

GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

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Integrity, Innovation, Inspiration

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GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

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List of Abbreviations

3G	Third Generation (artificial grass pitch)
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
CC	Cricket Club
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
CSP	County Sports Partnership
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
FA	Football Association
FC	Football Club
FE	Further Education
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GBC	Gravesham Borough Council
HC	Hockey Club
HE	Higher Education
IOG	Institute of Groundmanship
JFC	Junior Football Club
KCB	Kent Cricket Board
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
LDF	Local Development Framework
LMS	Last Man Stands
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PQS	Performance Quality Standard
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
PF	Playing Field
RFU	Rugby Football Union
RUFC	Rugby Union Football Club
RLFC	Rugby League Football Club
S106	Section 106 Agreement
TGR	Team Generation Rate
U	Under

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) for Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) and its partners. Building upon the preceding Assessment Report it provides a strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities between 2016 and 2028. The PPS covers the following sports:

- ◀ Football pitches including 3G Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs)
- ◀ Cricket pitches
- ◀ Rugby union pitches
- ◀ Hockey/artificial grass pitches (AGPs)
- ◀ Bowling greens
- ◀ Tennis courts
- ◀ Other sports (i.e. golf courses and athletics)

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.

1.1: Structure

The Strategy has been developed from research and analysis of playing pitch provision and usage within the GBC area to help provide:

- ◀ Assistance to the future improvement and prioritisation of playing pitches
- ◀ A series of strategic recommendations which provide a strategic framework for the improvement, maintenance, development and, as appropriate, rationalisation of the playing pitch stock.
- ◀ A series of sport by sport recommendations which provide a strategic framework for sport led improvements to provision.
- ◀ A prioritised area-by-area action plan to address key issues.

The Strategy and Action Plan recommends a number of priority projects for GBC which should be implemented from 2016 to 2028. It provides a framework for improvement and, although resources may not currently be in place to implement it, potential partners and possible sources of external funding are highlighted (see Appendix Four: Funding Plan).

The recommendations that come out of this strategy need to be translated into local plan policy so there is a policy mechanism to protect existing provision and secure investment where the opportunity arises.

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1.2 Context

The primary purpose of the PPS is to provide a strategic framework which ensures that the provision of outdoor playing pitches meet the local needs of existing and future residents within the Gravesham Area. A summary of the strategic context for each National Governing Bodies for Sport is provided in Appendix One.

National Planning Policy Framework

One of the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs. Section 8 of the NPPF deals specifically with the topic of healthy communities. Paragraph 73 discusses the importance of access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation that can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

Paragraphs 73 and 74 of the NPPF discuss assessments and the protection of “existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields”. A Playing Pitch Strategy will provide the evidence required to help protect playing fields to ensure sufficient land is available to meet existing and projected future pitch requirements.

Paragraph 76 and 77 promote the identification of important green spaces by local communities and the protection of these facilities. Such spaces may include playing fields.

Gravesham’s Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2028

The Local Plan is a key part of the Government's planning system. It consists of a collection of local development documents including Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). In Gravesham Borough, the Local Plan will consist of the Core Strategy and a Site Allocations and Development Management Policies document. In addition, the Council is considering a number of supplementary planning documents.

The Core Strategy is supported by a comprehensive evidence base collated throughout the development of the document. This will be subject to ongoing review and updates during the life of the Strategy in line with national policy, particularly to take account of demographic information. It provides a robust technical understanding of how the Council's policies, and external circumstances, are shaping and influencing the Borough and inform the need for future policy review. The Council has assessed the facilities and services available in the Borough's settlements to identify which are more sustainable. The results are reflected in the settlement hierarchy below:

Table 1.1: Tiered settlements with definitions for Gravesham

Tier	Settlements
First tier settlements	Gravesend/Northfleet/Ebbsfleet, i.e. the urban area
Second tier settlements	Istead Rise, Hook Green Meopham, Higham
Third tier settlements	Culverstone Green, Meopham Green, Vigo
Fourth tier settlements	Cobham, Shorne, Sole Street
Other settlements	Harvel, Lower Higham, Luddesdown, Lower Shorne, Shorne Ridgeway, Three Crutches

Source: Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014

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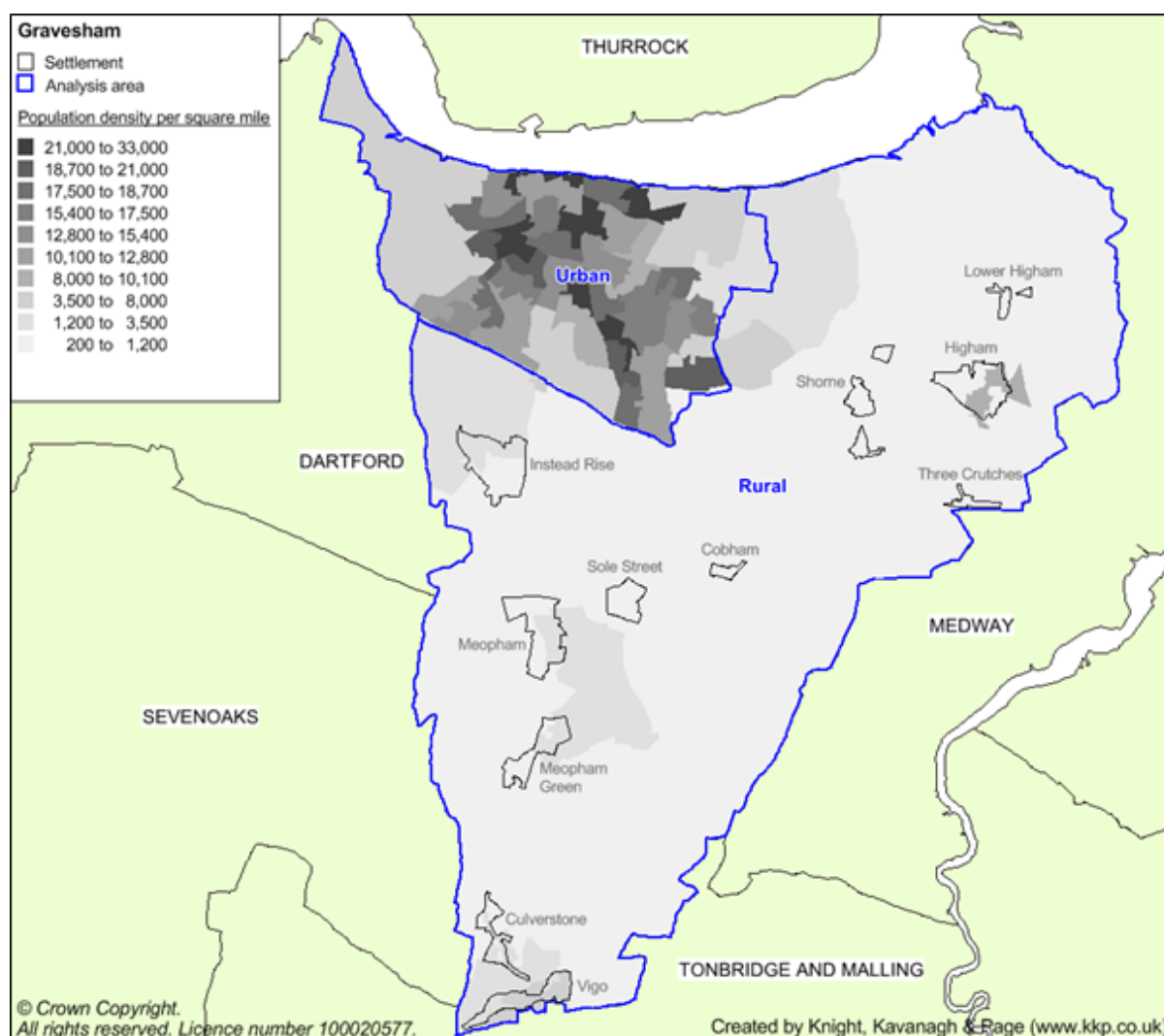
The Local Plan Core Strategy also identifies that opportunities to improve health and accessibility will have been seized by the provision of better facilities for recreation, sport, walking and cycling. A Green Infrastructure network will have been created to improve the quality of life, provide benefits to wildlife, protect the landscape and improve access for leisure and sustainable travel purposes particularly within the Gravesend/Northfleet urban area, between the urban area and the rural area and along the River Thames. This is translated into strategic policies and objectives. The primary one in relation to this report is:

Strategic Objective 15: Improve opportunities for recreation, sport, walking and cycling which relates to policies CS01 - Sustainable Development, CS11 – Transport, CS12 - Green Infrastructure and CS13 - Green Space Sport and Recreation

1.3 Study area

The study area covered by the PPS is the GBC 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. Gravesham is divided into the following two analysis areas:

Figure 1.1: Map of PPS analysis areas



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

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Table 1.2: 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

1.4 Headline findings

The table below highlights the quantitative headline shortfalls from the Gravesham Playing Pitch Assessment Report. Details of the different pitch sizes (dependent upon the age of the person playing) are also set out within the Assessment Report.

Sport	Analysis area	Current demand shortfall ¹	Future demand shortfall (2028) ²
Football (grass pitches)	Rural	1.5 youth 9v9 match sessions Mini 5v5 match sessions at capacity	2.5 youth 11v11 match sessions 3 youth 9v9 youth match sessions 1 mini 5v5 match sessions
	Urban	5 adult match session 1 youth 11v11 match sessions	12 adult match sessions 8 youth 11v11 match sessions 3.5 youth 9v9 match sessions 4 mini 7v7 match sessions
	Gravesham	4 adult match sessions	11.5 adult match sessions 10.5 youth 11v11 match sessions 7.5 youth 9v9 match sessions 1.5 mini 7v7 match sessions
Football (3G AGPs) ³	Rural	1 full size 3G pitches	
	Urban	3 full size 3G pitches	
	Gravesham	4 full size 3G pitches	

¹ Current demand is calculated from an analysis of overplay and spare capacity only.

² Please note that this is demand that will exist in 2028 if the current demand is not met and also includes latent, displaced and future demand identified.

³ Based on accommodating 42 teams to one full size pitch for training

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Sport	Analysis area	Current demand shortfall ⁴	Future demand shortfall (2028) ⁵
Cricket	Rural	Demand is being met	Demand is being met
	Urban	Demand is being met	0.4 pitches ⁶ (could be potentially further exacerbated by recent establishment of Guru Nanak CC)
	Gravesham	Demand is being met	Demand is being met
Rugby union	Rural	Demand is being met	3 match sessions
	Urban	0.5 match sessions	2.5 match sessions
	Gravesham	0.5 match sessions	5.5 match sessions
Hockey (Sand AGPs)	Gravesham	Demand being met (however no capacity for growth)	Quality of only AGP facility is likely to act as a barrier
Bowls	Gravesham	Demand is being met	Demand is being met
Tennis	Gravesham	Demand is being met	Demand is being met
Golf	Gravesham	Demand is being met	Demand is being met
Athletics	Gravesham	Demand is being met	Demand is being met

Conclusions

The existing position for all pitch sports means demand is either being met or there is a shortfall. The future position shows the sports with current shortfalls is exacerbated and those where demand was being met will experience shortfalls; except in the case of non-pitch sports (e.g. bowls, tennis, golf and athletics). Therefore, there is a need to protect all existing provision and create access to school sites or bring disused sites back into use where feasible.

1.5 Definitions

Match sessions

Pitches have a limit of how much play they can accommodate over a certain period of time before their quality, and in turn their use, is adversely affected. As the main usage of pitches is likely to be for matches, it is appropriate for the comparable unit to be match equivalent sessions but may for example include training sessions.

⁴ Current demand is calculated from an analysis of overplay and spare capacity only.

⁵ Please note that this is demand that will exist in 2028 if the current demand is not met and also includes latent, displaced and future demand identified.

⁶ Figure is the amount of shortfall in the Urban Analysis Area (i.e. 2) divided by the number of matches per season a cricket pitch can accommodate (i.e. 5) to give the shortfall in pitches

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The table below sets out the pitch capacity for each sport subject to the quality of the pitch. For football and rugby union pitches this relates to a typical week within the season for each sport (i.e. a good quality football pitch can accommodate 3 matches per week). For cricket pitches it is appropriate to look at the number of match equivalent sessions over the course of a season.

Pitch capacity

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. 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. Pitch quality is often influenced by weather conditions and drainage.

As a guide, each NGB has set a standard number of matches that each grass pitch type should be able to accommodate without adversely affecting its current quality (pitch capacity):

Sport	Pitch type	No. of matches per week		
		Good quality	Standard quality	Poor quality
Football	Adult pitches	3	2	1
	Youth pitches	4	2	1
	Mini pitches	6	4	2
Rugby union	Natural Inadequate (D0)	2	1.5	0.5
	Natural Adequate (D1)	3	2	1.5
	Pipe Drained (D2)	3.25	2.5	1.75
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	3.5	3	2
Cricket	One grass wicket	5 per season	N/A	N/A
	One synthetic wicket	60 per season	N/A	N/A

Shortfalls

Please note that shortfalls are expressed in match sessions rather than converted to pitches. To convert match sessions into pitches, the number of match sessions should be halved (to take account of teams playing on a home and away basis).

For a full Glossary of terms please refer to Appendix Three.

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PART 2: OBJECTIVES

The following overarching objectives are based on the three Sport England themes (see figure 1 below). Delivery of the Strategy is the responsibility of and relies on, all stakeholders.

It is recommended that the following are adopted by the Council and its partners to enable it to achieve the overall vision of the Playing Pitch Strategy and Sport England planning objectives.

Aim 1

To **protect** the existing supply of playing pitches where it is needed for meeting current and future needs

Aim 2

To **enhance** playing fields, pitches and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites

Aim 3

To **provide** new playing pitches where there is current or future demand to do so

Figure 1: Sport England themes- Protect, Enhance and Provide



Source: Sport England 2015

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PART 3: SPORT SPECIFIC ISSUES, SCENARIOS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Building on the key findings and issues from the assessment work a number of relevant scenarios have been looked at. The scenarios have helped with developing the recommendations and actions and understanding their potential impact. They should not be regarded as recommendations or actions in their own right. As concluded from the assessment work, there is at present a need to protect all existing provision, and create access to school sites or bring disused sites back into use where feasible. Once they are implemented, assessing the actual impact of the recommendations and actions, along with establishing what the impacts may mean for the key findings of the assessment work, should form a key part of the monitoring and review of the strategy (see Part 6).

