Catholic Comprehensive School
- ◀ Thamesview School

In addition, senior tennis courts at Gravesham Lawn TC are also over marked by four mini and four junior courts.

Ancillary provision

Both Meopham Lawn TC and Gravesham Lawn TC report having access to ancillary facilities. Meopham TC reports its ancillary facilities are poor and Gravesham Lawn TC believes its ancillary facilities to be adequate. It is believed Gravesham Lawn TC previously had plans in 2012/13 to erect an Airhall at the club. However, it is understood no plans have progressed.

Cobham TC has access to ancillary facilities intermittently. The Club does not have its own clubhouse however; it can access the sports association clubhouse which is located off site and is used by a football and cricket club. Not all members have a key, therefore, access to the facilities is limited to when it is being used by either the football or cricket club, or a club member with a key is present.

8.3: Demand

Competitive tennis

The three clubs servicing Gravesham collectively provide a total of 286 senior members and 241 junior members. Gravesham Lawn TC records the highest membership with 120 senior members and 124 junior members. The smallest club in the area is Cobham TC with 54 senior members and 24 junior members.

Table 8.6: Summary of club membership

Name of club	Number of members		LTA Capacity
	Seniors	Juniors	
Cobham Tennis Club	54	26	-
Gravesham Lawn Tennis Club	120	124	440
Meopham Lawn Tennis Club	112	91	200
GRAVESHAM	286	241	-

Both Gravesham Lawn TC and Cobham TC state seeing no changes in the number of members over the last three years. Cobham TC suggests its numbers have stayed consistent due to it being a social club where members join for the social aspect of playing. It

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reports that individuals wanting to compete competitively go to the other two clubs in the area.

Meopham Lawn TC reports an increase in membership numbers over the previous three years.

All clubs confirm that the number of courts available is adequate to meet the needs of current and potential future membership.

Displaced demand

No clubs in Gravesham currently report having displaced demand.

Latent demand

No clubs in Gravesham report current latent demand for access to additional courts and no clubs operate a waiting list.

Future demand

All three clubs report plans to increase membership numbers. When asked to quantify potential growth, Gravesham Lawn TC reported wanting to increase membership by 20 senior members and 20 junior members. Although Cobham TC and Meopham Lawn TC did not specify numbers, both express a desire to increase membership in both its senior and junior sections.

All clubs report that potential new members can be accommodated on the current supply of courts available for play.

8.4 Supply and demand analysis

All three clubs report spare capacity on courts, suggesting that the current number of courts can accommodate both current and future demand. Priority, therefore, may be placed on improving current facilities to allow for the clubs planned growth. Within this, particular focus should be placed on improving the courts at Gravesham Lawn TC and also the ancillary facilities at all three clubs.

Improvements could also be made to courts open to community use which are currently rated as standard (Northfleet School for Girls and Wombwell Park) and poor (Woodlands Park). This will help to promote recreational tennis participation in the area.

There are no park / recreational facilities that offer floodlit provision. This will make it harder for an operator to run a sustainable programme at a venue, which in turn restricts the availability of programmed activity at the recreational venues, which means these sites predominantly serve recreational play.

8.5 Conclusions

Tennis summary

- ◀ There are a total of 53 tennis courts across 13 sites provided in Gravesham, 40 of which are available for community use across 11 sites.
- ◀ Of provision that is available for community use, 33 courts are assessed as good quality, five are deemed standard and two are rated as poor. The indoor courts at Legends are viewed as good quality (reflected in their ITF Approval).
- ◀ Eight courts being used by clubs are identified as being floodlit.
- ◀ The only courts available for community use and assessed as poor quality are located at Woodlands Park.
- ◀ The three clubs servicing Gravesham collectively provide a total of 286 senior members and 241 junior members.
- ◀ All three clubs report plans to increase their membership in both senior and junior sections.
- ◀ Priority should be placed on improving current facilities in order to allow for the clubs planned growth.

