



## Appendix 1

# Swale Borough Council

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## Playing Pitch Strategy Stage C Assessment Report 2025 – 2040

A report by Strategic Leisure Limited

October 2025



## Table of Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
	Scope	3
	Study Area	3
<b>2.</b>	<b>Football</b>	<b>4</b>
	Introduction	4
	Local Football Facilities Plans (LFFPs)	5
	Pitch Supply (Step 2)	6
	Football Supply	7
	Grass Pitches	7
	Secured Community use pitches.	9
	Unsecured	13
	Other grass pitch supply used for informal play and training/coaching.	14
	Quality of Grass Pitches	15
	Quality of Ancillary Facilities	22
	Distribution of Pitches	25
	Proposed Supply Changes the developments and several active planning applications	26
	Football Supply Aspirations	27
	Pitch Demand (Step 3)	29
	Football Demand	30
	Clubs and Teams	30
	Youth Football Clubs	31
	Women and Girls	31
	Kent Disability Football League	33
	Displaced Demand	33
	Imported Demand	33
	Unmet demand	33
	Latent demand	34
	Future Playing Pitch (Football) Demand – Population Growth	35
	Capacity Analysis 2024/25 Season	36
	Overplay	41
	Supply and demand analysis	43
	Conclusion	47

---

# Swale Borough Council

## *Playing Pitch Strategy*

---

Football Summary Swale Playing Pitch Strategy 2024	48
<b>Appendix 1: Swale Borough – 2024/25 Season Number of Football Teams by Age Group Typology.</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>3. Third Generation Turf (3G) Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPS)</b>	<b>56</b>
Introduction	56
Current Provision	57
3G Football Turf Artificial Grass Pitches (FTPs)	57
Future Provision 3G AGPs	63
Other considerations	64
Supply and Demand Analysis	65
FA Training Model	65
3G Pitch and Artificial Grass Pitch Draft Recommendations	67
<b>4. Rugby Union</b>	<b>69</b>
Introduction	69
Pitch Supply (Step 2)	70
Rugby Supply	70
Number and sizes of pitches	70
Secured Community Use Pitches	71
Pitch Quality Community Use Rugby Union Sites.	71
Proposed Future Rugby Supply Changes	73
Pitch Demand (Step 3)	74
Rugby Demand	74
Clubs and Teams	74
Training and Match Demand	75
Unmet Demand	77
Latent Demand	77
Displaced Demand	78
Future Demand (Rugby Growth) Population Demand	78
Summary of Demand, supply and Capacity for Weekly Training and Match Play	79
Scenario - Improving pitch quality.	82
Scenario – Sittingbourne Rugby Club Wises Lane	83
Scenario- Increasing Access to Rugby Union Sports Lighting Training Provision	83
Rugby Union Summary Findings	84
Rugby Union Recommendations	85

---

# Swale Borough Council

## *Playing Pitch Strategy*

---

<b>5.</b>	<b>Cricket</b>	<b>86</b>
	Introduction	86
	Cricket Club Demand and Number of Teams	86
	All Stars Cricket (5-8-year-olds) and Dynamos Cricket (8 – 11-year-olds)	88
	Women’s and Girls Softball and Hardball	89
	Unmet demand	89
	Latent and Future demand	90
	Displaced demand	90
	Future Playing Pitch (Cricket) Demand – Population Growth	91
	Pitch Supply	92
	Local Authority Parks Pitches	92
	Secured and Unsecured Community Use Pitches	92
	Quality, Capacity Supply and Demand Assessment	97
	Faversham Sub Area – site issues from consultation	101
	Sittingbourne Sub Area – site issues from consultation	103
	Sheppey Sub Area – Site issues from consultation	105
	Cricket Summary	106
<b>6.</b>	<b>Hockey</b>	<b>108</b>
	Introduction	108
	Pitch Supply (Step 2)	109
	Hockey Supply	110
	Number and sizes of pitches	110
	Unsecured / Secured Community Use pitches.	112
	Pitch Quality	112
	Ancillary Facilities	112
	Pitch Demand	112
	Hockey Demand	113
	Clubs and Teams	113
	Sittingbourne Hockey Club (Formerly Old Bordenians Hockey Club)	113
	Faversham Ladies Hockey Club	115
	Gore Court Hockey Club	115
	Supply and Demand	117
	Hockey Match Slots Required Each Week	117
	Supply and Demand Match Play	118
	Training Capacity	120

---

# Swale Borough Council

## *Playing Pitch Strategy*

---

	Unmet and Latent Demand	121
	Displaced demand	121
	Future Demand 2040 – Population Growth	121
	Hockey Summary Key Findings	122
	Hockey Recommendations	124
<b>7.</b>	<b>Tennis Court Analysis and Recommendations</b>	<b>125</b>
	Parks Investment Project	125
	Swale - Supply Tennis Courts	129
	Swale - Demand Tennis Courts	131
	Tennis Recommendations	133
<b>8.</b>	<b>Athletics</b>	<b>135</b>
	Supply Swale	135
	Quality	136
	TrackMark	136
	Future provision	136
	Compact Track	136
	Mini Track	136
	Active Track	137
	Demand	137
	Club demand	137
	Swale Combined Athletics Club	137
	Sittingbourne Striders Running Club	138
	Swale Tri Club	138
	Faversham Running Club	138
	Parkrun	138
	Other events	139
	Beginners2Runners Running Club	139
	Exported/imported demand.	140
	Latent/unmet demand	140
	Sport England – Active People Survey	141
	Future demand	142
	Supply and demand analysis.	143
	England Athletics Facility Priorities	144
	Local priority	146

---

# Swale Borough Council

## *Playing Pitch Strategy*

---

Facility supply	147
Conclusion	152
Athletics – supply and demand Key Issues	152
Shortfall in Provision	153
Recommendations	153
<b>9. Bowls Green Analysis and Recommendations</b>	<b>154</b>
Swale Borough Supply	155
Bowls Demand	157
Bowls Green Recommendations	158
<b>10. Netball Analysis and Recommendations</b>	<b>159</b>
Swale - Supply Netball Courts	161
Swale - Demand Netball Courts	162
Netball Recommendations	165

## Figures

Figure 1: Swale Borough % Secured community use and unsecured community use natural grass football pitches	8
Figure 2: Swale Borough Playing field sites providing secured community use and unsecured community use	10
Figure 3: Swale Borough Quality Ratings Natural Grass Pitches Good, Standard and Poor	21

## Maps

Map 1: Distribution of Pitches	25
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---

# Swale Borough Council

## *Playing Pitch Strategy*

---

### Tables

Table 1: FA recommended pitch sizes.	4
Table 2: Number of sites in Swale Borough 2024/25 Season with marked natural Grass pitches for community use (Secured and Unsecured)	7
Table 3: Number of sites in Faversham Sub Area 2024/25 Season with marked natural Grass pitches for community use (Secured and Unsecured)	8
Table 4: Number of sites in Sittingbourne Sub Area 2024/25 Season with marked natural Grass pitches for community use (Secured and Unsecured)	9
Table 5: Number of sites in Sheppey Sub Area 2024/25 Season with marked natural Grass pitches for community use (Secured and Unsecured).	9
Table 6: Sites providing secured and unsecured natural grass pitches by typology across Swale Borough 2024/25 season.	10
Table 7: Identified sites that are unavailable for use.	13
Table 8: Equivalent PPS quality rating for pitch Performance Quality Standard ratings.	15
Table 9: Sub Area Quality Ratings Natural Grass Football Pitches.	16
Table 10: Quality of Grass pitches and ancillary facilities by site and sub area	22
Table 11: Proposed Supply Changes	26
Table 12: Youth Football Clubs with 5 or More Youth Football Teams Swale Borough 2024/25 Season	31
Table 13: Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator – Population Increase 2024 – 2040. Estimated demand and costs for new pitches (matches and training demand) and ancillary provision	36
Table 14: Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator – Population Increase 2024 – 2040. Football MES per week.	36
Table 15: Actual (peak time) spare capacity site by site	39
Table 16: Actual spare capacity summary	40
Table 17: Summary of overplay by site	41
Table 18: Summary of overplay	43
Table 19: Supply and demand position for adult pitches	43
Table 20: Future supply and demand position for adult 11v11 pitches	44
Table 21: Supply and demand position for youth 11v11 pitches	44
Table 22: Future supply and demand position for youth 11v11 pitches	45
Table 23: Supply and demand position for Junior 9v9 pitches	45
Table 24: Future supply and demand position for Junior 9v9 pitches	46
Table 25: Supply and demand position for mini soccer 7v7 pitches	46
Table 26: Supply and demand position for mini 5v5 pitches	46
Table 27: Future supply and demand position for mini soccer 7v7 and 5v5 pitches	47
Table 28: Summary of supply and demand	47
Table 29: AGP type and sport suitability	56
Table 30: Existing 3G AGPs Swale	57
Table 31: Current demand for 3G pitches in Swale for Affiliated Football Team Training (38 teams per pitch)	65
Table 32: Rugby union pitch dimensions	69

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# Swale Borough Council

## *Playing Pitch Strategy*

---

Table 33: Swale Rugby Union Pitches by Sub Area	70
Table 34: RFU pitch assessment guidance	72
Table 35: Community sites and individual pitch capacity	72
Table 36: Number of Rugby Union Teams – Swale Borough	75
Table 37: Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator – Population Increase 2024 – 2040.	79
Table 38: Sheppey Rugby Club Summary of Demand, Supply and Capacity for weekly Training Equivalent Sessions and Match Play	79
Table 39: Sittingbourne Rugby Club Summary of Demand, Supply and Capacity for weekly Training Equivalent Sessions and Match Play	80
Table 40: Faversham Rugby Club Summary of Demand, Supply and Capacity for weekly Training Equivalent Sessions and Match Play	80
Table 41: Swale Borough Rugby Union Summary of Current 2022/23 Season Demand, Supply and Capacity for weekly Training Equivalent Sessions and Match Play	81
Table 42: Current and Future Demand to 2040 For Community Rugby Club Pitches	81
Table 43: Improving Quality and Drainage of Rugby Pitches and impact on weekly capacity.	82
Table 44: Faversham Cricket Clubs and Team Numbers	86
Table 45: Sittingbourne Cricket Clubs and Team Numbers	87
Table 46: Sheppey Cricket Clubs and Teams	88
Table 47: Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator – Population Increase 2024 – 2040	91
Table 48: Cricket site breakdown	94
Table 49: Swale Borough School Cricket Facilities	97
Table 50: Pitch Quality Ratings and Supply and Demand capacity	98
Table 51: Peak Time Demand and availability of additional play	100
Table 52: Cricket Club comments and other identified issues Faversham Sub Area	102
Table 53: Cricket Club Comments and other identified issues Sittingbourne Sub Area	104
Table 54: Cricket Club Comments and Other Identified Issues	105
Table 55: England Hockey guidelines on artificial surface types suitable for hockey	108
Table 56: Current Community and Non-Community Use AGPs that can be used for Hockey – Swale Borough Council area	110
Table 57: Current Community and Non-Community Use AGPs to small for Hockey Use – Swale Borough Council area	111
Table 58: Sittingbourne Hockey Club - Adults Training	113
Table 59: Sittingbourne Hockey Club Junior Training	114
Table 60: Membership Sittingbourne Hockey Club 2024/25 and 2023/24 Season – England Hockey Membership Data	114
Table 61: Membership Faversham Ladies Hockey Club 2024/25 and 2023/24 Season – England Hockey Membership Data.	115
Table 62: Gore Court Hockey Club Adults Training	116
Table 63: Gore Court Hockey Club Junior Training	116
Table 64: Membership Gore Court Hockey Club 2024/25 and 2023/24 Season – England hockey Membership Data.	117
Table 65: Match Slots Required Each Week - Swale Borough	117
Table 66: Individual AGP site supply, demand and capacity.	119
Table 67: Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator – Population Increase 2024 – 2040. Hockey AGP Needs	122

---

# Swale Borough Council

## *Playing Pitch Strategy*

---

Table 68: National Survey – Location of Play 2018 (Source: Statistical)	127
Table 69: National survey Organised Play	127
Table 70: National Survey – Satisfaction Levels with Courts	127
Table 71: National Survey – Awareness of Local Tennis Courts	128
Table 72: Outdoor Tennis Provision by Site – Swale Borough	129
Table 73: England Athletics NEW GEN Priority Areas	142
Table 74: England Athletics Need Assessment	146
Table 75: Flat Green Bowls Sites in Swale Borough	155
Table 76: Netball Court Provision by Site – Swale Borough	161

## Glossary

**Secured Community Use:** For pitches that are available to the community the degree of certainty that this availability will continue needs to be recorded (i.e. how secure is the availability to the community?). Unless local information suggests otherwise it can be assumed that the availability of all pitches in Local Authority, town and parish council and sports club ownership will be secure. PPS guidance is 3 years or greater for any agreement e.g., leasehold. Community use agreement in place would be considered as secure.

**Unsecured Community Use:** Mainly educational sites where the following should be in place to ensure certainty of secured community use: if not in place, then the site provides unsecured community use.

- A formal community use agreement
- A leasing or management agreement requiring pitches to be available to the community/a community club.
- A formal policy for community use adopted by the owner and or educational establishment.
- Written confirmation from the owner and or educational establishment.

### **Note on definitions of artificial pitch surfaces.**

Sport England has produced guidance on “Selecting the Right Artificial Surface for Hockey, Football, Rugby League and Rugby Union” This guidance can be referred to when selecting an artificial surface, but it is worth noting that this is now superseded by new and updated National Governing Body (NGB) technical guidance and you should contact the relevant NGB. The guidance can be found at:

[selecting-the-right-artificial-surface-rev2-2010.pdf](#)

Throughout the PPS the following abbreviations are used to describe specific types of playing pitch facility that has an artificial surface rather than natural grass.

NTP or non-turf pitch refers to an artificial turf sports surface designed specifically for cricket.

**3G AGP** Third Generation Football Turf Pitch. This pitch type comprises blades of polypropylene supported by a thin base layer of sand and by an infill of rubber crumb. 3G pitches must meet the FIFA Quality Performance Standard up to Step 3 (FA National League System) or the FIFA Quality Pro Performance Standards for Step 1 & 2 level football as well as higher level FA competitions.

**AGP** Stands for an England Hockey recognised Artificial Grass Pitch which is either sand based/dressed or water playing surface. World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant stands for a long pile AGP 3G with an engineered subbase system (of stone base, porous tarmac layer and shock pad) and are accepted by the rugby governing bodies (RFU and RFL).

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# Swale Borough Council

## *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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### **Sports Lighting Lux Levels:**

Football	As many league and cup competitions specify the minimum level of lighting they require; it will be necessary to determine the competitions that the teams using the pitch will compete in and alter the design accordingly. Where no requirements are stated the minimum levels of performance should be in accordance with FIFA's Class II which for 11-a-side football is a minimum maintained average illumination of 200 lux. To minimise running costs and for flexibility of use, the lighting system should allow part illumination of the pitch (half pitch and/or thirds) and a lower level of lighting for training which is a minimum maintained average illumination of 120 lux.
Hockey	For hockey, 350 lux is considered suitable for training and club competition, while 500 lux for high level non-televised national league and international competition.
Cricket	<p>International Cricket Council (ICC) Lighting Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ICC sets out lighting standards, which require high brightness and a colour rendering index of more than 90 for cricket sports lights.</li><li>• A 1500-2500 lux brightness is necessary for TV broadcast to ensure colour harmony without distortion.</li><li>• LED lighting is the preferred option for meeting these standards.</li></ul> <p>Practice Pitch Cricket Lighting Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lighting standards are more lenient since there is no need to consider TV viewers.</li><li>• The goal is to provide sufficient illumination for hitting balls, so it needs about 200 lux.</li></ul> <p>Indoor Cricket Stadium Lighting Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Indoor lighting standards require more lighting than outdoor standards due to heat accumulation in indoor ceilings during operation.</li><li>• High-end thermal management systems, including fins with large surface areas, have been developed to solve the issue.</li><li>• Recommended lighting standards are Class I: 750 lux, Class II: 500 lux, and Class III: 300 lux.</li></ul>
Rugby Union	RFU Levels 2 – 5 matches 200 Lux, Training 100 Lux. Levels 6 -12 matches 100 Lux, Training 100 Lux.
Tennis Court	The Lawn Tennis Association recommends lighting levels of 500 Lux in the principle playing area with uniformity of 0.7 and 400 Lux in the total playing area with uniformity of 0.6. The minimum recommended lighting levels are 400 Lux in the principle playing area with uniformity of 0.7 and 300 Lux in the total playing area with uniformity of 0.6.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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#### Netball Court

England Netball minimum maintained illuminance - 200 Lux for community courts. Club courts training - minimum 200 Lux and 300 Lux for match play.

#### Athletics

The following consistent illumination levels across BOTH track and field facilities must be achieved: 200lux for club venues and 500 Lux for International/Premier competition venues. Note: 100lux is acceptable for community facilities that only have a track facility (i.e. no field events) sportlighting columns should be positioned at least 4 metres from the edge of any track/activity areas and should be maintained and checked regularly. The mounting system employed can be either masts, columns or the structure of the stadium itself such as the roof.

## 1. Introduction

1.1 The Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) is delivered in accordance with Sport England's PPS Guidance, which details five stages of development:

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

1.2 Stage C is covered in this report, with stage D covered in the proceeding strategy document and Stage E ongoing once the work has been approved.

1.3 A primary purpose of producing the PPS is to provide the Council with a strategy to fulfil effectively the Sport England objectives relating to promoting, protecting, enhancing and providing sports facilities as appropriate and as set out in Sport England's Planning for Sport Guidance. It will achieve this by:

- Accurately auditing the supply of pitches and ancillary facilities, and the demand for pitches, within Swale (from which deficiencies and surpluses in provision can be measured).
- Assessing whether the current supply (in terms of the quantity, quality, and accessibility of the provision) in Swale is adequate to meet both current and future demand.
- Developing a clear, succinct and deliverable strategy, in the form of a set of recommendations and an Action Plan which addresses deficiencies and surpluses in provision.

1.4 In addition, the PPS will be produced in accordance with national planning guidance and provide robust and objective justification for future sporting provision throughout Swale. One of the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), updated in 2025, is to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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1.5 Paragraph 98 of the NPPF emphasises the need for Local Plans to deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services a community needs. In doing so, policies should:

- a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.
- b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.
- c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs.
- d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and
- e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.

1.6 Paragraph 103 outlines the planning policies for the provision and protection of sport and recreation facilities:

“Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.”

1.7 Paragraph 104 of the NPPF specifies that:

“Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and formal play spaces, should not be built on unless:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- b) 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
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.”

### Scope

1.8 The scope of the PPS will focus geographically on all local provision, regardless of ownership and management arrangements. Sports included within the study are as follows:

- Football (including 3G pitches)
- Rugby Union
- Cricket
- Hockey (sand/water-based pitches)
- Bowls
- Netball
- Tennis
- Athletics

1.9 Bowls, Netball, Tennis and Athletics are not covered by Sport England Playing Pitch guidance. For these sports Sport England Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance has been applied [Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance](#)

### Study Area

1.10 The study area is the entire local authority area, with analysis areas (or sub areas) also used to allow for a more localised analysis in addition to the analysis for Swale as a whole. For this purpose, the Borough has been split into three distinct areas Faversham, Sittingbourne and Sheppey.

## 2. Football

### Introduction

- 2.1 This section of the Swale Playing Pitch Strategy 2024 details the current picture of facility supply and demand for the playing pitch sport of **football** - at playing field sites in the borough.
- 2.2 Kent County FA is the primary organisation overseeing the development of football in Swale Borough. It is responsible for growing participation, promoting diversity and regulating the sport for everyone to enjoy. Facility development for football is largely the responsibility of the Football Foundation, which is a charity, linked to the Premier League, the FA and the Government, that helps communities improve their local football facilities through grant funding. It is committed to improving the experience of playing football for everyone involved in the game. Formal demand is generally defined through five formats of play and five pitch types, linked to the age of teams and players.
- 2.3 In accordance with the FA Youth Review, U17 and U18 teams can play on adult pitches, with the FA's recommended pitch size being 100 x 64 metres compared to 91 x 55 metres for U15 and U16 teams and 82 x 50 metres for U13 and U14 teams. Please refer to the table below for more detail relating to pitch sizes for each format of play.

**Table 1: FA recommended pitch sizes.**

Format	Age group	Recommended pitch size (metres)
Adult	U17+	100 x 64
Youth 11v11	U15-U16	91 x 55
	U13-U14	82 x 50
Youth 9v9	U11-U12	73 x 46
Mini 7v7	U9-U10	55 x 37
Mini 5v5	U7-U8	37 x 27

- 2.4 A guide to the size of the recognised football pitches including run offs can be found using this link [pitch\\_and\\_goalpost\\_guide-jul12.pdf](#)

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- 2.5 The likely future picture of provision is assessed based on potential changes in supply (both committed and planned projects within the borough and its travel catchment), forecast changes in the resident population informed by the targets for new housing in the Borough Council's proposed new local plan, national trends in participation and the development aspirations of the clubs based in the borough.
- 2.6 The policies, development programmes and investment priorities of the national governing body for the sport will also influence the future picture of facility supply and demand for the sport in Swale. These are summarised in a separate appendix.
- 2.7 At Stage A it was agreed to divide Swale into three sub areas, Faversham, Sittingbourne, and Sheppey.

#### Local Football Facilities Plans (LFFPs)

- 2.8 A LFFP has been produced for every local authority across England, with each plan being unique to its area as well as being diverse in its representation. The LFFP is strategically aligned to the National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS); a 10-year plan to change the landscape of football facilities in England.
- 2.9 The LFFP presents a major funding commitment from the national funding partners (the FA, Premier League and Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)) and is delivered through the Football Foundation to inform and direct an estimated one billion pounds of investment into football facilities over the next ten years.
- 2.10 Each LFFP builds upon PPS findings (where present and current) regarding the formal and affiliated game.
- 2.11 The LFFP is a 'live' document that should be updated following the completion of a PPS if the up-to-date supply and demand assessment may present findings and recommendations that need to be incorporated for investment purposes.
- 2.12 LFFPs identify key projects to be delivered and act as an investment portfolio for projects that require funding. As such, around 90% of all national football investment will be identified via LFFPs. Notwithstanding the above, it is important to recognise that the LFFP is an investment portfolio of priority projects for potential investment; it is not a detailed supply and demand analysis of all pitch provision in a local area. Consequently, it cannot be used in place of a PPS and is not an accepted evidence base for site change of use or disposal.
- 2.13 A LFFP does, however, build on available/existing local evidence and strategic plans. The LFFP for Swale Borough was produced in November 2024 and identifies priority projects for investment. These include:
- 3G AGP – The Abbey School Faversham. The existing 3G AGP needs refurbishing and the school plan to undertake this over the next 12 months (2025). A new second 3G AGP full size and with World Rugby 22 compliant surface is being planned.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- 3G AGP - Sittingbourne Area Analysis. There is a shortfall of three 11v11 3G FTPs in Sittingbourne analysis area. However, considering the proposed addition of a 11v11 3G FTP at The Abbey School, potential impact on demand from the Sittingbourne area should be monitored.
- Two potential site locations are identified which are Central Park Stadium and Westlands School. A feasibility study is required to determine which site is most suitable.
- Central Park Stadium operates as a greyhound racing venue and features a dilapidated (not in use) sand based AGP to the north of the greyhound track. Swale Borough Council is in the process of reviewing options for the site and there is potential to explore the development of an 11v11 3G FTP in the area where the sand based AGP is located. In addition, there are also two full size equivalent grass pitches on site.
- Westlands School require the development of a new 11v11 3G FTP on the school's playing fields.
- Opportunities should be monitored moving forward for additional sites.
- 3G AGPs – Future Participation Growth. The FA has seen unprecedented growth in football over the last five years, particularly in the youth and women & girls' game. Overall participation is estimated to grow year on year, equating to an additional 126 teams in the local authority by 2030, of which 37 will come from women and girls. This could represent the equivalent of up to three additional 11v11 3G FTPs.
- Allowances have been made for ancillary provision for each pitch if needed, however this is subject to the final agreed location of any additional future provision and an assessment as to whether there are existing suitable facilities available.
- Grass Pitch Improvements - Given the range of funding opportunities available, and the comparably shorter-term and accessible nature of grants opportunities for grass pitch improvements (versus major capital projects such as 3G FTPs and pavilions), specific investment priorities are not identified via Local Football Facility Plans. Prospective applicants are encouraged to discuss their requirements with their County FA in the first instance.
- Festival Playing Field – Isle of Sheppey. Refurbish Changing Pavilion. New Road FC is working towards gaining a lease for the pavilion, and Swale Borough Council have commenced discussions with the Football Foundation around utilising the Home Advantage Fund to help support the project.
- Murston Recreation Ground – New Changing Pavilion. Woodcombe Youth FC is exploring options to take on a lease for the site which will allow the potential development of a new pavilion on a section of land immediately adjacent to Church Road.

### Pitch Supply (Step 2)

- 2.14 For all the playing pitch sports included in the scope of the PPS for Swale, the supply information illustrated in the diagram below has been gathered, as far as possible, by a combination of data collection and review, surveys, and consultations:
- 2.15 *Sources of information* – The sources of information used to establish current pitch supply were:
- Sport England Active Places Power audit for playing pitches.
  - Kent County FA team affiliation data for Swale.
  - Online survey returns from football clubs.
  - Meeting with football club and league representatives

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

- Information provided by schools and colleges, including visits to most secondary schools and primary schools.
- Site visits and inspections – Visits to all the football pitches in Swale and visual, nontechnical inspection.

### Football Supply

2.16 Findings relating to football pitch supply in Swale are summarised in the paragraphs below and in the table that follows.

### Grass Pitches

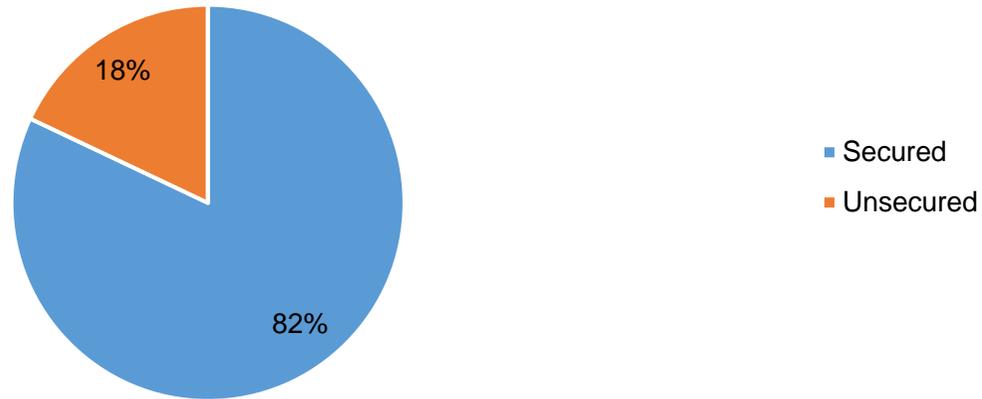
2.17 In the 2024/25 season, including schools, 44 playing fields were used for secured and unsecured community use in the borough providing a total of 119 marked grass football pitches of which 48 are full size (adult 11v11), 21 sized for youth football (youth 11v11), 19 junior football (junior 9v9) and 30 for mini soccer (7v7- 17, 5v5 - 14). The above is shown in Table 2 below. 36 sites providing 97(82%) marked natural grass pitches provide secured community use and 9 sites providing 22 (18%) natural grass pitches provide unsecured community natural grass pitches. Clubs and leagues have stated that there are insufficient junior pitches and that the adult game has declined in recent years, whilst the junior and mini soccer game is growing, particularly the girl's game.

**Table 2: Number of sites in Swale Borough 2024/25 Season with marked natural Grass pitches for community use (Secured and Unsecured)**

Type	No. of Sites	No. marked pitches 2024/25 Used for community Use					Total (%)
		Full size Adult	Youth 11 v 11	Junior 9 v 9	Mini (7 v 7)	Mini (5 v 5)	
<b>Swale Borough</b>							
Secured Community Use	35 Sites	36	16	17	14	14	97 (82%)
Unsecured Community Use	9 Sites	12	5	2	3	0	22 (18%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>44 Sites</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>119 (100%)</b>
<b>For definition of Secured and Unsecured Community use please see Glossary</b>							

2.18 Figure 1 below shows that 82% of natural grass pitches are in secured community use and 18% are in unsecured community use.