Football pitches

Summary - grass

- ◀ Many youth 11v11 teams (36) are playing on adult pitches, which may in part be due to a lack of youth 11v11 pitches rather than a preference for adult pitches.
- ◀ Of the pitches available for community use, 60 are assessed as standard quality, three as good quality and 13 are deemed to be poor quality.
- ◀ Security of tenure is considered unsecure at the Southfields site. Several teams currently use the site (e.g. Gravesham Youth FC, Greenways FC and Gravesend Spartans).
- ◀ Changing facilities at Higham Recreation Ground, Judson's Recreation Ground and Kings Farm Playing Fields are assessed as poor quality.
- ◀ There are a couple of clubs that if promoted their grounds would not meet the stipulated league requirements (i.e. Greenways FC, Punjab United FC). Gravesham Borough FC are displaced (see below) due to no ground being able to cater to their current requirements.
- ◀ There is latent demand equating to the need for two adult, five youth and one mini match session.
- ◀ Five teams are currently displaced, AEI Sports (adult), Eagles FC (u13s, u14s and u18s) and Gravesham Borough FC (adult).
- ◀ Future demand from Team Generation Rates and expressed by clubs equates to four adult, 11.5 youth and six mini match sessions.
- ◀ There is a total of 14.5 match sessions of actual spare capacity across Gravesham with most (4.5) expressed on youth 9v9 pitches in the Urban Analysis Area. There are 3.5 match sessions of actual spare capacity identified on adult pitches.
- ◀ There are 12 pitches overplayed across eight sites by a total of 12.5 match equivalent sessions.
- ◀ Overall in Gravesham there is a current shortfall of adult match sessions (4) and a future shortfall of 11.5 match sessions overall.
- ◀ Overall in Gravesham youth 11v11 pitches are played to capacity but there is a future shortfall of 10.5 match sessions. In addition, the level of shortfall is much greater when accounting for youth teams (u13-u16) playing on adult pitches (18 match sessions).
- ◀ Overall in Gravesham there is a small amount of spare capacity of youth 9v9 (0.5 match sessions) but a future shortfall of 7.5 match sessions.
- ◀ Overall in Gravesham there is a small amount of spare capacity of mini 7v7 (three match sessions) but a future shortfall of 1.5 match sessions.
- ◀ Overall in Gravesham there is a small amount of spare capacity of mini 5v5 (2.5 match sessions) with 5v5 pitches being played to capacity in the future.
- ◀ In further summary there is an overall shortfall of match equivalent sessions to satisfy current but particularly future demand for grass football across Gravesham.

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Scenarios - grass

- ◀ **Improving pitch quality of poor sites** - improving poor quality pitches (either through increased maintenance or drainage improvements in order to increase pitch capacity) to either standard or good quality will help to accommodate identified overplay. For example, improving all poor quality adult pitches (four) to standard quality will create additional spare capacity equating to four match sessions which would help to meet current demand expressed (from overplay). However, even if there is an improvement in quality on such pitches, access to them may be an issue as three pitches are at educational sites and one is at a private sports club. This demonstrates the need for a solution beyond grass pitch improvements to address the capacity issues for adult pitches.
- ◀ Improving the quality of the 9v9 pitch at Judson's Recreation Ground in the Rural Analysis Area would create additional spare capacity which in turn could help to reduce overplay expressed in the area (at Meopham School).
- ◀ There is currently no need to improve quality of smaller format pitches, as currently no shortfalls are indicated for mini 7v7 or mini 5v5. However, improving quality of some of the existing seven mini pitches of poor quality would help to meet future shortfalls.
- ◀ However, given the cost of doing such work for all poor and standard quality pitches and the continued maintenance required (and associated costs) alternatives need to be considered that may offer a more sustainable model for the future of football. The alternative to grass pitches is the use of AGPs for competitive matches and this is something that the FA is supporting, particularly for mini football.
- ◀ **Reintroduction of Former Fleet Leisure site** – which is looking to be brought back into use by the Council in 2017. A potential option previously mentioned has been to reinstate the two adult pitches previously marked on site along with smaller sided AGP provision. This would help to meet current demand for adult pitches (with the smaller sided AGP helping to meet shortfalls identified in the future). However, a shortfall in the future would still be identified for adult pitches.
- ◀ **Remove training currently taking place on match pitches** – a number of clubs identify that training takes place on match pitches. Furthermore, eight clubs identify travelling outside of Gravesham to use a 3G facility for training purposes.
- ◀ If training were to be moved from formal grass pitches, this would reduce overplay and increase spare capacity; it would result in no current shortfall across Gravesham
- ◀ **Loss of Southfields** – this site has the only pitches in the Borough identified as technically unsecure in terms of tenure. If the pitches on site were to be removed from usage it would lead to the displacement of two adult teams, three youth teams and four mini teams. This would create added pressure on the existing stock of pitches in Gravesham already at capacity or being overplayed in most instances.
- ◀ **Utilising lapsed/disused sites** – using lapsed sites such as the Former Fleet Leisure, Whitehill Primary School (detached pitch), Copperfield Academy (detached), Culverstone Recreation Ground, North Kent College, Shears Green Junior school and Holy Trinity Primary School as well as sites currently unmarked could potentially provide an additional two adult, one youth 11v11, four youth 9v9 and two mini 7v7 pitches.
- ◀ This would help meet current demand identified in the Urban Analysis Area. It would also help to meet future shortfalls expressed for youth 9v9 and mini 7v7 in the Urban Analysis Area. For the latter it would meet all future shortfalls in 7v7 across Gravesham.
- ◀ For youth 9v9 a future shortfall of 1.5 match sessions would still exist across Gravesham.
- ◀ **Summary** – if overplay and teams using match pitches for training can be addressed, and if access to the existing pitch stock is maximised, there would be no requirement for new grass pitch provision (although pitch reconfiguration may be necessary).

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Recommendations – grass

- ◀ Existing stock of football pitches to be protected as shortfalls are identified for most formats of the game in the future.
- ◀ Explore opportunities for access to 3G pitches to cater for training demand which in turn will help to reduce some instances of overplay (as a result of training on match pitches) and to meet current levels of demand.
- ◀ Where pitches are overplayed and assessed as standard or poor quality, review maintenance regimes to ensure it is of an appropriate standard to sustain pitch quality whilst exploring opportunities for pitch quality improvements.
- ◀ As a priority work with educational establishments and private site owners/managers as well as lapsed/disused sites to maximise and secure access to pitches which are currently unavailable for community use to help address future demand particularly for youth and mini pitches.
- ◀ Actual spare capacity expressed on sites needs to be retained and utilised in order to cater for expressed future demand. This may require improvements to pitch quality and is explored on a site by site basis within the accompanying action plan.
- ◀ Where appropriate, develop partnership and/or lease arrangements with large, sustainable, development-minded clubs to manage their own 'home' sites thus facilitating club development.

Summary – 3G pitches

- ◀ There are no full size 3G pitches within Gravesham.
- ◀ Instances of training occurring on match pitches is highlighted, which is further supported by clubs expressing a need for access to more training facilities. Several clubs also report travelling outside of Gravesham to train on 3G provision.
- ◀ In order to satisfy current (training) and future demand by analysis area, there is a need for at least four full size 3G pitches (on the basis of 42 teams per pitch) across Gravesham.
- ◀ Aspirations to develop new full size 3G pitches are noted at Gravesend Grammar School and Guru Nanak FC.
- ◀ Reintroduction of the Former Fleet Leisure site is also looking to feature a mixture of 3G provision (details of potential schemes are currently being developed).

Scenarios – 3G pitches

Two scenarios are explored regarding 3G pitches. The first looks at what the result would be if training on match pitches was to be removed. The second scenario looks at what the requirement would be if all mini match play was to take place on 3G pitches. The scenarios have helped with developing the recommendations and actions and understanding their potential impact. They should not be regarded as recommendations or actions in their own right. As concluded from the assessment work, there is at present a need to protect all existing provision, and create access to school sites or bring disused sites back into use where feasible. Once they are implemented, assessing the actual impact of the recommendations and actions, along with establishing what the impacts may mean for the key findings of the assessment work, should form a key part of the monitoring and review of the strategy (see Part 6).

- ◀ **Moving training off match pitches on to 3G pitches** – removing instances of training from match pitches for the adult format of the game reduces overplay and increases spare capacity; which would result in no current shortfall across Gravesham.
- ◀ **Moving all mini match play onto 3G pitches** - there are currently 15 5v5 teams which would require 1.9 (rounded to 2) AGPs and there are 28 7v7 teams which would require

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2.3 (rounded to 3) AGPs. Based on programming as set out in Appendix Four and separate start times for 5v5 and 7v7 matches, the overall need is for three full size 3G pitches to accommodate all mini football demand within Gravesham.

Recommendations – 3G pitches

- ◀ Increase provision of 3G pitches in Gravesham to meet current training and future competitive demand.
- ◀ Any changes relating to the provision of AGPs should be reflected in the periodic updating of the PPS data.
- ◀ Encourage any providers to have a funding mechanism in place which ensures the long term sustainability of provision (i.e. long term maintenance and repairs).
- ◀ Encourage any providers to test and subsequently FA register in order to maximise use for competitive football to be played.
- ◀ Any new forms of 3G provision should also explore options for World Rugby compliant AGPs in line with RFU investment plans.

Cricket pitches

Summary

- ◀ In total, there are 13 cricket pitches identified in Gravesham, of which 12 are available for community use (11 are in use). The only pitch not available to the community is located at Meopham School.
- ◀ There are three non-turf wickets, two of these accompany grass wicket squares (at Cobham Playing Fields and Gravesend Grammar School) and one is standalone (at Meopham School).
- ◀ The two pitches at Gravesend Grammar School are available but not used by the community.
- ◀ Security of tenure is generally secure and not an issue for clubs.
- ◀ The audit of grass wicket cricket pitches found 12 to be standard quality, whilst one pitch was assessed as good (Fleetway Sports Ground). In addition, all but one responding club view their pitch as standard (Gravesend CC rate its pitch as good)
- ◀ All clubs have access to changing facilities with no issues identified.
- ◀ Three clubs (Cobham CC, Gravesend RFCC & Nurstead CC) report demand for additional training facilities, all state a need for an artificial turf wicket or training area.
- ◀ In total, there are 11 clubs generating 32 men's and 14 junior teams.
- ◀ Despite a national recognition that cricket is currently experiencing a reduction in participation of traditional formats of the game, the amount of teams in Gravesham has seemingly stayed the same over the previous three years.
- ◀ Five clubs have plans to increase the number of senior teams with three of these clubs also looking to increase the number of junior teams. It must be noted that these plans are aspirations. Factoring in TGRs, Gravesham may see future demand for seven senior and five junior teams.
- ◀ Recent establishment of the Guru Nanak CC (linked to Street Cricket initiative) to capture 'hidden' demand from South Asian Communities may also lead to increases in the future.
- ◀ No non-turf wicket pitches are recorded as accommodating more than 60 matches per season, therefore, all non-turf wickets are considered to have spare capacity. This translates to actual spare capacity, as peak time for junior cricket is midweek, whereby non-turf wickets are more commonly used and matches can be played on a variety of days.
- ◀ There are seven sites which show potential spare capacity on grass wickets, totalling 200 match sessions per season. All have actual spare capacity during peak time for senior cricket (Saturdays).

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- ◀ Overall current demand in Gravesham is being met. However, two sites indicate being overplayed; Luddesdowne CC and Gravesend CC (Bat and Ball). The latter already accesses additional grounds for its 3rd and 4th team to try and limit impact of overplay.
- ◀ When accounting for future demand, there is a slight shortfall of match sessions in the Urban Analysis Area. This potentially could be exacerbated given the vision for the recently established Guru Nanak CC. Likely short term need is for a practice facility.

Scenarios

- ◀ **Addressing overplay** – reviewing the quality of standard quality pitches which are overplayed i.e. Bat and Ball used by Gravesend CC (20 match sessions) and Luddesdowne CC (three match sessions) could help meet demand. For Luddesdowne CC reviewing and sustaining current quality should help to absorb overplay on site.
- ◀ As the overplayed pitch at the Bat and Ball site does not contain a non-turf wicket, all junior cricket recorded at the site is played on grass wickets. Exploring the possibility of installing a non-turf wicket for the eight junior teams will alleviate overplay.
- ◀ And/or alternatively exploring the use of other non-turf wicket pitches that are available but currently unused (e.g. Gravesend Grammar School) is recommended. However, this may not be financially viable due to the rent costs attached. It is also subject to the School having appropriate and accessible ancillary facilities.
- ◀ **Utilising spare capacity** – 5.5 pitches worth of actual spare capacity is expressed in Gravesham; two pitches worth is identified in the Urban Analysis Area. Exploring use of the spare capacity at the Fleetway Sports Ground (currently used by Old Gravesendians CC) to accommodate overplay from Gravesend CC could be an option (site is a five-minute drive away).
- ◀ This also appears to correspond to where future demand is expressed and therefore should be used to accommodate where clubs indicate they are looking to increase teams.
- ◀ **Accommodating future demand** – in order to create further capacity, consideration should be given to the possible transfer of junior cricket to non-turf wickets. Making full use of the pitches available but currently unused at Gravesend Grammar School should also help to accommodate potential future demand from Guru Nanak CC.
- ◀ **Summary** – if pitch quality/overplay is addressed and access to existing pitches is maximised to accommodate future demand there is unlikely to be a requirement for new grass pitches to be sought in Gravesham.

Recommendations – cricket

- ◀ Existing quantity of cricket pitches to be protected.
- ◀ Kent County Cricket to work with clubs to review quality on those pitches assessed as standard and as a priority those which are overplayed to ensure an appropriate quality is achieved in relation to the standard of play.
- ◀ Explore opportunities for increasing junior play on non-turf wickets throughout Gravesham. Consideration to installing non-turf wicket at sites overplayed and with junior teams and/or exploring use of other non-turf wicket pitches that are available but currently unused (e.g. Gravesend Grammar School) for junior play.
- ◀ Actual spare capacity on sites need to be retained in order to meet future demand expressed by clubs.
- ◀ Work with clubs to ensure continued access to ancillary facilities which supports provision of pitches/sites.
- ◀ Work with clubs to improve access to indoor training facilities during the winter months.

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Rugby union pitches

Summary

- ◀ There are 12 senior pitches available for community use; four are assessed as good quality and eight as standard. In terms of the six 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, 10 junior boys' and eight (mixed) mini teams.
- ◀ No clubs express latent demand.
- ◀ 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.
- ◀ Overplay amounts to 8.5 match equivalent sessions and can be attributed solely to the Gravesend RFC site; predominantly as a result of training taking place on match pitches. Mini teams also play on senior pitches at the site accounting for two match sessions.
- ◀ The three senior pitches at Vigo Rugby Club are currently at capacity.
- ◀ There is an overall shortfall of senior pitches amounting to 0.5 match equivalent sessions, of which all is identified in the Urban Analysis Area.
- ◀ Improving pitch quality will help to provide greater capacity throughout Gravesham. First and foremost, this can be done through the installation of drainage systems and exploring opportunities to improve maintenance.
- ◀ Additional floodlighting and/or more pitch space is needed. By spreading training demand across more floodlit pitches, capacity on other pitches should improve.
- ◀ Where overplay remains present after pitch quality improvements, larger capital investment will be required.