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PART 9: OTHER SPORTS

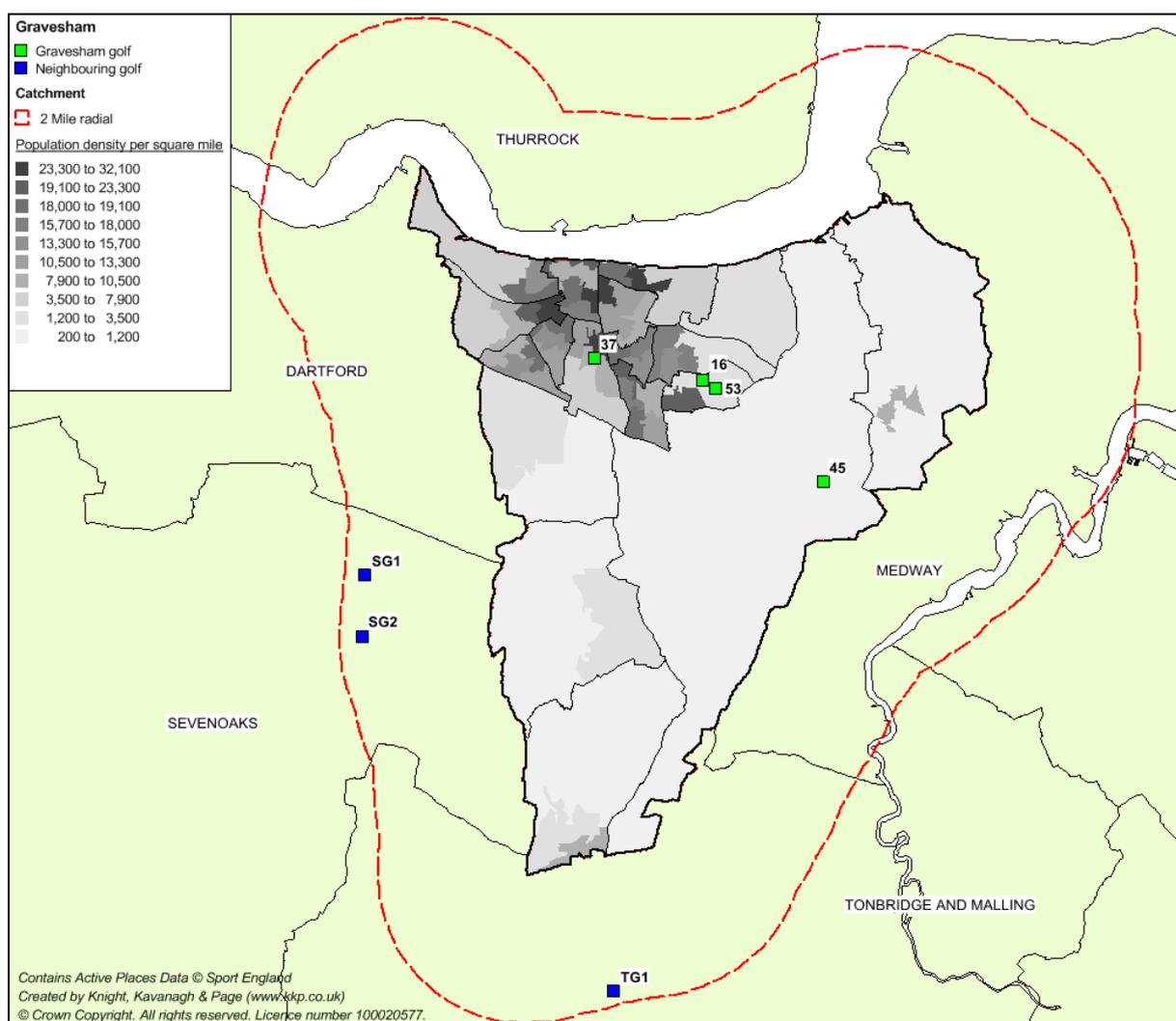
9.1: Golf

There are four golf sites identified in Gravesham (table 9.1). Three of these are located in the Urban Analysis Area of Gravesend. Figure 9.1 shows the location of golf sites across Gravesham.