Figure 1: Swale Borough % Secured community use and unsecured community use natural grass football pitches.



2.19 The following tables show the three-sub area breakdown of secured and unsecured grass pitches used by football clubs in the 24/25 season.

Table 3: Number of sites in Faversham Sub Area 2024/25 Season with marked natural Grass pitches for community use (Secured and Unsecured)

Type	No. of Sites	No. marked pitches 2024/25 Used for community Use					Total (%)
		Full size Adult	Youth 11 v 11	Junior 9 v 9	Mini (7 v 7)	Mini (5 v 5)	
<b>Faversham Sub Area</b>							
Secured Community Use	9 Sites	10	3	4	1	2	<b>20 (83%)</b>
Unsecured Community Use	2 Sites	1	3	0	0	0	<b>4 (17%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>11 Sites</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>24 (100%)</b>

2.20 The Faversham sub area has 9 sites providing secured community use with 20 (83%) natural grass pitches. King Georges Playing Field Faversham the adult 11v11 is over marked with blue lines and provides 2 x 7v7 pitches and the 9v9 with blue lines provides a 5v5 pitch. Faversham Town at Salters Lane have reconfigured their adult 11v11 grass pitch to 3G AGP in July 2023.

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

**Table 4: Number of sites in Sittingbourne Sub Area 2024/25 Season with marked natural Grass pitches for community use (Secured and Unsecured)**

Type	No. of Sites	No. marked pitches 2024/25 Used for community Use					Total (%)
		Full size Adult	Youth 11 v 11	Junior 9 v 9	Mini (7 v 7)	Mini (5 v 5)	
<b>Sittingbourne Sub Area</b>							
Secured Community Use	15 Sites	17	9	8	8	5	47(78%)
Unsecured Community Use	4 Sites	8	0	2	3	0	13 (22%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>19 Sites</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>60 (100%)</b>

2.21 Sittingbourne sub area has 15 sites providing secured community use with 47 (78%) natural grass pitches. Hollywell Meadow provides marked pitches in blue lines over 11v11.

**Table 5: Number of sites in Sheppey Sub Area 2024/25 Season with marked natural Grass pitches for community use (Secured and Unsecured).**

Type	No. of Sites	No. marked pitches 2024/25 Used for community Use					Total (%)
		Full size Adult	Youth 11 v 11	Junior 9 v 9	Mini (7 v 7)	Mini (5 v 5)	
<b>Sheppey Sub Area</b>							
Secured Community Use	11 sites	9	4	5	5	7	30 (86%)
Unsecured Community Use	3 Sites	3	2	0	0	0	5 (14%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>14 Sites</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>35 (100%)</b>

2.22 Sheppey sub area has 11 sites providing secured community use with 30 (86%) natural grass pitches. Sheerness East Working Men's Club provides a mini soccer 5v5 marked pitches partly over 11v11 adult pitch.

### Secured Community use pitches.

2.23 Figure 2 below shows that 35 (80%) of the playing field sites Borough wide provide secured access to community clubs (i.e., owned or leased by local authorities or clubs/associations) and 9 (20%) of the playing field sites are at education sites where there is no secured community use.

Figure 2: Swale Borough Playing field sites providing secured community use and unsecured community use

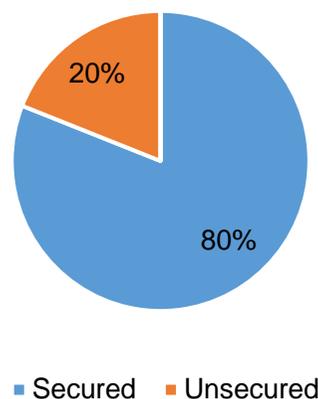


Table 6: Sites providing secured and unsecured natural grass pitches by typology across Swale Borough 2024/25 season.

Site Name	Community use on site	Security of use	Sub Area	Owners	Adult	Youth Football		Mini Soccer	
					11v11	11v11	9v9	7v7	5v5
Bull Lane Recreation Ground	Available	Secured	Faversham	Parish Council	1	0	0	0	0
Faversham Recreation Ground	Available	Secured	Faversham	Swale BC	2	0	1	0	0
Frognall Lane Teynham	Available	Secured	Faversham	Parish Council – Leased to Sports Association lease expires 2024	1	0	0	0	0
ISP Teymham	Available	Unsecured	Faversham	Education /Foster Care	0	1	0	0	0
Herne Hill Recreation Ground	Available	Secured	Faversham	Dawes Association	1	1	0	0	0
King Georges Playing Fields (Pitches over marked 11v11 (2 x 7v7) 9v9 (5v5)	Available	Secured	Faversham	Swale BC Leased to Faversham Strike Force	1	0	1	0	1
Norton Sports Club	Available	Secured	Faversham	Sports club	1	0	0	0	0
Queen Elizabeth Grammar School	Available	Unsecured	Faversham	Education	1	2	0	0	0
Salters Lane (Faversham FC) 1 adult Grass Pitch reconfigured as 3G AGP July 2023	Available	Secured	Faversham	Swale BC leased to club	0	0	0	0	0
Sharsted Sports Club	Available	Secured	Faversham	Sports Club	1	0	1	1	1

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

Site Name	Community use on site	Security of use	Sub Area	Owners	Adult	Youth Football		Mini Soccer	
					11v11	11v11	9v9	7v7	5v5
The Abbey School	Available	Secured	Faversham	Education	2	2	1	0	0
<b>Faversham Sub Area Totals</b>		<b>Secured Sites - 9</b>		<b>Secured</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
		<b>Unsecured Sites - 2</b>		<b>Unsecured</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
		<b>Total Sites - 11</b>			<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Borden Grammar School Playing Fields	Available	Unsecured	Sittingbourne	Education	2	0	0	0	0
Central Park Stadium	Available	Secured	Sittingbourne	Swale BC	2	0	0	0	0
Chapel Meadow	Available	Secured	Sittingbourne	Parish Council Leased to cricket club	0	3	0	0	0
Fulston Manor School Cromers Corner	Available	Unsecured	Sittingbourne	Education	2	0	1	1	0
Hollywell Meadow (Pitches over marked in blue)	Available	Secured	Sittingbourne	Leased to Cricket Club	2	2	0	0	0
Kemsley Recreation Ground	Available	Secured	Sittingbourne	Swale BC	1	0	0	1	0
King Georges Playing Field	Available	Secured	Sittingbourne	Swale BC	2	0	0	0	0
Milton Recreation Ground	Available	Secured	Sittingbourne	Swale BC	1	0	1	0	0
Murston Recreation Ground (Woodcoombe Sports & Social Club)	Available	Secured	Sittingbourne	Swale BC Leased to Sports Club	1	2	1	1	2
Newington Recreation Ground	Available	Secured	Sittingbourne	Parish Council	1	1	0	0	0
Rectory Playing Field	Available	Secured	Sittingbourne	Swale BC	0	0	1	0	0
Rodmersham Cricket Club	Available	Secured	Sittingbourne	Sports Club	0	0	1	2	2
Herons Park – School Lane Playing Field	Available	Secured	Sittingbourne	Leased to Herons FC by Swale BC	0	0	1	1	1
Sittingbourne School	Available	Unsecured	Sittingbourne	Education	3	0	1	1	0
Sittingbourne Recreation Ground	Available	Secured	Sittingbourne	Swale BC	1	0	0	1	0
The Appleyard	Available	Secured	Sittingbourne	Commercial	3	0	2	1	0
The Playstool	Available	Secured	Sittingbourne	Parish Council	1	0	0	0	0
Westlands Primary School	Available	Unsecured	Sittingbourne	Education	1	0	0	1	0

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

Site Name	Community use on site	Security of use	Sub Area	Owners	Adult	Youth Football		Mini Soccer	
					11v11	11v11	9v9	7v7	5v5
Saxson Stadium (Woodstock Park) Sittingbourne FC	Available	Secured	Sittingbourne	Sports Club	2	1	1	1	0
<b>Sittingbourne Sub Area Totals</b>		<b>Secured Sites - 15</b>		<b>Secured</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>
		<b>Unsecured Sites - 4</b>		<b>Unsecured</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>
		<b>Total Sites - 19</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>
EKC Academy	Available	Unsecured	Sheppey	Education	1	1	0	0	0
Festival Playing Field	Available	Secured	Sheppey	Swale BC	0	1	1	1	1
Holm Park	Available	Secured	Sheppey	Sports Club	1	0	1	0	1
King Georges Playing Field	Available	Secured	Sheppey	Swale BC	1	0	0	0	0
Leysdown Coastal Park	Available	Secured	Sheppey	Leased to club by Swale Borough	1	0	0	0	0
Leigh Academy	Available	Unsecured	Sheppey	Education	1	0	0	0	0
Range Road Football Ground	Available	Secured	Sheppey	Sports Club	1	0	0	1	0
Seager Road Sports Ground	Available	Secured	Sheppey	Leased to Sports club by Swale Borough	1	1	0	0	0
Sheerness East Working Men's Club	Available	Secured	Sheppey	Sports Club	1	1	1	0	0
Sheppey Sports Club	Available	Secured	Sheppey	Sports Club	1	0	1	2	2
Shurlands Meadows (East Church CC)	Available	Secured	Sheppey	Sports Club	0	0	1	1	3
Co-op Sports Club	Available	Secured	Sheppey	Sports Club	1	1	0	0	0
St Georges Church of England Primary School	Available	Unsecured	Sheppey	Education	1	1	0	0	0
Thistle Hill	Available	Secured	Sheppey	Swale BC	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Sheppey Sub Area Totals</b>		<b>Secured Sites - 12</b>		<b>Secured</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>
		<b>Unsecured Sites - 3</b>		<b>Unsecured</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
		<b>Total Sites - 15</b>		<b>Totals</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>

## Swale Borough Council

### Playing Pitch Strategy

Site Name	Community use on site	Security of use	Sub Area	Owners	Adult	Youth Football		Mini Soccer	
					11v11	11v11	9v9	7v7	5v5
<b>Swale Borough Totals</b>		<b>Secured Sites - 35</b>		<b>Secured</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>
		<b>Unsecured Sites - 9</b>		<b>Unsecured</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>
		<b>Total Sites - 44</b>		<b>Totals</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>

2.24 Table 7 below identifies 24 sites where football pitches are unavailable for community use.

**Table 7: Identified sites that are unavailable for use.**

Site Name	Community use on site	Security of use	Sub Area	Owners	Adult	Youth Football		Mini Soccer	
					11v11	11v11	9v9	7v7	5v5
Bysing Wood Primary School	Unavailable	Unsecured	Faversham	Education	0	0	0	2	0
Courtney Road Dunkirk	Unavailable	Unsecured	Faversham	Education	0	0	0	0	1
Davington Primary School	Unavailable	Unsecured	Faversham	Education	0	2	0	0	0
Eastling Primary Junior School	Unavailable	Unsecured	Faversham	Education	0	1	0	0	0
Hernhill C of E Primary School	Unavailable	Unsecured	Faversham	Education	0	0	0	0	1
Lynsted and Norton Primary School	Unavailable	Unsecured	Faversham	Education	0	0	0	1	0
Ospringe C of E Primary School	Unavailable	Unsecured	Faversham	Education	0	1	0	0	0
Sheldwich Primary School	Unavailable	Unsecured	Faversham	Education	0	0	0	1	0
Teynham Parochial C of E School	Unavailable	Unsecured	Faversham	Education	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Faversham Sub Area Total</b>		<b>Unsecured sites - 9</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
Infiniti School Doddington	Unavailable	Unsecured	Sittingbourne	Education	0	0	0	1	0
Iwade School	Unavailable	Unsecured	Sittingbourne	Education	0	0	0	2	0
Lower Halstow School	Unavailable	Unsecured	Sittingbourne	Education	0	1	0	0	0
Newington CEP School	Unavailable	Unsecured	Sittingbourne	Education	0	0	0	2	0

## Swale Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy

Site Name	Community use on site	Security of use	Sub Area	Owners	Adult	Youth Football		Mini Soccer	
					11v11	11v11	9v9	7v7	5v5
Grove Park Primary School	Unavailable	Unsecured	Sittingbourne	Education	0	1	0	0	0
Highsted Grammar School	Unavailable	Unsecured	Sittingbourne	Education	0	2	0	0	0
Regis Manor Primary School	Unavailable	Unsecured	Sittingbourne	Education	0	0	0	1	0
St Peters Catholic Primary School	Unavailable	Unsecured	Sittingbourne	Education	0	0	0	1	0
Westlands School	Unavailable	Unsecured	Sittingbourne	Education	2	0	0	0	0
Lynstead and Norton Primary School	Unavailable	Unsecured	Sittingbourne	Education	0	0	0	1	0
South Avenue Infants School	Unavailable	Unsecured	Sittingbourne	Education	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Sittingbourne Sub Area Total</b>		<b>Unsecured Sites - 11</b>			<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>
HMP Swaleside	Unavailable	Unsecured	Sheppey	Prison Service	1	0	0	0	0
Rose Street Primary School	Unavailable	Unsecured	Sheppey	Education	0	0	0	1	0
Halfway Houses Primary School	Unavailable	Unsecured	Sheppey	Education	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Sheppey Sub Area Totals</b>		<b>Unsecured Sites - 4</b>			<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Swale Borough Totals</b>		<b>Unsecured Sites - 24</b>			<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>

### Other grass pitch supply used for informal play and training/coaching.

- 2.25 In addition to playing fields with marked pitches and goalposts for formal games, there are areas of maintained grass in parks, recreation grounds and other public open spaces throughout the borough that are available and free to access for informal, kick about games. Several football clubs use these spaces for team training at weekends and during light evenings in early and late season as a free alternative to paying for training slots on artificial pitches.

### Quality of Grass Pitches

2.26 Quality of pitches in Swale borough has been assessed through a variety of means, specifically:

- Site assessments using the non-technical data sheet provided by the Football Association.
- PitchPower technical assessment reports and
- Consultation with pitch users and leagues.

2.27 The assessments reach an agreed rating of either:

- Good
- Standard
- Poor

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

2.29 PitchPower Assessment Tool - The football funding partners (Premier League, The FA, Sport England, Football Foundation and Department for Culture, Media and Sport) are increasing efforts to improve the quality of grass pitches in England with the launch of the PitchPower app. Launched in 2020 alongside the Football Foundation Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund, The app is a digital self-assessment tool to allow reports and recommendations to be made more quickly and easily once submitted for review by Grounds Management Association (GMA) regional pitch advisors.

2.30 The tool across mobile app and desktop is open to access by all providers, for example clubs, schools and local authorities. Following a PitchPower Assessment Report, organisations can work towards the recommended dedicated maintenance regime identified to improve the quality of their pitches.

2.31 The PitchPower assessments use the new five step Performance Quality Standard rating system developed by the GMA, with the Football Foundation and Sport England agreeing alignment with the capacity guidance within the existing PPS guidance. Alignment was agreed as follows:

**Table 8: Equivalent PPS quality rating for pitch Performance Quality Standard ratings.**

Performance Quality Standard Rating	Playing Pitch Strategy Quality Rating
Poor	Poor

## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

Performance Quality Standard Rating	Playing Pitch Strategy Quality Rating
Basic	Standard
Good	
Advanced	
High	

2.32 The table below summarises the quality of pitches that are available for community use in Swale Borough by sub area. In total, across the borough seven pitches are rated as good quality, 49 as standard quality and 56 as poor quality.

**Table 9: Sub Area Quality Ratings Natural Grass Football Pitches.**

Faversham Sub Area	Security of Site	Quality Pitches (Site Assessments using non-technical data sheet)	Quality (PitchPower Assessments)	Pitch No.	Pitch Type
Bull Lane Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor	Poor	1	Adult 11v11
Faversham Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor	N/A	2	Adult 11v11
Faversham Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Junior 9v9
Frognaill Lane - Teynham	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Adult 11v11
Herne Hill Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Adult 11v11
Herne hill Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Youth 11v11
ISP Teynham	Unsecured	Poor	N/A	1	Youth 11v11
King Georges Playing Field Faversham	Secured	Standard	Basic	1	Adult 11v11
King Georges Playing Field Faversham	Secured	Poor	Poor	1	Junior 9v9
King Georges Playing Field Faversham	Secured	Poor	Poor	1	Mini Soccer 5v5
Norton Sports Club	Secured	Standard	Basic	1	Adult 11v11
Queen Elizabeth Grammar School	Unsecured	Standard	Basic	1	Adult 11v11
Queen Elizabeth Grammar School	Unsecured	Standard	Basic	2	Youth 11v11
Sharsted Sports Club	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Adult 11v11

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

Faversham Sub Area	Security of Site	Quality Pitches (Site Assessments using non-technical data sheet)	Quality (PitchPower Assessments)	Pitch No.	Pitch Type
Sharsted Sports Club	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Junior 9v9
Sharsted Sports Club	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Mini Soccer 7v7
Sharsted Sports Club	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Mini soccer 5v5
The Abbey School	Unsecured	Standard	Basic	2	Adult 11v11
The Abbey School	Unsecured	Standard	Basic	2	Youth 11v11
The Abbey School	Unsecured	Standard	Basic	1	Junior 9v9
		<b>Good</b>		<b>0</b>	
		<b>Standard</b>		<b>10</b>	
		<b>Poor</b>		<b>14</b>	
		<b>Total</b>		<b>24</b>	

Sittingbourne Sub Area	Security of Site	Quality Pitches (Site Assessments using non-technical data sheet) - Poor	Quality (PitchPower Assessments)	Pitch No.	Pitch Type
Borden Grammar School	Unsecured	Poor	N/A	2	Adult 11v11
Central Park	Secured	Standard	Basic	2	Adult 11v11
Chapel Meadow	Secured	Poor	N/A	3	Youth 11v11
Fulston Manor School	Unsecured	Standard	N/A	2	Adult 11v11
Fulston Manor school	Unsecured	Standard	N/A	1	Junior 9v9
Fulston Manor School	Unsecured	Standard	N/A	1	Mini Soccer 7v7
Herons Park School	Unsecured	Poor	Poor	1	Junior 9v9
Herons Park School	Unsecured	Poor	Poor	1	Mini soccer 7v7
Herons Park School	Unsecured	Poor	Poor	1	Mini soccer 5v5
Hollywell Meadow	Secured	Good	N/A	1	Adult 11v11

# Swale Borough Council

## *Playing Pitch Strategy*

Sittingbourne Sub Area	Security of Site	Quality Pitches (Site Assessments using non-technical data sheet) - Poor	Quality (PitchPower Assessments)	Pitch No.	Pitch Type
Hollywell Meadow	Secured	Standard	N/A	1	Adult 11v11
Hollywell Meadow	Secured	Standard	N/A	2	Youth 11v11
King Georges Playing Field – Park Avenue	Secured	Poor	N/A	2	Adult 11v11
Kemsley Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Adult 11v11
Kemsley Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Mini soccer 7v7
Milton recreation Ground	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Adult 11v11
Milton Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Junior 9v9
Murston Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Adult 11v11
Murston Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor	N/A	2	Youth 11v11
Murston Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Junior 9v9
Murston Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Mini soccer 7v7
Murston Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Mini soccer 5v5
Newington Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Adult 11v11
Newington Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Youth 11v11
Rectory Road Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Junior 9v9
Rodmersham Cricket Club	Secured	Good	N/A	1	Junior 9v9
Rodmersham Cricket Club	Secured	Good	N/A	2	Mini soccer 7v7
Rodmersham Cricket Club	Secured	Good	N/A	2	Mini soccer 5v5
Sittingbourne School	Unsecured	Standard	N/A	3	Adult 11v11
Sittingbourne School	Unsecured	Standard	N/A	1	Junior 9v9
Sittingbourne School	Unsecured	Standard	N/A	1	Mini Soccer 7v7
Sittingbourne Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Adult 11v11
Sittingbourne Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Mini soccer 7v7
The Appleyard	Secured	Poor	N/A	3	Adult 11v11

## Swale Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy

Sittingbourne Sub Area	Security of Site	Quality Pitches (Site Assessments using non-technical data sheet) - Poor	Quality (PitchPower Assessments)	Pitch No.	Pitch Type
The Appleyard	Secured	Poor	N/A	2	Junior 9v9
The Appleyard	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Mini Soccer 7v7
The Playstool	Secured	Standard	Basic	1	Adult 11v11
Westland's Primary School	Unsecured	Poor	N/A	1	Adult 11v11
Westlands Primary School	Unsecured	Poor	N/A	1	Mini soccer 7v7
The Staxson Stadium (Woodstock Park)	Secured	Poor	Poor	1	Adult 11v11
The Staxson Stadium (Woodstock Park)	Secured	Poor	Poor	1	Adult 11v11
The Staxson Stadium (Woodstock Park)	Secured	Poor	Poor	1	Youth 11v11
The Staxson Stadium (Woodstock Park)	Secured	Poor	Poor	1	Junior 9v9
The Staxson Stadium (Woodstock Park)	Secured	Poor	Poor	1	Mini Soccer 7v7
			<b>Good</b>	<b>6</b>	
			<b>Standard</b>	<b>15</b>	
			<b>Poor</b>	<b>38</b>	
			<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	

Sheppey Sub Area	Security of Site	Quality Pitches (Site Assessments using non-technical data sheet) - Poor	Quality (PitchPower Assessments)	Pitch No.	Pitch Type
Co-op Sports club	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Adult 11v11
Co-op Sports Club	Secured	Standard	Basic	1	Youth 11v11
EKC Academy	Unsecured	Standard	N/A	1	Adult 11v11
EKC Academy	Unsecured	Standard	N/A	1	Youth 11v11
Holm Park	Secured	Standard	N/A	1	Adult 11v11
Holm Park	Secured	Standard	N/a	1	Junior 9v9
Holm Park	Secured	Standard	N/A	1	Mini soccer 5v5

# Swale Borough Council

## *Playing Pitch Strategy*

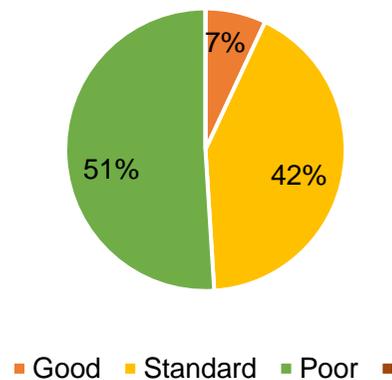
Sheppey Sub Area	Security of Site	Quality Pitches (Site Assessments using non-technical data sheet) - Poor	Quality (PitchPower Assessments)	Pitch No.	Pitch Type
Festival Playing Fields	Secured	Good	Good	1	Youth 11v11
Festival Playing Field	Secured	Standard	Basic	1	Junior 9v9
Festival Playing Fields	Secured	Standard	Basic	1	Mini soccer 7v7
Festival Playing Fields	Secured	Good	Good	1	Mini soccer 5v5
King Georges Playing Field	Secured	Standard	N/A	1	Adult 11v11
Leysdown Coastal Park	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Adult 11v11
Leigh Academy	Unsecured	Standard	N/A	1	Adult 11v11
Range Road	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Mini soccer 7v7
Range Road	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Adult 11v11
Seager Road Sports Ground	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Adult 11v11
Seager Road sports Ground	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Youth 11v11
Sheerness East Working Men's Club	Secured	Standard	Basic	1	Adult 11v11
Sheerness East Working Men's Club	Secured	Standard	Basic	1	Youth 11v11
Sheerness East Working Men's Club	Secured	Standard	Basic	1	Junior 9v9
Sheppey Sports Club	Secured	Standard	Basic	1	Adult 11v11
Sheppey Sports Club	Secured	Standard	Basic	1	Junior 9v9
Sheppey Sports Club	Secured	Standard	Basic	2	Mini soccer 7v7
Sheppey Sports Club	Secured	Standard	Basic	2	Mini soccer 5v5
Shurland Meadow East Church	Secured	Standard	N/A	1	Junior 9v9
Shurland Meadow East Church	Secured	Standard	N/A	1	Mini soccer 7v7
Shurland Meadow East Church	Secured	Standard	N/A	3	Mini soccer 5v5
St Georges Church of England Primary School	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Adult 11v11
St Georges Church of England Primary School	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Youth 11v11

## Swale Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy

Sheppey Sub Area	Security of Site	Quality Pitches (Site Assessments using non-technical data sheet) - Poor	Quality (PitchPower Assessments)	Pitch No.	Pitch Type
Thistle Hill	Secured	Poor	N/A	1	Adult 11v11
			Good	2	
			Standard	24	
			Poor	9	
			Total	35	

2.33 In total, across the borough 8 (7%) pitches are rated as good quality, 50 (42%) pitches as standard quality and 61 (51%) pitches as poor quality.

Figure 3: Swale Borough Quality Ratings Natural Grass Pitches Good, Standard and Poor



2.34 Good quality pitches were found mainly at club sites:

- The Staxson Stadium (Woodstock Park) – Stadia Pitch
- Hollywell Meadow
- Rodmersham Cricket Club – Mini soccer pitches

2.35 The majority of the Local authority sites have poor quality rated pitches. Secondary schools commented that drainage of their facilities is poor.

### Quality of Ancillary Facilities

2.36 The quality of the ancillary facilities (i.e., changing, social and parking) at sites with playing pitches is also mixed.

2.37 Good quality changing rooms have been identified at the following 5 sites:

- Hollywell Meadow
- Faversham Recreation Ground
- Salters Lane – Faversham FC
- Herons Park – School Lane Iwade
- Holm Park

2.38 Eight sites have been identified with no changing provision and 13 sites have been identified with poor changing provision. The quality for pitches and ancillary facilities can be found in table 10 below.