Scenarios

- ◀ **Floodlighting** – Gravesend RFC would benefit from installing additional floodlighting in order to create additional room for training and help increase pitch capacity.
- ◀ **Improving pitch quality** – focusing on pitches of a standard quality and being played at capacity or overplayed, improving sites to drainage score of 'natural adequate' (M2/D1) results in current demand being met across Gravesham. However, this would also require all spare capacity to accommodate overplay identified at Gravesend RFC.
- ◀ No pitch is recorded as having an adequate drainage system installed. All drainage recorded is therefore either natural adequate or natural inadequate. Even if overplayed pitches can be improved to a pipe drained (M2/D2) standard, they would still be overplayed (due to training on pitches).
- ◀ **More pitches** – another reason for overplay is mini teams playing on senior pitches. This is especially the case at Gravesend RFC, as 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 (but would still exist unless other interventions were carried out).
- ◀ **Remove training from match pitches** – if training on match pitches is removed, all instances of overplay are reduced with spare capacity across Gravesham increasing. This would result in current and future demand being met.
- ◀ **World rugby compliant AGPs** - The intention of the RFU investment strategy in relation to AGPs is to invest in communities where grass rugby pitches are over capacity and where the installation of an AGP would support the growth of the game at the host site and for the local rugby partnership, including local rugby clubs and other organisations.

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- ◀ The RFU is keen to work locally with partners such as the Council and the FA to look at sites of mutual interest for future AGP provision.

Recommendations – rugby union

- ◀ Existing quantity of rugby pitches to be protected.
- ◀ As a priority, seek to address overplay at Gravesend RFC via exploring improvements to pitch quality (both maintenance schedules and drainage).
- ◀ Work to reduce overplay at the above mentioned site as a result of training on match pitches through access to additional dedicated floodlit pitches/training areas.
- ◀ Consider supply of world rugby compliant AGPs in the area to address levels of overplay.

Hockey pitches (AGPs)

Summary

- ◀ There is one full sized floodlit sand based AGP in Gravesham, located at Gravesend RFC.
- ◀ It is poor quality due to number of reasons including subsidence and rips in the carpet. At 21 years old it is considered over its recommended life span. Vandalism is also highlighted
- ◀ There are three hockey clubs in Gravesham consisting of eight teams. Gravesend and Wellcome Mens HC is the largest with four teams.
- ◀ All three clubs report a decrease in members and a loss of teams over the last few years. However, all three plan to create junior sections to gain more senior members.
- ◀ It is recognised that the clubs are competing with bigger clubs with better facilities on the outskirts of Gravesham such as Sevenoaks HC and Holcombe HC.
- ◀ Clubs report changing facilities are functional but basic. Better heating is suggested as being in need in the changing rooms.
- ◀ Although there is sufficient provision to meet current demand, there is no capacity for growth at peak times.
- ◀ Quality of existing provision is the key priority as it is likely to act as a barrier to increasing participation and even to sustainability of hockey in Gravesham.

Recommendations – hockey

- ◀ Protect current provision and improve quality in order to ensure sustainability for continued hockey use.
- ◀ As a priority explore opportunities for hockey clubs to submit a joint funding bid (e.g. Sport England's Inspired Facilities) to replace the carpet.
- ◀ Any changes relating to the provision of AGPs should be reflected in the periodic updating of the PPS data.
- ◀ In the longer term, ensure appropriate access to ancillary facilities is secured.

Bowling greens

Summary

- ◀ There are nine flat bowling greens in Gravesham. All are assessed as good quality.
- ◀ Club membership has, in general, remained the same (despite a national decline). Five clubs have aspirations to increase membership.
- ◀ Clubhouse facilities at Windmill Hill Gardens are rated as poor by the Club.
- ◀ No clubs express demand for an additional green.

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Recommendations – bowling greens

- ◀ Sustain greens currently in use and maximise use through pay and play opportunities.
- ◀ Improve green quality and ancillary provision as required.

Tennis courts

Summary

- ◀ There are 47 courts across 13 sites in Gravesham, 34 are available for community use.
- ◀ Of the courts available for community use, 27 are assessed as good, five as standard and two as poor. Indoor courts at Legends are also viewed as good quality.
- ◀ Courts at Woodlands Park are the only ones available for community use assessed as poor for quality.
- ◀ All three clubs in Gravesham signal plans to increase membership in both senior and junior sections; which clubs state can be accommodated on existing courts.

Recommendations – tennis

- ◀ Retain existing court provision and ensure sustainability of sites through improving quality and maximising use through delivery of LTA initiatives and encouraging providers to make use of technology solutions.
- ◀ Continue to support clubs to ensure current and future demand is being met.

Other sports

- ◀ Current levels of provision, taking into account facilities in neighbouring local authorities, are deemed sufficient for Gravesham.

PART 4: STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The strategic recommendations for the Strategy have been developed from the key issues cutting across all playing pitch sports and categorised under each of the Strategy Aims. They reflect overarching and common areas to be addressed which apply across outdoor sports facilities and may not be specific to just one sport.

Aim 1

To **protect** the existing supply of playing pitch facilities where it is needed for meeting current or future needs

Recommendations:

- a. Protect playing field sites (including lapsed/disused sites) through local planning policy
- b. Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs, through a range of solutions and partnership agreements.
- c. Maximise community use of education facilities where there is a need to do so.

Recommendation a – Protect playing field sites through local planning policy

The PPS Assessment shows that all currently used playing field sites require protection and therefore cannot be deemed surplus to requirements due to instances of shortfalls now and in the future. Therefore, based on the outcomes of the PPS, local planning policy should reflect this situation.

NPPF paragraph 74 states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

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

Lapsed and disused – playing field sites that formerly accommodated playing pitches but are no longer used for formal or informal sports use within the last five years (lapsed) or longer (disused). Existing provision should only be deemed surplus if a robust review is undertaken in line with Sport England’s Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance and this has been signed off by the PPS Steering Group.

As concluded from the assessment work, there is at present a need to protect all existing provision, and create access to school sites or bring disused sites back into use where feasible. Once they are implemented, assessing the actual impact of the recommendations and actions, along with establishing what the impacts may mean for the key findings of the assessment work, should form a key part of the monitoring and review of the strategy (see Part 6).

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Each currently disused/lapsed site is included within the action plan together with a recommendation in relation to the need to bring the site back into use. If bringing the site back into use is not feasible and the site may be lost, mitigation or replacement (to an equal or better standard) for its loss will be necessary in order to address the shortfalls identified with the Assessment.

New housing development - where proposed housing development is located within access of a high quality playing pitch, this does not necessarily mean that there is no need for further pitch provision or improvements to existing pitches in that area in order to accommodate additional demand arising from that development. The PPS should be used to help inform what impact the new development will have on the demand and capacity of existing sites in the area, and whether there is a need for improvements to increase capacity or if new provision is required.

It is important for future growth areas (when details are known) to be scenario tested in line with Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance and using the Sport England Pitch Demand Calculator. This could be subject to a separate document. It is also important for such workings to be signed off by the PPS Steering Group. No surpluses can be identified until this piece of work is undertaken.

Sport England's Playing Fields Policy

The PPS can be used to help inform Development Management decisions that affect existing (including lapsed/disused) or new playing fields, pitches and ancillary facilities. All applications are assessed by the Local Planning Authority on a case by case basis taking into account site specific factors. In addition, Sport England as statutory consultee on planning applications that affect or prejudice the use of playing field will use the PPS to help assess that planning application against their Playing Fields Policy

It is Sport England's policy to oppose any planning application which will result in the loss of playing field land unless it is satisfied that the application meets with one or more of its five specific exceptions.

Policy Exception E1: Excess of provision

'A carefully quantified and documented assessment of current and future needs has demonstrated to the satisfaction of Sport England that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment, and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport.'

The exception allows for development of lapsed or disused playing fields if a PPS shows a clear excess in the quantity of playing pitch provision at present and in the future across all playing pitch sports types and sizes.

Policy Exception E2: Ancillary development

'The proposed development is ancillary to the principal use of the site as a playing field or playing fields, and does not affect the quantity or quality of pitches or adversely affect their use'

This may include for example pavilions, changing rooms and/or sports lighting which could improve the sporting use of the site.

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Policy Exception E3: Land incapable of forming part of a pitch

'The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming, or forming part of, a playing pitch, and does not result in the loss of or inability to make use of any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins), a reduction in the size of the playing areas of any playing pitch or the loss of any sporting/ancillary facilities on the site'

Where the PPS cannot demonstrate the site, or part of a site, is clearly surplus to requirements then replacement of the site, or part of a site, will be required to comply with Sport England policy exception E4.

Policy Exception E4: Replacement provision

'The playing field or fields, which would be lost as a result of the proposed development, would be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development'

Policy Exception E5: Sports facilities

'The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field or playing fields'

As concluded from the assessment work, there is at present a need to protect all existing provision, and create access to school sites or bring disused sites back into use where feasible. Once they are implemented, assessing the actual impact of the recommendations and actions, along with establishing what the impacts may mean for the key findings of the assessment work, should form a key part of the monitoring and review of the strategy (see Part 6).

Relating to this, it is important that any changes to the provision of pitches and/or AGPs should be reflected in the periodic updating of the PPS data.

School playing field land

Local authorities wanting to dispose of school playing field land need consent under Section 77 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, but consent is now also required for disposal of any land used by a school or academy under Schedule 1 to the Academies Act 2010. Academies also need consent to any leases or disposals under their Funding Agreement.

It should be noted that consent under Section 77 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act does not necessarily mean subsequent planning approval will be granted. Therefore, any application for planning permission must meet the requirements of the relevant policy, in this case paragraph 74 of NPPF, Local Plan Policy and Sport England policy. Indeed, applicants are advised to engage Sport England before submitting applications. Robust implementation of the statutory obligation will ensure protection of school playing fields for use by pupils (and sometimes the community as a whole) to ensure receipt is ploughed back into sports education.

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Recommendation b – Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs through a range of solutions and partnership agreements

A number of school sites are being used in Gravesham for competitive play, predominantly for football. In all cases use of pitches has not been classified as unsecure, however, use is not necessarily formalised and further work should be carried out to ensure an appropriate Community Use Agreement (CUA) is in place (including access to changing provision where required).

NGBs can often help to negotiate and engage with schools, particularly academies where the local authority may not have direct influence.

Sport England has also produced guidance, online resources and toolkits to help open up and retain school sites for community use and can be found at:
<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/use-our-school/>

Local sports clubs should be supported by partners including the Council, NGBs or the County Sports Partnership (CSP) to achieve long-term success across a range of areas including management, membership, funding, facilities, volunteers and partnership working. For example, support club development and encourage clubs to develop evidence of business and sports development plans to generate an income through their facilities. All clubs could be encouraged to look at different management models such as registering as Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC)⁷. Clubs should also be encouraged to work with partners locally whether volunteer support agencies or linking with local businesses.

As well as improving the quality of well-used, local authority sites, there are a number of sites which have poor quality (or no) ancillary facilities. **The Council should further explore opportunities where security of tenure could be granted to the clubs playing on these sites (minimum 25 years as recommended by Sport England and NGBs) so the clubs are in a position to apply for external funding opportunities to improve the ancillary facilities.** It is important that this is undertaken in line with Sport England's Playing Fields Policy exceptions (set out on p18); and that any changes to the provision of pitches and/or AGPs should be reflected in the periodic updating of the PPS data.

Further to this there could be examples in Gravesham where long term leases could be put into place for the continued use of a site. Each club should be required to meet service and/or strategic recommendations. However, an additional set of criteria should be considered, which takes into account the quality of the club, aligned to its long term development objectives and sustainability.

In the context of the Comprehensive Spending Review, which announced public spending cuts, it is increasingly important for the Council to work with voluntary sector organisations in order that they may be able to take greater levels of ownership and support the wider development and maintenance of facilities.

To facilitate this, the Council should support and enable clubs to generate sufficient funds to allow this.

⁷ <http://www.cascinfo.co.uk/cascbenefits>

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Recommended criteria for lease of sport sites to clubs/organisations

Club	Site
<p>Clubs should have Clubmark/FA Charter Standard accreditation award.</p> <p>Clubs commit to meeting demonstrable local demand and show pro-active commitment to developing school-club links.</p> <p>Clubs are sustainable, both in a financial sense and via their internal management structures in relation to recruitment and retention policy for both players and volunteers.</p> <p>Ideally, clubs should have already identified (and received an agreement in principle) any match funding required for initial capital investment identified.</p> <p>Clubs have processes in place to ensure capacity to maintain sites to the existing, or better, standards.</p>	<p>Sites should be those identified as 'Club Sites' (recommendation d) for new clubs (i.e. not those with a Borough wide significance) but which offer development potential. For established clubs which have proven success in terms of self-management 'Key Centres' are also appropriate.</p> <p>As a priority, sites should acquire capital investment to improve (which can be attributed to the presence of a Clubmark/Charter Standard club).</p> <p>Sites should be leased with the intention that investment can be sourced to contribute towards improvement of the site.</p> <p>An NGB/Council representative should sit on a management committee for each site leased to a club.</p>

The Council can further recognise the value of NGB club accreditation by adopting a policy of prioritising the clubs that are to have access to these better quality facilities. This may be achieved by inviting clubs to apply for season long leases on a particular site as an initial trial.

The Council should establish a series of core outcomes to derive from clubs taking on a lease arrangement to ensure that the most appropriate clubs are assigned to sites. As an example, outcomes may include:

- ◀ Increasing participation.
- ◀ Supporting the development of coaches and volunteers.
- ◀ Commitment to quality standards.
- ◀ Improvements (where required) to facilities, or as a minimum retaining existing standards.

In addition, clubs should be made fully aware of the associated responsibilities/liabilities when considering leases of multi-use public playing fields. Any changes in pitch/AGP provision should be in line with the Sport England Playing Fields Policy exception (set out on p18) and reflected in the periodic updating of the PPS data.

Community asset transfer

The Council should continue to work towards adopting a policy which supports community management and ownership of assets to local clubs, community groups and trusts (this could be through formal adoption of this PPS or via stipulation of a specific Asset Transfer Policy). This presents sports clubs and national governing bodies with opportunities to take ownership of their own facilities; it may also provide non-asset owning sports clubs with their first chance to take on a building.

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The Sport England Community Sport Asset Transfer Toolkit is a bespoke, interactive web based tool that provides a step by step guide through each stage of the asset transfer process:

<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/asset-transfer/>

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Recommendation c – Maximise community use of education sites where there is a need to do so

In order to maximise community use of educational facilities it is recommended to establish a more coherent, structured relationship with schools. The ability to access good facilities within the local community is vital to any sports organisation, yet many clubs struggle to find good quality places to play and train. Pricing policies at facilities can be a barrier to access at some of the education sites but physical access and resistance from schools, especially academies, to open up provision can also be an issue.

A number of sporting facilities are located on education sites and making these available to sports clubs can offer significant benefits to both the school/college and the local clubs. The Council and other key partners must work with schools and colleges to develop an understanding of the issues that restrict or affect community access. Support should be provided, where appropriate, to address underlying problems. Consideration should be given to a centralised booking system for community use of schools and colleges to minimise administration and make access easier for the users.

It is not uncommon for school pitch stock not to be fully maximised for community use. Even on established community use sites, access to grass pitches for community use is limited.

In some instances, grass pitches are unavailable for community use due to poor quality and therefore remedial works may be required before community use can be established.