Table 9.1: Golf provision in Gravesham

Course	Size of course	Analysis Area	Location
Gravesend Golf Centre	9 holes & driving range	Urban	Gravesend
Mid Kent Golf Club	18 holes	Urban	Gravesend
Rochester & Cobham Park Golf Club	18 holes	Rural	Cobham
Southern Valley Golf Club	18 holes	Urban	Gravesend

Figure 9.1: Location of golf



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Table 9.2: Key to map

Map ref	Site name
16	Gravesend Golf Centre
37	Mid Kent Golf Club
45	Rochester & Cobham Park Golf Club
53	Southern Valley Golf Club
SG1	Fawkham Valley Golf Club
SG2	Redlibbets Golf Club
TG1	West Malling Golf Club

There are a number of other golf courses within access of Gravesham which are likely to attract members from within the study area. Facilities within a two mile catchment of the Gravesham boundary have also been included in the map (figure 9.1).

There are three sites within a two mile catchment of the Gravesham boundary as set out in table 9.3.

Table 9.3: Golf within 2 miles of boundary

Course	Size of course	Location
Fawkham Valley Golf Club	9 holes	Sevenoaks
Redlibbets Golf Club	18 holes	Sevenoaks
West Malling Golf Club	2x 18 holes	Tonbridge and Malling

The current levels of provision is thought to be sufficient for the area. It is not thought likely that future demand will currently generate enough need for another golf course in Gravesham. In part, this is also due to the proximity of other golf courses in surrounding areas.

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9.2: Athletics

There is no athletics facility in Gravesham. Figure 9.2 shows the location of athletic facilities located within a 20 minute drive time catchment of Gravesham.