**Table 10: Quality of Grass pitches and ancillary facilities by site and sub area**

Faversham Sub Area	Security of Site	Quality Ancillary Facilities - Good /Standard/ Poor
Bull Lane Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor – Changing facilities provided separately in adjacent village hall – require modernisation.
Faversham Recreation Ground	Secured	Good
Frognall Lane - Teynham	Secured	Poor – needs rebuilding. Developer to provide new pavilion.
ISP Teynham	Unsecured	None
Herne Hill Recreation Ground	Secured	Standard
King Georges Playing Field Faversham	Secured	Standard
Norton Sports Club	Secured	Standard
Queen Elizabeth Grammar School	Unsecured	Poor – Old facilities require modernisation/rebuild.
Salters Lane (Faversham Town FC)	Secured	Good – Recent Football Foundation funding
Sharsted Playing Field	Secured	Standard
The Abbey School	Unsecured	Standard

# Swale Borough Council

## *Playing Pitch Strategy*

<b>Sittingbourne Sub Area</b>	<b>Security of Site</b>	<b>Quality Ancillary Facilities - Good /Standard/ Poor</b>
Central Park Stadium	Secured	Poor – Needs rebuilding
Chapel Meadow	Secured	Poor – aged and needs modernisation
Fulston Manor School	Unsecured	Standard
Hollywell Meadow	Secured	Good
Kemsley Recreation Ground	Secured	None
King Georges Playing Field	Secured	Poor – Needs modernisation
Milton Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor – Needs modernisation
Murston Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor – Needs modernisation
Newington Recreation Ground	Secured	Poor – Needs modernisation
Rectory Playing Field	Secured	None
Rodmersham Cricket Club	Secured	Standard
Hérons Park - School Lane Playing Field	Secured	Good
Sittingbourne School	Unsecured	Standard
Sittingbourne Recreation Ground	Secured	None
The Appleyard	Secured	Standard
The Playstool	Secured	Poor – showers need replacing
Borden Grammar School Sports Field	Unsecured	None
Westlands Primary School	Unsecured	Standard
The Staxson Stadium (Woodstock Park)	Secured	Standard
<b>Sheppey Sub Area</b>	<b>Security of Site</b>	<b>Quality Ancillary Facilities - Good /Standard/ Poor</b>
EKC Academy	Unsecured	Standard
Festival Park	Secured	Poor – club wish to rebuild when lease is agreed with SBC.
Holm Park 1 3G spotlit, 1 Youth 11v11/adult 11v11	Secured	Good
King Georges Playing Field	Secured	None

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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Sheppey Sub Area	Security of Site	Quality Ancillary Facilities - Good /Standard/ Poor
Leysdown Coastal Park	Secured	Standard
Leigh Academy (3G) and adult grass	Unsecured	Standard
Range Road Football Ground	Secured	Poor – Need rebuilding
Seager Road Sports Ground	Secured	Poor – Club has plans to rebuild
Sheerness East Workings Men's Club	Secured	Standard
Sheppey Sports Club	Secured	Standard
Shurlands Meadow (East church CC)	Secured	Standard
Co-op Sports Club	Secured	Standard
St Georges Church of England Primary School	Unsecured	None
Thistle Hill	Secured	None

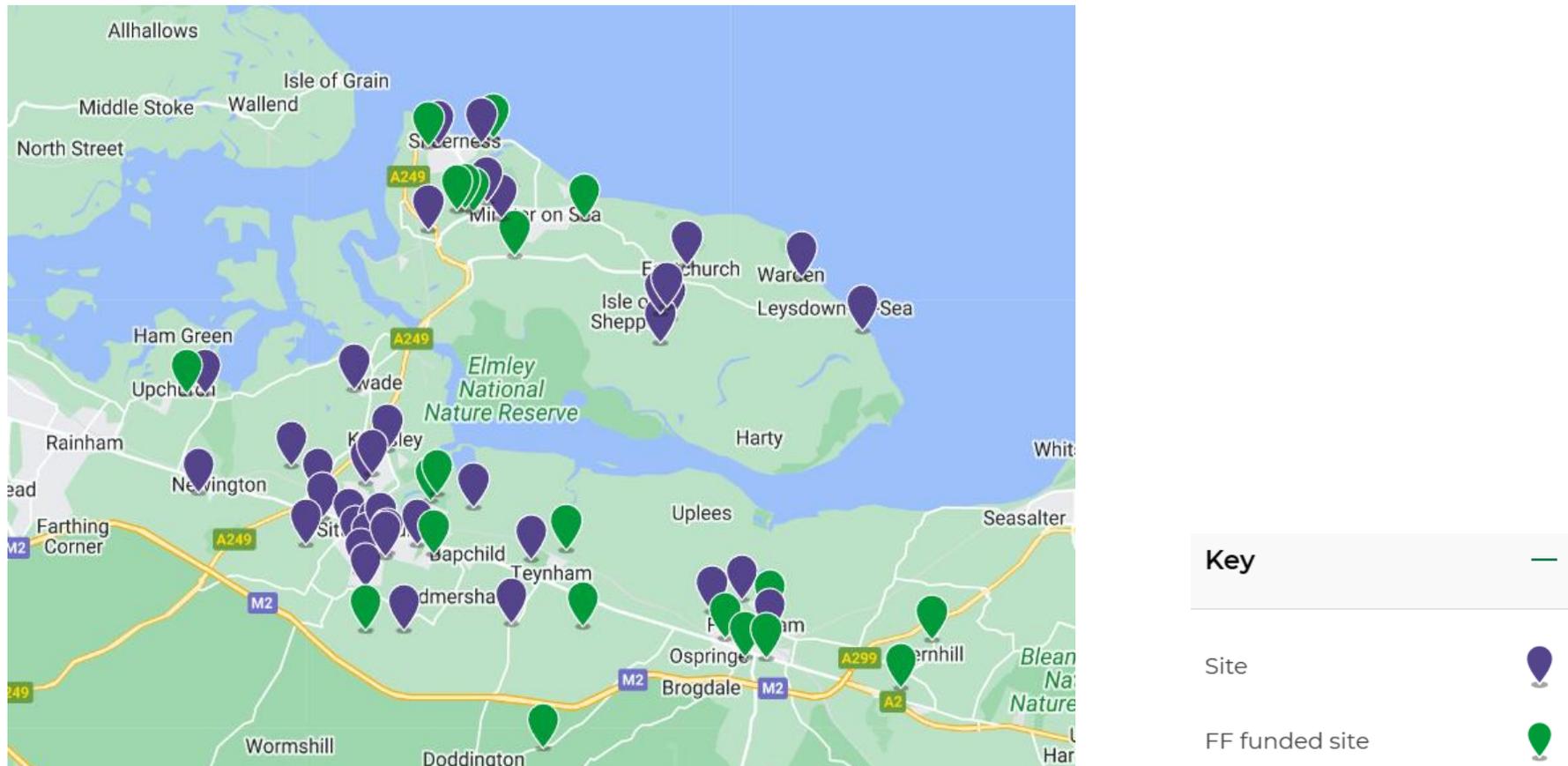
# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

### Distribution of Pitches

2.39 The map below shows that grass football pitches are generally quite evenly distributed throughout the borough aside from in the most northern parts and rural areas.

Map 1: Distribution of Pitches <sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Source: Football Foundation Pitch Finder – January 2023

**Proposed Supply Changes the developments and several active planning applications.**

2.40 There are several planning applications that have been agreed with Section 106 funding attached and several planning applications awaiting a decision.

**Table 11: Proposed Supply Changes**

Planning Reference	Site & Sub Area	Comment
15/504264/OUT	Perry Court – Faversham	Provides for a playing pitch football and additional shared car park facilities. No changing provision so unlikely to contribute to affiliated football demand.
18/502190/EIHYB	Kemsley Recreation Ground & Milton Recreation Ground – Sittingbourne	A formal sports contribution of £711,600 (or £593 per dwelling) has been agreed, and this will be spent on improving provision locally in general accordance with the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy, which identifies the need for proposed basic facilities and some pitch improvements to increase capacity at Kemsley Recreation Ground and pitch improvements at Milton Recreation Ground
14/501588/OUT	Stones Farm, Sittingbourne – Sittingbourne	Formal sports contribution of £160,000 towards enhancement of sports pitches and related facilities in the general area.
21/503914/EIOUT	Land South & East of Sittingbourne – Sittingbourne	Undecided. 8,000 new homes. Sittingbourne FC and new sports hub.
18/503697/FULL	Land East of Station Road Teynham – Faversham	£76,000 for sports.
16/507689/OUT	Orchard View Teynham – Faversham	Illustrative master plan identifies 3.72ha of sports field. 3 senior football pitches, cricket square, changing pavilion and car park. This is the currently unused Frognall Playing Field Site.
16/508602/OU& 21/500766/OUT	Preston Park Faversham – Faversham	(S106 still subject to contract) seeks combined 320 dwellings at £593 per dwelling - £189,760 toward formal sport in Faversham including Love Lane facilities.
SW/14/0045/OUT	Graveney Road and Lady Dane Farm Love Lane - Faversham	Faversham Cricket Club now not moving to site. Considering other uses – football is being promoted, S106 contribution toward facilities £62,000 plus proposes a further contribution from additional, development.
24/502123/EIOUT	Land North and South of the A2 Boughton Bypass Dunkirk Kent ME13 9LG	The current planning application proposes 1815 new houses and formal playing pitch and pavilion provision. There are no current playing pitches within the proposed development site.
23/505533/EIHYB	Land At South East Faversham Between A2 Canterbury/London Road And M2 Faversham Kent ME13 9LJ Duchy of Cornwall – Faversham	Development considering 2500 new homes. Proposal to relocate Faversham Cricket Club and Faversham Football Club expanded.

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

Planning Reference	Site & Sub Area	Comment
Proposal for an additional AGP encompassing a World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant and football turf compliant 3G AGP	The Abbey School - Faversham	Proposal are being considered to provide a 91m x 55m 3G AGP. The proposal is for the 3G AGP to be underpinned by the Football Foundation Lioness Legacy Fund meaning priority access will be for women and girl's provision. and while being WR22 compliant, the AGP will be too small for Faversham Rugby club's adult match play for senior teams but will allow senior training to take place. The school's rugby teams will use it for match play, and it will enable Faversham RUFC to develop junior and age grade sections for boys and girls which can use the AGP for match play and training.
22/502834/EOUT	Land West of Bapchild	Appeal allowed 380 dwellings @ £593.00 per dwelling for sports. Funding for sports facilities within 5Km of development.
22/502086/OUT	Land to the East of Scocles Road, Minster-on-sea.	Pending decision. Up to 650 dwellings. Will require developer contributions for new or enhanced facilities. For playing pitches.
22/503654/EIOUT	Land West of Bobbing	Pending decision up to 2,500 dwellings may require Ball stop Netting for existing cricket facility and developer contributions towards new or enhanced facilities for playing pitches either on site or off-site at existing facilities. This PPS should be used to identify the strategic need alongside Sport England Playing Pitch calculator tool for Football, Cricket, Hockey and Rugby Union.

### Football Supply Aspirations

2.41 Consultation with clubs identified the following:

- Faversham Strike Force has identified the need to improve the pitches at the different sites that the club currently use such as Faversham Recreation Ground; King George Playing Fields, Faversham; Bull Lane Recreation Ground; Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School and The Abbey School. The club has identified a need for a Stadia Step 6 3G AGP in Faversham to service the Step clubs such as Faversham Strike Force and Faversham Town FC. The club are interested in having discussions to secure Section 106 land originally to be used for cricket at Love Lane for football. The club has insufficient access to pitches and has a waiting list for club members and has plans to increase team numbers.
- The small 3G AGP at King Georges Faversham has had a new carpet (2024) and the grass pitches on site need improvements.
- Faversham Recreation Ground. Pitch improvements at this site would complement the improved changing facilities provided from Heritage Lottery Funding.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- A planning application has been submitted by The Abbey School to increase pitch provision. The planning application is for a second 3G AGP also suitable for rugby union training and is being supported by Football Foundation funding via the Lionesses Futures Fund programme. This will therefore provide capacity to support female participation and playing pathways – given prioritisation to supporting women and girls activity.
- Sittingbourne FC are in discussions with developers to relocate and have access to 3G pitch provision, new grass pitches and clubhouse as part of a wider sports hub at Highsted Garden Village. A planning application has been submitted. However, the application is now being considered by the Planning Inspector after intervention by the Governments housing secretary with a decision due later in 2025. Sittingbourne FC youth and women and girls have used alternative sites such as the Appleyard in the past. This will therefore provide significant support.
- Herons FC currently use 2 sites School Lane Iwade, for the younger teams and youth teams at Kemsley Recreation Ground.
- Bredhurst Juniors use Central Park Stadium as their base although 3 adult teams are exported to Medway for match play on a Sunday, the Club also use Newington Recreation Ground and Chapel Meadow for some junior and mini games.
- Range Rovers FC want to improve the pitches and changing facilities at Seager Road.
- Several sites have suffered vandalism in the past e.g., Leysdown Coastal Park and Festival Playing Field has had issues with travellers.
- Clubs have identified several sites in the Sittingbourne area that require pitch improvements these are King Georges Playing Fields, Kemsley Recreation Ground, Murston Recreation Ground, Milton Recreation Ground, Rectory Playing Fields, Sittingbourne Recreation Ground
- All youth football clubs are restricted in developing due to access to pitches and the quality of the pitches.
- New Road FC at Festival Playing Fields wish to develop and improve their pitches and changing accommodation. The club is working towards gaining a lease for the pavilion, and Swale Borough Council have commenced discussions with the Football Foundation around utilising the Home Advantage Fund to help support the project.
- Murston Recreation Ground – Woodcombe Youth FC is exploring options to take on a lease for the site which will allow the potential development of a new pavilion on a section of land immediately adjacent to Church Road.
- Sheerness East Youth has stated that they would like new pitch(es), new / improved drainage, clubhouse renovation/improvement, renovation/improvement. Would be ideal if they could use the playing field of the old Halfway School Site in Southdown Road which is directly next to the club and had a covenant that should be used for playing purposes.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- Beechwood 76 has moved to Sittingbourne School from Frognal Playing Field in the 2024/25 season. The club is in limbo because the Frognall where they have always played is now owned by Trenport Investments Limited. The changing rooms at Frognall have fallen into disrepair/unsafe. There is a planning application to re provide 3 adult 11v11 pitches with a cricket square and new pavilion at the Frognall site.
- Milton and Fulston Juniors FC have had discussions with Fulston Manor School and Swale Athletics Club re continued use of Cromers Corner the clubs home ground and will work with the athletics club to provide an athletics facility on site that does not impact on existing pitches and to improve football and ancillary facilities on site.
- Leo's FC has moved to Sharsted Sports Club (Faversham sub area) from Shurlands (Isle of Sheppey sub area) in December 2024 and wish to create a home ground. The club has increased the number of pitches on site at Sharsted Sports Club by providing an additional 9v9, 7v7 and 5v5 pitch adjacent to the existing 11v11 pitch.
- Faversham Town and Faversham Town Youth FC have combined in 2024 and are in discussions with developers with regards to a second 3G pitch.

### Pitch Demand (Step 3)

2.42 For all four major playing pitch sports included in the PPS scope, the following pitch demand information, has been gathered, as available, by a combination of data collection and review, surveys, and consultations:

*Sources of information* – The sources of information used to establish current football pitch demand were:

- Online survey returns and meetings with 32 clubs confirming patterns of use and any unmet demand. 32 clubs out of 65 clubs (49% of those based in the borough) contributed representing 286 teams (77% of all teams).
- Kent County FA affiliated club/team datasheets 2024/25 for Swale borough plus club and league websites.

### Football Demand

2.43 Findings relating to football pitch demand in Swale are summarised below.

### Clubs and Teams

2.44 In the 2024/25 season, the Kent County FA had 65 affiliated football clubs listed as based in Swale borough. Between them, these clubs had a total of 372 registered teams.

2.45 Demand from the 65 clubs for league football in the borough is shown in full for each club and team in Appendix 1:

- 6 adult male 'Step' clubs with their origins in Swale borough that compete in the National League System:
  - Borden Village First – Step 7
  - Faversham Strike Force Saturday – Step 6.
  - Sheppey Sports FC - Step 6
  - Faversham Town FC – Step 5
  - Sheppey United Firsts – Step 4
  - Sittingbourne FC Firsts – Step 4
  
- 5 adult women's teams in the Women's National League System
  - Faversham Strike Force Women Firsts FC NLS 5 – 6
  - Faversham Strike Force U18 Lionesses FC NLS 5 – 6
  - Faversham town Women FC NLS 5 – 6
  - Sheppey United Ladies FC NLS 2 - 4
  - Sittingbourne FC Ladies NLS 2 - 4
  
- Swale borough affiliated football clubs:
  - 78 other open aged teams aged 17+.
  - 4 other women's teams 17+
  - 73 youth boy's football teams 11v11 (An increase of 11 teams compared to 23/24 season)
  - 45 junior 9v9 boy's teams (Same as 23/24 season)
  - 12 youth 11v11 girls' teams (An increase of 4 teams compared to 23/24 season)
  - 10 9v9 girl's teams (An increase of 2 teams compared to 23/24 season)
  - 77 7v7 mini soccer teams. (An increase of 11 teams compared to 23/24 season)
  - 55 5v5 mini soccer teams. (A decrease of 8 teams compared to 23/24 season)

## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

- 6 disability teams (A decrease of 1 team compared to 23/24 season)
- 2 walking football teams (An increase of 1 compared to 23/24 season)
- 3 Adult 11v11 and 1 mini soccer 7v7 imported teams - Len Valley (1 adult team), and Rochester City FC (2 adult teams and 1 mini soccer 7v7 team).
- Imported teams to Disability Central Venue Abbey School

2.46 The previous PPS 2016 identified 244 football teams playing in Swale. The 2023/24 season FA team data identified 345 teams. This is an increase of 101 teams on the previous PPS. As previously stated, the 2024/25 season identified 372 football teams. This is an increase of 27 teams in one season and overall growth since 2016 of 128 teams in nearly 10 years.

### Youth Football Clubs

2.47 The table below identifies the youth football clubs with 5 or more youth teams registered with Kent County FA play their home fixtures on grass or 3G football turf pitches in Swale borough.

**Table 12: Youth Football Clubs with 5 or More Youth Football Teams Swale Borough 2024/25 Season**

Club		
AFC Minster – 19 teams	Leos FC – 9 teams	Sittingbourne Youth – 30 teams
Bredhurst Juniors – 9 teams	Milton And Fulston Utd – 24 teams	Sheerness East Youth – 6 teams
Dawes Hernhill Herons – 12 teams	New Road FC – 15 teams	Sheppey United Youth – 23 teams
Faversham Strike Force – 43 teams	Park Regis Juniors – 8 teams	Upchurch Colts – 10 teams
Faversham Town Youth – 26 teams	Range Rovers – 10 teams	Woodcombe Youth – 21 teams
Iwade Herons – 16 teams	Rising Stars Youth FC – 5 teams	

### Women and Girls

2.48 Demand growth for football is greatest in women and girls' football as more of the youth football clubs start to establish girls' teams or expand the number of girls' teams as more girls move up the age groups from mixed mini soccer. One catalyst for growth was the victory by the Lionesses in the 2022 EUROs finals. Female football is now growing at a rate of 13% year on year and it is imperative that there is sufficient supply and quality of facilities (both on and off the pitch) to meet this demand. By 2030 it is estimated that 21% of all teams will be women and girls' teams.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- 2.49 Exit routes within the borough from girls to women's football are also beginning to become better established.
- 2.50 Weetabix Wildcats sessions are provided by Faversham Town and Faversham Strike Force FC in the Faversham Sub Area, and Woodcoombe Sports and Social and ISP Teynham in the Sittingbourne Sub Area and Sheppey Sports FC in the Isle of Sheppey Sub Area.
- 2.51 The following women's and girls' league teams played in the borough in the 2024/25 season:
- **Women's Teams**
    - Faversham Strike Force Ladies and U18s
    - Sittingbourne Ladies FC
    - Woodcoombe Sports and Social Ladies 2 teams
    - Sheppey United Ladies
    - New Road Veterans
    - Park Regis Ladies Sunday FC
  
  - **Girl's Teams**
    - AFC Minster
    - Faversham Strike Force
    - Faversham Town youth
    - Leo's Lionesses
    - London City Lionesses
    - Sittingbourne Ladies
    - Milton and Fulston
    - New Road
    - Swale Jets
    - Upchurch colts
    - Woodcoombe Youth
- 2.52 The current 9 women's teams, 12 youth 11v11 girl's teams and 10 junior 9v9 girl's teams. 31 teams in total, is nine more than the women and girl's teams identified in the Swale Local Football Facilities Plan 2022 (11 adult women's teams and 11 youth girl's teams).

### Kent Disability Football League

- 2.53 The 2024/25 football season both junior and adult events took place once a month at the Abbey School 3G AGP. There are 6 adult divisions with 35 teams and 3 junior age group divisions with 21 teams. Total teams equate to 56. In addition to the above Faversham Town FC manages teams that play in the Kent Disability Football League and Faversham Strike Force FC have a SEND football coaching session once a week.
- 2.54 FA Full Time identifies that the Kent Disability Football League took place at the Abbey School 3G AGP. In 2017/18 season there were 5 adult divisions with 29 teams and 4 junior age group divisions with 18 teams. Total teams equate to 47.
- 2.55 There is an increase of 9 teams in the 2024/25 season compared to 2017/18 season. this is a 21% increase in disability teams.

### Displaced Demand

- 2.56 There are 3 Bredhurst Junior adult 11v11 teams playing at pitch sites in Medway.

### Imported Demand

- 2.57 There are two clubs that have imported teams from surrounding local authorities. These are Rochester City plays Saturday afternoon 2 x adult teams playing at the Central Park Stadium in Sittingbourne and a mini soccer 7v7 team and Len Valley FC 1 adult team playing at The Abbey School Saturday afternoons.

### Unmet demand

- 2.58 Several of the larger, more successful community football clubs playing in the borough have indicated they have identified unmet demand for growth and plan to establish additional teams over the next three seasons.
- Faversham Strike Force have a waiting list but cannot cater for more teams without the use of additional playing pitches 2 youth boys 11v11, 4 junior boys 9v9, 1 junior girls 9v9, 7 mini 7v7 and 15 mini 5v5.
  - Faversham Town FC 1 adult men's, 1 adult women's, 1 youth boy's 11v11, 1 junior boy's 9v9, 2 youth girls 11v11 and 2 junior girls 9v9
  - Gillingham Town FC 1 adult men's, 1 adult women's, 1 youth boy's 11v11, 1 junior boy's 9v9, 1 mini 7v7 and 1 mini 5v5
  - Mile Town FC 1 adult men's, 1 adult women's, 2 youth boy's 11v11, 1 junior boy's 9v9, 1 mini 7v7 and 1 mini 5v5
  - Sheerness East Youth FC 2 junior boys 9v9, 1 7v7 and 1 5v5
  - Sheppey United 2 adult teams
  - Borden Village FC 1 adult men's, 2 junior boy's 9v9 and 2 mini 7v7
  - Leos FC 2 mini soccer teams 7v7

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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2.59 The number of new teams based on club's aspirations over the next three seasons equates to:

- Adult 11v11 men = 6 teams
- Adult 11v11 women = 3 teams
- Youth Boy's 11v11 = 6 teams
- Junior Boy's 9v9 = 11 teams
- Junior Girl's 9v9 = 3 teams
- Mini Soccer 7v7 = 13 teams
- Mini Soccer 5v5 = 18 teams

2.60 The above equates to the following additional MES and pitches required at peak time of play for matches only. There is a MES requirement for training times if on grass or 3G AGP. This is considered under 3G AGPs.

- Adult 11v11 men = 6 teams = 3 MES
- Adult 11v11 women = 3 teams = 1.5 MES
- Youth Boy's 11v11 = 6 teams = 3 MES
- Junior Boy's 9v9 = 11 teams = 5.5 MES
- Junior Girl's 9v9 = 3 teams = 1.5 MES
- Mini Soccer 7v7 = 13 teams = 6.5 MES
- Mini Soccer 5v5 = 18 teams = 9 MES

2.61 The growth aspirations of clubs are often tempered by challenges accessing facilities (where clubs may have limited stated growth aspirations, due to already having challenges accessing sufficient facilities for their existing demand and therefore consideration needs to be given to overall trends in growth over recent years to understand what growth may take place over the coming years.

#### Latent demand

2.62 Further expansion of recent initiatives such as veterans' leagues (encouraging over 35s to continue to play or to return to the game), 'Just Play' organised kickabouts, walking football are opportunities to use football as a tool to address this need. Kent FA will be targeting veterans' football in the Kent FA strategy 2024 – 2028. So, there is expected to be an increase in participation within this typology.

2.63 The low current base of expressed demand for girls and women's football (i.e., in terms of the number of girls and women's teams in comparison to boys and men teams) is clear evidence of high levels of latent demand for more female participation in the game. Realising much more of this latent demand among women and girls is a key target of the FA Strategy.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- 2.64 Wildcats is designed to inspire girls aged 5-11 to be involved in the sport. SSE Wildcats Girls' Football Clubs will provide girls with regular opportunities to play football and take part in organised sessions in a fun and engaging environment created exclusively for girls. Kent FA has stated that the increase in demand for women's' and girls' football is already being seen and is likely to continue.
- 2.65 The football clubs in Swale have stated that the demand for girl's football is clearly growing and the need for improved changing provision and appropriate pitches need to be provided to meet this demand. This will lead to an increase in women's football as more teams are likely to be created as current junior girls are retained and adult teams and competition structures are developed (both formal and informal). Kent FA are leading the country in W&Gs football and will be working with schools through County Connects which will see a rise in demand for more clubs and playing opportunities.
- 2.66 The Swale LFFP identifies that overall participation is estimated to grow year on year, equating to an additional 126 teams in the local authority by 2030, of which 37 will come from women and girls.

#### Future Playing Pitch (Football) Demand – Population Growth

- 2.67 As well as growth through latent demand, there will be growth through population demands.
- 2.68 Swale Borough Council are currently in the process of updating and providing a new local plan that will go to 2040.
- 2.69 The local housing need for Swale is currently 1,040 dwellings per annum - a change from 1,086 dwellings at 1 April 2023. This change is largely due to the affordability ratio dropping from 10.95 to 9.6 in March 2024 and a slightly lower household projection for the years 2024 to 2034. **Under the standard method the Council's need for the Plan period to 2040 (16 years) would be 16,640 dwellings.**
- 2.70 For Local Plan drafting and resilience through the consultation process and Local Plan examination process Swale has applied a buffer to this figure (16,640) to cover any removal of housing sites. A buffer of 5% should ensure that there will not be the need to consult on further sites late in the Local Plan drafting process. **Applying a 5% resilience buffer to 16,640 dwellings for the proposed Plan period would result in a proposed Local Plan housing target of 17,472 dwellings.**
- 2.71 A total of 17,472 homes with an average household size of 2.4 persons provides a new resident population of 41,933. The Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator Tool identifies the need and cost for football facilities across Swale up to 2040.
- 2.72 The Playing Pitch Calculator uses figures based on Team Generation Rates and applies the current rates forward to the new population. The TGRs are based on overall existing team numbers, but growth has recently accelerated and is expected to continue at the new rate, so these team generation rates will require an annual update to capture the changing Team Generation Rates moving forward.

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

2.73 The table below identifies the number of football pitches required to meet population increase from new developments by 2040 across Swale. The Playing Pitch Calculator identifies that developer's contributions capital costs towards football between 2024 and 2040 is estimated to be £4,040,286 with lifecycle costs per annum of £806,161 and changing room costs of £10,547,023

**Table 13: Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator – Population Increase 2024 – 2040. Estimated demand and costs for new pitches (matches and training demand) and ancillary provision**

	Number of pitches required to meet the estimated demand	Capital Cost	Lifecycle Cost (per annum)	Changing rooms (number)	Changing rooms (capital cost)
	<b>49.66</b>	<b>£4,040,286</b>	<b>£806,161</b>	<b>47.78</b>	<b>£10,547,023</b>
Adult Football	12.61	£1,511,885	£297,841	25.22	£5,566,484
Youth Football	18.58	£1,924,269	£388,702	22.56	£4,980,539
Mini Soccer	18.47	£604,132	£119,618	0	£0
3G AGP	<b>2.61</b>	<b>£3,347,983</b>	<b>£92,146</b>	<b>5.23</b>	<b>£1,153,986</b>

2.74 Table 14 identifies from the Playing Pitch Calculator Tool the MES generated from the new population per week for each football typology:

**Table 14: Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator – Population Increase 2024 – 2040. Football MES per week.**

Age Group	MES per Week New Population
Adult	12.61
Youth	18.58
Mini Soccer	18.47

2.75 Appendix 1 provides the number of football teams by age group typology currently in Swale Borough based for the 2024/25 Season.

### Capacity Analysis 2024/25 Season

2.76 Stage B data for Swale football provides a worksheet sub area match equivalent sessions analysis. The worksheet provides the name of the site the quality of pitches, number of pitches by pitch typology and capacity of play per pitch weekly and peak time over and under play for each typology (adult 11v11, youth 11v11, junior 9v9 and mini soccer).

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## Swale Borough Council

### ***Playing Pitch Strategy***

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2.77 The summary of the Stage B data work sheet sub area is provided below.

#### **Faversham Sub Area**

2.78 There are 11 adult 11v11 pitches 10 are in secured community use and 1 is unsecured community use at Queen Elizabeths Grammar School. The adult 11v11 pitch at King Georges Playing Field Faversham is overmarked by 2 mini soccer 7v7 pitches. In July 2023 the natural grass pitch at Faversham Town FC was reconfigured as a 3G AGP.

2.79 There are 7 youth 11v11 pitches in the sub area. 3 are in secured community use (The Abbey School 2 and Hernhill Youth 1) and 4 are unsecured community use at ISP Teynham, and Queen Elizabeths Grammar School. The Hernehill Youth 11v11 pitch has some 9v9 play attributed to it. ISP Teynham has no identified use in the 2024/25 season but has been used previously by City Lionesses FC.

2.80 There are 4 junior 9v9 pitches in the sub area. All are in secured community use (1 Faversham Recreation Ground, 1 King Georges Playing Field, 1 Sharsted Sports Club and 1 at The Abbey School.

2.81 Sharsted Sports Club has 1 x 7v7 mini soccer pitch in the Faversham sub area.

2.82 King Georges Playing field has 1 x 5v5 mini soccer pitch and Sharsted Sports Club has 1 5v5 mini soccer pitch in the Faversham sub area.

2.83 The Abbey School 3G pitch is used for match play by Faversham Town Youth FC for under 7s, Kent Disability League and Faversham Strike Force FC.

2.84 The Faversham Town FC 3G pitch is used extensively for Club match play on Saturdays and Sundays with some midweek match play for the academy team and Under 23's development team.