As detailed earlier, Sport England has also produced guidance, online resources and toolkits to help open up and retain school sites for community use and can be found at:

Community use: <http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/accessing-schools/>
Use our schools' toolkit: <http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/use-our-school/>

There are a growing number of academies and college sites in Gravesham which the Council does not have any control over as Kent County Council is the education authority. It is still important to understand the significance of such sites and attempt to work with the schools and Kent County Council where there are opportunities for community use. In addition, the relevant NGB has a role to play in supporting the Council to deliver the strategy and communicating with schools where necessary to address shortfalls in provision, particularly for football pitches.

Aim 2

To **enhance** playing fields, pitches and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites

Recommendation:

- d. Improve quality
- e. Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) for the management and improvement of sites.
- f. Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding

Recommendation d – Improve quality

There are a number of ways in which it is possible to increase pitch quality, including for example, addressing overplay and improving maintenance. These are explored in more detail below.

Addressing quality issues

Generally, where pitches are assessed as standard or poor quality and/or overplayed, review/improve maintenance regimes to ensure it is of an appropriate standard to sustain/improve pitch quality. Ensuring existing maintenance of good quality pitches continues is also important.

Based on an achievable target using existing quality scoring to provide a baseline, a standard should be used to identify deficiencies and investment should be focused on those sites which fail to meet the proposed quality standard (using the site audit database, provided in electronic format). The Strategy approach to these outdoor sports facilities achieving these standards should be to enhance quality and therefore the planning system should seek to protect them.

For the purposes of the Quality Assessments, this Strategy will refer to pitches and ancillary facilities separately as Good, Standard or Poor quality. In Gravesham, for example, some good quality sites have poor quality elements i.e. changing rooms or a specific pitch.

Good quality refers to pitches that have, for example, a good maintenance regime coupled with good grass cover, an even surface, are free from vandalism, litter etc. In terms of ancillary facilities, good quality refers to access for disabled people, sufficient provision for referees, juniors/women/girls and appropriate provision of showers, toilets and car parking. For rugby union, a good pitch is often also pipe and/or slit drained.

Standard quality refers to pitches that have, for example, an adequate maintenance regime coupled with adequate grass cover, minimal signs of wear and tear, goalposts may be secure but in need of minor repair. In terms of ancillary facilities, standard quality refers to adequately sized changing rooms, storage provision and provision of toilets. For rugby union, drainage is often natural and adequate.

Poor quality refers to pitches that have, for example, poor levels of maintenance coupled with inadequate grass cover, uneven surface and damage. In terms of ancillary facilities,

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poor quality refers to inappropriate size of changing rooms, no showers, no running water and old dated interior. For rugby union, drainage is often natural and inadequate.

Please refer to the Sport England/NGB quality assessments. Sites played beyond capacity may require remedial action to help reduce this.

Without appropriate, fit for purpose ancillary facilities, good quality pitches may be underutilised. Changing facilities form the most essential part of this offer and therefore key sites should be given priority for improvement.

In order to prioritise investment into key sites **it is recommended that the steering group works up a list of criteria, relevant to the Area, to provide a steer on future investment.**

For improvement/replacement of AGPs refer to Sport England and the NGBs 'Selecting the Right Artificial Surface for Hockey, Football, Rugby League and Rugby Union' document for a guide as to suitable AGP surfaces:

www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/artificial-sports-surfaces/

Addressing overplay

In order to improve the overall quality of the playing pitch stock; it is necessary to ensure that pitches are not overplayed beyond recommended weekly carrying capacity.

This is determined by assessing pitch quality (via a non-technical site assessment) and allocating a weekly match limit to each. Each NGB recommends a number of matches that a good quality grass pitch should take:

Sport	Pitch type	No. of matches		
		Good quality	Standard quality	Poor quality
Football	Adult pitches	3 per week	2 per week	1 per week
	Youth pitches	4 per week	2 per week	1 per week
	Mini pitches	6 per week	4 per week	2 per week
Rugby union*	Natural Inadequate (D0)	2 per week	1.5 per week	0.5 per week
	Natural Adequate (D1)	3 per week	2 per week	1.5 per week
	Pipe Drained (D2)	3.25 per week	2.5 per week	1.75 per week
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	3.5 per week	3 per week	2 per week
Rugby league	Senior	3 per week	2 per week	1 per week
Cricket	One grass wicket	5 per season	N/A	N/A
	One synthetic wicket	60 per season		

* Please note that the RFU believes that it is most appropriate to base the calculation of pitch capacity upon an assessment of the drainage system and maintenance programme afforded to a site.

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There are also a number of sites that are poor quality but are not overplayed. These sites should not be overlooked as often poor quality sites have less demand than other sites but demand could increase if the quality was to increase. Improving pitch quality should not be considered in isolation from maintenance regimes.

Whilst it works both ways in so much as poor pitch condition is a symptom of pitches being over played, potential improvements may make sites more attractive and therefore more popular.

There is also a need to balance pitch improvements alongside the transfer of play to alternative pitch sites. Therefore, there is a need to work with clubs to ensure that sites are not played beyond their capacity and encourage play, where possible, to be transferred to alternative venues which are not operating at capacity.

Increasing pitch maintenance

Standard or poor grass pitch quality may not just be a result of poor drainage. In some instances, ensuring there is an appropriate maintenance for the level/standard of play can help to improve quality and therefore increase pitch capacity. Each NGB can provide assistance with reviewing pitch maintenance regimes.

For example, the FA and ECB in partnership have recently introduced a Pitch Advisor Scheme and have been working in partnership with Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG) to develop a Grass Pitch Maintenance service that can be utilised by grassroots clubs with the simple aim of improving the quality of grass pitches. The key principles behind the service are to provide clubs with advice/practical solutions on a number of areas, with the simple aim of improving the club's playing surface.

At local authority sites in Gravesham, maintenance of grass pitches is deemed to be basic and for football covers grass cutting and seeding only, resulting in many pitches being assessed as standard quality. Where local authority pitches are recommended for improvement within the action plan, carrying out additional regular work such as aerating, sand dressing, fertilising and/or weed killing will all improve quality. An improvement in post season remedial work is also recommended. It is recommended that the Council works with users and Kent FA to fully determine the most appropriate pitch improvements on a site by site basis.

In relation to cricket, 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. The ECB recommends full technical assessments of wickets and pitches available through a Performance Quality Standard Assessment (PQS). The PQS assesses a cricket square to ascertain whether the pitch meets the Performance Quality Standards that are benchmarked by the Institute of Groundsmanship. Please note that PQS assessments are also available for other sports.

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Recommendation e – Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) for the management and improvement of sites

To allow for facility developments to be programmed within a phased approach the Council should adopt a tiered approach to the management and improvement of playing pitch sites and associated facilities. Please refer to Part 5: Action Plan for the proposed hierarchy.

Recommendation f – Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding

Partners, led by the Council, should ensure that appropriate funding secured for improved sports provision is directed to areas of need, underpinned by a robust strategy for improvement in playing pitch facilities.

In order to address the community's needs, to target priority areas and to reduce duplication of provision, there should be a coordinated approach to strategic investment. In delivering this recommendation the Council should look to maintain a regular dialogue with local partners and through the Playing Pitch Steering Group.

Some investment in new provision will not be made by the Council directly, it is important, however, that the Council therefore seeks to direct and lead a strategic and co-ordinated approach to facility development by education sites, NGBs, sports clubs and the commercial sector to address community needs whilst avoiding duplication of provision.

Please refer to Appendix Two for further funding information which includes details of the current opportunities, likely funding requirements and indicative project costs.

Sport and physical activity can have a profound effect on peoples' lives, and plays a crucial role in improving community cohesion, educational attainment and self-confidence. However, one of sport's greatest contributions is its positive impact on public health. It is therefore important to lever in investment from other sectors such as health and wellbeing for example.

Aim 3

To **provide** new outdoor sports facilities where there is current or future demand to do so

Recommendations:

- g. Rectify quantitative shortfalls in the current pitch stock.
- h. Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand.

Recommendation g - Rectify quantitative shortfalls in the current pitch stock

The Council and its partners should work to rectify identified inadequacies and meet identified shortfalls as outlined in the Assessment Report and the sport by sport specific recommendations.

It is important that the current levels of grass pitch provision are protected, maintained and enhanced to secure provision now and in the future. For most sports the future demand for provision identified in Gravesham can be overcome through maximising use of existing pitches through a combination of:

- ◀ Improving pitch quality in order to improve the capacity of pitches to accommodate more matches.
- ◀ Securing long term community use at school sites.
- ◀ Working with commercial and private providers to increase usage.

While maximising the use of existing pitches offers scope to address the quantitative deficiencies for most sports; access to new artificial training facilities (i.e. 3G AGP and artificial wickets), as well as improving existing quality in some instances is required to meet the levels of demand identified for both now and in the future.

There may be an opportunity to use some senior pitches to provide senior, junior or mini pitches (through different line markings/coning areas of the pitch). However, further work should be undertaken on this as an action for the Council/NGBs. It is likely that for some sports, particularly football, the provision of new pitches and/or facilities will be required in the future to support the predicted future demand.

Unmet demand, changes in sport participation and trends, and proposed housing growth should be recognised and factored into future facility planning. Assuming an increase in participation and housing growth occurs, it will impact on the future need for certain types of sports facilities. Sports development work also approximates unmet demand which cannot currently be quantified (i.e., it is not being suppressed by a lack of facilities) but is likely to occur. The following table highlights the main development trends in each sport and their likely impact on facilities. However, it is important to note that these may be subject to change.

Furthermore, retaining some spare capacity allows some pitches to be rested to protect overall pitch quality in the long term. Therefore, whilst in some instances it may be appropriate to re-designate a pitch where there is low demand identified, a holistic approach

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should be taken to re-designation for the reasons cited. The site-by-site action planning will seek to provide further clarification on where re-designation is suitable.

Likely future sport-by-sport demand trends

Sport	Future development trend	Strategy impact
Football	As a result of the FA Youth Development Review pitch demands are changing. This could also see changes in the seasonal demand of pitches (youth football).	Consider allocating leases to FA Community Charter Standard designated clubs with a large number of teams. Work with clubs to identify facility development opportunities. Work with clubs in relation to their pitch demands as a result of the FA Youth Development Review.
	Demand for senior football is likely to be sustained based on current trends and the move to small sided football. County FA focus to maintain growth of youth football through to adults.	Sustain current stock but consideration given to reconfigure pitches if required.
	An increase in women and girls football following £2.4m investment over the next two years (2014-2016) from Sport England to increase the number of women and girls taking part in football sessions.	A need to provide segregated ancillary facilities and the potential need for more pitches.
Cricket	Demand is likely to grow across Gravesham for facility use for both junior and adult participation (as a result of initiatives such as Street Cricket and Guru Nanak CC).	Possible demand for access to additional facilities where pitches are operating at capacity. A need to encourage greater use of non turf wickets particularly for junior use to help meet shortfalls.
	Women's and girls' cricket is a national priority and there is a target to establish two girls' and one women's team in every local authority over the next five years.	Support clubs to ensure access to segregated changing and toilet provision and access to good quality cricket pitches to support growth.
Rugby union	The RFU works towards achieving the stated outcomes of the Rugby Football Union National Facilities Strategy (2013-2017), the Rugby Football Union Women and Girls Strategy and the Rugby Football Union Male XV-a-side Strategy. Locally, the RFU wants to ensure access to pitches that satisfy existing demand and predicted growth, particularly following the Rugby World Cup (2015). It is also an aim to protect and improve pitch quality, as well as ancillary facilities including changing rooms and floodlights.	Clubs are likely to field more teams in the future. It is important, therefore, to work with the clubs to maintain the current pitch stock, support facility development where appropriate and increase the number of training facilities where necessary.

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Sport	Future development trend	Strategy impact
3G pitches	Demand for 3G pitches for competitive football will increase. It is likely that future demand for the use of 3G pitches to service competitive football, may result in some reduced demand for grass pitches. Provision of 3G pitches which are World Rugby compliant will help to reduce overplay as a result of training on rugby pitches.	Ensure that access to new AGP provision across the Borough is maximised and that community use agreements are in place. Utilise Sport England/NGB guidance on choosing the correct surface: http://www.sportengland.org/media/30651/Selecting-the-right-artificial-surface-Rev2-2010.pdf
AGPs - hockey	Priority on sustaining and growing current participation.	Retain pitch currently in use and resurface as sand based AGP.
Tennis	Aspiration of a number of clubs to increase membership.	Likely that any future increase could be accommodated on existing courts.
Bowls	Aspiration of a number of clubs to increase membership.	Likely that any future increase could be accommodated on existing greens.

Recommendation h - Identify opportunities to add to the overall pitch stock to accommodate both current and future demand

The Council should use, and regularly update, the Action Plan within this Strategy for improvements to its own pitches whilst recognising the need to support partners. The Action Plan lists improvements to be made to each site focused upon both qualitative and quantitative improvements as appropriate for each area.

Furthermore, any potential school sites which become redundant over the lifetime of the Strategy may offer potential for meeting community needs on a localised basis. Where schools are closed their playing fields may be converted to dedicated community use to help address any unmet community needs.

Some sites (or adjacent land) in Gravesham also have the potential to accommodate more pitches which may offer a solution to meeting shortfalls identified as is further explored within the action plan.

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PART 5: ACTION PLAN

Introduction

The site-by-site action plan list seeks to address key issues identified in the accompanying Assessment Report. It provides recommendations based on current levels of usage, quality and future demand, as well as the potential of each site for enhancement.

It should be reviewed in the light of staff and financial resources in order to prioritise support for strategically significant provision and provision that other providers are less likely to make. Recommendation e below explains the hierarchy of priorities on the list. It is imperative that action plans for priority projects should be developed through the implementation of the strategy.

The Council should make it a high priority to work with NGBs and other partners to comprise a priority list of actions based on local priorities, NGB priorities and available funding.

Recommendation e - Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites

To allow for facility developments to be prioritised and programmed within a phased approach a tiered model to for the improvement of playing pitch sites and associated facilities is useful.

The identification of sites is based on their strategic importance in a Borough-wide context i.e. they accommodate the majority of demand or the recommended action has the greatest impact on addressing shortfalls identified either on a sport by sport basis or across the Borough as a whole.

Recommended tiered site criteria

Hub sites	Key centres	Local sites
Strategically located. Priority sites for NGB.	Strategically located within the analysis area.	Services the local community. Likely to include education sites.
Accommodates three or more good quality grass pitches. Including provision of at least one AGP.	Accommodates two or more good quality grass pitches.	Accommodates more than one pitch.
Single or multi-sport provision. Could also operate as a central venue.	Single or multi-sport provision. Could also operate as a central venue.	Single or multi-sport provision.
Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines.	Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines.	Standard maintenance regime either by the club or in house maintenance contract.
Good quality ancillary facility on site, with sufficient changing rooms and car parking to serve the number of pitches.	Good quality ancillary facility on site, with sufficient changing rooms and car parking to serve the number of pitches.	Appropriate access changing to accommodate both senior and junior use concurrently (if required).

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Hub sites are of Borough wide importance where users are willing to travel to access the range and high quality of facilities offered and are likely to be multi sport. These have been identified on the basis of high impact on addressing the issues identified in the assessment.