Figure 9.2: Location of athletics

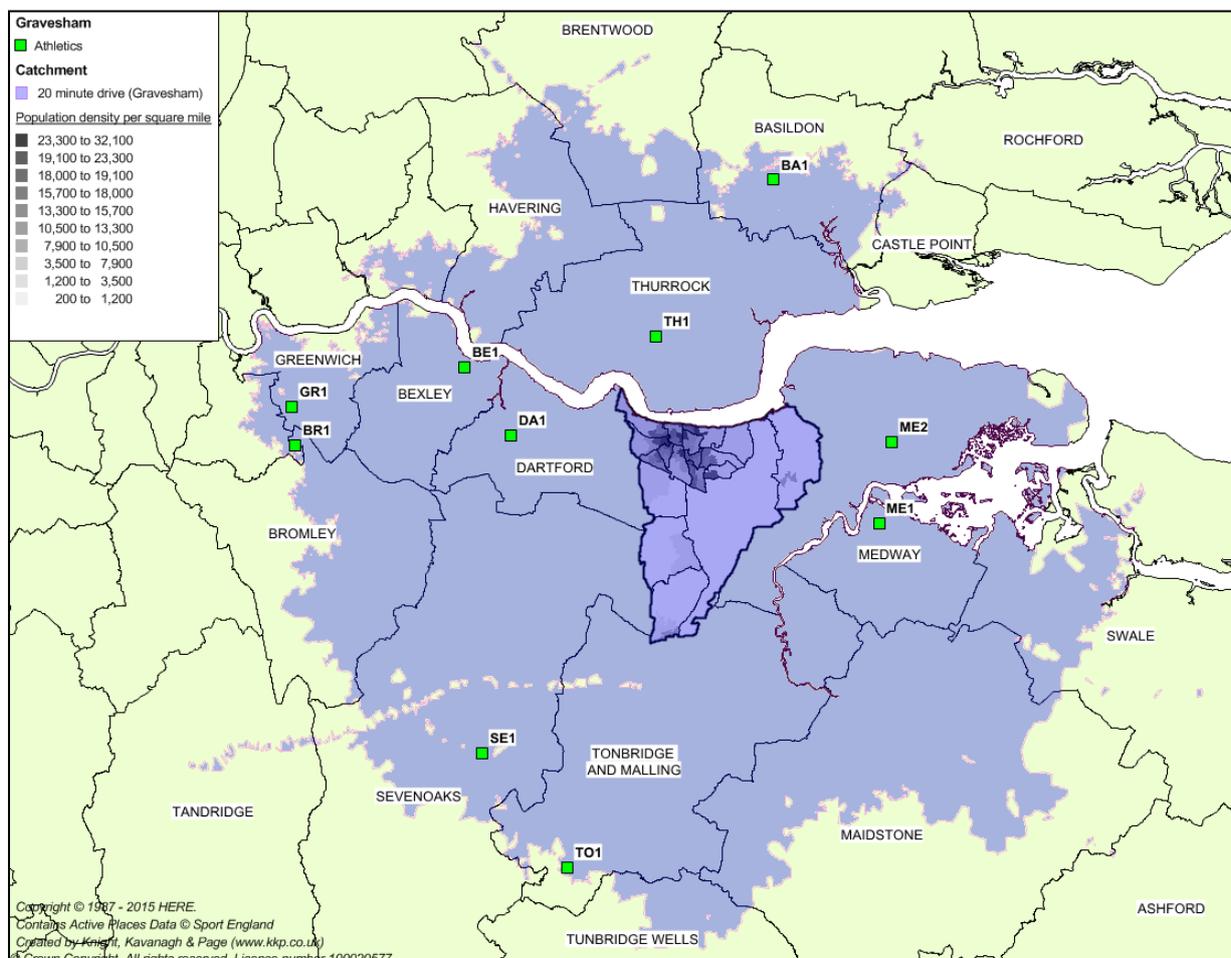


Table 9.4: Key to map

Map Ref	Site Name	Lanes	Local Authority
BA1	Basildon Sporting Village	8	Basildon
BE1	Erith Leisure Centre	6	Bexley
BR1	City Of London School Sports Ground Track	4	Bromley
DA1	Central Park Arena	6	Dartford
GR1	Sutcliffe Park Athletics Track	6	Greenwich
ME1	Medway Park	8	Medway
ME2	Deangate Ridge Golf & Sports Complex	6	Medway
SE1	Sennocke Centre	6	Sevenoaks
TH1	Thurrock Athletics Stadium	7	Thurrock
TO1	Tonbridge School Centre	6	Tonbridge and Malling

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There are 10 athletic facilities located within 20 minutes of Gravesham. Three of these are located in neighbouring local authorities; Central Park Arena in Dartford and Medway Park and Deangate Ridge Golf & Sports Complex in Medway. Each provides a minimum of six lanes with the Medway Park facility having eight lanes.

Table 9.5: Summary of nearest athletic facilities

Site	Club active	Summary
Central Park Arena	Dartford Harriers Athletics Club	Floodlit track with a 8 lane straight. Includes field area. Junior sessions ran throughout the week
Medway Park	Medway and Maidstone Athletics Club	Has a floodlit 10 lane straight merging to a 8 full lane track as well as comprehensive throwing field (over marked with football pitch). Approved for Olympic and Paralympic training.
Deangate Ridge Golf & Sports Complex	Medway Athletics Club	Six lane track with football pitch on infield

Given the proximity and standard of nearby athletic facilities it is unlikely that new similar forms of provision will be warranted in Gravesham.

APPENDIX 1: SPORTING CONTEXT

The following section outlines a series of national, regional and local policies pertaining to the study and which will have an important influence on the Strategy.

National context

The provision of high quality and accessible community outdoor sports facilities at a local level is a key requirement for achieving the targets set out by the Government and Sport England. It is vital that this strategy is cognisant of and works towards these targets in addition to local priorities and plans.

Department of Media Culture and Sport Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation (2015)

The Government published its strategy for sport in December 2015. This strategy confirms the recognition and understanding that sport makes a positive difference through broader means and that it will help the sector to deliver five simple but fundamental outcomes: physical health, mental health, individual development, social and community development and economic development. In order to measure its success in producing outputs which accord with these aims it has also adopted a series of 23 performance indicators under nine key headings, as follows:

- ◀ More people taking part in sport and physical activity.
- ◀ More people volunteering in sport.
- ◀ More people experiencing live sport.
- ◀ Maximising international sporting success.
- ◀ Maximising domestic sporting success.
- ◀ Maximising domestic sporting success.
- ◀ A more productive sport sector.
- ◀ A more financially and organisationally sustainable sport sector.
- ◀ A more responsible sport sector.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out planning policies for England. It details how these changes are expected to be applied to the planning system. It also provides a framework for local people and their councils to produce distinct local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities.