#### **Sittingbourne Sub Area**

2.85 There are 25 adult 11v11 pitches 17 are in secured community use and 8 are unsecured community use.

2.86 There are 8 youth 11v11 pitches in the sub area. All 8 are secured community use.

2.87 There are 10 junior 9v9 pitches in the sub area. 8 are in secured community use and 2 are unsecured community use.

2.88 There are 11 7v7 mini soccer pitches in the sub area. 8 are in secured use and 3 pitches are unsecured community use.

2.89 There are 5 Mini soccer 5v5 pitches in the Sittingbourne sub area. 5 are in secured community use.

### **Sheppey Sub Area**

- 2.90 There are 12 adult 11v11 pitches 9 are in secured community use and 3 are unsecured community use.
- 2.91 There are 6 youth 11v11 pitches in the sub area. 4 pitches are secured community use and 2 are unsecured community use.
- 2.92 There are 5 junior 9v9 pitches in the sub area. All are in secured community use.
- 2.93 There are 5 7v7 mini soccer pitches in the Sheppey sub area, all are in secured community use.
- 2.94 There are 7 Mini soccer 5v5 pitches in the Sheppey sub area. All 7 are in secured community use.

### **Pitch Capacity Rating**

- 2.95 The actual level of weekly play recorded to determine a capacity rating is as follows:

<b>Potential capacity</b>	Play is below the level the site could sustain
<b>At capacity</b>	Play matches the level the site can sustain
<b>Overused</b>	Play exceeds the level the site can sustain

### **Match Equivalent Sessions**

- 2.96 Pitches have a limit of how much play they can accommodate over a certain period 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 and informal use.
- 2.97 One team accessing one pitch is considered to use the pitch for 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week. This is based on them playing home and away fixtures on an alternate basis (therefore only requiring access to their home pitch every two weeks).

### **Actual Spare Capacity**

- 2.98 The table below identifies actual spare capacity by site and pitch type across Swale Borough taken from Appendix 2 Swale Master Football Capacity Analysis. The Actual spare capacity totals 68.5 match equivalent sessions per week and is identified across 44 pitches at twenty-three sites.

# Swale Borough Council

## *Playing Pitch Strategy*

2.99 There are 13 sites with 15 pitches that have no identified use with actual spare capacity totalling 18 match equivalent sessions per week.

**Table 15: Actual (peak time) spare capacity site by site**

Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Capacity rating (match sessions)
Frognall Lane Playing Field	Faversham	*Adult (11v11)	1	1
Sharsted Sports club	Faversham	Adult (11 v 11)	1	0.5
Sharsted Sports Club	Faversham	Mini Soccer 5v5	1	1
Chapel Meadow	Sittingbourne	Youth 11v11	3	1
King Georges Playing Field Park Avenue	Sittingbourne	Adult (11v11)	2	2
Newington Recreation Ground	Sittingbourne	*Adult (11v11)	1	1
Newington Recreation Ground	Sittingbourne	*Youth 11v11	1	1
The Playstool	Sittingbourne	Adult 11v11	1	0.5
Milton Recreation Ground	Sittingbourne	*Junior (9v9)	1	1
Murston Recreation Ground	Sittingbourne	Junior 9v9	2	0.5
Rectory Playing Field	Sittingbourne	*Junior (9v9)	1	1
The Appleyard	Sittingbourne	Junior 9v9	2	0.5
Rodmersham Cricket Club	Sittingbourne	Mini Soccer (7v7)	2	2
		Mini Soccer (5v5)	2	2
Sittingbourne Recreation Ground	Sittingbourne	*Adult (11v11)	1	0.5
		*Mini Soccer (7v7)	1	1
Co-op Sports Club	Sheppey	Adult (11V11)	1	0.5
		Youth (11v11)	1	0.5
Festival Playing Fields	Sheppey	Mini Soccer (5v5)	1	0.5

## Swale Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy

Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Capacity rating (match sessions)
King Georges Playing Field	Sheppey	*Adult (11v11)	1	1
Leysdown coastal	Sheppey	Adult (11v11)	1	0.5
Range Road	Sheppey	*Adult (11v11)	1	1
		*Mini Soccer (7v7)	1	1
Sheerness East Working Men's Club	Sheppey	*Junior (9v9)	1	0.5
Sheppey Sports club		Mini Soccer (5v5)	2	0.5
Shurland Meadow	Sheppey	Junior 9v9	1	1
		Mini Soccer (5v5)	3	3
Thistle Hill	Sheppey	*Adult (11v11)	1	0.5
<b>Total</b>			<b>38</b>	<b>27</b>

\*Pitch types with no identified current match play.

- 2.100 Actual spare capacity is broken down by analysis area and pitch type in the table below. As seen, actual spare capacity is split between the different playing typologies adult, youth 11v11 junior 9v9 pitches and mini soccer 7v7 and 5v5.
- 2.101 Actual spare capacity is most prevalent in the Sittingbourne sub area, amounting to 14 match equivalent sessions per week.
- 2.102 The Sheppey sub area has actual spare capacity of 10.5 match equivalent sessions per week 14 of these are mini soccer. The Faversham sub area has actual spare capacity of 2.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

**Table 16: Actual spare capacity summary**

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match sessions per week)					Total
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Junior 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	
Faversham	1.5	0	0	0	1	2.5
Sittingbourne	4	2	3	3	2	14
Sheppey	3.5	0.5	1.5	1	4	10.5

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match sessions per week)					Total
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Junior 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	
Swale	9	2.5	4.5	4	7	27

### Overplay

- 2.103 Overplay occurs when there is more play accommodated on a site than it can sustain (based on its quality rating), which can often be due to the low carrying capacity of pitches. In Swale, 30 pitches across 14 sites are overplayed by a combined total of 38 match equivalent sessions per week.
- 2.104 All the overplayed pitches in the Faversham sub area reflect a shortfall due to their poor quality. The Sittingbourne sub area has overplay on all poor-quality pitches except for Fulston Manor School (standard quality) overplayed due to the degree of demand accommodated. The Sheppey sub area has overplay on all poor-quality pitches except for Sheerness East Working Men's club (standard quality) overplayed due to the degree of demand accommodated.

**Table 17: Summary of overplay by site**

Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Capacity rating (match sessions)
Herne Hill Recreation Ground	Faversham	Adult (11v11)	1	1.5
		Youth (11v11)	1	0.5
King Georges Playing Field	Faversham	Adult (11v11)	1	4
		Mini soccer 5v5	1	1.5
Queen Elizabeth Grammar School	Faversham	Adult (11v11)	1	0.5
The Abbey School	Faversham	Youth (11v11)	2	1
		Junior (9v9)	1	1
Murston Recreation Ground	Sittingbourne	Adult 11v11	1	1
		Youth 11v11	1	1.5
		Mini soccer 7v7	1	1.5

## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Capacity rating (match sessions)
The Appleyard	Sittingbourne	Adult (11v11)	3	6.5
		Mini Soccer 7v7	1	1.5
Central Park stadium	Sittingbourne	Adult 11v11	2	2
Kemsley Recreation Ground	Sittingbourne	Adult (11v11)	1	0.5
The Staxson Stadium (Woodstock Park)	Sittingbourne	Youth 11v11	1	2.5
		Junior (9v9)	1	2
Festival Playing Fields	Sheppey	Youth (11v11)	1	0.5
		Junior (9v9)	1	0.5
Seager Road	Sheppey	Adult (11v11)	1	2
		Youth (11v11)	1	1
Sheerness East working Men's Club	Sheppey	Adult 11v11	1	0.5
Sheppey Sports Club	Sheppey	Junior (9v9)	1	0.5
St Georges Primary	Sheppey	Adult (11v11)	1	0.5
<b>Total</b>			<b>27</b>	<b>34.5</b>

2.105 Overplay is broken down by analysis area and pitch type in the following table. The highest level of overplay is identified on adult 11v11 pitches (20 match equivalent sessions per week), Sittingbourne sub area has the highest overplay 19 match equivalent sessions per week followed by Faversham 10 match equivalent sessions per week and Sheppey 5.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

Table 18: Summary of overplay

Analysis area	Overplay (match sessions per week)					Total
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Junior 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	
Faversham	6	1.5	1	0	1.5	10
Sittingbourne	10	4	2	3	0	19
Sheppey	3	1.5	1	0	0	5.5
<b>Swale</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>34.5</b>

### Supply and demand analysis

2.106 Having considered supply and demand, the tables overleaf identify current demand (i.e., spare capacity taking away overplay) in each of the analysis areas for the different pitch types, based on match equivalent sessions. Future demand is then also considered, based on future growth identified through population increases. Furthermore, future demand aspirations identified by clubs will be featured in the preceding strategy document to identify what impact this could have on supply if realised.

#### Adult Football

2.107 Overall, in Swale there is a current shortfall of 11.5 adult match equivalent sessions per week including 1.5 match equivalent sessions for exported demand (Bredhurst Juniors 3 adult teams exported to Medway).

Table 19: Supply and demand position for adult pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Exported demand	Total
Faversham	1.5	6	4.5	-	4.5
Sittingbourne	4	10	6	1.5	7.5
Sheppey	3.5	3	0.5		0.5

## Swale Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overlay	Current total	Exported demand	Total
Swale	9	19	10	1.5	11.5

2.108 When accounting for future demand through club initiatives and aspirations there is a need for 4,5 match equivalent sessions per week and population growth 7.14 match equivalent sessions per week. This leads to an overall shortfall of 21 adult 11v11 match equivalent session per week as seen below.

**Table 20: Future supply and demand position for adult 11v11 pitches**

Analysis area	Demand (match equivalent sessions per week)			
	Current total	Future demand (Club Demand)	Future demand (Population Increase)	Future total
Swale	11.5	4.5	12.61	29 (rounded up from 28.61)

### Youth 11v11 Football

2.109 The table below shows that for youth 11v11 pitches, there is currently a shortfall of 4.5 match equivalent sessions per week to accommodate demand. However, the Faversham sub area has a shortfall of 1.5, Sittingbourne sub area 2 and Sheppey 1 match equivalent sessions per week.

**Table 21: Supply and demand position for youth 11v11 pitches**

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overlay	Current total	Exported demand	Total
Faversham	0	1.5	1.5	0	1.5
Sittingbourne	2	4	2	0	2
Sheppey	0.5	1.5	1	0	1
Swale	2.5	7	4.5	0	4.5

## Swale Borough Council

### Playing Pitch Strategy

2.110 When accounting for club demand and aspirations future demand, equates to 3 match equivalent sessions per week, and population growth equates to 11 match equivalent sessions per week across the Borough. The overall shortfall in the future is 19 (18.05 rounded up) match equivalent sessions per week as shown below.

**Table 22: Future supply and demand position for youth 11v11 pitches**

Analysis area	Demand (match equivalent sessions per week)			
	Current total	Future demand Club Initiatives and Aspirations	Future Demand Population Growth	Future total
Swale	4.5	3	11	19 (18.05 rounded up)

### Junior 9v9 Football

2.111 There is current capacity of junior 9v9 pitches equating to 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week across Swale. Faversham sub area has a shortfall of 1 match equivalent session weekly.

**Table 23: Supply and demand position for Junior 9v9 pitches**

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Exported demand	Total
Faversham	0	1	1	-	1
Sittingbourne	3	2	1	-	1
Sheppey	1.5	1	0.5	-	0.5
<b>Swale</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0.5</b>

2.112 When accounting for club initiatives and aspirations future demand, there is a need for 7 match equivalent sessions per week, and future population demand 7.58 match equivalent sessions per week leading to a requirement for an additional 15 (rounded up 14.08) match equivalent sessions per week across the Borough, as shown below.

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

Table 24: Future supply and demand position for Junior 9v9 pitches

Analysis area	Demand (match equivalent sessions per week)			
	Current total	Future demand Club initiatives and aspirations	Future Demand Population Growth	Future total
Swale	0.5	7	7.58	15 (Rounded up 14.08)

### Mini Soccer 7v7 and 5v5 football

2.113 As seen in the table below, mini soccer 7v7 pitches are currently operating with spare capacity of 1.5 match equivalent sessions per week. There is zero capacity across the Faversham and Sittingbourne sub areas.

Table 25: Supply and demand position for mini soccer 7v7 pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Exported demand	Total
Faversham	0	0	0	0	0
Sittingbourne	3	3	0	0	0
Sheppey	1	0	1	0	1
Swale	4	3	1	0	1

2.114 As seen in the table below, mini soccer 5v5 pitches are currently operating with spare capacity of 2.5 match equivalent sessions per week. There is overplay across the Faversham sub area.

Table 26: Supply and demand position for mini 5v5 pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Exported demand	Total
Faversham	0	1.5	1.5	-	1.5
Sittingbourne	3	0	3	-	3

## Swale Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Exported demand	Total
Sheppey	1	0	1	-	1
Swale	4	1.5	2.5	-	2.5

2.115 When accounting for club initiatives and aspirations future demand for both mini soccer 5v5 and 7v7 there are an additional 6.5 match equivalent sessions required per week, future population demand equates to 18.47 match equivalent sessions per week. This leads to a future requirement of 22 match equivalent sessions per week as shown below.

**Table 27: Future supply and demand position for mini soccer 7v7 and 5v5 pitches**

Analysis area	Demand (match equivalent sessions per week)			
	Current total	Future demand Club Initiatives and aspirations	Future demand population Growth	Future total
Swale	3.5	12.5	18.47	28 (27.47 rounded up)

### Conclusion

2.116 Using the supply and demand tables above, the table below summarises the overall Swale supply and demand balance by pitch type.

**Table 28: Summary of supply and demand**

Pitch type	Demand Match Equivalent Sessions			
	Current Demand Capacity Total 2024/25	Future demand Club Aspiration and Initiatives	Future Demand Population Growth	Total Demand 2040
Adult	11.5	4.5	12.61	29 (rounded up from 28.61)
Youth 11v11	4.5	3	11	19 (18.05 rounded up)
Junior 9v9	0.5	7	7.58	15 (Rounded up 14.08)
Mini Soccer 7v7 & 5v5	3.5	12.5	18.47	28 (27.47 rounded up)

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- 2.117 Overall, it is determined that there is currently a future shortfall of all pitch typologies.
- 2.118 Based on the above, with clear capacity shortfalls existing for adult 11v11 youth 11v11, junior 9v9 and mini soccer pitch types, there is a clear deficit of supply to meet current and future football demand within Swale.
- 2.119 Appendix 2,3,4,5 and 6 provide scenarios of need from submitted planning applications that could assist with meeting the future identified shortfalls.

### Football Summary Swale Playing Pitch Strategy 2024

- In the 2024/25 season, including schools, 45 playing fields were used for secured and unsecured community use in the borough providing a total of 120 marked grass football pitches of which 49 are full size (adult 11v11), 21 sized for youth football (youth 11v11), 19 junior football (junior 9v9) and 30 for mini soccer (7v7- 17, 5v5 - 14).
- 36 sites provide 96 (82%) marked natural grass pitches provide secured community use and 9 sites providing 22 (185%) natural grass pitches provide unsecured community natural grass pitches.
- Demand is highest in the Sittingbourne sub area (163 teams 24/25) followed by Faversham (118 teams 24/25), and Sheppey (91 Teams). A total of 372 teams.
- 6 adult male 'Step' clubs with their origins in Swale borough that compete in the National League System:
  - Borden Village First – Step 7
  - Faversham Strike Force Saturday – Step 6.
  - Sheppey Sports FC - Step 6
  - Faversham Town FC – Step 5
  - Sheppey United Firsts – Step 4
  - Sittingbourne FC Firsts – Step 4
- 5 adult women's teams in the Women's National League System
  - Faversham Strike Force Women Firsts FC NLS 5 – 6
  - Faversham Strike Force U18 Lionesses FC NLS 5 – 6
  - Faversham town Women FC NLS 5 – 6
  - Sheppey United Ladies FC NLS 2 - 4
  - Sittingbourne FC Ladies NLS 2 - 4

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- Swale borough affiliated football clubs:
  - 78 other open aged teams aged 17+.
  - 4 other women's teams 17+
  - 73 youth boy's football teams 11v11 (An increase of 11 teams compared to 23/24 season)
  - 45 junior 9v9 boy's teams (Same as 23/24 season)
  - 12 youth 11v11 girls' teams (An increase of 4 teams compared to 23/24 season)
  - 10 9v9 girl's teams (An increase of 2 teams compared to 23/24 season)
  - 77 7v7 mini soccer teams. (An increase of 11 teams compared to 23/24 season)
  - 55 5v5 mini soccer teams. (A decrease of 8 teams compared to 23/24 season)
- There are 3 exported teams playing in Medway.
- In total, across the borough 7% pitches are rated as good quality, 41% pitches as standard quality and 52% pitches as poor quality.
- 5 sites have been identified with Good ancillary facilities and 13 sites with Poor ancillary facilities. 8 sites have no ancillary facilities.
- Overall, there is a shortfall of adult, youth 11v11 and junior 9v9 match equivalent sessions currently and in the future, meaning that there is a clear deficit of supply to meet existing and future football demand within Swale.

### Football Recommendations

1. Protect existing quantity of pitches unless replacement provision can meet Sport England Playing Fields Policy and suitable mitigation, or replacement provision is agreed and delivered.
2. Where pitches are overplayed and/or assessed as 'Poor' quality, prioritise investment (likely to be externally driven) and review delivery model of maintenance. This is to ensure maintenance is of an appropriate standard to sustain use and improve quality to 'standard' or 'good'.
3. Encourage use of PitchPower assessments to assess pitch quality across all providers, especially local authority-maintained provision to maintain a current technical understanding of pitch quality and to evidence need for increased investment at priority sites. Kent FA are working with Parish Councils to ensure PitchPower assessments where pitches are maintained.
4. Support clubs and other eligible organisations to access funding through the likes of Football Foundation to improve quality of grass pitches and to sustain good quality once improved.
5. Consider the potential and feasibility for asset transfer or long-term leasehold to clubs which express interest and are considered realistically able to sustain and maintain sporting provision as required, allowing for greater opportunities to access external funding streams for facility development. Such as the Football Foundation Home Advantage Programme.

6. Given the growth rates for affiliated football, monitor the annual growth via annual reviews to gauge how growth in demand is impacting on demand for grass pitches.
7. Work to accommodate future demand as well as unmet and latent demand at sites which are not operating at capacity, or at sites not currently available for community use that could become so, moving forward.
8. Provide security of tenure for clubs using remaining unsecured sites through community use agreements or through conditions of external investment, particularly at key education sites used by community clubs and teams.
9. Ensure all teams are playing on the pitches of the correct size.
10. Improve ancillary facilities where there is a demand to do so and where it can benefit the wider footballing offer. Ensure any works provide suitability for female and disability access to facilitate increased football formats. Prioritise multi - pitch sites and key sites for female participation and development, seek to provide access to toilet facilities as a minimum requirement at all sites.
11. Where a residential development is of a size to justify on-site football provision, (2 pitches or more) focus on the creation of multi-pitch sites that meet the new demand created by the development and existing shortfalls where possible, with accompanying clubhouse, access and car parking provision included given that single pitch sites without appropriate ancillary facilities can be unsustainable.
12. Where a development is not of a size to justify on-site football provision, secure contributions to improve existing sites within the locality, guided by the priorities identified within the PPS Action Plan and Swale Local Football Facility Plan.



# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

	Adult Teams		Boys						Girls						Mini Teams		TOTALS	Walking Football 6v6	Disability Adult 6v6	Under 13 =16 Disability Development	Disability Junior 6v6	Wheel Chair Football 4 x 4 Men' s	Adult 11v11 Pan disability	Junior 9v9 Disability	SEND	TOTALS	
	Men' s and Mixed 11v11	Ladies 11v11	U16	U15	U14	U13	9v9	U12	U11 9v9	U16	U15	U14	U13	9v9	U12	U11											7 V 7
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>118</b>	
<b>Sittingbourne Sub Area Football Clubs</b>																											
AFC Loose	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									1
AFC Phoenix United	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									1
AFC Rangers	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									1
AFC Swale	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									1
Atheltic Billbowls	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									1
Bang Average Open	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									1
Beechwood 76	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									1
Bordon Village	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									1
Bredhurst Juniors Seniors Sunday	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2									2
Bredhurst Juniors	3	0	1	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	10									10
Calm Kickabout	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									1
Gillingham Town	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									1
Inter Sittingbourne	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									1
Iwade Herons	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	6	16										16







### 3. Third Generation Turf (3G) Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPS)

#### Introduction

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

**Table 29: AGP type and sport suitability**

Surface	Category	Comments
Rubber crumb	Long Pile 3G (60mm with shock pad)	Rugby surface – must comply with World Rugby type 22 and/or RFL Community Standard, requires a minimum of 60mm pile.
Rubber crumb	Medium Pile 3G (55-60mm)	Preferred football surface. Suitable for noncontact rugby union/league practice or play.
Rubber crumb	Short Pile 3G (40mm)	Acceptable surface for some competitive football.
Sand	Sand Filled	Competitive hockey and football training.
Sand	Sand Dressed	Preferred hockey surface and suitable for football training.
Water	Water based	Preferred hockey surface and suitable for football training if irrigated.

- 3.2. England Hockey’s Artificial Grass Playing Surface Policy (June 2016) advises that 3G pitches should not be used for hockey matches or training and that they can only be used for lower-level hockey (introductory level) when no sand-based or water-based AGPs are available. Hockey AGP supply and demand is set out in Section 6 of this assessment.
- 3.3. Competitive football can take place on 3G surfaces that have been FA or FIFA certified and a growing number of 3G pitches are now used for competitive match play when passed an approved test and registered on the FAs 3G pitch register at mini soccer and youth level. The recommended dimensions for a full size 3G artificial grass pitch for football are 100 x 64 metres. This extends to an area of 106 x 70 metres with the recommended minimum three metre run off area included. These dimensions allow for all age group match play to take place including adults, youth under 17/18 and younger age groups via overmarked pitches, e.g. the marking out of two 9v9 pitches for under 11/12s. If a new pitch is proposed to measure below the recommended dimensions, then justification must be provided for this in relation to the identified needs it will provide for and/or site constraints. In doing so, the impacts of a reduced pitch size in meeting current and future needs must be considered, e.g. a pitch not providing the recommended dimensions for adult match play and/or only being able to accommodate one rather than two overmarked 9v9 pitches. This justification needs to be included in the planning application details submitted to the relevant Local Planning Authority for the new pitch. Unless otherwise stated and justified for an individual pitch, proposals in this PPS for any new 3G artificial grass pitches are based on providing them to the recommended dimensions.

## Swale Borough Council

### Playing Pitch Strategy

- 3.4. FIFA 3G pitch certification is required to host competitive adult match play at Step 3 and below, whilst for teams playing at Steps 1 or 2 pitches are required to have FIFA Pro standard certification, further information on which is included later in the section. Football training can take place on sand and water-based surfaces but is not the preferred option.
- 3.5. World Rugby (WR) produced the 'Performance Specification for Artificial Grass Pitches for Rugby', more commonly known as 'Regulation 22' that provides the necessary technical detail to produce pitch systems that are appropriate for rugby. The artificial surface standards identified in Regulation 22 allows matches to be played on surfaces that meet the standard. Full contact activity, including tackling, rucking, mauling, and lineouts can take place. All full-size World Rugby compliant 3G pitches feature on the RFU register, including expiry dates of certification. Upon registration, World Rugby compliancy is valid for two years before renewal and retesting is required.
- 3.6. Competitive rugby league play and contact practice is permitted to take place on 3G pitches which are deemed by the RFL to meet its Performance Standard for Synthetic Turf Pitches. Pitches fall under two categories; community club pitches which require retesting every two years and elite stadia pitches which require an annual retest. Much of the criteria within the RFL performance standard test also forms part of the World Rugby test, consequently World Rugby certified 3G pitches are considered by the RFL to be able to meet rugby league requirements and are deemed suitable for rugby league use subject to passing an additional exclusive RFL performance standard test.

### Current Provision

#### 3G Football Turf Artificial Grass Pitches (FTPs)

- 3.7. Table 30 shows the existing full size 3G AGPs in Swale:

**Table 30: Existing 3G AGPs Swale**

Site Name	Analysis Area	No. of Pitches	Available Period	Community Use	Peak	Security of tenure	Size	Pile	Sports Lighting (Yes or No)	FA Registered	Year Built/ Refurbished
Borden Grammar School ME10 4DB	Sittingbourne	1	Monday – Friday – 18.00 - 20.00 hours	Weekends Saturday 09.00 – 18.00 hours –	Sunday 09.00 – 18.00 hours	Secured – Leased to club 28 years remaining	97m x 62m	Sand Filled	Yes	No	Built 2003 carpet replaced 2018. Needs new LED lights.

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

Site Name	Analysis Area	No. of Pitches	Available Community Use Peak Period	Security of tenure	Size	Pile	Sports Lighting (Yes or No)	FA Registered	Year Built/ Refurbished
			<p>Used by Sittingbourne Hockey Club:  Mondays 6pm – 7pm  Tuesdays 7pm – 9pm  Wednesdays 6.00pm – 9.30pm  Thursdays 7pm – 8.30pm  Saturdays 9am – 6pm</p> <p>Only suitable for non-contact rugby union training and football training but not match play.</p> <p>Suitable for hockey training and match play.</p>						
Faversham Town Football Club	Faversham	1	<p>The AGP has community use, with a formal community use agreement in place. The pitch markings are restricted to 11v11 due to ground grading requirements for the level of football. The AGP is used by Faversham Town FC and Faversham Strike Force for match play (Saturday PM 2024/25 season) and training Monday evening and Thursday evening). This allows for more slots at the Abbey School to be filled with new youth, ladies, and disability teams around the town. Faversham Town FC Kent Youth League Teams are using the 3G pitch for match play on Saturdays and Sundays. With some midweek match play. The pitch is heavily used.</p>	Secured	100m x 64m	Rubber Crumb	Yes	Expires May 2026	Built 2023

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

Site Name	Analysis Area	No. of Pitches	Available Community Use Peak Period	Security of tenure	Size	Pile	Sports Lighting (Yes or No)	FA Registered	Year Built/ Refurbished
Westlands School ME10 1PF	Sittingbourne	1	Used by Gore Court Hockey Club: Tuesday 3.5 hours (hockey) Wednesday 3.5 hours (Hockey) Saturdays 9am – 6pm Sundays 9.30pm – 12 Noon  Football – Monday 3 hours and Thursday 3 hours.  Only suitable for non-contact rugby union training and football training but not match play.  Suitable for hockey training and match play	Secured Leased from School until 2032 (7 years remaining)	100m x 60m	Sand Filled	Yes	No	New carpet and shock pad provided July 2023. Needs new LED lights.
Sittingbourne School ME10 4NL	Sittingbourne	1	Monday – Friday – 17.00 - 21.00 hours  Weekends Saturday 09.00 – 18.00 hours  Sunday 09.00 – 18.00 hours  Used Monday-Thursday 6pm – 8pm Saturday 11am – 12 noon  Only suitable for non-contact rugby union training and football training but not match play  Suitable for hockey training but too small for adult match play.	Unsecured	54m x 35m	Sand filled	Yes	No	Built 2007  Standard quality will need a new carpet. Issues with school not having funds to replace originally funded by Football Foundation.

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

Site Name	Analysis Area	No. of Pitches	Available Community Use Peak Period	Security of tenure	Size	Pile	Sports Lighting (Yes or No)	FA Registered	Year Built/ Refurbished
Sittingbourne School ME10 4NL	Sittingbourne	1	<p>Monday – Friday 17.30 – 21.00 hours</p> <p>Weekends Saturday 10am – 4.30pm Sunday 10am – 8pm</p> <p>Fully booked 17.30 – 21.00 Monday to Thursday Friday booked 17.30 – 19.00. Saturday booked 10.am – 11,30am Sunday available all day.</p> <p>Has some spare capacity late evening and Fridays and for match play at weekends. Only suitable for football, non-contact rugby union training. Not suitable for hockey</p>	Unsecured	70m x 104m	Long pile 40mm	Yes	Yes, Expires May 2026	<p>Built 2012 – will need a new carpet soon.</p> <p>Issue with school not having funds to replace carpet. Originally funded by Football Foundation.</p>
The Abbey School	Faversham	1	<p>Monday – Friday 18.00 - 21.30 hours</p> <p>Weekends Saturday 10am – 4.30pm Sunday 09.00 – 4.30 hours</p> <p>Pitch is fully booked Monday – Thursday with some capacity Friday evenings and has bookings at the weekend. Saturday morning and afternoon and Sundays 10.00am -4.00pm in the football season.</p> <p>Only suitable for football, non-contact rugby league and rugby union training. Not suitable for hockey</p>	Secured	100m x 61m	Long Pile	Yes	No Expired	Built 2012 will require a new carpet. School to replace 2025.