The financial, social and sporting benefits which can be achieved through development of strategic sites (also known as hub sites) are significant. Sport England provides further guidance on the development of community sports hubs at:

http://www.sportengland.org/facilities_planning/planning_tools_and_guidance/sports_hubs.aspx

Where development of Strategic Sites includes provision of 3G pitches for football it is recommended that further modelling/feasibility work is carried out to ensure sustainability of new 3G pitches to accommodate competitive fixtures. However, as a priority consultation should be carried out with leagues/clubs to gauge acceptance/buy in of moving competitive play to 3G pitches in the future.

Key centres although these sites are more community focused, some are still likely to service a wider analysis area (or slightly wider area). However, there may be more of a focus on a specific sport i.e. a dedicated site.

It is considered that some financial investment will be necessary to improve the ancillary facilities at both Hub sites and Key Centres to complement the pitches in terms of access, flexibility (i.e. single-sex changing if necessary), quality and that they meet the rules and regulations of local competitions.

Local sites refer to those sites which are generally one and two pitch sites and may be Council owned hired to clubs for a season or are sites which have been leased on a long-term basis. However, they are also likely to be private club sites serving one particular sport.

The level of priority attached to them for Council-generated investment may be relatively low and consideration should be given, on a site-by-site basis, to the feasibility of a club taking a long-term lease on the site (if not already present), in order that external funding can be sought.

It is possible that sites could be included in this tier which are not currently hired or leased to a club, but have the potential to be leased to a suitable club. NGBs would expect the facility to be transferred in an adequate condition that the club can maintain. In the longer term, the Club should be in a position to source external funding to improve/extend the facilities.

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Management and development

The following issues should be considered when undertaking sports related site development or enhancement:

- ◀ Financial viability.
- ◀ Security of tenure.
- ◀ Planning permission requirements and any foreseen difficulties in securing permission.
- ◀ Adequacy of existing finances to maintain existing sites.
- ◀ Business Plan/Masterplan – including financial package for creation of new provision where need has been identified.
- ◀ Analysis of the possibility of shared site management opportunities.
- ◀ The availability of opportunities to lease sites to external organisations.
- ◀ Options to assist community groups to gain funding to enhance existing provision.
- ◀ Negotiation with landowners to increase access to private strategic sites.
- ◀ Availability of funding for hub site development.
- ◀ Impact on all sports that use a site regardless of the sport that is the subject of enhancements.

Action plan columns

Partners

The column indicating Partners refers to the main organisation that the Council will liaise with in helping to deliver the actions. The next stage in the development of the action plan will be to agree a Lead Partner to help deliver the actions.

Site hierarchy tier and priority level

Although Strategic/Hub Sites are mostly likely to have a **high** priority level as they have Borough wide importance, high priority sites have been identified on the basis of the impact that the site will have on addressing the key issues identified in the assessment and therefore Key Centres should also be identified as having a high priority level. It is these projects/sites which should generally be addressed within the short term (1-2 years).

There are 10 overarching priority sites which should be considered as the top priorities in Gravesham as they would have the most impact and benefits if the recommendations were carried out. These sites are:

- ◀ Cobham Playing Fields
- ◀ Cascades Leisure Centre
- ◀ Elite Sports Ground
- ◀ Fleet Leisure
- ◀ Fleetway Sports Ground
- ◀ Bat and Ball
- ◀ Gravesend Grammar School
- ◀ Gravesend Synthetic Turf Pitch
- ◀ Kings Farm Playing Field
- ◀ Southfields

In addition, there are two education sites highlighted as having the potential to be key centres if the assigned actions can be achieved:

- ◀ Meopham School (potential)
- ◀ Northfleet Technology College (potential)

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It is recommended that as the Steering Group reviews and updates the action plan that medium and low priority sites are then identified as the next level of sites for attention. As a guide it is recommended that:

Local Sites with the potential to be Key Centres are a **medium** priority. These are likely to have analysis area importance and have been identified on the basis of the impact that the site will have on addressing the issues identified in the assessment.

Low priority sites are club or education sites with local specific importance and have been identified on a site by site basis as issues appertaining to individual sites but that may also contribute to addressing the issues identified in the assessment.

Costs

The strategic actions have also been ranked as low, medium or high based on cost. The brackets in which these sit are:

(L) - Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above. These are based on Sport England's estimated facility costs which can be found at <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>

Timescales

The action plan has been created to be delivered over a ten year period. The information within the Assessment Report, Strategy and Action Plan will require updating as developments occur. The timescales relate to delivery times and are not priority based.

Timescales: (S) - Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years).

Aim

Each action seeks to meet at least one of the three aims of the Strategy; **Enhance, Provide, Protect.**

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Rural Area

Football

Summary of pitches required to meet current and future demand

Pitch type	Actual spare capacity ⁸	Demand (match equivalent sessions)					Total
		Overplay	Current total	Latent demand	Displaced demand	Future demand	
Adult pitches	1.5	0.5	1	-	0.5	-	0.5
Youth pitches 11v11	1	-	1	1	1	1.5	2.5
Youth pitches 9v9	-	1.5	1.5	-	-	1.5	3
Mini pitches 7v7	3	-	3	-	-	0.5	2.5
Mini pitches 5v5	-	-	-	-	-	1	1

- There is currently actual spare capacity across most pitch formats in the Rural Analysis Area. For adult and mini 7v7 pitches there is also spare capacity noted in the future. However, across Gravesham there are future shortfalls for all pitch formats, therefore spare capacity should be retained.
- Taking into account future demand, shortfalls appear for youth 11v11 and mini 5v5, whilst the shortfall worsens on youth 9v9.
- Overplay is present on 9v9 pitch at Meopham School as well as on the adult pitch at Cobham Playing Fields.

Recommendations

- Protect existing pitch supply.
- Retain small amounts of spare capacity in order to protect pitch quality.
- Addressing instances of overplay and removing training from match pitches will increase actual spare capacity and help to cater for future demand (i.e. explore possibility of adult pitch at Meopham School being community accessible and removing training at Cobham Playing Fields).
- Improve pitch quality in order to alleviate overplay, reduce shortfalls and build future capacity.

3G pitches

- There are currently no full size 3G pitches.
- Based on 36 teams in the Analysis Area there is theoretically currently almost a sufficient amount of training demand for a full size 3G pitch.

Recommendations

- Consider value of any introduction of a 3G pitch in the Urban Analysis Area to accommodate future shortfalls across all of Gravesham.
- Ensure potential pitches are FA approved and ensure access to cater for grass pitch shortfalls.
- Encourage providers to put sinking funds in place for eventual refurbishment.

⁸ In match equivalent sessions

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Cricket

- ◀ There are seven pitches across six sites available for community use. A non-turf wicket pitch is also located at Cobham Playing Fields (along with grass wickets).
- ◀ A standalone non-turf wicket is located at Meopham School. However, community use is not allowed.
- ◀ Overplay of three match equivalent sessions is evident at Luddesdowne Cricket Club. In addition, Nurstead Cricket Club is currently being played at capacity.
- ◀ There is a no current or future shortfall of pitches in the Rural Analysis Area.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect existing pitch supply.
- ◀ Review quality issues on pitches assessed as standard and poor quality.
- ◀ Explore opportunities for increasing junior play on non-turf wickets
- ◀ Ensure maintenance levels are appropriate at Luddesdowne Cricket Club and Nurstead Cricket Club in order to sustain current usage.
- ◀ Support clubs in meeting ancillary and training facility demands.
- ◀ Longer term, explore potential community use of non-turf wicket at Meopham School; particularly as a result of future demand in the Urban Analysis Area.

Rugby union

- ◀ There are three senior pitches available for community use.
- ◀ In addition, Gad's Hill School has a senior pitch. However, it is not full size and is not available for community use.
- ◀ Pitches at Vigo Rugby Club are currently played to capacity.
- ◀ Taking into account future demand, there is an overall shortfall of three match equivalent sessions.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect existing pitch supply.
- ◀ Explore potential use of currently unavailable pitches within education sites in order to provide greater capacity.
- ◀ Improve pitch quality to provide greater capacity through installation of drainage systems and improved maintenance regimes at Vigo RFC.

Hockey

- ◀ There is no hockey suitable AGP and no local demand.

Recommendations

- ◀ Explore possibilities should demand for hockey exist in the future.

Bowls

- ◀ There are two bowling greens of good quality with associated clubs attached.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect existing supply and sustain quality in order to meet current and future demand

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Tennis

- ◀ There are seven courts available for community use (used by Meopham Tennis Club and Cobham Tennis Club) and 10 courts identified which are not available for community use.
- ◀ Meopham TC rates its ancillary facilities as poor.
- ◀ Cobham TC does not have its own clubhouse. It utilises sports association clubhouse used by cricket and football clubs.
- ◀ Both clubs signal plans to increase membership in both senior and junior sections; which clubs state can be accommodated on existing courts.

Recommendations

- ◀ Explore possibilities to improve current ancillary facilities to allow for clubs anticipated growth.

Other sports

- ◀ Rochester and Cobham Park Golf Club is the only golf site located in the Rural Analysis Area.
- ◀ There are no athletic tracks situated in the area. Furthermore, there are a number of facilities in the surrounding local authorities.

Recommendations

- ◀ No actions required for golf provision in the area.
- ◀ No actions required for athletics provision in the area.

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescales ⁹	Cost ¹⁰	Aim
4	Cobham Playing Fields	Football	Parish Council	One adult, two youth 11v11 and one 9v9 all assessed as standard quality. Adult pitch is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent session. Training to an equivalent of three match sessions occurs on match pitches.	Review and investigate maintenance of pitches with a view to absorbing current overplay. Remove training from match pitches; aim for all training to take place of 3G AGPs.	Council Parish Council FA	Key Centre	M-L	L	Protect Enhance
		Cricket		A standard quality pitch with non-turf wicket. Used by Cobham CC and Meopham CC teams. Unofficial use of the wicket is an issue highlighted by clubs. Desire for new practice nets.	Retain current standards to continue to meet current and future needs	Parish Council ECB		S	L	
		Bowls		Single green used by Cobham Bowls Club	Retain current standards to continue to meet current and future needs	Club Parish Council		S	L	
		Tennis		Two courts of good quality. Club shares clubhouse with cricket and football.	Review potential options for club access of shared facilities.	Club LTA Parish Council		S	L	
5	Cobham Primary School	Football	School	A mini 7v7 football pitch which is not available for community use.	No local demand. Retain pitch for school use.	School	Local	S	L	Protect
6	Crispin Ground	Cricket	Club	Cricket pitch of standard quality. Spare capacity identified.	Retain spare capacity for future growth and review quality.	Club ECB	Local	S	L	Protect Enhance
7	Culverstone Recreation Ground	Football	Council	One adult, one youth 11v11 and one 9v9 pitches. Clubs rate as poor quality. Spare capacity on site discounted due to poor perception. Site also includes a disused mini pitch.	Explore option of long term lease to current main user - Northfleet Eagles FC. On basis of improving pitch quality in order to provide actual spare capacity and to meet future club demand. Bring mini pitch back into use to meet future demand.	Council Club FA	Local	M	L-M	Protect Enhance Provide
12	Gads Hill School	Football	School	One mini 7v7 pitch. Not available for community use.	No local demand. Retain pitch for school use.	School	Local	S	L	Protect Provide
		Rugby		One senior rugby. Not full size. Not available for community use.	Work with school to explore option of community use by Vigo RFC in order to help meet future club demand.	Council School RFU Club	Local	L	L	
19	Higham Recreation Ground	Football	Council/ Parish Council	One adult pitch of standard quality. Eagles FC is looking to improve shower facilities at the site.	Minimal spare capacity to be retained in order to protect quality. Ensure appropriate maintenance levels.	Council/ Parish Council	Local	S	L	Protect Enhance
21	Istead Rise Community Centre	Football	Council	One adult, one 11v11 and one 9v9 pitches assessed as standard quality. Actual spare capacity on adult pitch noted (currently not in use).	Consider reconfiguration of adult pitch to meet current demand (overplay) at Meopham School.	Club Council FA	Local	S	L	Protect Provide

⁹ Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years).

¹⁰ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescales ⁹	Cost ¹⁰	Aim
22	Judsons Recreation Ground	Football	Parish Council	One 9v9 and one 5v5 pitch. Both pitches on site and changing facilities are of a poor quality. No match play. Spare capacity on site discounted due to poor quality.	Investigate improving pitch quality to help meet future demand. Explore long term lease arrangement with a club to help provide site improvements (increasing spare capacity and usage).	Parish Council FA Council	Local	S	M	Protect Enhance Provide
25	Luddesdown Recreation Ground	Football	Council	One 9v9 pitch assessed as standard quality.	Minimal spare capacity to be retained in order to protect quality. Ensure appropriate maintenance levels.	Council	Local	S	L	Protect
26	Luddesdowne Cricket Club	Cricket	Club	Standard quality pitch with non-turf wicket. Issue of Tawny Mining Bees highlighted on pitch. Overplay of three match sessions identified.	Review and investigate maintenance of pitch with a view to absorbing current overplay.	Club ECB	Local	S	L	Protect Enhance
28	Meopham School	Football	School	9v9 pitch of standard quality; used by Meopham Colts. Pitch is overplayed by 1.5 match sessions. No community use is allowed on the two adult pitches. Viewed to impact on school use; both rate as poor quality due to underlying clay conditions.	Explore reconfiguration of adult pitch at Istead Rise Community Centre to meet current overplay on site. Work with school to explore option of community use on adult pitches to help meet future demand for 11v11. Consider potential use of site as a home venue for Meopham Colts (currently spread across four venues) to help with potential drainage improvements.	Council School FA	Local (potential Key Centre)	M	L-M	Protect Enhance Provide
		Cricket		Standard quality pitch with non-turf wicket. No community use allowed.	Retain pitch for school use. Work with school to explore option of community use for any possible future demand (Nurstead CC seeking artificial area for training).	School ECB	Local	S	L	
29	Meopham Lawn Tennis Club	Tennis	Club	Site has five good quality courts. Poor ancillary facilities on sites.	Explore options for improving quality of ancillary facilities.	Club LTA	Local	S	L-M	Protect Enhance
36	Rochester United FC	Football	Club	Adult pitch assessed as standard quality. Used by Gravesham FC as limited option for pitches able to meet league requirements.	Improve quality as required. Explore potential for Cascades Leisure Centre or Fleet Leisure sites in Urban Analysis Area to help meet displaced demand from Gravesham FC.	Club FA	Local	M	L	Protect Enhance
39	Shorne Football Club	Football	Club	Adult pitch played at capacity due to poor quality.	Review and investigate maintenance of pitch. Improve pitch quality in order to provide spare capacity to help accommodate future demand for youth 11v11.	Club FA	Local	M	L	Enhance
45	The Green	Cricket	Parish Council	Standard quality pitch. Rented on an annual basis by Meopham CC from Parish Council.	Work with parish council and club to explore options for long term club lease agreement; with a view to enabling future improvements.	ECB Club Parish Council	Local	M	L	Enhance