The NPPF states the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It identifies that the planning system needs to focus on three themes of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. A presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key aspect for any plan-making and decision-taking processes. In relation to plan-making the NPPF sets out that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs.

The 'promoting healthy communities' theme identifies that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficiencies or surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform what provision is required in an area.

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As a prerequisite the NPPF states existing open space, sports and recreation buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- ◀ An assessment has been undertaken, which has clearly shown that the open space, buildings or land is surplus to requirements.
- ◀ 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.
- ◀ The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

In order for planning policies to be 'sound' local authorities are required to carry out a robust assessment of need for open space, sport and recreation facilities.

The FA National Game Strategy (2015 – 2019)

The Football Association's (FA) National Game Strategy provides a strategic framework that sets out key priorities, expenditure proposals and targets for the national game (i.e., football) over a four year period. The main issues facing grassroots football are identified as:

- ◀ Growth and retention (young and adult players)
- ◀ Raising standards and behaviour
- ◀ Better players
- ◀ Running the game
- ◀ Workforce
- ◀ Facilities

'The National Game Strategy' reinforces the urgent need to provide affordable, new and improved facilities in schools, clubs and on local authority sites. Over 75% of football is played on public sector facilities. The leisure budgets of most local authorities have been reduced over recent years, resulting in decaying facilities that do not serve the community and act as a disincentive to play football. The loss of playing fields has also been well documented and adds to the pressure on the remaining facilities to cope with the demand, especially in inner city and urban areas.

The growth of the commercial sector in developing custom built five-a-side facilities has changed the overall environment. High quality, modern facilities provided by Powerleague, Goals and playfootball.net for example, have added new opportunities to participate and prompted a significant growth in the number of five-a-side teams in recent years.

Champion Counties – England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) Strategic Plan (2013 – 2017) A Game for Everyone

"Champion Counties" - continues to focus on the four pillars, as identified in the ECB's previous strategy: "Grounds to Play". The pillars are:

- ◀ Energising people and partnerships through effective leadership and governance
- ◀ Building a Vibrant domestic game through operational excellence and delivering a competition structure with appointment to view
- ◀ Engaging participants through the maintenance of existing facilities, supporting club/school links, supporting volunteers and expanding women's and disabilities cricket
- ◀ Delivering Successful England teams and world class global events

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The key measures for the life span of the plan are as follows:-

- ◀ Increase the subset of participation measured by Sport England's Active People Survey from 183,400 to 197,500.
- ◀ Increase attendances at Liverpool Victoria County Championship, Yorkshire Bank 50 and Friends Life Twenty20 by 200,000.
- ◀ Complete sponsorship and broadcasting agreements through 2019.
- ◀ Win the World Test Championship and Women's World Cup in 2017.
- ◀ Win The Ashes and World Cup in 2015.
- ◀ Expand the number of clubs participating in NatWest Cricket Force from 2,000 to 2,200.
- ◀ Complete co-operation agreements for each of the 39 County Boards with their First Class County or Minor County partner.
- ◀ Deliver two world class global events in 2017 which exceed budget and exceed customer satisfaction targets.
- ◀ Increase the number of cricket's volunteers to 80,000 by 2017.
- ◀ Expand the number of participants in women's and disabilities cricket by 10% by 2017.
- ◀ Award all Major Matches through 2019 by December 2014.
- ◀ To increase the number of TwelfthMan members from 220,000 to 250,000 by 2017.
- ◀ Complete an approved Community Engagement programme with all 18 First Class Counties and Marylebone Cricket Club.
- ◀ Provide First Class Counties with total fee payments of £144m between 2014 and 2017.
- ◀ For each £1 provided in facility grants through the Sport England Whole Sport Plan grant programme ensure a multiplier of 3 with other funding partners.
- ◀ Provide a fund of £8.1m of capital investment to enhance floodlights, sightscreens, replay screens, power sub-stations and broadcasting facilities at First Class County venues.
- ◀ Provide an interest-free loan fund to community clubs of £10 million.
- ◀ Leverage the 2014 tour by India to engage with a minimum of 10,000 cricket supporters of Asian origin. Qualify and engage 50 Level 4 coaches to support the development of professional cricketers.
- ◀ Expand the number of coaches who have received teacher level 1, 2 or 3 qualifications to 50,000.
- ◀ Deliver an annual fixture for the Unicorns against a touring (Full, A or U19) International Cricket Council member nation.
- ◀ Provide a fund of £2 million for community clubs to combat the impact of climate change.
- ◀ Introduce a youth T20 competition engaging 500 teams by 2017.