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

Site Name	Analysis Area	No. of Pitches	Available Community Use Peak Period	Security of tenure	Size	Pile	Sports Lighting (Yes or No)	FA Registered	Year Built/ Refurbished
Leigh Academy ME12 3JQ	Sheppey	1	<p>Available hours - Monday – Friday 18.00 – 21.00 hours – 15 hours</p> <p>Available hours - Weekends Saturday and Sunday 09.00 – 18.00</p> <p>Fully booked Monday – Friday 18.00 – 21.00 – Booked 15 hours. Saturday fully booked 09.00 – 12.00. 12.00 – 13.00 2/3rds available, 13.00 – 17.00 available – Booked 3 2/3rds hourly slots.</p> <p>Sundays 09.00 – 17.00 Available</p> <p>Only suitable for football, non-contact rugby league and rugby union training. Not suitable for hockey</p>	Unsecured	91m x 55m	Long	Yes	Yes, Expires May 2028	Year built 2013 will require refurbishment (Carpet over 10 years old).
Sheppey United FC ME12 3DB	Sheppey	1	<p>Only suitable for football, non-contact rugby league and rugby union training. Not suitable for hockey.</p> <p>Restricted community use due to match play mid-week and weekends.</p>	Secured	100 x 64	Long	Yes	Yes, expires May 2026	Built 2021
Sittingbourne Golf Centre ME9 9AR	Sittingbourne	1	<p>Monday – Friday 09.00 – 20.30 hours</p> <p>Weekends Saturday and Sunday 09.00 – 13.00</p>	Secured	44m x 33m (7v7) Commercial Management	Long 57mm	Yes	No	Built 2021

## Swale Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy

Site Name	Analysis Area	No. of Pitches	Available Community Use Peak Period	Security of tenure	Size	Pile	Sports Lighting (Yes or No)	FA Registered	Year Built/ Refurbished
King Georges Playing Field ME13 8TH	Faversham	1	Used by Faversham Strike Force and local schools and clubs by appointment.  Fully utilised.	Secured		Long	Yes	Yes, Expires May 2027	Built 2013 Carpet relayed 2024.
HMP Elmley ME12 4DZ	Sheppey	1	Not available for public use	Unsecured		Sand filled			
HMP Swaleside ME12 4AX	Sheppey	1	Not available for public use	Unsecured		Long			

- 3.8. Central Stadium, Sittingbourne had a small sand dressed AGP that is not recorded in Pitch Finder or Active Places Power. The sand dressed AGP is not suitable for match play or training as it has fallen into complete disrepair and is surrounded by a lorry park. There may be an opportunity to repurpose to provide small-sided 3G AGP training provision although access may be an issue.
- 3.9. There is a 7v7 3G AGP built in 2021 at Sittingbourne Golf Centre managed commercially with sports lighting but not FA 3G pitch registered.
- 3.10. In total there are 6 3G AGPs, 5 are full size and 1 5v5. The Abbey School FA 3G Pitch registration has expired. The remaining 4 full size 3G AGPs and 1 5v5 have FA 3G Pitch registration and all 6 3G AGPs have sports lighting. These are:
- The Sittingbourne School Full Size – Sittingbourne
  - The Abbey School full Size – Faversham
  - Faversham Town FC full size - Faversham
  - King George's Playing Field (Faversham Strike Force FC) 5v5 – Faversham
  - Leigh Academy Full size – Sheppey
  - Sheppey United FC Full Size - Sheppey

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- 3.11. A new full size 3G AGP which is FA 3G Pitch Registered opened at Faversham Town FC at the start of the 2023/24 season. The AGP has community use, with a formal community use agreement in place. The pitch markings are restricted to 11v11 due to ground grading requirements for the level of football. The AGP is used by Faversham Town FC and Faversham Strike Force for match play and training. This will allow more slots at the Abbey School to be filled with new youth, ladies, and disability teams around the town. Faversham Town FC Kent Youth League Teams are using the 3G pitch for match play on Sundays.
- 3.12. There are no World Rugby Regulation 22 AGPs provided in Swale currently. There is a need for additional sports lighting for training for Rugby Union in Sittingbourne and Faversham sub areas. Any new 3G AGPs proposed for these two sub areas should consider the need for sports lighting training facilities for Rugby Union and a World Regulation 22 compliant pitch.
- 3.13. There are 6 hours of football use at Westlands School AGP weekday evenings. For hockey to expand its training needs there will be a need for football to explore transferring football from Westlands School AGP onto any new nearby 3G pitch developments where appropriate.
- 3.14. Football clubs across Swale particularly in the Faversham and Sittingbourne sub areas have stated the need for additional 3G football turf pitches for training and match play. The existing 3G AGPs are full Monday to Friday except for some late-night hours and Friday evenings, times that are not always suitable for use. Sittingbourne Clubs include Bredhurst Juniors and Seniors, Sittingbourne FC. Park Regis, Upchurch. Faversham clubs include Dawes Hernhill Herons and Faversham Strike Force
- 3.15. The way 3G AGPs are used is rapidly changing; current line-marking systems allow for match play across all formats of football (5 v 5, 7 v 7, 9 v 9 and 11 v 11). This enables significant levels of match-play to be transferred from grass to 3G.

### Future Provision 3G AGPs

- 3.16. The 2024 LFPP for Swale highlights the following 3G AGP need:
  - **The Abbey School** - The PPS identifies a small shortfall (0.3 pitches) in the Faversham analysis area. However, due to limited viable options and a more significant shortfall (3 x 3G FTPs) in the Sittingbourne analysis area, the LFPP steering group has recommended adding an additional 3G Football Turf Pitch (FTP) at The Abbey School. This recommendation considers the additional multi-sport needs identified within the Faversham analysis area along with football demand and the potential to accommodate some football demand from the Sittingbourne analysis area. At the time of writing, The Abbey School is progressing with a funding application through the Football Foundation. The current 3G FTP on site is in need of resurfacing and the school plans to undertake this over the next 12 months. It is planned that the second 3G FTP will be a World Rugby 22 compliant surface. Faversham Rugby Club is a current user group of the existing 3G FTP.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- **Sittingbourne Area** - There is a shortfall of three 11v11 3G FTPs in Sittingbourne analysis area. However, considering the proposed addition of a 11v11 3G FTP at The Abbey School, potential impact on demand from the Sittingbourne area should be monitored. Two potential site locations are identified which are Central Park Stadium and Westlands School. A feasibility study is required to determine which site is most suitable. Central Park Stadium operates as a greyhound racing venue and features a dilapidated (not in use) sand based AGP to the north of the greyhound track. Swale Borough Council is in the process of reviewing options for the site and there is potential to explore the development of an 11v11 3G FTP in the area where the sand based AGP is located. In addition, there are also two full size equivalent grass pitches on site. Westlands School require the development of a new 11v11 3G FTP on the school's playing fields. No third site for 11v11 3G FTP development has been identified and opportunities should be monitored moving forward.
- **Future Growth** - The FA has seen unprecedented growth in football over the last five years, particularly in the youth and women & girls' game. Overall participation is estimated to grow year on year, equating to an additional 126 teams in the local authority by 2030, of which 37 will come from women and girls. This could represent the equivalent of up to three additional 11v11 3G FTPs. Allowances have been made for ancillary provision for each pitch if needed, however this is subject to the final agreed location of any additional future provision and an assessment as to whether there are existing suitable facilities available.

### Other considerations

- 3.17. King George Playing Field Faversham is heavily used by Faversham Strike Force FC. The small sided 3G AGP is heavily used by the club and local schools with some rugby union non-contact training taking place. The AGP carpet has been replaced in the summer 2024. The club are heavily invested into using The Abbey School 3G AGP and Faversham Town FC 3G AGP. In addition, any opportunity to provide a second 3G AGP at the Abbey School should be considered. Particularly if it could be constructed to World Rugby Regulation 22 requirements.
- 3.18. Leigh Academy Sheppey surface will require resurfacing soon.
- 3.19. Sittingbourne School – the small, sided sand based AGP is used totally for football training and no hockey takes place. The existing pitch is too small for either Gore Court or Sittingbourne Hockey Clubs use. There is potential to provide a 3G AGP surface at this site if the Swale Borough Playing Pitch Steering Group can agree to resurface the small, sided sand based to provide a 3G AGP.
- 3.20. Sheppey Area – Sheppey United have built a 3G AGP for its own use for matches and training. The club hires out the 3G pitch for community use but again this is restricted mid-week for match play. There is no formal community use agreement in place as part of the planning conditions.

Supply and Demand Analysis

FA Training Model

- 3.21. The FA considers high quality third generation artificial grass pitches as an essential tool in promoting coach and player development. AGPs can support intensive use and as such are great assets for both playing and training. Primarily such facilities have been installed for community use and training, however, are increasingly used for competition which The FA wholly supports.
- 3.22. The FA's long-term ambition is to provide every affiliated team in England the opportunity to train once per week on a 3G surface with sports lighting, together with priority access for every Charter Standard Community Club through a partnership agreement. The FA standard estimates that one full size AGP can service 38 teams.
- 3.23. Table 31 considers the number of full size 3G pitches required if every team was to remain training within the analysis area in which they play. The 3G requirement is rounded up to the whole number so every team has an opportunity to train.
- 3.24. The model assumes 38 football teams per full size 3G AGP. The number of teams in each sub area includes walking and disability football teams.

**Table 31: Current demand for 3G pitches in Swale for Affiliated Football Team Training (38 teams per pitch)**

Analysis Sub Area	Current No. of Teams	Current Requirement	Current No. of Full size 3G	Current Shortfall 2024/2025
Faversham	118	3.1	2.5	0.6
Sittingbourne	163	4.3	1	3.3
Sheppey	91	2.4	2	0.6
<b>Swale Total</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>

- 3.25. When applying the above methodology on a Swale Council basis there is a current need for a further 4.5 full size 3G pitches across Swale
- 3.26. The current team numbers have been used with the population projections using the new housing needs 2024 – 2040. A total of 17,472 homes with an average household size of 2.4 persons provides a new resident population of 41,933. These figures have been inputted into Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator Tool to identify the need and cost for 3G AGP football facilities across Swale up to 2040. The PPC identifies a future need for 2.61 x 3G AGPs.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- 3.27. In addition, the unmet demand of 58 teams has been considered 58 teams divide by 38 equates to 1.53 3G AGPs. In total with the population future demand this equates to 4.14 3G AGPs required in the future to meet new population and latent demand. This should be reviewed on an annual basis as team demand changes on an annual basis.
- 3.28. There is a current need for a further 4.5 full size 3G pitches (2024/25 season), rising to 9 (8.64 rounded up) to cater for future demand and increased population by 2040. This is in addition to the 5.5 3G AGPs which currently service Swale.
- 3.29. In conclusion, there is an insufficient supply of full size 3G pitches to meet current and anticipated future training demand based on the FA training model in Swale. There is a need for further provision to be provided currently in the Sittingbourne sub area. It must be noted though that there will be restrictions on use mid-week on the full-size pitches at Faversham Town FC and Sheppey United 3G AGP due to midweek matches.
- 3.30. The need for Rugby Union training on a World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant pitch in Faversham and Sittingbourne could grow the future requirement by 2040 for 3G pitches to 10 x 3G AGPS.
- 3.31. To ensure that current and any future supply are maintained to a good enough standard to accommodate demand, providers are encouraged to put sinking funds in place to ensure long-term sustainability. Annual budgets must include a sink fund to provide funds for replacing the surface every 7 - 10 years depending on use. This will allow for re-surfacing to take place when required and will ensure that FA certification remains in place.
- 3.32. Any new 3G pitches should comply with FA certification once installed and be placed on the FA 3G Pitch Register to allow for match play as well as training.

### Rugby Union

- 3.33. Providing World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant 3G pitches in Swale is a potential resolution to the grass pitch shortfalls identified in Part 4 Rugby of this report. For training midweek there is a minimum requirement for 1.5 match equivalent sessions for Faversham Rugby Club currently although this could easily grow with the development of the women and girls' game to 2.5 match equivalent sessions mid-week. Sittingbourne Rugby Club will have no sports lighting at the proposed new ground at Wises Lane and will for the time being use the sports lighting land adjacent to the club house at Gore Court. If Sittingbourne Rugby Club were to transfer mid-week training to a World rugby Regulation 22 compliant 3G pitch the requirement would currently be for 8 MES per week.
- 3.34. Discussions should be held between the FA Football Foundation and RFU when considering any additional 3G AGPs in the Sittingbourne sub area. Sittingbourne Rugby Club have a need for training under sports lighting mid-week and a World Rugby Regulation 22 AGP would meet this need.
- 3.35. Provision of an additional 3G AGP at The Abbey School Faversham that was also World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant would meet the midweek training requirements for Faversham Rugby Club.

### 3G Summary

- There is a clear need for an increase in 3G pitch provision in Swale to meet current and future needs.
- With 372 football teams currently affiliated to Swale there is a potential shortfall of five (4.5 rounded up) full size 3G pitches to meet training demand (2024/25 season). This grows with unmet demand and population growth to a shortfall in 20240 of 9 x 3G pitches and possibly 10 when considering rugby union use of 3G pitches to 2040.
- There is a requirement for suitable AGP provision to provide a solution for rugby union training requirements in Faversham and Sittingbourne.
- Consideration should be given to a new 3G AGP with World Rugby Regulation 22 compliance at The Abbey School Faversham
- King George Playing Field Faversham is heavily used by Faversham Strike Force FC. The small sided 3G AGP is heavily used by the club and local schools with some rugby union non-contact training taking place.
- Leigh Academy Sheppey surface will require resurfacing soon.
- Sittingbourne School – the small, sided sand based AGP is used totally for football training and no hockey takes place. The existing pitch is too small for either Gore Court or Sittingbourne Hockey Clubs use. There is potential to provide a 3G AGP surface at this site.
- There is a need to consider transferring football use at Westlands School AGP to 3G AGPs when developed in the Sittingbourne sub area

### 3G Pitch and Artificial Grass Pitch Recommendations

1. All existing AGPs are required to be protected in the Local Plan including the disused AGP at Central Park. All AGPs should be protected unless equivalent or better replacements are to be provided or appropriate mitigation is provided that meets Sport England Playing Pitch Policy and National Governing Body guidelines.
2. There is an insufficient supply of full size 3G pitches to meet current and anticipated future demand for football in Swale. Particularly in the Sittingbourne Sub Area and Faversham sub area.
3. There are currently 5.5 full size 3G pitches across Swale (Includes Faversham Town FC). All are available for community use. The Abbey School is required to renew FA Registration and Sheppey United FA registration expires May 2025. The other 3G AGPs are FA Registered. There is an existing need for 10 (9.8 rounded up) 3G pitches and a current shortfall of 4.5 3G pitches rising to 9 (8.64 rounded up) to cater for future demand and increased population by 2040. This is in addition to the 5.5 3G AGPs which currently service Swale.
4. Consider a 3G AGP that can be utilised as a World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant AGP as well as football in the Sittingbourne Sub Area particularly provide for rugby training mid-week and the Faversham sub area.
5. If hockey wishes to expand its training times at Westlands School AGP, there will be a need to relocate 6 hours of football midweek to a 3G AGP in the Sittingbourne sub area when new 3G AGPs are developed.

6. Consider and discuss with hockey the reconfiguration of either Westlands School or Borden Grammar School AGP to a 3G AGP if a 2 x AGP facility is built for hockey in the future. This would still leave 3 x AGPs for Hockey demand.
7. To ensure that current and any future supply are maintained to a good enough standard to accommodate demand, providers are encouraged to put sinking funds in place to ensure long-term sustainability. Annual budgets must include a sink fund to provide funds for replacing the surface every 7 -10 years depending on use and maintenance. This will allow for re-surfacing to take place when required and will ensure that FA certification remains in place.
8. New 3G pitch design proposals must be in accordance with appropriate and relevant sources technical guidance and performance quality standards which are appropriate to external artificial sports facilities for example, flood risk, sports lighting, acoustics (Noise) planning guidance and provide an infill containment strategy.
9. Any new 3G pitches should comply with FA certification once installed and be placed on the FA 3G Pitch Register to allow for match play as well as training.

## 4. Rugby Union

### Introduction

- 4.1. This section of the Swale Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report 2024 details the current picture of facility supply and demand for the playing pitch sport of **rugby union** - at playing field sites in the borough.
- 4.2. The Rugby Football Union (RFU) is split into six areas across the country with a workforce team that covers development, coaching, governance and competitions. It governs a variety of formats and programmes, including 15-aside, 10-aside, 7-aside and Tag rugby as well as the O2 Touch programme, now part of the T1 Rugby programme. Its aim is to increase and retain participation within the game, with facilities needing to be appropriate, affordable and accessible to enable this. For traditional rugby union, there are generally three playing formats, based on the age of the players involved. These are now known as age grade mixed rugby (previously mini), age grade boys/girls rugby (previously junior) and senior rugby.
- 4.3. For rugby union pitch dimension sizes please refer to the table below.

**Table 32: Rugby union pitch dimensions**

Age	Pitch type	Maximum pitch dimensions (metres) <sup>2</sup>
U7	Age grade mixed	20 x 12
U8	Age grade mixed	45 x 22
U9	Age grade mixed	60 x 30
U10	Age grade mixed	60 x 35
U11	Age grade mixed	60 x 43
U12	Age grade mixed	60 x 43
U13	Age grade boys/girls	90 x 60 (60 x 43 for girls)
U14 +	Senior	100 x 70 <sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Recommended run off area for all pitch types requires five-metres each way and a minimum in-goal length of six metres.

<sup>3</sup> Minimum dimensions of 94 x 68 metres are accepted.

### Pitch Supply (Step 2)

- 4.4. For all the playing pitch sports included in the scope of the PPS for Swale Borough, the supply information has been gathered, as far as possible, by a combination of data collection and review, and face to face consultations with all clubs.
- 4.5. Sources of information – The sources of information used to establish current pitch supply were latest Sport England Active Places Power audit for playing pitches; relevant NGB, county board and club websites; NGB insight data (where available); face to face consultation with the three rugby clubs based in Swale Borough and information provided by school’s surveys.
- 4.6. Site visits and inspections – Visits to the rugby pitches in Swale Borough and visual, non-technical inspection.

### Rugby Supply

- 4.7. Findings relating to rugby pitch supply in Swale Borough is summarised below.

### Number and sizes of pitches

- 4.8. In the 2024/25 season, there are 6 sites providing 10 senior rugby pitches across Swale Borough. Sheppey sub area has 3 senior pitches. Faversham sub area has 3 senior pitches, Sittingbourne sub area 4 senior pitches.

**Table 33: Swale Rugby Union Pitches by Sub Area**

Sub Area	Site	Number of Senior Pitches	Secured Community use
Faversham	Faversham Recreation Ground	1	Yes
	Queen Elizabeth Grammar School	1	No
	The Abbey School	1	No
Sittingbourne	Fulston Manor School	2	No
	Gore Court Cricket Club (Top Field)	2	Yes
Sheppey	Sheppey Rugby Club	3	Yes

### Secured Community Use Pitches

4.9. There are 3 secured community use club sites one in each sub area:

- Faversham Sub Area – Faversham Rugby Club – Faversham Recreation Ground
- Sittingbourne Sub Area – Sittingbourne Rugby Club – Gore Court (Top Field)
- Sheppey Sub Area – Sheppey Rugby Club

4.10. Currently Sheppey Rugby Club is the only Club that owns its site with 3 senior rugby pitches (one with sports lighting), and clubhouse.

4.11. Sittingbourne Rugby Club currently use 2 senior rugby pitches (no sport lighting) on the Top Field at Gore Court Sports Club and have use of the clubhouse and train on grass land adjacent to the clubhouse. Although the pitches are secure community use the rugby club has become the largest user of Gore Court Sports Club clubhouse but recognises that it needs its own facilities for the future. Gore Court Sports Club purchased the Top Field in the late 1960's early 1970's and originally used for cricket and hockey. The clubhouse social area is in reasonable condition. However, the changing rooms require upgrading and modernisation. The majority of works recently undertaken on the clubhouse have been undertaken by the rugby club. The car park has recently been re surfaced by the housing developer at Wises Lane (Part of the development agreement). Sittingbourne Rugby Club will eventually move to a new home with two senior pitches (no sports lighting) it is hoped a third pitch will be available for use on the proposed primary school site and a clubhouse provided as part of a housing development at Wises Lane.

4.12. Faversham Rugby Club have a single senior pitch (no sports lighting) at Faversham Recreation Ground rented on a weekly basis to them but owned by the local authority and their clubhouse is part of the Lodge at Faversham Recreation Ground leased from Swale Borough Council. The club currently has a 10-year lease on the Lodge. The club have been in the Lodge for several years as the only tenant until the local authority received Heritage funding and the Lodge was redesigned. The original lease ceased. The redesign of the Lodge with the Heritage Funding has allowed a café style kiosk to open onto the main park with a small loss of space for the rugby club and the kiosk has been leased to a commercial caterer. The club still has access to a garden area, bar and changing facilities at the Recreation Ground. These facilities are in reasonable condition.

4.13. The other rugby pitch sites are all unsecured community use sites in education ownership.

### Pitch Quality Community Use Rugby Union Sites.

4.14. All sites have been visited, and non-technical site assessments have been undertaken to provide an overall quality score that is in line with the RFU guidance provided below. Face to face consultation has taken place with all three rugby clubs.

## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

- 4.15. The maintenance and drainage scores determine the capacity of a pitch in match equivalents. The drainage scores are based upon a pipe drained system at 5m centres that has been installed in the last eight years; and a slit drained system at 1m centres. If systems are beyond this, then they are natural drainage – adequate or inadequate depends on pitch condition.

**Table 34: RFU pitch assessment guidance**

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

- 4.16. Pitch Power assessments have been conducted at Sheppey RFC and Sittingbourne RFC and awards made for maintenance (2 Basic pitches) at Sheppey RFC and equipment at Sittingbourne RFC.
- 4.17. Table 35 below shows the pitch scores following a non-technical quality assessment of the pitches that are used by the community for rugby in Swale Borough and discussions with the three rugby clubs. This allows us to understand the capacity of each pitch from a community use perspective, using the capacity calculations in Table 34.

**Table 35: Community sites and individual pitch capacity**

Site Name	Type of pitch	Drainage Score	Pitch maintenance score	Pitch Capacity	Overall capacity of site
Sheppey RUFC	Pitch 1 (Training Pitch Sports Lighting)	D1	M1	2	6
Sheppey RUFC	Pitch 2 (Main Pitch outside clubhouse)	D1	M1	2	
Sheppey RUFC	Pitch 3 (Back pitch previously football)	D1	M1	2	
Sittingbourne RUFC	Pitch	D1	M1	2	4
Sittingbourne RUFC	Pitch 2	D1	M1	2	
Faversham RUFC	Pitch	D1	M0	1.5	1.5

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- 4.18. Sheppey Rugby Club – considers that it's three available rugby pitches (one with sports lighting) are good quality naturally drained and adequate, however pitch maintenance could be improved. Based on a drainage Score D1 and maintenance score M1 the three pitches have capacity for 6 MES per week. The training pitch also accommodates match play. In total match play and training MES equates to 4.25 per week currently.
- 4.19. Sittingbourne Rugby Club – considers the 2 pitches it has use of are of good quality. Both pitches are adequately naturally drained. Pitch quality maintenance could be improved. Based on a drainage Score D1 and maintenance score M1 the two pitches have capacity for 4 MES per week. The club trains on a separate grass area with partial sports lighting next to the Gore Court Sports Club pavilion.
- 4.20. Faversham Rugby Club – considers its 1 pitch to be adequately naturally drained but has had safety issues with tree roots from nearby trees protruding through the pitch. The maintenance of the pitch could be improved. Based on a drainage Score D1 and maintenance score M0 the pitch has capacity for 1.5 MES per week. The club trains at the Abbey School either on the 3G AGP or in the school sports hall. Neither AGP or sports hall can be used for full contact training. The current training requirement is for 2 men's teams and 1 women's team 1 night per week equivalent to 1.5 match equivalent sessions.

### Proposed Future Rugby Supply Changes

- 4.21. The identified supply changes are:
1. Sittingbourne Rugby Club via a section 106 agreement will have access to a new site in Wises Lane as part of a housing development. The planning application has been approved. The build has started late 2024 with an expected completion of late 2025 early 2026. Planning application 23/500263/REM - Approval of Reserved Matters for Scale, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout being sought for the Sittingbourne Rugby Club and Community Hub including, 2x RFU compliant rugby pitches and associated parking, pursuant to application 17/505711/HYBRID. The new site will comprise of a sports club and community building, sports club car park, and 2 senior rugby pitches all to RFU standards. The agreement is that the site will be delivered before 180 houses are built. However, sports lighting was not agreed as part of the planning permission. A junior rugby pitch and two mini rugby pitches are to be provided on the new primary school playing fields across the road from the new rugby club development. Sittingbourne Rugby Club will be the incumbent sports club and have said they will have access to the junior and two mini rugby pitches on the school site. The club foresee a need to continue use of midweek training sessions on the existing grass area currently being used at Gore Court Sports Club due to no sports lighting being allowed at the Wises Lane site. In April 2025 a planning application was submitted as part of reserved matters for Wises Lane development and provides for a full-size rugby training pitch on open space across the road from the new rugby club development. The planning application does not provide for sports lighting and is awaiting a decision.
  2. Faversham Rugby Club has stated during consultation that they have discussed land requirements with the Duchy of Cornwall Development at South East Faversham and that there is a possibility of land being available near to the M2, which would be large enough for 2 senior pitches a car park and a club house for their rugby use, if the development was agreed. The club believe they would have to find the funding to build the clubhouse and develop the pitches. However, no land has been allocated in the master plan provided as part of Application Reference: 23/505533/EIHYB Site: Land At South East Faversham Between A2 Canterbury/London Road And M2 Faversham Kent ME13 9LJ. The club currently train on the 3G AGP at the Abbey School and require use of a World Regulation 22 Rugby Compliant 3G AGP.

3. Sheppey Rugby Club has recently completed the erection of a single-story front and single storey rear extension to the existing clubhouse. The club is modernising the current facilities so it can cater for its wide membership base of women, children and men. The new extension and refurbishment will meet RFU guidance for space and design to provide changing rooms, lavatories, and showers. There is a larger area for match officials along with a suitable first aid room/physio room for the club's members. An extension of the bar area allows comfortable viewing of the pitch from the clubhouse and provides a separate function area and members area. The club is being supported via the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund and RFU Impact funding for Social Space.

### Pitch Demand (Step 3)

- 4.22. For all four sports of the main playing pitch sports, the following pitch demand information, has been gathered, as available, by a combination of data collection and review, surveys and face to face club consultations:
- 4.23. The sources of information used to establish current rugby pitch demand were:
  - Face to face consultations with all three rugby clubs.
  - Sport England tools - i.e. Active Places Power and Sports Market Segmentation (SMS) trends and latent demand.
  - Club and league websites.

### Rugby Demand

- 4.24. Findings relating to rugby pitch demand in Swale Borough for the 2024/25 season are summarised below.

### Clubs and Teams

- 4.25. The clubs have the following teams 2024/25:
  - **Sheppey RFC** (source face to face consultation) – 1st XV men's, 2nd XV men's, 1st XV Women's, U14 youth team. U10, U9, U7 age grade teams. Sheppey RFC are a targeted Focus Club (Women and Girls) 2025/26. Growth of 142% in age grade 24/25. Included as part of the RFU Schools Rugby Manager network delivering T1 Rugby and increasing profile in local schools. Part of the partnership work with Girl Guides.
  - **Sittingbourne RFC** (Source face to face consultation) – 2 adult (male) teams, Development Team playing one game per month, Vets team playing 4 games a year and a Vets team playing in the Kent County Cup. 1 women's team that partners with other rugby clubs to provide participants for matches due to numbers. U17 male, U16 male, U15 male, U14 male, U13 male, U12 male, U11 and U10 mixed, U9 mixed, U8 mixed and Under 7's and 6s mixed.
  - **Faversham RFC** (Source face to face consultation) – 2 adult male teams and 1 women's team.