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescales ⁹	Cost ¹⁰	Aim
47	Vigo Rugby Football Club	Rugby	Club	Three senior pitches assessed as standard quality. One pitch floodlit and used for training purposes. Site at capacity.	Review and investigate maintenance of pitch. Consider installation of pipe drainage to pitches to increase capacity in order to meet future demand. Work with Gads Hill School to explore option of community use by club in order to help meet future demand.	Club RFU	Local	M	M	Protect Enhance
52	Desmond Wood Ground	Cricket	Club	A standard quality pitch. Owned by Harvel CC.	Spare capacity to be retained in order to protect/improve quality.	Club ECB	Local	S	L	Protect Enhance
55	Higham Primary School	Football	School	Standard quality 9v9 and 7v7. Used by Eagles FC. 9v9 pitch played to capacity.	Review and improve maintenance of pitches.	Council FA	Local	S	L	Protect Enhance
56	Istead Rise Primary School	Football	School	A standard 7v7 pitch available but unused.	Retain spare capacity to potentially help meet future demand for 7v7 and 5v5 formats.	School Council FA	Local	L	L	Protect Provide
57	Shorne C of E Primary School	Football	School	A standard 7v7 pitch available but unused.	Retain spare capacity to potentially help meet future demand for 7v7 and 5v5 formats.	School Council FA	Local	L	L	Protect Provide
59	Vigo Primary School	Football	School	A 7v7 pitch unavailable to the community.	No local demand. Retain pitch for school use.	School	Local	L	L	Protect
61	Culverstone Green Primary School	Football	School	A 7v7 pitch unavailable to the community.	No local demand. Retain pitch for school use.	School	Local	L	L	Protect
65	Nurstead Cricket Club	Cricket	Club	Standard quality pitch. Currently played to capacity. Areas of diseased grass highlighted. Desire for artificial training area.	Review and improve maintenance of pitch. Explore possible community use of Meopham School non-turf wicket for training purposes.	Club ECB	Local	S	L	Protect Enhance

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Urban Area

Football

Summary of pitches required to meet current and future demand

Pitch type	Actual spare capacity ¹¹	Demand (match equivalent sessions)					
		Overplay	Current total	Latent demand	Displaced demand	Future demand	Total
Adult pitches	2	7	5	2	1	4	12
Youth pitches 11v11	-	1	1	2.5	-	4.5	8
Youth pitches 9v9	4.5	2.5	2	1.5	-	4	3.5
Mini pitches 7v7	-	-	-	1	-	3	4
Mini pitches 5v5	2.5	-	2.5	-	-	1.5	1

- For adult pitches there is a current shortfall of five match equivalent sessions (due to pitches being overplayed), with future demand resulting in a shortfall of 12 match equivalent sessions.
- There is a current shortfall of youth 11v11 pitches amounting to one match equivalent session and a future shortfall of eight match equivalent sessions.
- Currently demand for 9v9 and 7v7 is being met, however taking into account future demand both experience shortfalls.
- Some actual spare capacity exists on 5v5 pitches both currently and taking into account future demand.
- Overplay is present on the three adult pitches and 9v9 pitch at Elite Sports Ground. An adult pitch at Guru Nanak FC is also overplayed. Both are private sites. All other instances of overplay occurs at school sites.
- Need for sites/pitches to accommodate clubs' progression up the football pyramid.
- There are 36 youth teams (u11s-u16s) playing on adult pitches.

Recommendations

- Protect existing pitch supply and ensure appropriate maintenance regimes.
- Reconfiguration of some adult pitches to youth 11v11 to accommodate instances of youth matches taking place on adult pitches.
- Improve pitch quality in order to alleviate overplay, reduce shortfalls and provide potential spare capacity.
- Explore options to remove training from match pitches to help reduce overplay.
- Protect and encourage reintroduction of lapsed sites to help meet future demand.

3G pitches

- There are currently no full size 3G pitches.
- Based on 124 teams in the Analysis Area there is theoretically a sufficient amount of training demand for three full size 3G pitches.
- Clubs highlight demand for training facilities.
- Reintroduction of the Former Fleet Leisure site is also looking to feature 3G provision (potentially smaller sided formats).
- Aspirations to develop new full size 3G pitches are noted at Gravesend Grammar School and Guru Nanak FC.

¹¹ In match equivalent sessions

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Recommendations

- ◀ Work to increase 3G provision in order to address demand; particularly for training.
- ◀ Ensure potential pitches are FA approved and ensure access to cater for grass pitch shortfalls.
- ◀ Encourage providers to put sinking funds in place for eventual refurbishment.

Cricket

- ◀ There are six pitches across six sites available for community use.
- ◀ A non-turf wicket pitch is also located at Gravesend Grammar School (along with grass wickets). The site is available for community use but unused.
- ◀ Overplay of 20 match equivalent sessions is evident at the Bat and Ball site (home to Gravesend Cricket Club).
- ◀ The Club also reports displaced demand (third team accesses site in Southfleet).
- ◀ Subsequently there is a future shortfall of match sessions in the Urban Area.
- ◀ This could potentially be exacerbated given the vision for the recently established Guru Nanak CC. Clubs likely short term need is for a practice facility.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect current stock of pitches.
- ◀ Explore opportunities for increasing junior play on non-turf wickets
- ◀ Ensure maintenance levels are appropriate at sites close to capacity in order to sustain current usage.
- ◀ Utilise spare capacity to accommodate displaced teams and instances of overplay.
- ◀ Explore potential community use of non-turf wicket at Gravesend Grammar School; particularly as a result of future demand in the Urban Analysis Area.
- ◀ Support clubs in meeting ancillary and training facility demands.

Rugby union

- ◀ There are nine senior and six mini/midi pitches available for community use.
- ◀ Senior and mini pitches at St Johns Comprehensive School are available for community use but unused. Similarly, the three senior pitches at Gravesend Grammar School only have occasional use by Gravesend RFC.
- ◀ Overplay amounts to 8.5 match equivalent sessions and can be attributed solely to the Gravesend RFC site; predominantly as a result of training take place on match pitches. Mini teams also play on senior pitches at the site accounting for two match sessions.
- ◀ Taking into account future demand, there is an overall shortfall of 2.5 match equivalent sessions.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect existing pitch supply.
- ◀ Explore potential use of currently available but unused pitches within education sites in order to provide greater capacity.
- ◀ Seek to provide additional training facilities for Gravesend RFC

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Hockey

- ◀ There is one full size sand-based AGP, used by all three hockey clubs.
- ◀ The AGP is poor quality and in need of resurfacing. Its quality is impacting on club development, sustainability and growth.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect AGP for continued hockey use.
- ◀ Explore and encourage opportunities for hockey clubs to submit a joint funding bid (e.g. Inspired Facilities).
- ◀ Encourage providers to put a sinking fund in place to maintain long term quality.

Bowls

- ◀ There are seven bowling greens of good quality with associated clubs attached.
- ◀ Windmill Hill Gardens Bowls Club is the only club not to maintain its own ancillary facilities. Club rates provision as poor.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect existing supply and sustain quality in order to meet current and future demand

Tennis

- ◀ There are 27 courts available for community use (two courts being located at Gravesham Lawn Tennis Club) and three courts identified which are not available for community use.
- ◀ Gravesend TC rates its ancillary facilities as adequate. Club also highlights need to resurface its courts in the near future.
- ◀ The two courts at Woodlands Park are the only community available courts to rate poor for quality; due to surface and net conditions.
- ◀ Gravesham TC signals plans to increase membership in both senior and junior sections; which the club states can be accommodated on existing courts.

Recommendations

- ◀ Explore possibilities to improve current ancillary facilities to allow for clubs anticipated growth.

Other sports

- ◀ Gravesend Golf Centre, Mid Kent Golf Club and Southern Valley Golf Club are all located in the Urban Analysis Area.
- ◀ There are no athletic tracks situated in the area. Furthermore, there are a number of facilities in the surrounding local authorities.

Recommendations

- ◀ No actions required for golf provision in the area.
- ◀ No actions required for athletics provision in the area.

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescales ¹²	Cost ¹³	Aim
2	Cascades Leisure Centre	Football	Council	Four standard quality adult pitches. Spare capacity but outside of peak period.	Explore option of long term lease of pitch(es) to clubs high up the football pyramid but without a 'home ground' (e.g. Gravesham FC, Greenways FC, Punjab United FC) but with due consideration to existing usage. On basis of improving pitch quality in order to provide actual spare capacity and to meet future club demand.	Council FA	Key Centre	S M	L-M	Protect Enhance
8	Ebbsfleet United Football Club	Football	Club	Adult pitch of good quality with stadia surrounding. Capacity recently increased.	Retain current standards to continue to meet current and future needs	Club FA	Local	S	L	Protect
9	Elite Sports Ground	Football	Private	Three adult, a 9v9 and 7v7 pitches assessed as standard quality. Adult pitches overplayed by 3.5 and 9v9 overplayed by 2.5 match sessions. Training equivalent to 1 match session occurs on adult pitches and 0.5 on 9v9. 13 youth teams identified as playing on adult pitches.	Explore option of relocating some overplay to sites currently identified as lapsed/disused (e.g. Fleet Leisure, North Kent College) or sites with spare capacity (e.g. Saint Georges C of E School, Thamesview School or Kings Farm Primary School).	Council FA Elite Sports	Key Centre	S	L	Protect Enhance
10	Fleet Leisure	Football	Council	Lapsed site. Previously containing two adult, two youth and a mini pitch. Potential for 3G AGP.	Reintroduce site to accommodate overplay and future demand in area. Explore preferred option of full size 3G AGP pitch. Explore options of club lease agreement.	Council FA Sport England	Key Centre (potential Hub)	S-M	L-H	Protect Enhance Provide
11	Fleetway Sports Ground	Football	Club	Poor quality youth 11v11 pitch used by Northfleet Eagles FC.	Review and look to improve maintenance of pitch.	Club FA	Key Centre	S	L	Protect Enhance
		Cricket		Good quality pitch. Old Gravesendians has a 10-year lease on tenure. Spare capacity in peak time identified.	Explore option of accommodating displaced demand from Gravesend CC (3 rd team).	Club ECB		S	L	
		Rugby		Two senior pitches. Good quality. Home to Old Gravesendians RFC. Spare capacity but not in peak period for seniors.	Spare capacity to be retained in order to protect quality. Ensure appropriate maintenance levels.	Club RFU		S	L	

¹² Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years).

¹³ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescales ¹⁴	Cost ¹⁵	Aim
13	Bat and Ball	Football	Club	Five 7v7 pitches assessed as poor quality.	Review and investigate maintenance of pitches.	Club FA	Key Centre	S-L	L-H	Protect Enhance Provide
		Cricket		Standard quality pitch. Overplayed by 20 match sessions. All junior play takes place on grass wickets. Displaced demand due to 3 rd team accessing site in Southfleet.	Explore installation of a non-turf wicket to alleviate overplay. Alternatively explore use of unused non-turf wicket at Gravesend Grammar School. Explore option of Fleetway Sports Ground accommodating displaced demand from 3 rd team.	Club ECB		S	L	
14	Gravesend Grammar School	Football	School	One poor quality adult pitch which is currently unused by the community. School has aspirations for a 3G AGP in association with Gravesend RFC.	Improve pitch quality and seek to maximise use given local shortfalls. Consider youth 11v11 provision. Work with School regarding potential 3G development. Seek FA testing. Encourage sinking fund for future refurbishment.	School FA RFU	Key Centre	M	L-	Protect Enhance Provide
		Cricket		Two pitches (one with non-turf wicket). Available but unused by the community.	Explore use of unused non-turf wicket to accommodate junior play from Gravesend CC.	School ECB Club		S	L	
		Rugby		Three senior pitches of standard quality. Available but unused by the community. School use reduces amount of actual spare capacity. School has aspirations for a 3G AGP in association with Gravesend RFC.	Explore potential use of site to accommodate junior play from Gravesend RFC to help meet overplay. Ensure any 3G development considers merits of being World Rugby compliant.	School Club RFU		S-M	L-H	
15	Gravesend Rugby Football Club	Rugby	Club	Three senior pitches over marked with five mini pitches. Two senior pitches rate as good, with third pitch standard quality. Pitches overplayed by 8.5 match equivalent sessions. 1.5 pitches floodlit with training taking place.	Explore relocation of some match play (juniors) to unused sites such as Gravesend Grammar School or St Johns Comprehensive School. Ensure any 3G development considers merits of being World Rugby compliant to help meet overplay due to training on match pitches.	Club School RFU	Local	S-M	L-H	Protect Enhance Provide
		Cricket		Standard quality pitch. Home to Gravesend RFCC. Club expresses need for practice nets.	Retain current quality standards to help meet future club growth. Explore options for net facilities.	Club ECB		S	L	

¹⁴ Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years).

¹⁵ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescales ¹⁴	Cost ¹⁵	Aim
16	Gravesend Synthetic Turf Pitch	AGP (Hockey, Football, Rugby)	Trust	Full size floodlit sand dressed AGP. Poor surface quality and 21 years of age. School use during the week, used for football training and for hockey. Spare capacity on Sundays but outside peak period for hockey (Saturday). Poor facility quality acts as barrier to hockey participation and growth.	Protect and retain facility for hockey use. Explore opportunities for funding to address issues of surface quality.	Trust EH Council	Key Centre	S	M-H	Protect Enhance
17	Gravesham Tennis Club	Tennis	Club	Two good quality floodlit courts. Club highlights need to resurface in near future.	Investigate and review surface quality of courts.	Club LTA	Local	S	L	Protect Enhance
18	Guru Nanak Football Club	Football	Club	Adult (floodlit) and youth 11v11 pitches of a good quality. Adult pitch overplayed by one match session. Training on adult pitch accounts for two match sessions. Club highlights aspirations to develop 3G provision.	Explore options to remove training from match pitches; access to 3G AGP for training purposes should be sought. Work with Club regarding potential 3G development. Seek FA testing. Encourage sinking fund for future refurbishment.	Club Council FA	Local	S M	H	Protect
20	Holy Trinity Primary School	Football	School	Previously contained a youth 9v9 pitch.	Explore potential of community use to help meet future demand for 9v9 and 7v7.	School Council	Local	L	L	Enhance
23	Kings Farm Playing Fields	Football	Council	Five standard quality adult pitches. Actual spare capacity identified. Poor quality changing facilities.	Retain spare capacity to help meet future demand. Consider options for improvements to changing facilities.	Council FA	Key Centre	M	L-M	Enhance
24	Legends Sports Club	AGP	Private	Two small side (60x40) AGP; one 3G and one sand dressed. Used for football training by clubs.	Retain current standards to continue to meet current and future needs.	Private club	Local	L	L	Enhance
27	Mayfield Grammar School	Football	School	Standard quality youth 11v11. Used by Real Gima FC. Overplayed due to capacity of education site being reduced	Review and improve maintenance of pitch.	School	Local	S	L	Enhance
30	North Kent College	Football	College	Previously contained youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches.	Bring site back into use with similar pitch types to accommodate instances of overplay and training on match pitches as well as to help meet future demand in area.	College Council FA	Local	S	L	Enhance Provide
31	Northfleet School for Girls	Football	School	Adult pitch and two mini 5v5 pitches are available but not used. Spare capacity of adult pitch discounted as poor quality.	Review and investigate maintenance of adult pitch. Explore options to improve adult pitch quality in order to provide spare capacity to help accommodate future demand. Consider club lease arrangement.	School Council FA	Local	M-L	L	Protect Enhance
32	Northfleet Sports & Youth Centre	Football	Kent County Council	Standard quality adult pitch.	Minimal spare capacity to be retained in order to protect quality. Ensure appropriate maintenance levels.	Council	Local	S	L	Protect