The Rugby Football Union National Facilities Strategy (2013-2017)

The recently launched RFU National Facility Strategy 2013-2017 provides a framework for development of high-quality, well-managed facilities that will help to strengthen member clubs and grow the game in communities around them. In conjunction with partners, this strategy will assist and support clubs and other organisations, so that they can continue to provide quality opportunities for all sections of the community to enjoy the game. It sets out the broad facility needs of the sport and identifies investment priorities to the game and its key partners. It identifies that with 470 grass root clubs and 1500 players there is a continuing need to invest in community club facilities in order to:

- ◀ Create a platform for growth in club rugby participation and membership, especially with a view to exploiting the opportunities afforded by Rugby World Cup 2015.

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- ◀ Ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of rugby clubs, through supporting not only their playing activity but also their capacity to generate revenue through a diverse range of activities and partnerships.

In summary the priorities for investment which have met the needs of the game for the Previous period remain valid:

- ◀ Increase the provision of changing rooms and clubhouses that can sustain concurrent adult and junior male and female activity at clubs
- ◀ Improve the quality and quantity of natural turf pitches and floodlighting
- ◀ Increase the provision of artificial grass pitches that deliver wider game development

It is also a high priority for the RFU to target investment in the following:

- ◀ Upgrade and transform social, community and catering facilities, which can support the generation of additional revenues
- ◀ Facility upgrades, which result in an increase in energy-efficiency, in order to reduce the running costs of clubs
- ◀ Pitch furniture, including rugby posts and pads, pitch side spectator rails and grounds maintenance equipment

England Hockey (EH) - A Nation Where Hockey Matters (2013-2017)

EH have a clear vision, a powerful philosophy and five core objectives that all those who have a role in advancing Hockey can unite behind. With UK Sport and Sport England's investment, and growing commercial revenues, EH are ambitious about how they can take the sport forward in Olympic cycles and beyond.

"The vision is for England to be a 'Nation Where Hockey Matters'. A nation where hockey is talked about at dinner tables, playgrounds and public houses, up and down the country. A nation where the sport is on the back pages of our newspapers, where children dream of scoring a goal for England's senior hockey team, and where the performance stirs up emotion amongst the many, not the few"

England Hockey aspires to deepen the passion of those who play, deliver and follow sport by providing the best possible environments and the best possible experiences. Whilst reaching out to new audiences by making the sport more visible, available and relevant and through the many advocates of hockey.

Underpinning all this is the infrastructure which makes the sport function. EH understand the importance of volunteers, coaches, officials, clubs and facilities. The more inspirational people can be, the more progressive Hockey can be and the more befitting the facilities can be, the more EH will achieve. The core objectives are as follows:

- ◀ Grow our Participation
- ◀ Deliver International Success
- ◀ Increase our Visibility
- ◀ Enhance our Infrastructure
- ◀ Be a strong and respected Governing Body

GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

England Hockey has a Capital Investment Programme (CIP), that is planned to lever £5.6 million investment into hockey facilities over the next four years, underpinned by £2m million from the National Governing Body. With over 500 pitches due for refurbishment in the next 4-8 years, there will be a large focus placed on these projects through this funding stream. The current level of pitches available for hockey is believed to be sufficient for the medium term needs, however in some areas, pitches may not be in the right places in order to maximize playing opportunities

'The right pitches in the right places'¹³

In 2012, EH released its facility guidance which is intended to assist organisations wishing to build or protect hockey pitches for hockey. It identifies that many existing hockey AGPs are nearing the end of their useful life as a result of the installation boom of the 90's. Significant investment is needed to update the playing stock and protect the sport against inappropriate surfaces for hockey as a result of the rising popularity of AGPs for a number of sports.

EH is seeking to invest in, and endorse clubs and hockey providers which have a sound understanding of the following:

- ◀ Single System – clubs and providers which have a good understanding of the Single System and its principles and are appropriately places to support the delivery.
- ◀ ClubsFirst accreditation – clubs with the accreditation are recognised as producing a safe effective and child friendly hockey environment
- ◀ Sustainability – hockey providers and clubs will have an approved development plan in place showing their commitment to developing hockey, retaining members and providing an insight into longer term goals. They will also need to have secured appropriate tenure.

Bowls England: Strategic Plan 2014-2017

Bowls England will provide strong leadership and work with its stakeholders to support the development of the sport of bowls in England for this and future generations.

The overall vision of Bowls England is to:

- ◀ Promote the sport of outdoor flat green bowls.
- ◀ Recruit new participants to the sport of outdoor flat green bowls.
- ◀ Retain current and future participants within the sport of flat green bowls.

In order to ensure that this vision is achieved, ten key performance targets have been created, which will underpin the work of Bowls England up until 31st March 2017.

- ◀ 115,000 individual affiliated members.
- ◀ 1,500 registered coaches.
- ◀ Increase total National Championship entries by 10%.
- ◀ Increase total national competition entries by 10%.
- ◀ Medal places achieved in 50% of events at the 2016 World Championships.
- ◀ County development officer appointed by each county association.
- ◀ National membership scheme implemented with 100% uptake by county associations.

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<http://englandhockey.co.uk/page.asp?section=1143§ionTitle=The+Right+Pitches+in+the+Right+Places>

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- ◀ Secure administrative base for 1st April 2017.
- ◀ Commercial income to increase by 20%.

Despite a recent fall in affiliated members, and a decline in entries into National Championships over the last five years, Bowls England believes that these aims will be attained by following core values. The intention is to:

- ◀ Be progressive.
- ◀ Offer opportunities to participate at national and international level.
- ◀ Work to raise the profile of the sport in support of recruitment and retention.
- ◀ Lead the sport.
- ◀ Support clubs and county associations.

2015-2018 British Tennis Strategy

The new strategy is presented in a concise one page framework that includes key strategies relating to three participation "focus" areas, six participation "drivers" and three participation "enablers". To achieve success, the 12 strategy areas will need to work interdependently to stem the decline and unlock sustainable growth:

The three participation "focus" areas are where tennis is consumed:

- ◀ Deliver great service to clubs
- ◀ Build partnerships in the community, led by parks
- ◀ Enhance the tennis offer in education

The six participation "drivers" are the areas that will make the biggest difference where tennis is consumed. They must all be successful on a standalone and interconnected basis and include:

- ◀ Becoming more relevant to coaches
- ◀ Refocusing on recreational competition
- ◀ Providing results orientated facility investment
- ◀ Applying best in class marketing and promotion
- ◀ Jump starting the peak summer season
- ◀ Establishing a "no compromise" high performance programme with focus

The final layer is comprised of three participation "enablers" that underpin our ability to be successful. These enablers are rooted in how the LTA will get better; how the entire network of partners must be harnessed to work together and the need to raise more financial resources to fund our sport's turnaround. They include:

- ◀ Becoming a more effective and efficient LTA
- ◀ Harnessing the full resource network
- ◀ Generating new revenue

For further information and more detail on the framework please go to <http://www.lta.org.uk/about-the-lta/structure-vision>