**Table 36: Number of Rugby Union Teams – Swale Borough**

Site Name	Adult Men	Adult Women	Juniors U18 – U19	Juniors 13 – 17 years	Minis U12 – U6
Sheppey RUFC	2	1	-	1	3
Sittingbourne RUFC	3	1	-	5	7
Faversham RUFC	2	1	-	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>

### Training and Match Demand

- 4.26. The capacity for pitches to regularly accommodate competitive play, training and other activity over a season is determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality, and therefore the capacity, of a pitch affect the playing experience and people’s enjoyment of playing rugby. In extreme circumstances it can result in the inability of the pitch to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off-peak times.
- 4.27. To enable an accurate supply and demand assessment of rugby pitches, the following assumptions are applied:
- All sites that are used for competitive rugby matches are included on the supply side.
  - As a winter sport most mid-week training will take place under sports lighting.
  - All competitive play is on senior sized pitches (except for where mini or junior pitches are provided).
  - From U14 upwards, teams play 15 v 15 on a full-size pitch and U13s will also take place within the boundaries of a posted pitch.
  - Age Graded (U7-12) play on half of a senior pitch i.e., two teams per senior pitch.
  - For senior and youth teams the current level of play per week is set at 0.5 for each match played based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis (assumes half of matches will be played away).
  - For U7 – U12 age graded play per week is set at 0.25 for each match played based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis and playing across half of one adult team pitch or mini pitch.
  - Most male adult club rugby match play takes place on a Saturday afternoon.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- Colts Rugby U18 match play takes place on Sundays,
- All U13-U16 rugby takes place both midweek for training and weekends on a Sunday morning for match play.
- Women's rugby union takes place traditionally on Sunday's pm unless it is University Rugby, which takes place Wednesday afternoons.
- Training that takes place on club pitches is reflected by the addition of team equivalents. 2 teams training on one pitch on one evening = one match equivalent session.
- Quality of pitches determines the capacity or number of times a pitch can be played. The RFU has set guidance standards for the number of matches and match equivalent sessions that each grass pitch type should be able to accommodate without adversely affecting its current quality (pitch capacity).
- **Sheppey RFC:**
  - 2 adult (male) teams play on Saturday afternoons (1 MES) and train on Wednesday (1 MES).
  - Women's team train Sunday mornings (0.5 MES) and play Sunday afternoons (0.5 MES).
  - Youth U14's (0.5 MES) and 3 age graded teams train and play Sunday AM (0.75 MES).
  - Match play equates to 1.5 MES per week and 1 MES for midweek training under sports lighting and 1.75 MES for Sunday training. This totals 4.25 match and training equivalent sessions per week.
- **Sittingbourne RFC**
  - 1st XV men's, 2nd XV men's. The Vets team competes in the Kent County cup. Adult teams play on a Saturday afternoon (1.5 MES match play Saturdays) and train on Tuesday and Thursday evenings (3 teams = 1.5 MES midweek training per week x 2 equates to 3 MES per week).
  - Women's team train Wednesday midweek 0.5 MES and play Sunday afternoons 0.5 MES
  - U17's play Sunday mornings 0.5 MES and train Wednesday and Thursday midweek 1 MES.
  - U16's train or play every Sunday morning 0.5 MES and train Wednesday midweek 0.5 MES
  - U15's train or play every Sunday morning 0.5 MES and train Tuesdays midweek 0.5 MES.
  - U14's train or play every Sunday morning 0.5 MES and train Tuesdays midweek 0.5 MES
  - U13's train or play Sunday mornings 0.5 MES and train Thursday midweek 0.5 MES
  - U12's train and play Sunday mornings 0.25 MES
  - U10's and U11's train as a combined squad Sundays 0.25 MES
  - U9's train and play Sunday mornings 0.25 MES per week.
  - U8's train and play Sunday morning 0.25 MES per week.
  - U6's and 7's combine training on Sunday morning 0.25 MES per week

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- The total training and match equivalent sessions per week equate to 13.75 MES. Midweek training equates to 8 MES per week, Sunday training equates to 3.75 MES and match play Saturdays equates to 1.5 MES per week and 0.5 MES Sunday pm.
- **Faversham RFC**
  - 1st XV and 2nd XV men's play Saturday pm 1 MES and train on Tuesdays midweek 1 MES.
  - Women's team plays Sunday pm 0.5 MES and trains on Tuesdays midweek 0.5 MES.
  - The total training and match equivalent sessions per week equate to 3 MES. Midweek training equates to 1.5 MES, match play Saturdays equates to 1 MES per week and 0.5 MES Sunday pm.

### Unmet Demand

- 4.28. Clubs have identified unmet demand and aspire to further growth of members and informal participation although consider that that they are operating at capacity on the playing areas they currently have available.
- 4.29. Sheppey RFC aspire to provide the following additional teams: 1 senior vets man's and U12s team = 0.5 MES senior match play and 0.5 MES senior training under sports lighting. 0.25 MES training/match play weekly.
- 4.30. Sittingbourne RFC aspire to provide 2 youth girl's teams to support the new women's team. 1 MES training mid-week and 1 MES match play weekends weekly.
- 4.31. Faversham RFC if they had the coaching staff and facilities would like to start a junior section. Not allocated but a scenario 1 junior team and 3 minis would require an additional 0.5 MES mid-week training and 1.25 MES weekend match play and training.
- 4.32. The total additional match play and training MES weekends would be 3 MES and mid-week sports lighting training would be 2 MES.
- 4.33. The targeted development work of RWC 2025 for the women and Girls' game. This should specifically increase participation rates along with development work such as Inner Warrior, Love the game and Rugby Impact 2025 Facility development.

### Latent Demand

- 4.34. By providing and promoting more opportunities for social play (e.g. vets sides) and less physically demanding forms of the game (e.g. Adult Touch and TAG) it is clear there is good potential to grow the game further in Swale.

### Displaced Demand

- 4.35. There is no imported demand for rugby in Swale. In other words, no clubs and teams based in other local authority areas play or train on rugby pitches in Swale as their home ground.

### Future Demand (Rugby Growth) Population Demand

- 4.36. As well as growth through latent demand, there will be growth through population demands.
- 4.37. Swale Borough Council are currently in the process of updating and providing a new local plan that will go to 2040.
- 4.38. The local housing need for Swale is currently 1,040 dwellings per annum - a change from 1,086 dwellings at 1 April 2023. This change is largely due to the affordability ratio dropping from 10.95 to 9.6 in March 2024 and a slightly lower household projection for the years 2024 to 2034. **Under the standard method the Council's need for the Plan period to 2040 (16 years) would be 16,640 dwellings.**
- 4.39. For Local Plan drafting and resilience through the consultation process and Local Plan examination process Swale has applied a buffer to this figure (16,640) to cover any removal of housing sites. A buffer of 5% should ensure that there will not be the need to consult on further sites late in the Local Plan drafting process. **Applying a 5% resilience buffer to 16,640 dwellings for the proposed Plan period would result in a proposed Local Plan housing target of 17,472 dwellings.**
- 4.40. A total of 17,472 homes with an average household size of 2.4 persons provides a new resident population of 41,933. The Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator Tool identifies the need and cost for rugby pitches and changing rooms from these developments across Swale up to 2040.
- 4.41. The table below identifies the number of rugby pitches required to meet population increase from new developments by 2040 across Swale. The Playing Pitch Calculator identifies that developer's contributions capital costs towards rugby union between 2024 and 2040 should be £479,701 with lifecycle costs per annum of £88,745 and changing room costs of £1,142,816. The new population generates match play MES of 2.59 MES per week and training MES under sports lighting 2.92 MES per week. The current unmet demand equates to 3 MES match play/training weekends and 2 MES weekday under sports lighting per week. The total projected additional MES is 4.65 weekly for match play and training at weekends and 3.86 MES mid-week for training under sports lighting.

## Swale Borough Council

### Playing Pitch Strategy

Table 37: Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator – Population Increase 2024 – 2040.

	Number of pitches required to meet the estimated demand	Capital Cost	Lifecycle Cost (per annum)	Changing rooms (number)	Changing rooms (capital cost)
Total Natural Grass Pitches Rugby Union	2.59	£479,701	£88,745	5.18	£1,142,816

### Summary of Demand, supply and Capacity for Weekly Training and Match Play

- 4.42. Sheppey Rugby Club has a demand for 1 MES training mid-week. The women's team and juniors train on Sunday. Table 40 identifies spare capacity on the training pitch midweek of 1 MES. The spare mid-week 1 MES can accommodate some Sunday training and match play. Overall, there is a spare capacity of 1.75 MES.

Table 38: Sheppey Rugby Club Summary of Demand, Supply and Capacity for weekly Training Equivalent Sessions and Match Play

Club	Demand Training Equivalent Sessions Per Week	Supply Training equivalent sessions per Week	Overplay Training Equivalent Sessions Per Week.
Sheppey Rugby Club Training Pitch with sports lighting	1	2	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Cub	Demand Match Equivalent Sessions per Week and Sunday Morning Training for Women's Team	Supply Match & Training Equivalent Sessions per Week	Overplay Match and Training Equivalent Sessions per Week
Sheppey Rugby Club			
Pitch 2 and 3 have capacity for 2 MES each and 1 MES Training Pitch from table above	3.25	5	1.75
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3.25</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Overall 1.75</b>

- 4.43. Sittingbourne Rugby Club has demand for 8 MES mid-week training. Sunday training equates to 3.75 MES and match play Saturdays equates to 1.5 MES per week and 0.5 MES Sunday pm. There are no pitches with sports lighting for mid-week training.
- 4.44. Training takes place adjacent to the clubhouse at Gore Court. On the basis that there is no official pitch as such for training there is a shortfall of 8 MES. There is a 1.75 shortfall of match play and training MES at the weekends.

## Swale Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy

**Table 39: Sittingbourne Rugby Club Summary of Demand, Supply and Capacity for weekly Training Equivalent Sessions and Match Play**

Cub	Demand Training Equivalent Sessions Per Week	Supply Training equivalent sessions per Week	Overplay Training Equivalent Sessions Per Week
Sittingbourne Rugby Club Training	8	0	8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>
Cub	(A) Demand Match Equivalent Sessions per Week and Sunday Morning Training	(D) Supply Match & Training Equivalent Sessions per Week	(E) Overplay Match and Training Equivalent Sessions per Week
Sittingbourne Rugby Club	5.75	4	1.75
Pitch 1 and 2			
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5.75</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.75</b>

- 4.45. Faversham Rugby Club has a demand for 1.5 MES of training mid-week. Training currently takes place on the 3G AGP at Abbey School and must be non-contact as this type of pitch is not suitable for full contact rugby union. On this basis there is a shortfall of 1.5 MES training need. There is an even balance between demand and supply for match play MES.

**Table 40: Faversham Rugby Club Summary of Demand, Supply and Capacity for weekly Training Equivalent Sessions and Match Play**

Cub	Demand Training Equivalent Sessions Per Week	Supply Training equivalent sessions per Week	Overplay Training Equivalent Sessions Per Week.
Faversham Rugby Club Training	1.5	0	1.5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.5</b>
Cub	(A) Demand Match Equivalent Sessions per Week and Sunday Morning Training	(D) Supply Match & Training Equivalent Sessions per Week	(E) Overplay Match and Training Equivalent Sessions per Week
Faversham Rugby Club	1.5	1.5	0
Pitch			
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>0</b>

## Swale Borough Council

### Playing Pitch Strategy

- 4.46. Table 41 below provides a summary of the current 2024/25 season demand, supply and capacity for weekly training equivalent sessions and match play across Swale Borough for rugby union. There is a shortfall of 8.5 MES for mid-week weekly training under sports lighting and an equal balance for match play and weekly training at weekends.

**Table 41: Swale Borough Rugby Union Summary of Current 2022/23 Season Demand, Supply and Capacity for weekly Training Equivalent Sessions and Match Play**

Cub	Demand Training Equivalent Sessions Per Week	Supply Training equivalent sessions per Week	Overplay Training Equivalent Sessions Per Week.
Swale Borough Training Mid-Week Under Sports Lighting	10.5	2	8.5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8.5</b>
Cub	(A) Demand Match Equivalent Sessions per Week and Sunday Morning Training	(D) Supply Match & Training Equivalent Sessions per Week	(E) Overplay Match and Training Equivalent Sessions per Week
Swale Borough Match Play and Weekend Training	10.5	10.5	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>0</b>

- 4.47. Table 42 below identifies the current 2024/25 season and future 2040 demand and supply for rugby club MES and pitches. The shortfall in 2040 equates to 15.36 MES for weekly training under sports lighting and 6.65 MES for weekend match play and training. These figures preclude any match play under sports lighting.

**Table 42: Current and Future Demand to 2040 For Community Rugby Club Pitches**

	(A) Current Demand Match Equivalent Sessions 2024/25	(B) Current Capacity Weekly Training and Match Equivalents (2024/25)	(C) Current Shortfall Match Equivalent Sessions (2022/23) = (B – A)	(D) Participation Increase Aspirations	(E) Projected Population Increase (2024/25 – 2040)	Future deficit match and Training Equivalent Sessions (2040)
Weekly Training MES Under Sports Lighting - midweek	10.50	2	8	2	2.92	11.36
Weekly Match and Training MES - weekend	10.50	10.50	2	3	2.59	7.59

- 4.48. Given the above-mentioned shortfalls, priority should be placed first and foremost on alleviating overplay. Given that the majority of overplay is a result of training demand on grass pitches, it is considered that there is a potential need for additional sports lighting, pitch quality improvements and/or access to World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant AGPs. Scenarios exploring this are evidenced below.

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

### Scenario - Improving pitch quality.

- 4.49. Improving pitch quality and drainage of existing rugby union pitches and the impact on weekly capacity is considered in the table below.
- 4.50. Sheppey Rugby Club pitch improvements would increase capacity by 4.5 MES per week. Providing room weekly Mes to meet future growth.
- 4.51. Sittingbourne Rugby Club pitch improvements to its existing pitches at Gore Core Sport Ground would meet the shortfall for match play and weekend training 1.75 MES by increasing capacity by 3 MES. It would not impact on mid-week training as neither pitch has sports lighting. There would still be a deficit of 8 MES for mid-week training.
- 4.52. Faversham Rugby Club has balanced play for match play but a shortfall of 1.5 MES for training mid-week under a pitch with sports lighting. As the club has no access to a rugby pitch with sports lighting. This shortfall cannot be met by pitch quality improvements. Improving the pitch quality would provide an additional 2 MES allowing for additional junior teams to be able to play matches at weekends but not provide for training MES under sports lighting.

**Table 43: Improving Quality and Drainage of Rugby Pitches and impact on weekly capacity.**

Site	Match & Training Capacity Weekly	Overplayed MES Weekly	Improve Quality of Maintenance/ Drainage	Overplay/Spare Capacity after improving quality of Drainage and Maintenance Weekly
Sheppey Sports Club	Pitch 1 (Outside clubhouse) 2 MES Pitch 2 (with sports lighting) 2 MES Pitch 3 (Back pitch) 2MES (All pitches Maintenance M1/ Drainage D1) Total 6 MES	Total 0.25 MES	Maintenance at highest. M2 (2 MES) Improve drainage to pipe and slit increase to D3/M2 MES (3.5 MES x 3 pitches = 10.5 MES) from D1/M1 (2 MES x 3 pitches = 6 MES) weekly improvement = 4.5 MES Total weekly increased capacity equates to 4.5 MES.	6.25 MES
Sittingbourne Rugby Club	Pitch 1 - 2 MES Pitch 2 – 2MES (Both pitches Maintenance M1/ Drainage D1) Total 4 MES	Total 12.75 MES	Improve maintenance to M2 and drainage to pipe and slit D3 = M2/D3 (2 pitches x 3.5 MES) = 7 MES from M1/D1 (2 x 2 MES) = 4 MES Total weekly increased capacity equates to 3 MES	9.75 MES

## Swale Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy

Site	Match & Training Capacity Weekly	Overplayed MES Weekly	Improve Quality of Maintenance/ Drainage	Overplay/Spare Capacity after improving quality of Drainage and Maintenance Weekly
Faversham Rugby Club	Pitch 1 - (Maintenance MO/ Drainage D1)  Total 1.5 MES	6 MES	Improve maintenance to M2 and drainage to pipe and slit D3 = M2/D3. (1 pitch x 3.5 MES) = 3.5 MES from M0/D1 (1.5 MES x 1) = 1.5 MES.  Total weekly increased capacity equates to 2 MES.	2 MES
<b>Totals</b>				<b>5 MES</b>

- 4.53. By improving the maintenance to good M2 and providing pipe and slit drainage D3 across all sites and pitches still leaves a shortfall of 5 MES.
- 4.54. This indicates that there is a need for additional pitches or access to a World Rugby Regulation 22 Compliant pitch to alleviate this overplay.

### Scenario – Sittingbourne Rugby Club Wises Lane

- 4.55. If Sittingbourne Rugby Club moved to Wises Lane and the quality of the pitches was maintenance M2, and drainage was pipe and slit D3 M2/D3 for each of the pitches this would equate to 2 senior pitches and 1 junior pitch and 2 mini rugby pitches providing 3.5 MES each equating to 17.5 MES. This meets the current match play and weekend training MES requirements of 5.75 MES but will not meet the 11 MES mid-week training with sports lighting shortfall as none of the pitches will have sports lighting.

### Scenario- Increasing Access to Rugby Union Sports Lighting Training Provision

- 4.56. If Faversham Rugby Club could have access to 2 rugby pitches as part of any new development in Faversham and these pitches had sports lighting and provided maintenance M2 and drainage was piped and slit the training and match play MES would provide for 7 MES. This would provide for the current 3 MES required for training and match play weekly and provide the necessary MES weekly for junior teams to be developed.
- 4.57. Sittingbourne Rugby Club weekly training midweek equates to 8 MES. The club does not have access to pitches with sports lighting. If 1 pitch with sports lighting was provided this would be equivalent to 3.5 MES weekly. There would still be a shortfall of 4.5 MES. If the 2 senior and the school junior pitch at the proposed Wises Lane site had sports lighting this would provide 1.5 MES weekly under sports lighting but would still not be sufficient to meet match play MES at the weekends, Consideration should be given to provision of a World Rugby 22 Regulation 22 pitch to meet current and future demand.

- 4.58. An option could be to explore in partnership with the FA Football Foundation provision of a World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant AGP as there is a shortfall of Football 3G AGPs in the Sittingbourne sub area. The planning application for an additional 3G pitch that will provide training at the Abbey School Faversham will provide a World Rugby 22 compliant rugby AGP is also a need to explore the possibility of providing a World rugby Regulation 22 compliant AGP in the Faversham that can be used for senior training only and possibly age grade training and match play. This would provide for the current training needs of Faversham Rugby Club.

### Rugby Union Summary Findings

- 4.59. This section summarises the findings from the rugby analysis, which will form the basis of the recommendation and action plan section for SBC Playing Pitch Strategy 2024.
- There is a clear shortfall of rugby union capacity to meet current demand in Swale, with a significant shortfall identified and with all three clubs utilising overplayed provision. When factoring in population growth, the overall shortfall exacerbates. There is a significant shortfall in training pitches with sports lighting particularly in the Faversham and Sittingbourne sub areas.
  - In the 2024/25 season, there are 6 sites providing 10 senior rugby pitches across Swale Borough. Faversham sub area has 3 senior pitches, Sittingbourne sub area 4 senior pitches and Sheppey sub area 2 senior pitches. 3 sites are schools and have 4 pitches that are not used by community clubs.
  - Faversham Rugby Club is considered to have unsecured tenure of its pitch at Faversham Recreation Ground although has secured tenure of the club house at the ground. The pitch is currently rented with no longer term agreement in place. The club uses the 3G AGPs at The Abbey School and King Georges Playing Fields Faversham for non-contact training and require access to a World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant AGP or natural grass pitch with sports lighting.
  - Faversham Rugby club would like to provide for juniors boys and girls but have a lack of pitch capacity.
  - Sittingbourne Rugby Club will be moving to a new developer venue in the future with a new clubhouse and 2 natural grass pitches but with no sports lighting. There is a requirement to secure a facility either natural grass or an AGP that is World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant.
  - Sheppey Rugby Club have recently upgraded their changing rooms and social facilities to meet the needs of the community including women and girls.
  - Through population growth there be an increase in rugby teams with a need for additional pitch provision particularly in Faversham and Sittingbourne
  - Increased female demand from the RWC 2025 is to be expected and associated development initiatives are in place to meet this future demand e.g. 100,000 participants targeted , Inner Warrior, Legacy funding, social space, toilet and sanitary provision funding.

### Rugby Union Recommendations

4.60. The recommendations are:

1. Protect all current rugby union sites and facilities in the Local Plan unless provision is made for new improved quality facilities that are accessible and provided before original facilities are closed.
2. Future population demand to 2040 projects a requirement from developer contributions to provide a minimum of 2.59 pitches. The Playing Pitch calculator identifies that population increases between 2023 and 2040 generates match play MES of 2.59 per week and training MES under sportlighting 2.92 per week.
3. Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator should be used to identify developer contributions from each new housing development in Swale Borough. The Playing Pitch Calculator and PPS should be used to help determine the likely impact of a new development on demand and the capacity of existing sites in the area, and whether there is a need for improvements to increase capacity of existing provision or if new provision is required. Where a development is located within access of existing high-quality provision, this does not necessarily mean that there is no need for further provision or improvement to existing provision, as additional demand arising from the development is likely to result in increased usage (which can result in overplay or quality deterioration).
4. There is a need to develop the Wises Lane rugby facility for use by Sittingbourne Rugby Club with the appropriate community use agreements in place between the club and developer and the club and the school for use of the school pitches. All building and pitch construction should meet Sport England and RFU design and pitch guidance.
5. There is a need to support Faversham Rugby Club with its aspirations to provide a new facility in the Faversham sub area providing as a minimum 2 senior rugby pitches with sports lighting and clubhouse.
6. Sittingbourne Rugby Club and Sheppey rugby Club have both undertaken Pitch Power assessments. Faversham Rugby Club needs to undertake a PitchPower assessment of its pitch to identify what improvements need to be undertaken to improve pitch maintenance and pitch quality with a view to increase capacity for match equivalent sessions.
7. FA Football Foundation, Rugby Football Union, Swale Borough Council and Sittingbourne Rugby Club to consider working in partnership to provide a joint World Rugby Regulation 22 AGP and 3G AGP for both rugby and football use in the Faversham and Sittingbourne sub areas. This will alleviate the shortfall of weekly training MES currently and in the future.

## 5. Cricket

### Introduction

- 5.1. The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) with Kent Cricket are the main governing and representative bodies for cricket within the County, including Swale Borough. Its aim is to promote the game at all levels through partnerships with professional and recreational cricketing clubs, and other appropriate agencies. Senior cricket is typically played on Saturdays, however, there is some play both on Sundays and midweek when teams typically play in short format competitions.
- 5.2. One cricket pitch area is 75ft x 10ft (22.87m x 3.05m) therefore the size of the square will depend on the likely fixture list (suggested maximum of five matches per pitch during the season). The number of teams that will use the facility (consideration for future club expansion and development should be considered), boundary restrictions and time allowance to ground staff to maintain and prepare pitches. Once the size of the square has been determined, the pitch orientation must be considered when considering the overall layout. A north/south orientation is preferable to minimise the effects of the sun on the bowlers and batsman, though a possible east/west variation of 55° from the point of north is acceptable.
- 5.3. The ECB and Kent Cricket have requested that only pitches on a cricket square with minimum boundary size of 37m+ are considered in the supply of cricket pitches for the Swale PPS.

### Cricket Club Demand and Number of Teams

- 5.4. This section provides an overview of the clubs and teams that play in the Swale Borough area. Tables 44, 45 & 46 provides a breakdown of clubs and the number of team's adult men's, adult women, and junior teams. The clubs and teams are divided into the three sub areas agreed at Stage A Faversham, Sittingbourne, and Sheppey.

**Table 44: Faversham Cricket Clubs and Team Numbers**

Faversham Cricket Clubs and Team Numbers	Male Adult	Adult Female	Male Junior	Female Junior	Mixed Junior	Total
Bapchild Cricket Club	5		3	1		9
Boughton Under Blean Cricket Club	1					1
Davington Priory Cricket Club	1					1
Faversham Cricket Club	4		3	1	4	12
Norton Sports Cricket Club	1					1
Reculver Cricket Club	1					1

## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

Faversham Cricket Clubs and Team Numbers	Male Adult	Adult Female	Male Junior	Female Junior	Mixed Junior	Total
Selling Cricket Club	1					1
Sheldwich Cricket Club	2		2	1		5
Eastling Cricket Club	1					1
Three Horseshoes Cricket Club	1					1
Chelsfield Cricket Club 3 <sup>rd</sup> XI Imported	1					1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>34</b>

- 5.5. There are 10 Swale community cricket clubs based in the Faversham sub area. Between them, the 10 clubs support 18 adult male open age teams either playing on a Saturday, Sunday, or midweek. There are 15 junior teams of which 8 male teams, 3 are girls' teams and 4 mixed teams. The peak time of play is a Saturday for clubs with more than 1 team. The remaining 1 team clubs peak time is a Sunday for adults. Majority of junior games take place mid-week. Chelsfield Cricket Club is an imported team from Bromley playing at Norton Sports (9 games per season Saturdays).

**Table 45: Sittingbourne Cricket Clubs and Team Numbers**

Sittingbourne Cricket Clubs and Team Numbers	Male Adult	Adult Female	Male Junior	Female Junior	Mixed Juniors	Total
Bobbing Court and Lower Halstow Cricket Club	1					1
Borden Cricket Club	2					2
Bredgar Cricket Club	2					2
Gore Court Cricket Club	4					4
Milstead Cricket Club	2	1				3
Newington Cricket Club	3					3
Rodmersham Cricket Club	4		6		1	11
Upchurch Cricket Club	4		4			8
Woodcoombe Cricket Club	1					1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>35</b>

## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

- 5.6. There are 9 community cricket clubs based in the Sittingbourne sub area. Between them, the 9 clubs support 23 adult male open age teams either playing on a Saturday, Sunday, or midweek and 1 adult female softball team. There are 10 junior male teams and 1 mixed team. The peak time of play is a Saturday for adults and mid-week for juniors.

**Table 46: Sheppey Cricket Clubs and Teams**

Sheppey Cricket Clubs and Team Numbers	Male Adult	Male Junior	Female Junior	Total
Eastchurch Cricket Club	2			2
Minster Cricket Club	8	4	1	13
Sheppey Cricket Club	2	1		3
Swale Prison Officers Cricket Club	1			1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19</b>

- 5.7. There are 4 community cricket clubs based in the Sheppey sub area. Between them, the 3 clubs support 13 adult male open age teams either playing on a Saturday, Sunday, or midweek. There are 5 junior male teams and 1 female junior girls' team. The peak time of play is a Saturday for adults and mid-week for juniors.
- 5.8. In total Swale Borough has 55 adult male cricket teams, 1 adult female team, 23 junior male teams and 4 junior girls' team and 5 mixed teams. A total of 88 teams.

### **All Stars Cricket (5-8-year-olds) and Dynamos Cricket (8 – 11-year-olds)**

- 5.9. In partnership with the ECB and Chance to Shine, cricket clubs can register to become an ECB All Stars Cricket Centre. Once registered, a club can deliver the programme which aims to introduce cricket to children aged from five to eight. Subsequently, this may lead to increased interest and demand for junior cricket at clubs.
- 5.10. The programme seeks to achieve the following aims:
- Increase cricket activity for 5–8-year-olds in the school and club environment.
  - Develop consistency of message in both settings to aid transition.
  - Improve generic movement skills for children, using cricket as the vehicle.
  - Make it easier for new volunteers to support and deliver in the club environment.
  - Use fun small-sided games to enthuse new children to follow and play the game.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- 5.11. Dynamos Cricket – Provides the next step for those graduating from All Stars Cricket and is an introduction for all 8 – 11-year-olds new to the sport. Complementing junior cricket, Dynamos provides children with a social offer focussed on developing fundamental movement skills and applying them in an exciting game of countdown cricket.
- 5.12. In Swale there are 6 identified clubs that have undertaken All Stars coaching. These are:
- Bapchild Cricket Club
  - Faversham Cricket Club
  - Rodmersham Cricket Club
  - Upchurch Cricket Club
  - Minster Cricket Club
  - Sheppey Cricket Club
- 5.13. In the past Bobbing Court and Lower Halstow CC have participated in the All-Stars programme.
- 5.14. Bredgar Cricket Club has introduced youth and junior cricket training on Fridays. Despite a good attendance the club are not in the position to provide age group teams yet but aspire to in the future.