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescales ¹⁴	Cost ¹⁵	Aim
33	Northfleet Technology College	Football	College	Three adult grass pitches; two assessed as standard with one poor for quality. Spare capacity identified.	Retain spare capacity to help meet future demand. Work with college to explore use of site for a club lease agreement with a view to improving pitch quality.	College Council FA	Local (potential Key Centre)	S-M	L	Protect Enhance
34	Painters Ash School	Football	School	Standard quality 9v9 and 7v7 pitches. Used by Real Gima FC. 9v9 played at capacity.	Ensure appropriate maintenance levels are retained to absorb current levels of play.	School FA	Local	S	L	Protect Enhance
35	Riverside Family Learning Centre	Football	Trust	Poor quality 7v7 pitch. Available but unused.	Retain spare capacity to help meet future demand for 7v7 format. Investigate options to improve quality.	Trust Council	Local	S	L	Protect Enhance
37	Saint Georges C of E School	Football	School	Two adult and one 9v9 pitch. Standard quality. Adult pitches overplayed by 0.5 match sessions. Spare capacity on 9v9.	Review and investigate maintenance of pitches. Explore potential for site to accommodate relocation of overplay for 9v9 from sites such as Elite Sports Ground.	School Council FA	Local	S	L	Protect Enhance
38	Shears Green Junior School	Football	School	Standard quality 7v7 pitch. Used by Northfleet Eagles FC. Site also has a lapsed Youth (9v9).	Ensure appropriate maintenance levels. Retain and explore potential of community use to help meet future demand for 9v9.	School Council	Local	L	L	Protect Enhance
40	Singlewell Primary School	Football	School	A 7v7 pitch unavailable to the community.	No current local demand. Retain pitch for school use. Explore potential of community use to help meet future demand for 7v7.	School	Local	S M	L	Protect Provide
41	Springhead Recreation Ground	Football	Council	Two adult pitches of standard quality.	Ensure appropriate maintenance levels.	Council FA	Local	L	L	Protect Enhance
42	St John's Catholic Comprehensive School	Football	School	Adult pitch and youth 9v9 on site. Used by Gravesham Town FC. Adult pitch overplayed by one match session. Spare capacity of 0.5 match sessions on 9v9. Used by Gravesham Town FC. Training on site takes place off match pitches.	Review and investigate maintenance of pitches with a view to absorbing current overplay. Retain spare capacity to meet future demand. Work with school to explore formal club lease agreement.	School Council FA	Local	S	L	Protect Enhance
		Rugby		Standard quality senior and mini pitch. Available but unused by community.	Explore potential use of site to accommodate junior play from Gravesend RFC to help meet overplay.					
43	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	Football	School	A standard quality 5v5 pitch unavailable to the community.	No local demand. Retain pitch for school use.	School	Local	L	L	Protect
44	Thamesview School	Football	School	Two 9v9 and an adult pitch of standard quality. Adult pitch overplayed by one match session. Spare capacity on two 9v9 pitches identified.	Review and investigate maintenance of adult pitch Work with school to encourage use of site to accommodate overplay from sites such as Elite Sports Ground and/or future demand Alternatively, retain spare capacity to meet future demand.	School Council FA	Local	S-L	L	Protect Enhance Provide

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescales ¹⁴	Cost ¹⁵	Aim
46	Ifield School	Football	School	Two 7v7 and one 5v5 pitches assessed as standard quality. Used by Guru Nanak FC teams.	Work with school to explore formal club lease agreement. Explore reconfiguration of a 7v7 pitch to 9v9 (with overmarkings).	School Club FA	Local	S	L	Protect Provide
48	Westcourt Primary School	Football	School	Good quality 7v7 pitch. Unavailable to the community.	Retain pitch for school use. Work with school to explore community use to help meet future demand.	School Council	Local	L	L	Protect Provide
49	Windmill Hill Gardens	Bowls	Council	Good quality green. Used by two clubs. Only site still maintained by council. Club rates ancillary facilities as poor.	Work with clubs to explore options to improve quality of ancillary facilities. Consider lease agreement in order for clubs to better access funding opportunities.	Council	Local	M	L-M	Protect Enhance
50	Wombwell Park	Cricket	Council	Standard quality pitch. Used by Northfleet CC (single team club).	Review quality and improve as required.	Council ECB	Local	S	L	Protect Enhance
51	Woodlands Park	Tennis	Council	Two poor quality courts. Issues highlighted with condition of surface and nets.	Review quality of courts.	Council	Local	S	L	Protect Enhance
53	Southfields	Football	Private	Unsecure site. Two adult, one 9v9 and one 5v5 pitches assessed as standard quality. Spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. Significant use by Gravesham Youth FC.	Explore options for long term lease arrangement; potential club venue should be explored for nomadic clubs (e.g. Gravesham Youth FC).	Private Council FA	Key Centre	S	L	Protect
58	Kings Farm Primary School	Football	School	A poor quality adult pitch currently unused by the community.	If quality can be improved, work with school to encourage sites ability to accommodate relocation of overplay from sites such as Elite Sports Ground.	School Council	Local	S	L	Protect Provide Enhance
60	St Botolph's C of E Primary School	Football	School	A 7v7 pitch unavailable to the community.	No current local demand. Retain pitch for school use. Explore potential of community use to help meet future demand for 7v7.	School	Local	L	L	Protect Provide
62	Riverview Junior School	Football	School	A 7v7 pitch unavailable to the community.	No current local demand. Retain pitch for school use. Explore potential of community use to help meet future demand for 7v7.	School	Local	L	L	Protect Provide
63	Tymberwood Academy	Football	School	A 7v7 pitch unavailable to the community.	No current local demand. Retain pitch for school use. Explore potential of community use to help meet future demand for 7v7.	School	Local	L	L	Protect Provide

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescales ¹⁴	Cost ¹⁵	Aim
64	Whitehill Primary School (detached pitch)	Football	Kent County Council	Lapsed site. Previously contained a 7v7 football pitch.	Explore opportunities to bring the site back into use to meet identified shortfalls in the Assessment. If bringing the site back into use is not feasible or sustainable or disposal of the site is inevitable it must meet the requirements of the second criterion of paragraph 74 of NPPF. This requires replacement provision of an equivalent or better quantity and quality in a suitable location.	Council	-	S	L-H	Provide
-	Copperfield Academy (detached pitch)	Football	Kent County Council	Previously contained a 7v7 football pitch.	No current local demand. Retain and explore potential of community use to help meet future demand for 7v7.	School	Local	M	L	Protect

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Part 6: Keep The Strategy Robust and Up to Date

Delivery

The Playing Pitch Strategy seeks to provide guidance for maintenance/management decisions and investment made across Gravesham. By addressing the issues identified in the Assessment Report and using the strategic framework presented in this Strategy, the current and future sporting and recreational needs of Gravesham can be satisfied. The Strategy identifies where there is a deficiency in provision and identifies how best to resolve this in the future.

It is important that this document is used in a practical manner, is engaged with partners and encourages partnerships to be developed, to ensure that outdoor sports facilities are regarded as a vital aspect of community life and which contribute to the achievement of Council priorities.

The production of this Strategy should be regarded as the beginning of the planning process. The success of this Strategy and the benefits that are gained are dependent upon regular engagement between all partners involved and the adoption of a strategic approach.

Each member of the steering group should take the lead to ensure the PPS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence. The role of the steering group should not end with the completion of the PPS document

To help ensure the PPS is well used it should be regarded as the key document within the study area guiding the improvement and protection of playing pitch provision. It needs to be the document people regularly turn to for information on how the current demand is met and what actions are required to improve the situation and meet future demand. In order for this to be achieved the steering group need to have a clear understanding of how the PPS can be applied and therefore delivered. Key uses for the PPS include evidence for supporting funding bids, guidance to inform planning decisions and planning applications and decision making for capital investment.

The process of developing the PPS will hopefully have already resulted in a number of benefits that will help with its application and delivery. These may include enhanced partnership working across different agendas and organisations, pooling of resources along with strengthening relationships and understanding between different stakeholders and between members of the steering group and the sporting community. The drivers behind the PPS and the work to develop the recommendations and action plan will have also highlighted, and helped the steering group to understand, the key areas to which it can be applied and how it can be delivered.

Monitoring and updating

It is important that there is regular annual monitoring and review against the actions identified in the Strategy. Building on the key findings and issues from the assessment work a number of relevant scenarios have been looked at. The scenarios have helped with developing the recommendations and actions and understanding their potential impact. They should not be regarded as recommendations or actions in their own right. As concluded from the assessment work, there is at present a need to protect all existing provision, and create access to school sites or bring disused sites back into use where feasible.

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Once they are implemented, assessing the actual impact of the recommendations and actions, along with establishing what the impacts may mean for the key findings of the assessment work, should form a key part of the monitoring and review of the strategy. It is also important that any changes relating to provision of pitches and AGPs are reflected as part of the periodic updating of data. This monitoring should be led by the local authority and supported by all members of, and reported back to, the steering group. Understanding and learning lessons from how the PPS has been applied should also form a key component of monitoring its delivery. This should form an on-going role of the steering group. It is possible that in the interim between annual reviews the steering group could operate as a 'virtual' group; prepared to comment on suggestions and updates electronically when relevant.

As a guide, if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years of the PPS being signed off by the steering group, then Sport England and the NGBs would consider the PPS and the information on which it is based to be out of date. If the PPS is used as a 'live' document, and kept up to date, the time frame can be extended to five years.

Furthermore, the process of refreshing the PPS would be much less resource intensive if changes and updates have been made throughout the five years. If there are no updates to the document within the period the nature of the supply and in particular the demand for playing pitches is likely to have changed. Therefore, without any form of review and update within this time period it would be difficult to make the case that the supply and demand information and assessment work is sufficiently robust.

Ideally the PPS could be reviewed on an annual basis from the date it is formally signed off by the steering group. This will help to maintain the momentum and commitment that would have been built up when developing the PPS. Taking into account the time to develop the PPS this should also help to ensure that the original supply and demand information is no more than two years old without being reviewed.

An annual review should not be regarded as a particularly resource intensive task. However, it should highlight:

- ◀ How the delivery of the recommendations and action plan has progressed and any changes required to the priority afforded to each action (e.g. the priority of some may increase following the delivery of others)
- ◀ How the PPS has been applied and the lessons learnt
- ◀ Any changes to particularly important sites and/or clubs in the area (e.g. the most used or high quality sites for a particular sport) and other supply and demand information, what this may mean for the overall assessment work and the key findings and issues
- ◀ Any development of a specific sport or particular format of a sport
- ◀ Any new or emerging issues and opportunities.

Once the PPS is complete the role of the steering group should evolve so that it:

- ◀ Acts as a focal point for promoting the value and importance of the PPS and playing pitch provision in the area
- ◀ Monitors, evaluates and reviews progress with the delivery of the recommendations and action plan
- ◀ Shares lessons learnt from how the PPS has been used and how it has been applied to a variety of circumstances
- ◀ Ensures the PPS is used effectively to input into any new opportunities to secure improved provision and influence relevant programmes and initiatives

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- ◀ Maintains links between all relevant parties with an interest in playing pitch provision in the area;
- ◀ Reviews the need to update the PPS along with the supply and demand information and assessment work on which it is based. Further to review the group should either:
 - ◀ Provide a short annual progress and update paper;
 - ◀ Provide a partial review focussing on particular sport, pitch type and/or sub area; or
 - ◀ Lead a full review and update of the PPS document (including the supply and demand information and assessment details).

Alongside the regular steering group meetings it is recommended that Gravesham Borough Council holds annual sport specific meetings with the pitch sport NGBs and other relevant organisations. These meetings should look to update the key supply and demand information, if necessary amend the assessment work, track progress with implementing the recommendations and action plan and highlight any new issues and opportunities. Things to consider include formation of new teams or loss of teams, any new formats of the sports that would impact on facilities, changes in quality or creation of new facilities.

These meetings could be timed to fit with the annual affiliation process undertaken by the NGBs which would help to capture any changes in the number and nature of sports clubs in the area. Other information that is already collected on a regular basis such as pitch booking records for local authority and other sites could be fed into these meetings. The NGBs will also be able to indicate any further performance quality assessments that have been undertaken within the study area. Discussion with the league secretaries may also indicate annual league meetings which it may be useful to attend to pick up any specific issues and/or enable a review of the relevant club details to be undertaken.

The steering group should regularly review and refresh area by area plans taking account of any improvements in pitch quality (and hence increases in pitch capacity) and also any new negotiations for community use of education or other private sites in the future. Updating the action plans will make the task of updating the PPS much easier.


It is important that the Council maintains the data contained with the accompanying Playing Pitch Database. This will enable it to refresh and update area by area plans on a regular basis. The accompanying databases are intended to be refreshed on a season by season basis and it is important that there is cross-departmental working, including for example, grounds maintenance and sports, to ensure that this is achieved and that results are used to inform subsequent annual sports facility development plans. Results should be shared with partners via a consultative mechanism.

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Checklist

To help ensure the PPS is delivered and is kept robust and up to date, the steering group can refer to the new methodology Stage E Checklist: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date:

<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/playing-pitch-strategy-guidance/>

Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date	Tick 	
	Yes	Requires Attention
Step 9: Apply and deliver the strategy		
1. Are steering group members clear on how the PPS can be applied across a range of relevant areas?		
2. Is each member of the steering group committed to taking the lead to help ensure the PPS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence?		
3. Has a process been put in place to ensure regular monitoring of how the recommendations and action plan are being delivered and the PPS is being applied?		
Step 10: Keep the strategy robust and up to date		
1. Has a process been put in place to ensure the PPS is kept robust and up to date?		
2. Does the process involve an annual update of the PPS?		
3. Is the steering group to be maintained and is it clear of its on-going role?		
4. Is regular liaison with the NGBs and other parties planned?		
5. Has all the supply and demand information been collated and presented in a format (i.e. single document that can be filtered accordingly) that will help people to review it and highlight any changes?		
6. Have any changes made to the Active Places Power data been fed back to Sport England?		

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APPENDIX ONE: STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The recommendations within this Strategy have been developed via the combination of information gathered during consultation, site visits and analysis. They reflect key areas to be addressed over its lifetime. However, implementation must be considered in the context of financial implications and the need for some proposals to also meet planning considerations.

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.

Sport England: Towards an Active Nation (2016-2021)

Sport England has recently released its new five year strategy 'Towards an Active Nation'. The aim is to target the 28% of people who do less than 30 minutes of exercise each week and will focus on the least active groups; typically women, the disabled and people from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Sport England will invest up to £30m on a plan to increase the number of volunteers in grassroots sport. Emphasis will be on working with a larger range of partners with less money being directed towards National Governing Bodies.

The Strategy will help deliver against the five health, social and economic outcomes set out in the Government's Sporting Future strategy.

- ◀ Physical Wellbeing
- ◀ Mental Wellbeing
- ◀ Individual Development

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- ◀ Social & Community Development
- ◀ Economic Development

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.

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:

- ◀ Sustain and Increase Participation.
- ◀ Ensure access to education sites to accommodate the game.
- ◀ Help players to be the best that they can be and provide opportunities for them to progress from grassroots to elite.
- ◀ Recruit, retain and develop a network of qualified referees
- ◀ Support clubs, leagues and other competition providers to develop a safe, inclusive and positive football experience for everyone.
- ◀ Support Clubs and Leagues to become sustainable businesses, understanding and serving the needs of players and customers.
- ◀ Improve grass pitches through the pitch improvement programme to improve existing facilities and changing rooms.

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- ◀ Deliver new and improved facilities including new Football Turf Pitches.
- ◀ Work with priority Local Authorities enabling 50% of mini-soccer and youth matched to be played on high quality artificial grass pitches.

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) Cricket Unleashed 5 Year Plan

The England and Wales Cricket Board unveiled a new strategic five-year plan in 2016 (available at <http://www.cricketunleashed.com>). Its success will be measured by the number of people who play, follow or support the whole game.

The plan sets out five important headline elements and each of their key focuses, these are:

- ◀ **More Play** – make the game more accessible and inspire the next generation of players, coaches, officials and volunteers. Focus on:
 - ◀ *Clubs and leagues*
 - ◀ *Kids*
 - ◀ *Communities*
 - ◀ *Casual*
- ◀ **Great Teams** – deliver winning teams who inspire and excite through on-field performance and off-field behaviour. Focus on:
 - ◀ *Pathway*
 - ◀ *Support*
 - ◀ *Elite Teams*
 - ◀ *England Teams*
- ◀ **Inspired Fans** – put the fan at the heart of our game to improve and personalise the cricket experience for all. Focus on:
 - ◀ *Fan focus*
 - ◀ *New audiences*
 - ◀ *Global stage*
 - ◀ *Broadcast and digital*
- ◀ **Good Governance and Social Responsibility** – make decisions in the best interests of the game and use the power of cricket to make a positive difference. Focus on:
 - ◀ *Integrity*
 - ◀ *Community programmes*
 - ◀ *Our environments*
 - ◀ *One plan*
- ◀ **Strong Finance and Operations** – increase the game's revenues, invest our resources wisely and administer responsibly to secure the growth of the game. Focus on:
 - ◀ *People*
 - ◀ *Revenue and reach*
 - ◀ *Insight*
 - ◀ *Operations*

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

The 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.

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It identifies that with 1.5 million 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 RWC 2015.
- ◀ 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

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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 maximise playing opportunities

‘The right pitches in the right places’¹⁶

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.

England Hockey Strategy

EH’s new Club Strategy will assist hockey clubs to retain more players and recruit new members to ultimately grow their club membership. EH will be focusing on participation growth through this strategy for the next two years. The EH Strategy is based on seven core themes. These are:

- 1 Having great leadership
- 2 Having Appropriate and Sustainable Facilities
- 3 Inspired and Effective People
- 4 Different Ways to Play
- 5 Staying Friendly, Social and Welcoming
- 6 Being Local with Strong Community Connections
- 7 Stretching and developing those who want it

¹⁶

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

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APPENDIX TWO: FUNDING PLAN

Funding opportunities

In order to deliver much of the Action Plan it is recognised that external partner funding will need to be sought. Although seeking developer contributions in applicable situations and other local funding/community schemes could go some way towards meeting deficiencies and/or improving provision, other potential/match sources of funding should be investigated. Below is a list of current funding sources that are relevant for community improvement projects involving sports facilities.

Awarding body	Description
Big Lottery Fund http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/	Big invests in community groups and to projects that improve health, education and the environment
Sport England The current funding streams will change throughout 2016/17 so refer to the website for the latest information: https://www.sportengland.org/funding/our-different-funds/	Sport England is keen to marry funding with other organisations that provide financial support to create and strengthen the best sports projects. Applicants are encouraged to maximise the levels of other sources of funding, and projects that secure higher levels of partnership funding are more likely to be successful.
Football Foundation http://www.footballfoundation.org.uk/	This trust provides financial help for football at all levels, from national stadia and FA Premier League clubs down to grass-roots local development.
Rugby Football Foundation - The Grant Match Scheme www.rugbyfootballfoundation.org	The Grant Match Scheme provides easy-to-access grant funding for playing projects that contribute to the recruitment and retention of community rugby players. Grants are available on a 'match funding' 50:50 basis to support a proposed project. Projects eligible for funding include: 1. Pitch Facilities – Playing surface improvement, pitch improvement, rugby posts, floodlights. 2. Club House Facilities – Changing rooms, shower facilities, washroom/lavatory, and measures to facilitate segregation (e.g. women, juniors). 3. Equipment – Large capital equipment, pitch maintenance capital equipment (e.g. mowers).
EU Life Fund http://ec.europa.eu/environment/funding/intro_en.htm	LIFE is the EU's financial instrument supporting environmental and nature conservation projects throughout the EU.
EH Capital Investment Programme (CIP)	The CIP fund is for the provision of new pitches and re-surfacing of old AGPs. It forms part of EH's 4 year Whole Sport's Plan.
National Hockey Foundation http://www.thenationalhockeyfoundation.com/	The Foundation primarily makes grants to a wide range of organisations that meet one of our chosen areas of focus: Young people and hockey. Enabling the development of hockey at youth or community level.

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Protecting Playing Fields

Sport England's Strategy: Towards an Active Nation (2016-2021) will simplify the funding reducing the number of investment programmes from 30 to 7:

- ◀ Tackling Inactivity
- ◀ Children and Young People
- ◀ Volunteering
- ◀ Taking sport and activity into the mass market
- ◀ Supporting sports core markets
- ◀ Local delivery
- ◀ Creating welcoming sports facilities

The current funding streams listed below will remain operational during 2016/17 but will be phased out and replaced by one or more of the seven listed above.

It launched Protecting Playing Fields (PPF) as part of its Places People Play Olympic legacy mass participation programme and is investing £10 million of National Lottery funding in community sports projects.

The programme is being delivered via five funding rounds (with up to £2 million being awarded to projects in each round). Its focus is on protecting and improving playing fields and developing community sport. It will fund capital projects that create, develop and improve playing fields for sporting and community use and offer long term protection of the site for sport. Projects are likely to involve the construction of new pitches or improvement of existing ones that need levelling or drainage works.

Sport England's 'Inspired Facilities' funding programme will be delivered via funding rounds and clubs, community and voluntary sector groups and local authorities can apply for grants of between £25k and £150k where there is a proven local need for a facility to be modernised, extended or modified to open up new sporting opportunities.

The programme's three priorities are:

- ◀ Organisations that haven't previously received a Sport England Lottery grant of over £10k.
- ◀ Projects that are the only public sports facility in the local community.
- ◀ Projects that offer local opportunities to people who do not currently play sport.

Besides this scheme providing an important source of funding for potential voluntary and community sector sites, it may also provide opportunities for the Council to access this funding particularly in relation to resurfacing the artificial sports surfaces

Strategic Facilities Fund

Facilities are fundamental in providing more people with the opportunity to play sport. The supply of the right facilities in the right areas is key to getting more people to play sport. Sport England recognises the considerable financial pressures that local authorities are currently under and the need to strategically review and rationalise leisure stock so that cost effective and financially sustainable provision is available in the long-term. Sport England has a key role to play in the sector, from influencing the local strategic planning and review of sports facility provision to investing in major capital projects of strategic importance.

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The Strategic Facilities Fund will direct capital investment into a number of key local authority projects that are identified through a strategic needs assessment and that have maximum impact on growing and sustaining community sport participation. These projects will be promoted as best practice in the delivery of quality and affordable facilities, whilst demonstrating long-term operational efficiencies. The fund will support projects that bring together multiple partners, including input from the public and private sectors and national governing bodies of sport (NGBs). The fund is also designed to encourage applicants and their partners to invest further capital and revenue funding to ensure sustainability. Sport England has allocated a budget of circa £30m of Lottery funding to award through this fund (2013-17).

Key features which applications must demonstrate are:

- ◀ A robust needs and evidence base which illustrates the need for the project and the proposed facility mix
- ◀ Strong partnerships which will last beyond the initial development of the project and underpin the long-term sustainability of the facility
- ◀ Multi-sport provision and activity that demonstrates delivery against NGB local priorities
- ◀ A robust project plan from inception to completion with achievable milestones and timescales.

Lottery applications will be invited on a solicited-only basis and grants of between £500,000 and £2,000,000 will be considered.

The Strategic Facilities Fund will prioritise projects that:

- ◀ Are large-scale capital developments identified as part of a local authority sports facility strategic needs assessment/rationalisation programme and that will drive a significant increase in community sports participation
- ◀ Demonstrate consultation/support from two or more NGBs and delivery against their local priorities
- ◀ Are multi-sport facilities providing opportunities to drive high participant numbers
- ◀ Are a mix of facility provision (indoor and/or outdoor) to encourage regular and sustained use by a large number of people
- ◀ Offer an enhancement, through modernisation, to existing provision and/or new build facilities
- ◀ Have a long-term sustainable business plan attracting public and private investment
- ◀ Show quality in design, but are fit for purpose to serve the community need
- ◀ Have effective and efficient operating models, combined with a commitment to development programmes which will increase participation and provide talent pathways.

Projects will need to demonstrate how the grant will deliver against Sport England's strategic priorities. The funding available is for the development of the capital infrastructure, which can contribute to the costs of new build, modernisation or refurbishment and purchasing of major fixed equipment as part of the facility development.

Funder's requirements

Below is a list of funding requirements that can typically be expected to be provided as part of a funding bid, some of which will fall directly out of the Playing Pitch Strategy:

- ◀ Identify need (i.e., why the Project is needed) and how the Project will address it.
- ◀ Articulate what difference the Project will make.

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- ◀ Identify benefits, value for money and/or added value.
- ◀ Provide baseline information (i.e., the current situation).
- ◀ Articulate how the Project is consistent with local, regional and national policy.
- ◀ Financial need and project cost.
- ◀ Funding profile (i.e., Who's providing what? Unit and overall costs).
- ◀ Technical information and requirements (e.g., planning permission).
- ◀ Targets, outputs and/or outcomes (i.e., the situation after the Project/what the Project will achieve)
- ◀ Evidence of support from partners and stakeholders.
- ◀ Background/essential documentation (e.g., community use agreement).
- ◀ Assessment of risk.

Indicative costs

The indicative costs of implementing key elements of the Action Plan can be found on the Sport England website:

<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>

The costs are for the development of community sports facilities and are based on providing good quality sports facility for the 1st Quarter 2016. These rounded costs are based on schemes most recently funded through the Lottery (and therefore based on economies of scale), updated to reflect current forecast price indices provided by the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS), prepared by Technical Team Lead of Sport England.

APPENDIX THREE: GLOSSARY

Displaced demand generally relates to play by teams or other users of playing pitches from within the study area (i.e. from residents of the study area) which takes place outside of the area. This may be due to issues with the provision of pitches and ancillary facilities in the study area, just reflective of how the sports are played (e.g. at a central venue for the wider area) or due to the most convenient site for the respective users just falling outside of the local authority/study area.

Unmet demand is demand that is known to exist but unable to be accommodated on current supply of pitches. This could be in the form of a team with access to a pitch for matches but nowhere to train or vice versa. This could also be due to the poor quality and therefore limited capacity of pitches in the area and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement. League secretaries may be aware of some unmet demand as they may have declined applications from teams wishing to enter their competitions due to a lack of pitch provision which in turn is hindering the growth of the league.

Latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better provision. This could include feedback from a sports club who may feel that they could set up and run an additional team if they had access to better provision.

Future demand is an informed estimate made of the likely future demand for pitches in the study area. This is generally based on the most appropriate current and future population projections for the relevant age and gender groupings for each sport. Key trends, local objectives and targets and consultation also inform this figure.

Casual use or other use could take place on natural grass pitches or AGPs and include:

- ◀ Regular play from non-sports club sources (e.g. companies, schools, fitness classes)
- ◀ Infrequent informal/friendly matches
- ◀ Informal training sessions
- ◀ More casual forms of a particular sport organised by sports clubs or other parties
- ◀ Significant public use and informal play, particularly where pitches are located in parks/recreation grounds.

Carrying capacity is the amount of play a site can regularly accommodate (in the relevant comparable unit) for community use without adversely affecting its quality and use. This is typically outlined by the NGB

Overplay is when a pitch is used over the amount that the carrying capacity will allow, (i.e. more than the site can accommodate). Pitches have a limit of how much play they can accommodate over a certain period of time before their quality, and in turn their use, is adversely affected.

Spare capacity is the amount of additional play that a pitch could potentially accommodate in addition to current activity. There may be reasons why this potential to accommodate additional play should not automatically be regarded as actual spare capacity, for example, a site may be managed to regularly operate slightly below its carrying capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of friendly matches and training activity. This needs to be investigated before the capacity is deemed **actual spare capacity**.

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Match equivalent sessions is an appropriate comparable unit for pitch usage. For football, rugby union and rugby league, pitches should relate to a typical week within the season and one match = one match equivalent session if it occurs every week or 0.5 match equivalent sessions if it occurs every other week (i.e. reflecting home and away fixtures). For cricket pitches it is appropriate to look at the number of match equivalent sessions over the course of a season and one match = one match equivalent session.

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APPENDIX FOUR: 3G PITCH SCENARIO

Moving match play to 3G pitches

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 AGPs for competitive matches and this is something that the FA is supporting, particularly for mini football. The table below tests a scenario in which all 5v5 and 7v7 football in Gravesham is moved to 3G AGPs.

A programme of play has been created based on the current peak time demand for mini pitches in Gravesham (Sunday AM).

Time	AGP 1	Total games/teams
9.30am – 10.30am	4 x 5v5	4/8
10.30am – 11.30am	2 x 7v7	2/4
11.30am – 12.30pm	2 x 7v7	2/4
12.30pm – 1.30pm	2 x 7v7	2/4

There are currently 15 5v5 teams which would require **1.9 (rounded to 2) AGPs** and there are 28 7v7 teams which would require **2.3 (rounded to 3) AGPs**. Based on the above programming and separate start times for 5v5 and 7v7 matches, the overall need is for **3 full size 3G** pitches to accommodate all mini football demand within Gravesham. This is slightly less than the total overall number required for training provision (4) as detailed earlier.

Building on the key findings and issues from the assessment work a number of relevant scenarios have been looked at. The scenarios have helped with developing the recommendations and actions and understanding their potential impact. They should not be regarded as recommendations or actions in their own right. It is important that any changes to the provision of AGPs should also be reflected in the periodic updating of the PPS data and agreed by the PPS Steering Group. As concluded from the assessment work, there is at present a need to protect all existing provision, and create access to school sites or bring disused sites back into use where feasible. Once they are implemented, assessing the actual impact of the recommendations and actions, along with establishing what the impacts may mean for the key findings of the assessment work, should form a key part of the monitoring and review of the strategy (see Part 6).