#### Women's and Girls Softball and Hardball

- 5.15. Milstead CC Sittingbourne has introduced a Women's Softball team in 2025. Bapchild Cricket Club, Faversham Cricket Club and Sheldwich Cricket Club have 1 girls' team each. Faversham Cricket Club has 4 mixed junior teams and Rodmersham Cricket Club has 1 mixed team. Women and girl's cricket is an area that Kent Cricket and the ECB wish to increase participation in the future.
- 5.16. In 2023 across all of Kent there were 41 women's teams and 72 girl's teams, Nationally the percentage of girl's teams was up by 21% versus 2022. This is a trend that the ECB expect to continue.
- 5.17. The ECB and Kent Cricket expect Swale women's and girl's cricket teams to rise to 2.5 women's teams and 5.5 girl's teams in the future.

#### Unmet demand

- 5.18. None of the community clubs has identified unmet demand (for example waiting lists for junior sections).

### Latent and Future demand

- 5.19. More accessible facilities and shorter, less formal game formats are being developed and promoted by the ECB in response to national research into the state of the game and to encourage more participation within these groups. Non-traditional community cricket - i.e., single teams, predominantly comprising players of South Asian or Black Caribbean heritage playing short format cricket in community or commercial leagues - is not currently taking place in Swale. Neither is informal Street 'Tapeball' Cricket taking place on an identifiable scale in any locations in the borough.
- 5.20. Currently no clubs in the borough have disability cricket sections.
- 5.21. Some clubs have identified that the adult men's game is finding it hard to maintain teams. Some clubs are struggling to provide 11 players and have had to cancel games during the 2024 season.
- 5.22. Some clubs that have identified that they wish to provide additional teams over the next 2 seasons. These are:
- Bapchild Cricket Club – 2 junior teams (10 MES per season)
  - Bredgar Cricket Club – 1 junior team. (5 MES per season)
  - Gore Court Cricket Club – 2 junior teams (10 MES per season)
  - Upchurch Cricket Club – 4 men's teams 2 junior teams (50 MES per season)
  - Milstead Cricket Club – 1 junior team (5 MES per season)
  - Rodmersham Cricket Club – 1 junior team (5 MES per season)
  - Newington Cricket Club – 1 men's team (10 MES per season)
  - Minster Cricket Club – 2 junior teams (10 MES per season)
- 5.23. The additional teams will create a need for 105 additional MES per season. with the expected increase in women's 2.5 (25 MES) and girl's teams 5.5 (27.5MES) the latent demand rises to 157.5 MES per season.

### Displaced demand

- 5.24. Rainham Cricket Club 3<sup>rd</sup> XI from the Medway Council area play home games at Newington Cricket Club alternate Saturdays. Rainham Cricket Club 4<sup>th</sup> XI play at Bobbing and Lower Halstow Cricket Club Saturdays. Kent Cricket 60+ and 70+ teams play cricket midweek at Upchurch Cricket Club, Newington Cricket Club and Gore Court Cricket Club. Chelsfield Cricket Club a Bromley based team play at Norton Sports on a Saturday.
- 5.25. Some club's teams in Swale must use alternative cricket club facilities as there are insufficient cricket squares at their home grounds. These teams are:
- Bapchild 3<sup>rd</sup> XI play at Bobbing Court and Lower Halstow Cricket Club – Saturdays.

# Swale Borough Council

## *Playing Pitch Strategy*

- Sheppey Cricket Club all teams play at Eastchurch Cricket Club and Swale Prison Officers Cricket Club use Eastchurch Cricket Club for midweek and ad hoc games.

### Future Playing Pitch (Cricket) Demand – Population Growth

- 5.26. As well as growth through latent demand, there will be growth through population demands. Swale Borough Council are currently in the process of updating and providing a new local plan that will go to 2040.
- 5.27. The local housing need for Swale is currently 1,040 dwellings per annum - a change from 1,086 dwellings at 1 April 2023. This change is largely due to the affordability ratio dropping from 10.95 to 9.6 in March 2024 and a slightly lower household projection for the years 2024 to 2034. **Under the standard method the Council’s need for the Plan period to 2040 (16 years) would be 16,640 dwellings.**
- 5.28. For Local Plan drafting and resilience through the consultation process and Local Plan examination process Swale has applied a buffer to this figure (16,640) to cover any removal of housing sites. A buffer of 5% should ensure that there will not be the need to consult on further sites late in the Local Plan drafting process. **Applying a 5% resilience buffer to 16,640 dwellings for the proposed Plan period would result in a proposed Local Plan housing target of 17,472 dwellings.**
- 5.29. A total of 17,472 homes with an average household size of 2.4 persons provides a new resident population of 41,933. The Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator Tool identifies the need and cost for cricket pitches and changing rooms from these developments across Swale up to 2040.
- 5.30. The table below identifies the number of cricket grounds required to meet population increase from new developments by 2040 across Swale. The Playing Pitch Calculator identifies that developer’s contributions capital costs towards cricket between 2024 and 2040 should be £1,893,479 with lifecycle costs per annum of £348,400 and changing room costs of £2,260,166. The new population generates 215 match equivalent sessions per season. The latent demand equates to 105 MES per season and women and girls demand is expected to rise by 52.5 match equivalent sessions per season. The total increase in match equivalent sessions per season is projected to be 373.

**Table 47: Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator – Population Increase 2024 – 2040**

	Number of pitches required to meet the estimated demand	Capital Cost	Lifecycle Cost (per annum)	Changing rooms (number)	Changing rooms (capital cost)
<b>Total Natural Grass Pitches Cricket</b>	<b>4.89</b>	<b>£1,893,479</b>	<b>£348,400</b>	<b>9.79</b>	<b>£2,160,166</b>

### Pitch Supply

- 5.31. In the 2025 season, there were 23 maintained fine turf cricket squares providing 200 pitches across Swale Borough, across 23 sites used by community cricket clubs.
- 5.32. There are no sites that are currently classed as unsecured. Although Rodemrsham Cricket club lease expires in 2024. A six-pitch cricket square at Sittingbourne Community College has been out of use for 5+ years.
- 5.33. Non turf pitches are at the following schools – Sittingbourne Community College, Borden Grammar School, Fulston Manor School, Queen Elizabeth’s Grammar School, Westlands School, and the Abbey School within the borough. Clubs do not usually access the schools natural grass cricket pitch facilities or the non turf facilities and no Swale cricket club has been identified as using school facilities.
- 5.34. Sheppey Cricket Club have moved from Sheppey Sports Club, which is now just used for football and are playing at Eastchurch Cricket Club.
- 5.35. There are concerns at the possible loss of Woodcoombe Cricket Club square at Murston Recreation Ground managed by Woodcoombe Sports and Social Club. The club withdrew from the Kent Village League in 2022 and have not signed up to a league since the 2023 season. The Woodcoombe Sports site is predominantly football.

### Local Authority Parks Pitches

- 5.36. There is no identified cricket pitches managed by Swale Borough Council provided in Local Parks. Any facility that the Council own are leased to cricket clubs.

### Secured and Unsecured Community Use Pitches

- 5.37. All club sites are secured for community use. However, there are some sites that are required to renew their lease.
- Rodmersham Cricket Club must renew by 2024 and has a lease arrangement with a developer. The club would like to be able to purchase the land.
  - Borden Cricket Club part of the Borden Sports Association who lease the grounds form Borden Parish Council need to renew their lease. There are 2 years left.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- 5.38. Bapchild Cricket Club has had issues with the Highsted Park New Garden Community proposal and planning application for 11,500 dwellings. The club formally responded to the initial consultation and states that it stands by its submission of objection with the revised planning application submitted in December 2022. The Club is not adverse to the proposal based on the principal that the Club would not be required to: - Relocate from their current ground (permanently or temporarily) - Move the cricket square - Reduce the size of the current pitch or non-playing areas (although non-playing areas could be moved) - Increase its operating costs unduly as a result of the plan and the - Pavilion (changing rooms, toilets, kitchen, storage room, bar and seating area), outbuilding (garage), nets, parking areas etc are replaced with similar or larger facilities to today's current standards if so required.
- 5.39. The Duchy of Cornwall land at Southeast Faversham between the A2 and the M2 is proposing 2,500 homes, and a planning application has been submitted. The current Faversham Cricket Club site is leased to the club by the Duchy of Cornwall, and it is understood that via consultation with the Duchy of Cornwall the club has agreed to move to a new site with the same facilities as currently within the proposed development. Faversham Cricket Club has chosen this site despite being offered alternative facilities provided through a section 106 agreement at Graveney Road and Lady Dane Farm Love Lane. This leaves a question mark over the land at Graveney Road and Lady Dane Farm Love Lane. The current proposal is for the site to be used for football.
- 5.40. Outline planning application for Orchard View Teynham – Master plan identifies a cricket square pavilion and changing facilities and car park. There is a planning application that has been submitted for 1815 new homes just outside Dunkirk and Boughton under Blean. This application if successful will require off site contributions towards cricket facilities.
- 5.41. The following table 48 provides a full overview of supply for all cricket pitches in the area.

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

Table 48: Cricket site breakdown

Site	Playing Pitch Sites – currently providing community use for cricket	Cricket Club	Post Code	Ownership	Secured/Unsecured/Unav ailable Community Use	Squares	Pitches (Grass 37m+ to Boundary)	Pitches (non turf)	Quality Grass Pitches	Quality of Pavilion	Sub Area
1	Bapchild Cricket Club	Bapchild Cricket Club	ME9 9LZ	Sports Club Rented from Farmer	Yes	1	9	0	Standard	Standard	Faversham
2	Belmont Park Throwley	Eastling Cricket Club	ME13 0HH	Trust (House & Gardens)	Yes	1	6	0	Standard	Standard	Faversham
3	Cadmans Meadow - Selling Cricket Club	Selling Cricket Club	ME13 3RQ	Sports Club	Yes	1	8	0	Standard	Good	Faversham
4	Davington Priory Cricket Club	Davington Priory Cricket Club	ME13 7TE	Local Authority Leased to Club	Yes	1	6	0	Standard	Poor	Faversham
5	Faversham Cricket Club (Formerly Macknade Cricket Club)	Faversham Cricket Club	ME13 8XF	Club lease from Duchy of Cornwall	Yes	1	8	0	Standard	Standard	Faversham
6	Norton Park	Norton Sports Cricket Club & Chelsfield CC	ME13 0SN	Sports Club	Yes	1	8	0	Poor	Standard	Faversham
7	Sheldwich Lees Village Green	Sheldwich Cricket Club	ME13 0LY	Common Land Sheldwicch Lees	Yes	1	5	0	Standard	Standard	Faversham
8	Sparrows Hill	Boughton under Blean Cricket Club	ME13 9TX	Club rent from Mount Ephraim Estate	Yes	1	4	0	Poor	Standard	Faversham
9	Hernhill Village Hall Forstal	Three Horseshoes Cricket Club	ME 13 9UA	Rented from Parish Council	Yes	1	5	0	Poor	Good	Faversham
10	The Playstool	Borden Cricket Club	ME9 8LP	Borden Parish Council Leased to Borden	Yes	1	8		Standard	Good	Sittingbourne

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

Site	Playing Pitch Sites – currently providing community use for cricket	Cricket Club	Post Code	Ownership	Secured/Unsecured/Unavailable Community Use	Squares	Pitches (Grass 37m+ to Boundary)	Pitches (non turf)	Quality Grass Pitches	Quality of Pavilion	Sub Area
				Sports Association. Cricket Club is part of the Association							
11	Bredgar Recreation Ground	Bredgar Cricket Club	ME9 8EP	Parish Council Rent to the Club	Yes	1	4		Standard	Poor	Sittingbourne
12	Chapel Meadow	Bobbing Court & Lower Halstow Cricket Club, Bapchild Cricket Club 3 <sup>rd</sup> XI	ME9 7AA	Sports Club	Yes	1	11		Standard	Standard	Sittingbourne
13	Gore Court Cricket Club (The Grove)	Gore Court Cricket Club, Kent Cricket 60+ teams	ME10 1YT	Sports Club	Yes	1	15		Standard	Good Social Changing requires refurbishment.	Sittingbourne
14	Gore Court Cricket Club (The Grove) Top Field (By Primary School)	Gore Court Cricket Club	ME10 1LU	Sports Club subject to 299-year lease with Swale BC	Yes	1	8		Standard	N/A	Sittingbourne
15	Holywell Meadow	Upchurch Cricket Club, Kent cricket 60+ teams	ME9 7AD	Sports Club own site with club house	Yes	1	9		Good	Good	Sittingbourne
16	Holywell Meadow (New Ground)	Upchurch Cricket Club	ME9 7AD	2nd pitch leased from local farmer	Yes	1	16		Good	N/A	Sittingbourne
17	Milstead Cricket Club -	Milstead Cricket Club	ME9 0RX	Sports Club	Yes	1	9		Standard	Good	Sittingbourne

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

Site	Playing Pitch Sites – currently providing community use for cricket	Cricket Club	Post Code	Ownership	Secured/Unsecured/Unavailable Community Use	Squares	Pitches (Grass 37m+ to Boundary)	Pitches (non turf)	Quality Grass Pitches	Quality of Pavilion	Sub Area
18	Murston Recreation Ground	Woodcoombe Cricket Club	ME10 3RT	Local Authority Leased to Club	Yes	1	7		Standard	Good	Sittingbourne
19	Rodemersham Cricket Club	Rodemersham Cricket Club and Schools Cricket	ME9 0PR	15-year lease owned by a developer lease runs out in 2024	Yes	1	15		Poor	Standard	Sittingbourne
20	Rooks Woods	Newington Cricket Club & Rainham Cricket club 3 <sup>rd</sup> XI	ME9 8NN	Leased to sports club from a private individual	Yes	1	11		Standard	Good	Sittingbourne
21	Gilbert Hall	Minster Cricket Club	ME12 3RF	Kent County Council 10-year lease remaining	Yes	1	11		Good	Good	Sheppey
22	Gilbert Hall Nursery Ground	Minster Cricket Club	ME12 3RF	As above	Yes	1	5		Standard	N/A	Sheppey
23	Shurland	Eastchurch Cricket Club, Sheppey Cricket Club & Swale Prison Officers Cricket Club	ME12 4BN	Held in Trust with a peppercorn Rent to Swale BC	Yes	1	12	1	Standard	Good	Sheppey

## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

5.42. School sites which are not used by clubs but would-be unsecured usage if they were available for use or used, are provided in table 49 below.

**Table 49: Swale Borough School Cricket Facilities**

Site	Post Code	Management	Unavailable	Squares	Pitches	Non-Turf Pitch
The Abbey School – Faversham	ME13 8RZ	Education	Unavailable	0	0	1
Queen Elizabeth Grammar School – Faversham	ME10 4DB	Education	Unavailable	0	0	1
Westlands School - Sittingbourne	ME10 1PF	Education	Unavailable	0	0	1
Sittingbourne Community College	ME10 4NL	Education	Unavailable	0	0	1
Fulton Manor School	ME10 4HS	Education	Unavailable	0	0	1
Borden Grammar School	ME10 3DB	Education	Unavailable	0	0	1

### Quality, Capacity Supply and Demand Assessment

- 5.43. Each site (and pitch) has been provided with a quality rating. The capacity rating per pitch has been agreed with the ECB, a poor pitch rating is zero, standard pitch rating four and a good pitch rating five.
- 5.44. The total capacity for grass cricket pitches across Swale Borough is shown in table 50 below. There are 708 available match equivalents per season. The demand in 2025 is for 593 match equivalent sessions per season, with a theoretical underplay of 115 match equivalent sessions per season across the whole of Swale Borough.
- 5.45. The new population generates 215 match equivalent sessions per season. The latent demand equates to 105 MES per season and women and girls demand is expected to rise by 52.5 match equivalent sessions per season. The total increase in match equivalent sessions per season is projected to be 373. This will provide a shortfall of 258 MES per season by 2040 and will require developer contributions to be used to provide new and improved existing cricket facilities across Swale to meet the needs of the new population by 2040. The new to be developed cricket ground at Orchard View Teynham will meet some of the future 258 MES requirements.
- 5.46. Overplay occurs on 9 cricket squares across Swale.

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

Table 50: Pitch Quality Ratings and Supply and Demand capacity

Site No.	Playing Pitch Sites – currently providing community use for cricket	Playing Pitch Sites – currently providing community use for cricket (A)	Squares (B)	Pitches (Grass 37m+ to Boundary) (C)	Quality Grass Pitches (Wickets)D)	Capacity per pitch (Wicket) (E)	Cricket Capacity Grass pitch per season (2025) (F)	Demand per season (2025) (H)	Capacity Demand Balance per Season (2025) (I) = (F) – (H)	Sub Area
1	Bapchild Cricket Club	Bapchild Cricket Club	1	9	Standard	4	36	48	-12	Faversham
2	Belmont Park Throwley	Eastling Cricket Club and Additional Friendly matches	1	6	Standard	4	24	24	0	Faversham
3	Cadmans Meadow	Selling Cricket Club	1	8	Standard	4	32	10	22	Faversham
4	Davington Priory Cricket Club	Davington Priory Cricket Club	1	6	Standard	4	24	10	14	Faversham
5	Faversham Cricket Club	Faversham Cricket Club	1	8	Standard	4	32	67	-35	Faversham
6	Norton Park	Norton Sports Cricket Club & Chelsfield CC	1	8	Poor	0	0	19	-19	Faversham
7	Sheldwich Lees. Village Green	Sheldwich Cricket Club	1	5	Standard	4	20	29	-9	Faversham
8	Sparrows Hill	Boughton under Blean Cricket Club	1	4	Poor	0	0	11	-11	Faversham
9	Hernhill Village Hall Forstall	Three Horseshoes Cricket Club	1	5	Poor	0	0	8	-8	Faversham
10	The Playstool	Borden Cricket Club	1	8	Standard	4	32	11	21	Sittingbourne
11	Bredgar Recreation Ground	Bredgar Cricket Club	1	4	Standard	4	16	18	-2	Sittingbourne
12	Chapel Meadow	Bobbing Court & Lower Halstow Cricket Club, 9 Bapchild Cricket Club 3 <sup>rd</sup> XI 8 MES Saturday. Rainham Cricket club 4th XI 8 MES Saturday	1	11	Standard	4	44	25	19	Sittingbourne
13	Gore Court Cricket Club (The Grove)	Gore Court Cricket Club, Kent Cricket 60+ & 70+ age group teams play at the site. 5 MES per season mid-week.	1	15	Standard	4	60	19	41	Sittingbourne

## Swale Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy

Site No.	Playing Pitch Sites – currently providing community use for cricket	Playing Pitch Sites – currently providing community use for cricket (A)	Squares (B)	Pitches (Grass 37m+ to Boundary) (c)	Quality Grass Pitches (Wickets)D)	Capacity per pitch (Wicket) (E)	Cricket Capacity Grass pitch per season (2025) (F)	Demand per season (2025) (H)	Capacity Demand Balance per Season (2025) (I) = (F) – (H)	Sub Area
14	Gore Court Cricket Club (The Grove Top Field)	Gore Court Cricket Club	1	8	Standard	4	32	9	23	Sittingbourne
15	Hollywell Meadow	Upchurch Cricket Club, Kent Cricket 60+ teams 7 MES mid-week.	1	9	Good	5	45	36	9	Sittingbourne
16	Hollywell Meadow)	Upchurch Cricket Club	1	16	Good	5	80	35	45	Sittingbourne
17	Milstead Cricket Club	Milstead Cricket Club	1	9	Standard	4	36	11	25	Sittingbourne
18	Murston Recreation Ground	Not in use	1	7	Standard	4	28	0	28	Sittingbourne
19	Rodmersham Cricket Club	Rodmersham Cricket Club and Schools Cricket	1	15	Poor	0	0	61	-61	Sittingbourne
20	Rooks Woods (Newington Cricket club	Newington Cricket Club & Rainham Cricket Club 3 <sup>rd</sup> XI 8 MES Saturday. Kent Cricket 60+ & 70+ teams 7 MES mid-week	1	11	Standard	4	44	40	4	Sittingbourne
21	Gilbert Hall	Minster Cricket Club	1	11	Good	5	55	63	-8	Sheppey
22	Gilbert Hall Nursery Ground	Minster Cricket Club also used by St Georges Church of England Primary School	1	5	Standard	4	20	15	5	Sheppey
23	Shurlands	Eastchurch Cricket Club, Sheppey Cricket Club & Swale Prison Officers Cricket	1	12	Standard	4	48	24	24	Sheppey
<b>Total</b>			<b>23</b>	<b>200</b>			<b>708</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>115</b>	

5.47. Two thirds of the existing overplay could be reestablished via investment into, and enhanced maintenance regimes at Norton Sports, Sparrows Hill, Hernhill Village and Rodmersham.

## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

- 5.48. Peak demand varies in the sub areas. The Faversham sub area has peak time of play on Sundays and Sittingbourne and Sheppey sub areas peak time of play is on Saturdays.
- 5.49. The table below identifies capacity at peak time of play: The orange squares identify that there is balanced play and that no more matches can be accommodated. Green means that the square can accommodate an additional match. Red identifies sites where the square is already over played during the week. - Saturday, Sunday, and midweek play.

**Table 51: Peak Time Demand and availability of additional play**

Site No.	Playing Pitch Sites – currently providing community use for cricket	Sub Area	Peak Time Availability Saturday	Peak time Availability Sunday	Peak time Availability Midweek
			Saturday	Sunday	Midweek
1	Bapchild Cricket Club	Faversham	Red	Red	Red
2	Belmont Park Throwley	Faversham	Orange	Orange	Orange
3	Cadmans Meadow	Faversham	Green	Green	Green
4	Davington Priory Cricket Club	Faversham	Green	Green	Green
5	Faversham Cricket Club	Faversham	Red	Red	Red
6	Norton Park	Faversham	Red	Red	Red
7	Sheldwich Lees. Village Green	Faversham	Red	Green	Green
8	Sparrows Hill	Faversham	Red	Red	Red
9	Herne Hill Village Hall Forstall	Faversham	Red	Red	Red
10	The Playstool	Sittingbourne	Green	Green	Green
11	Bredgar Cricket Club	Sittingbourne	Red	Red	Red
12	Chapel Meadow	Sittingbourne	Green	Green	Green
13	Gore Court	Sittingbourne	Green	Green	Green
14	Gore Court Top Field	Sittingbourne	Green	Green	Green
15	Hollywell Meadow	Sittingbourne	Red	Green	Green
16	Hollywell Meadow	Sittingbourne	Green	Green	Green
17	Milstead Cricket Club	Sittingbourne	Green	Green	Green

## Swale Borough Council

### Playing Pitch Strategy

Site No.	Playing Pitch Sites – currently providing community use for cricket	Sub Area	Peak Time Availability Saturday	Peak time Availability Sunday	Peak time Availability Midweek
			Saturday	Sunday	Midweek
18	Murston Recreation Ground	Sittingbourne			
19	Rodmersham Cricket club	Sittingbourne			
20	Rooks Woods	Sittingbourne			
21	Gilbert Hall	Sheppey			
22	Gilbert Hall Nursery Ground	Sheppey			
23	Shurland Meadow	Sheppey			

5.50. With only 1 team using a square at any one time, there is available spare capacity at 10 sites on a Saturday, 14 sites on a Sunday and 13 Sites mid-week.

#### Faversham Sub Area – site issues from consultation

- 5.51. The Faversham sub area has 9 sites with 9 squares. Bapchild Cricket Club Cricket Club has a third team on a Saturday that must play at an alternative ground.
- 5.52. There are no non turf pitches at community cricket club sites in the Faversham sub area.
- 5.53. Cadmans Meadow and Davington Priory are the only cricket clubs in the Faversham sub area that could accommodate additional play at peak time on a Saturday, Sunday and Midweek. Sheldwich Leys can accommodate additional matches on a Sunday and Midweek.
- 5.54. 6 sites provide ‘Standard’ quality grass facilities and could be improved too ‘Good’. 3 sites provide ‘Poor’ quality grass facilities. If the standard quality sites are improved to ‘Good’ and the Poor-quality sites improved to Standard this would raise capacity of play.
- 5.55. 2 sites have good quality pavilions. Davington Priory Cricket Club pavilion is poor, and the remaining sites are all standard quality pavilions.
- 5.56. There is a need to safeguard and protect all cricket sites across Faversham sub area unless better quality and improved provision will replace sites such as Bapchild Cricket Club and Faversham Cricket Club. Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator should be used to identify capital pitch, changing room and lifecycle costs to be provided by developer contributions for individual developments in the Faversham area between 2023 – 2040.

5.57. The table below identifies cricket club’s comments and other identified issues in the Faversham area:

**Table 52: Cricket Club comments and other identified issues Faversham Sub Area**

Club	Comments
Bapchild Cricket Club	Main concerns involve the existing Highsted Park Planning application. The Club is not adverse to the proposal based on the principal that the Club would not be required to: - Relocate from their current ground (permanently or temporarily) - Move the cricket square - Reduce the size of the current pitch or non-playing areas (although non-playing areas could be moved) - Increase its operating costs unduly as a result of the plan and the - Pavilion (changing rooms, toilets, kitchen, storage room, bar and seating area), outbuilding (garage), nets, parking areas etc are replaced with similar or larger facilities to today’s current standards if so require
Selling Cricket Club	Good quality square and received a Sport England Grant a while ago to assist with renewing the pavilion.
Davington Priory Cricket Club	Outfield suffers from dog fouling and pavilion is old and outdated.
Faversham Cricket Club	Duchy of Cornwall proposes a new housing development at Southeast Faversham – As part of the consultation process the developer and Faversham Cricket Club are committed to relocating the club ground to a large central green in Southeast Faversham as part of this development, placing the club at the heart of the new community. A new pavilion and facilities will be provided alongside the new cricket field, which will become a new community space for hire.  The clubs 2017 Manifesto states:  “By launching a major project to make the existing ground one of excellence with a new cricket square built to modern standards with a fine outfield clear of the A2 and with play from north to south so that evening sun does not, as at present interfere with play. Re-site and build a new dedicated but multi-use cricket pavilion. Install high quality practice nets.  Allow for a better entrance to the ground with good parking facilities. Provide good facilities for spectators and guests to enjoy. Preserve benefits of existing Faversham cricket ground within green hinterland south of A2 currently under threat from a house building onslaught.”
Sheldwich Cricket Club	Pavilion is wooden but in reasonable condition. Club celebrated its centenary in 2022.
Boughton under Blean Cricket Club	Team numbers stayed the same for past 2 seasons - club maintain the ground and pavilion, no difference in quality from last season, uneven outfield.
Three Horseshoes Cricket Club	Parish council cut the outfield and Club look after the square; football is marked on the outfield.

**Sittingbourne Sub Area – site issues from consultation**

- 5.58. The Sittingbourne sub area has 11 sites with 11 squares. Upchurch Cricket Club and Gore Court Cricket Clubs have access to 2 squares each.
- 5.59. There are no community club non turf pitches in the Sittingbourne sub area.
- 5.60. Saturdays is peak time of play. Bredgar Cricket Club and Rodmersham Cricket Club have no capacity for additional play. Upchurch and Newington Cricket Club have no spare space for additional match play on a Saturday. All other sites have availability on Saturdays, Sundays and mid-week to increase matches.
- 5.61. 1 cricket site provides ‘Good’ quality grass facilities. 8 sites provide ‘Standard’ quality grass facilities and 1 site provide ‘Poor’ quality grass facilities. If the ‘Standard’ quality sites are improved to ‘Good’ and the ‘Poor’ quality sites improved to ‘Standard’ this would raise the capacity of match equivalent sessions.
- 5.62. 5 cricket sites have good quality pavilions Gore court Cricket club social facilities are good but the changing rooms need refurbishing, 3 have standard quality and Bredgar Cricket club has a poor-quality pavilion.
- 5.63. There is a need to safeguard and protect all cricket sites across Sittingbourne sub area unless better quality and improved provision will replace sites such as Bobbing Court and Lower Halstow Cricket Club. Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator should be used to identify capital pitch, changing room and lifecycle costs to be provided by developer contributions for individual developments in the Sittingbourne area between 2023 – 2040.
- 5.64. The table below identifies cricket club’s comments and other identified issues Sittingbourne Sub Area:

# Swale Borough Council

## *Playing Pitch Strategy*

**Table 53: Cricket Club Comments and other identified issues Sittingbourne Sub Area**

<b>Club</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Bordon Cricket club	Number of depressions due to other use makes fielding interesting. Evidence of dog fouling and unofficial use. 2 years left on lease outfield considered under size senior football pitch on outfield. Club would like a mobile net cage.
Bredgar Cricket Club	Club has started youth training on Fridays. The youth numbers have increased. However, due to the wide variety of age ranges the club are not able to have a full youth team yet.
Bobbing Court and Lower Halstow Cricket Club	There is an outline planning application (22/503654) for 2,500 new dwellings. The development site includes Bobbing Court and Lower Halstow cricket ground. The application states there is potential to relocate the existing ground to contribute to the heart of the development as part of a new central green with a new cricket pitch and pavilion. Bapchild Cricket Club 3 <sup>rd</sup> XI play at the ground (Saturdays 8 MES per season).
Gore Court Cricket Club	Same players for past 4 years. Must travel to Canterbury or Medway for Winter nets none in Swale. Ground not fenced and dog walkers use the ground Groundsman's shed has been broken into and damage has been caused to the outfield. We need permanent practice nets. Kent Cricket 60+ played 6 midweek matches at the ground in 2024 and 2025. The clubhouse carpark has been resurfaced and remarked (Section 106 agreement) plus will have £5,000 towards new nets from section 106 funding in the future. the changing rooms need refurbishing.
Upchurch Cricket Club	Has suffered from vandalism and has had astro turf stolen from nets and external lighting stolen. Kent Cricket Club 60+ midweek 5 games in 2024 and 2025 season  Installation of a new fully carpeted 3 lane 33m enclosed non-turf cricket practice facility with security fencing.
Woodcoombe Cricket Club	Square surrounded by football pitches. Cricket teams have reduced. Woodcoombe CC withdrew from Kent village League in 2022 and did not apply for the 2023 season onwards.
Rodmersham Cricket Club	Lease runs out in 2024 need to protect. Club aspires to purchase the ground from current owner (Developer).  The quality of the ground is 'Poor' and requires upgrading to at least 'Standard' quality  Cricket Club hires 4 pitches to Milton and Fulstead FC Mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 no impact on outfield. Hold other events as well.  Participated in All stars and Dynamos cricket 30 participants in each 2022.  School's matches played 5 matches midweek
Newington Cricket Club	Square had diesel oil poured on it before beginning of 2022 season. Club raised the funds for the costly repairs.  The pavilion has been broken into previously following refurbishment. Club is security conscious and has CCTV.

**Sheppey Sub Area – Site issues from consultation**

- 5.65. The Sheppey sub area has 2 sites with 3 squares. Shurlands home to Eastchurch Cricket Club, Sheppey Cricket Club, and ad hoc games for Swale Prison Officers.
- 5.66. There is one cricket ground with a non turf pitch at Eastchurch Cricket Club. The non turf pitch is not used for competitive matches.
- 5.67. Gilbert Hall Main Sports Ground square can accommodate additional play at peak time on a Sunday and the Nursery Ground on a Saturday. Eastchurch Cricket club could accommodate additional play on a Sunday.
- 5.68. The Gilbert Hall Main sports Ground square is good quality, and the nursery and Shurlands’ are standard quality. If these sites are improved to ‘Good’ this would raise capacity of play.
- 5.69. Both sites’ pavilions are good quality.
- 5.70. The table below identifies cricket club’s comments and other identified issues:

**Table 54: Cricket Club Comments and Other Identified Issues**

Club	Comments
Minster Cricket Club – Gilbert Hall	4 changing rooms on site with separate changing for juniors and men
Shurlands – Eastchurch Cricket Club and Sheppey Cricket Club	Planning application 19/500887/FULL provides £8,895 for formal sport contribution towards the upgrade and enhancement of the quality of the pavilion facilities at the cricket ground Shurland Meadow.

### Cricket Summary

5.71. This section summarises the findings from the cricket analysis, which will form the basis of the recommendation and action plan section for SBC Playing Pitch Review 2024.

- In total there are 23 affiliated cricket clubs in Swale which collectively provide 54 adult male cricket teams, 22 junior male teams and 1 junior girls' team and 5 mixed teams. A total of 81 teams.
- No club exports demand outside of Swale. However, Rainham Cricket Club imports two teams the 3<sup>rd</sup> XI and 4<sup>th</sup> XI from the Medway Council area and play home games at Newington Cricket Club and at Bobbing and Lower Halstow Cricket Club on alternate Saturdays. A third club Chelsfield Cricket Club 3<sup>rd</sup> XI is imported and plays at Norton Park on alternate Saturdays.
- Due to insufficient squares at their home ground. Bapchild Cricket Club 3<sup>rd</sup> XI play at Bobbing Court and Lower Halstow Cricket Club – Saturdays.
- Eight clubs have indicated aspirations to increase their levels of participation, with potential growth equating to five senior men's and eleven junior teams. Approximately requiring 105 match equivalent sessions per season.
- The ECB and Kent Cricket advise that they expect the women's teams to increase by 2.5 teams and girl's teams by 5.5 teams in the future. Approximately requiring 52.5 match equivalent sessions per season.
- There are 708 available match equivalents per season. The demand in 2025 is for 593 match equivalent sessions per season, with a theoretical underplay of 115 match equivalent sessions per season across the whole of Swale Borough.
- The new population generates 215 match equivalent sessions per season. The latent demand equates to 105 MES per season and women and girls demand is expected to rise by 52.5 match equivalent sessions per season. The total increase in match equivalent sessions per season is projected to be 373. This will provide a shortfall of 258 MES per season by 2040 and will require developer contributions to be used to provide new and improved existing cricket facilities across Swale to meet the needs of the new population by 2040.
- Two thirds of the existing overplay could be reestablished via investment into, and enhanced maintenance regimes at Norton Sports, Sparrows Hill, Hernhill Village and Rodmersham.
- There is substantial uncertainty around two major housing developments in the Faversham assessment area, which would primarily impact Faversham CC and Bapchild CC. Together, the two clubs deliver over 60% of the cricket teams in the Faversham sub area and are both projecting additional teams, prior to any new housing development.

5.72. The cricket recommendations are:

1. Protect all current cricket sites and facilities in the Local Plan unless provision is made for new improved quality facilities that are accessible and provided before original facilities are closed.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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2. Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator should be used to identify developer contributions from each new housing development in Swale Borough. The Playing Pitch Calculator and PPS should be used to help determine the likely impact of a new development on demand and the capacity of existing sites in the area, and whether there is a need for improvements to increase capacity of existing provision or if new provision is required. Where a development is located within access of existing high-quality provision, this does not necessarily mean that there is no need for further provision or improvement to existing provision, as additional demand arising from the development is likely to result in increased usage (which can result in overplay or quality deterioration).
3. New housing development if approved around Bapchild Cricket Club and Faversham Cricket Club could be seen as an opportunity if current and future needs are met or a threat if current and future needs are not met. It is therefore essential for the local authority to collaborate with Kent Cricket and the ECB to safeguard current facilities for both clubs and obtain the future facility needs required for both clubs from future population growth from the new developments through the Planning process.
4. Any development of a housing site close to a cricket pitch can raise issues of risk of ball strike from balls leaving the field of play. Indeed, any site within 80 metres of a cricket wicket is at risk from ball strike and ball strike must be considered as part of the planning process. Any mitigation package that a ball strike risk assessment advised should be built into the scheme by the developer; and be constructed and maintained in perpetuity at the developer's expense. It is good practice for the requirement for mitigation to be built into any policy for a site in this position.
5. Secure long-term leases/licenses for clubs where they can apply for funding to improve facilities and provide security of tenure. The clubs requiring new leases are:
  - Rodmersham Cricket Club – club to negotiate with landowner.
  - Borden Cricket Club – club to negotiate with Parish Council.
6. Need to improve the quality of pavilions at the following sites:
  - Faversham Cricket Club
  - Davington Priory Cricket Club
  - Bredgar Cricket Club
7. Need to improve quality from Poor to at least standard increasing pitch capacity at the following sites:
  - Norton Sports
  - Hernhill Village
  - Sparrows Hill
  - Rodmersham

## 6. Hockey

### Introduction

- 6.1 This section of the Swale Borough Playing Pitch Strategy 2024 details the current picture of facility supply and demand for the playing pitch hockey - at playing field sites in the Swale Borough Council area.
- 6.2 Hockey in England is governed by England Hockey (EH) and is administered locally by the Kent Hockey Association. Competitive league hockey matches, and training can only be played on sand filled, sand dressed, or water based artificial grass pitches (AGPs). Competitive, adult and junior club training cannot take place on third generation turf pitches (3G).
- 6.3 EH's Artificial Grass Playing Surface Policy details suitability of surface type for varying levels of hockey, as shown below.

**Table 55: England Hockey guidelines on artificial surface types suitable for hockey**

Category	Surface	Playing Level - Essential	Playing Level - Desirable
1	Water surface approved within the FIH Global/National Parameters	International hockey (training and matches).	Domestic National Premier League competition. Higher levels of player pathway (performance centres and upwards).
2	Sand dressed surfaces within the FIH National Parameter	Domestic National Premier League competition. Higher levels of player pathway (academy centres and upwards).	All adult and junior league hockey. Intermediate or advanced school hockey. EH competitions for clubs and schools.
3	Sand filled surfaces within the FIH National Parameter	All adult and junior club training and league hockey. EH competitions for clubs and schools. Intermediate or advanced school hockey.	Lower-level hockey (introductory level).
4	Gen 2 Pitch (sand dressed surface with a modified shock pad)	Education, local authority, and leisure sites that require multi-sport use. Suitable for community clubs playing up to EHL standards.	

- 6.4 Regarding the Gen 2 pitch option, EH, working with International Tennis Federation (ITF) and England Netball (EN) have developed a multi-sport surface to better accommodate lower levels of hockey demand on a pitch that is also suitable for other sports such as netball, tennis, and recreational football. This reduces the need for multiple specialised fields.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- 6.5 The surface type, known as Gen 2, is a versatile surface that will ensure that the sports do not need to compromise on the playing experience; it is a sand dressed synthetic turf with a compatible shock pad. The concept is designed to provide facilities, including at schools, with a dynamic carpet which reduces the amount of space required and enables the provision to be utilised to its full potential.
- 6.6 For senior teams, a full-size pitch for matches must measure at least 91.4 x 55 metres excluding surrounding run off areas which must be a minimum of two metres at the sides and three metres at the ends. England Hockey preference is for four metre side and five metre end run offs, with a preferred overall area of 101.4 x 63 metres.
- 6.7 It is considered that a hockey pitch can accommodate a maximum of four matches on one day, providing that it has sports lighting. Training is generally midweek for senior activity and requires access to a pitch and sports lights, whereas many junior teams train on a Sunday as well as during midweek.

#### Pitch Supply (Step 2)

- 6.8 For all the playing pitch sports included in the scope of the PPS for Swale Borough, the supply information has been gathered, by a combination of data collection and review, and consultations with all three hockey clubs
- 6.9 Sources of information – The sources of information used to establish current pitch supply were latest Sport England Active Places Power audit for playing pitches; NGB club and team data, club consultation and club websites; and information provided by schools.
- 6.10 Site visits and inspections – Visits to the sand based artificial grass pitches in Swale Borough suitable for hockey and visual, non-technical inspection.

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

### Hockey Supply

### Number and sizes of pitches

6.11 The audit of full size AGP's in Swale Borough is shown in Table 56 below.

**Table 56: Current Community and Non-Community Use AGPs that can be used for Hockey – Swale Borough Council area**

Playing Pitch Sites – Currently Providing Community Use for Hockey	Ownership/ Secured/ Unsecured Community Use.	No of AGPS	Sub Area	Sand Filled /Sand Dressed/ Water Based	Sport Lighting	Built and Last Refurbished	Condition – Quality Rating	Community hours Availability
Borden Grammar School ME10 4DB	Education – Hockey club has 28 years lease remaining on AGP & pavilion. Secured Community Use.	1 x AGP 97 x 62	Sittingbourne	Sand Filled	Yes	2018	Good	Monday – Friday 17.00 – 21.30  Sat & sun 09.00 - 18.00  No football use.  Hockey club has priority use.
Westlands School ME10 1PF	Westlands School are the Landlord leased to Gore Court Westlands Limited.  Lease for a further 7 years ends in 2032. Up to now efforts to renew/extend the lease have failed.  Secured Use	1 x AGP 100 x 60	Sittingbourne	Sand Filled	Yes	New pitch and shock pad constructed July 2023	New AGP 2023. Lights require to be replaced with LED	Monday – Friday 17.00 – 22.00  Sat & Sun – 09.00 – 18.00  Football use Mondays and Thursdays 3 hours per night.  Hockey use Tuesdays and Wednesdays midweek 3.5 hours per night and all-day Saturdays and Sundays.  Hockey Club has priority use.

## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

- 6.12 There are 2 x sand filled AGPs that are suitable for hockey. These are Westlands School AGP used mainly by Gore Court Hockey Club with football training on two nights a week and Borden Grammar School used by Sittingbourne Hockey Club and Faversham Women's Hockey Club and has all hockey use.
- 6.13 Westlands School hockey AGP has had the shock pad and carpet replaced in July 2023. However, the lease ends in 2032 and efforts to extend/renew have currently failed.
- 6.14 The table below identifies smaller AGPs that cannot be used for hockey matches.

**Table 57: Current Community and Non-Community Use AGPs to small for Hockey Use – Swale Borough Council area**

Playing Pitch Sites – Currently Providing Community Use for Hockey	Ownership and Use	No of AGPS	Sub Area	Sand Filled /Sand Dressed/ Water Based	Sport Lighting	Built and Last Refurbished	Condition – Quality Rating	Community hours Availability
Sittingbourne School ME10 4NL	Education – Unsecured use	1 x AGP 54 x 35	Sittingbourne	Sand Filled	Yes	2007	Standard – too small for competitive hockey	Monday – Friday 17.00 -21.00 Sat & Sun – 10.00 - 16.00
HMP Elmley ME12 4DZ	Prison Service Unavailable for community use	1 x AGP 96 x 63	Sheppey	Sand Dressed	No	2000	Not seen but planning application to remove and replace with smaller 3G AGP	Not Available

- 6.15 The Sittingbourne School AGP is too small for competitive hockey and is mainly used for football training. The HMP Elmley AGP is not available for community use and has no sports lighting.
- 6.16 In addition to the above Central Stadium, Sittingbourne had a small sand dressed AGP that is not recorded in Pitch Finder or Active Places Power. The sand dressed AGP is not suitable for match play or training as it has fallen into complete disrepair and is surrounded by a lorry park. There may be an opportunity to repurpose to provide small-sided training provision although access may be an issue.

### Unsecured / Secured Community Use pitches.

- 6.17 There are two AGPs that provide secured community use - Borden Grammar School and Westlands School AGP. Both are leased to the two clubs. Westlands School AGP (Gore court Hockey Club) has a lease for a further 7 years. However, efforts to increase the lease have failed so far. Sittingbourne Hockey club has 28 years lease remaining on the AGP and pavilion at Borden Grammar School.

### Pitch Quality

- 6.18 Borden Grammar School AGP is rated as good with the carpet refurbished in 2018.
- 6.19 The Westlands School AGP subbase and carpet were replaced July 2023. The lights also need upgrading to LED.
- 6.20 Sittingbourne School is standard quality and HMP was not visited as it is within a prison.

### Ancillary Facilities

- 6.21 Sittingbourne Hockey Club have a pavilion with changing and bar facilities adjacent to the AGP and is in good condition, the bar area has been refurbished. However, there is a need to replace a boiler.
- 6.22 Gore Court Hockey Clubs clubhouse is not on site, it's around 1/4 mile from the AGP. The Gore Court Clubhouse at the Grove is also home to Gore Court Cricket club and currently Sittingbourne Rugby Club. The rugby club will move to new accommodation once their new site has been provided as part of a Section 106 agreement at Wises Lane Housing Development. The clubhouse has good social facilities however the changing rooms need refurbishment. The car park at the clubhouse at Gore Court has recently been resurfaced and remarked as part of this section 106 agreement.

### Pitch Demand

- 6.23 For all four of the main playing pitch sports, the following pitch demand information, has been gathered, by a combination of data collection and review, and consultation:
- Sources of information – The sources of information used to establish current hockey pitch demand were:
    - Consultation meeting with Sittingbourne Hockey Club, Faversham Hockey Club and Gore Court Hockey Club,
    - England Hockey
    - Club and league websites.

### Hockey Demand

6.24 Findings relating to hockey pitch demand in Swale Borough are summarised below.

### Clubs and Teams

#### Sittingbourne Hockey Club (Formerly Old Bordenians Hockey Club)

6.25 Sittingbourne Hockey Club play matches and train at Borden Grammar School AGP. Number of teams 2024/25 season:

- 5 men’s teams
- 3 women’s teams
- Under 16’s Boy’s
- Under 16 Girl’s
- Under 14 Girl’s
- Under 12 Girl’s
- Under 10’s
- Under 8’s

6.26 The men’s and women’s teams play matches on Saturdays. The club has a larger girl’s junior section than boy’s but have training groups for mixed U8, boys under 10, 12, 14 and 16. Girls U12 and U14.

6.27 The club has a five-year plan where the men’s 1st achieves two promotions. The aim for the coming years is to balance performance with continuing to improve the pathway for talented juniors, making the first team increasingly reachable for young players coming up through the club. The club would like to make the club an attractive destination for performance players in a competitive region.

6.28 Sittingbourne Hockey Club - Training times:

**Table 58: Sittingbourne Hockey Club - Adults Training**

Team/Session	Day	Time	Hours
Men’s 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Goalkeeper Training	Monday	19.30-21.00	1.5
		18.30- 20.00	1.5
Women’s 13 years + Women’s Performance Squad	Tuesday	19.30-21.00	1.5
		19.30-21.00	1.5

## Swale Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy

Team/Session	Day	Time	Hours
Club Goalkeepers Men's Fist Squad	Wednesday	18.00-19.30	1.5
		19.30-21.00	1.5
Walking Hockey Men's 13+ Training	Thursday	19:00-20:30	1.5
		19.00-20/30	1.5
<b>Totals</b>			<b>12</b>

**Table 59: Sittingbourne Hockey Club Junior Training**

Team/Session	Day	Time	Hours
Minis mixed 4 years – 11 years	Monday	18.00-19.00	1
Youth 13 years – 18 years.	Wednesday	18.00–19.00	1
<b>Totals</b>			<b>2</b>

6.29 The membership data below shows an increase of 34 members between 2023/24 and the 2024/25 season. The main increase is in junior membership.

**Table 60: Membership Sittingbourne Hockey Club 2024/25 and 2023/24 Season – England Hockey Membership Data**

	M 5-10	F 5-10	M 11-13	F 11-13	M 14-16	F 14-16	M 17-18	F 17-18	M 19-21	F 19-21	M 22-25	F 22-25	M 26-35	F 26-35	M 36-45	F 36-45	M 46-84	F 46-84	M 85-89	F 85-89	M 90+	F 90+	Total	
2024/25	48	15	10	2	11	4	6	3	5	5	5	5	10	15	15	20	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>199</b>
2023/24	10	10	10	10	10	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	10	5	20	20	20	10	0	0	0	0	0	<b>165</b>

### Faversham Ladies Hockey Club

6.30 Faversham Ladies Hockey Club play matches Saturdays in the South East Division 6 Invicta league:

- 1 women’s team

6.31 The club does not train at all but do play their matches at Borden Grammar School AGP (Sittingbourne Hockey Club) on Saturday’s. This allows Faversham Ladies to access the Sittingbourne Hockey Club pavilion on site and provide after games hospitality. The club only provides 1 umpire for matches.

**Table 61: Membership Faversham Ladies Hockey Club 2024/25 and 2023/24 Season – England Hockey Membership Data.**

	M 5-10	F 5-10	M 11-13	F 11-13	M 14-16	F 14-16	M 17-18	F 17-18	M 19-21	F 19-21	M 22-25	F 22-25	M 26-35	F 26-35	M 36-45	F 36-45	M 46-84	F 46-84	M 85-89	F 85-89	M 90+	F 90+	Total
2024/25	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	0	13	0	0	0	0	22
2023/24	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	3	0	12	0	0	0	0	22

6.32 The membership data above indicates a small club with an ageing membership. The membership has remained the same for the past two seasons.

### Gore Court Hockey Club

6.33 Gore Court Hockey Club play matches and train at Westlands School AGP. The league games are played on Saturdays with vets and mixed teams playing on Sundays. The club stated during consultation that on a typical Saturday, fixtures commence at 10.15am and the final game start time is 16.30pm. The club has the following number of teams:

- 6 men’s teams
- 3 women’s teams
- 1 mixed team
- U 10s
- Boy’s U12 x 2
- Boy’s U14
- Girl’s U16

## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

- Girl's U12
- Boy's U16
- Boys U18

#### 6.34 Gore Court Hockey Club - Training times:

**Table 62: Gore Court Hockey Club Adults Training**

Team/Session	Day	Time	Hours
Men's 2 XI – Men's 4 XI	Wednesday	19.00-20.00	1
Men's 5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> XI	Wednesday	18.00-19.30	1.5
Men's 1 XI	Wednesday	19:30-21:00	1.5
Women's 1 XI	Tuesday	20.00-21:00	1
	Thursday	20:00-21:00	1
Women's 2 XI - 3 XI	Tuesday	19:00-20:00	1
Goalkeeper Training	Tuesday	18.00 – 19.00	1
Back to Hockey/ Small Sided Hockey	Wednesday	18..00 – 19.30	1.5
<b>Total</b>			9.5

**Table 63: Gore Court Hockey Club Junior Training**

Team/Session	Day	Time	Hours
Juniors Under 10	Sunday	09.30-10.30	1
Juniors 10 Years and above	Sunday & Tuesday	10.30–12.00	1.5
		19.00–20.00	1
<b>Total Hours</b>			3.5

## Swale Borough Council

### Playing Pitch Strategy

- 6.35 In addition to the weekly training hours totalling 11.5 hours the club hold a Back to hockey and small sided hockey sessions on Wednesdays 18.00-19.30 (1.5 hours).
- 6.36 The club has increased its membership by 63 between 2024/25 and 2023/24.

**Table 64: Membership Gore Court Hockey Club 2024/25 and 2023/24 Season – England hockey Membership Data.**

	M 5-10	F 5-10	M 11-13	F 11-13	M 14-16	F 14-16	M 17-18	F 17-18	M 19-21	F 19-21	M 22-25	F 22-25	M 26-35	F 26-35	M 36-45	F 36-45	M 46-84	F 46-84	M 85-89	F 85-89	M 90+	F 90+	Total
<b>2024/25</b>	19	25	22	8	15	9	7	2	5	3	9	5	33	14	9	5	20	6	0	0	0	0	<b>216</b>
<b>2023/24</b>	18	18	13	3	9	5	2	1	4	1	8	2	24	13	6	4	15	7	0	0	0	0	<b>153</b>

### Supply and Demand

- 6.37 It is suggested that a full size, sports lit AGP can accommodate four match equivalent sessions on one day. With teams playing on a home and away basis, this equates to one AGP being able to cater for eight 'home' teams at peak time (one team requires 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week on its 'home' AGP). Using the above calculations, on the basis that there are two full size AGP available which can accommodate hockey matches in Swale, this provides an opportunity to currently accommodate up to 16 adult hockey teams across the Borough on a Saturday and 16 junior teams on a Sunday.

### Hockey Match Slots Required Each Week

- 6.38 Table 65 provides the match slots required on Swale Hockey AGPs.

**Table 65: Match Slots Required Each Week - Swale Borough**

Swale Hockey Clubs	Adult Teams				Juniors	Totals	Match Slot (Adult) Requirements	Match Slot (Junior) Requirements
	Senior Men 17 +	Senior Women	Mixed	Veterans				
Faversham Ladies Hockey Club	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.5	0
Gore Court Hockey Club	7*	3	0	0	9	19	4.5	5

## Swale Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy

Swale Hockey Clubs	Adult Teams				Juniors	Totals	Match Slot (Adult) Requirements	Match Slot (Junior) Requirements
	Senior Men 17 +	Senior Women	Mixed	Veterans				
Sittingbourne Hockey Club	5	3	0	0	6	14	4	3
<b>Total Teams</b>	<b>12*</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>7.5</b>
<b>Total Teams Playing on a Saturday</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Teams Playing on a Sunday</b>	<b>1*</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>7.5</b>

N.B: Includes Boys Under 18 team that play on Sunday.

### Supply and Demand Match Play

- 6.39 It is suggested that a full size, sports lit AGP can accommodate four match equivalent sessions on one day. With teams playing on a home and away basis, this equates to one AGP being able to cater for eight 'home' teams at peak time (one team requires 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week on its 'home' AGP). Using the above calculations, on the basis that there are two full size AGP available which can currently accommodate hockey matches in Swale, this provides an opportunity to accommodate up to 16 adult hockey teams across the Borough on a Saturday and 16 junior teams on a Sunday.
- 6.40 The table below helps to map out the individual site supply, demand and capacity.

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

Table 66: Individual AGP site supply, demand and capacity

Site name	Hours available mid-week	% of hockey usage	% of other usage (e.g., football)	Spare capacity	Match slots available Saturdays	% of hockey usage Saturdays	Match slots Sundays	% of hockey usage Sundays	Hockey club users	Training capacity comments (mid-week)	Match capacity comments (weekend)	Capacity summary
Borden Grammar School	20	70%	0%	30%	4	112.5%	4	75%	Sittingbourne Hockey Club and Faversham Ladies Hockey Club	Accommodated training is demanded for Sittingbourne Hockey Club only. Faversham Ladies Hockey club does not train.	Over played on Saturdays by Sittingbourne Hockey Club and Faversham Ladies Hockey Club.  Spare capacity on Sundays for Junior Hockey.	Pitch is used only by Sittingbourne Hockey Club and Faversham Ladies Hockey Club on Saturdays and is overplayed. Pitch is used by Sittingbourne Hockey club juniors Sundays and is underplayed.  AGP has 30% of the spare capacity for additional hockey training.  Sittingbourne Hockey Club has a lease on the AGP and Pavilion for a further 28 years.
Westland's School AGP	20	65%	30%	5%	4	112.5%	4	125%	Gore Court Hockey Club	65% of the capacity is provided for Gore Court Hockey Club. 30% equivalent to 6 hours is provided for football.	Overplayed by Gore Court Hockey Club on Saturdays and Sundays	Pitch is used only by Gore Court Hockey Club on Saturdays and is overplayed.  Pitch is used by Gore Court Hockey club juniors and 18 years team Sundays and is overplayed.

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

Site name	Hours available mid-week	% of hockey usage	% of other usage (e.g., football)	Spare capacity	Match slots available Saturdays	% of hockey usage Saturdays	Match slots Sundays	% of hockey usage Sundays	Hockey club users	Training capacity comments (mid-week)	Match capacity comments (weekend)	Capacity summary
												<p>AGP has 5% of spare capacity for additional hockey training and additional 30% if football is transferred to a 3G AGP.</p> <p>Sittingbourne Hockey Club has a lease on the AGP and Pavilion for a further 7 years (2032). However, efforts to extend the lease have failed to date.</p>

- 6.41 There are 18 teams currently playing on a Saturday and 16 on a Sunday. There is currently insufficient AGP provision for hockey match play on a Saturday but sufficient provision for match play on a Sunday. However, additional teams playing on a Sunday would need additional AGP provision.
- 6.42 Sittingbourne Hockey Club, Faversham Ladies Hockey Club and Gore Court Hockey Club have 18 teams playing on a Saturday requiring 9 match equivalent sessions with both AGPs in use there is overplay by 1 match equivalent session.

### Training Capacity

- 6.43 There is a need for 27 hours of hockey training to meet the mid-week training needs of Sittingbourne Hockey Club (14 hours) and Gore Court Hockey Clubs (13 hours). Both clubs have priority over any other club for use at their respective AGPs.
- 6.44 There is a total of 40 hours mid-week for training slots across each of the AGPs Monday – Friday 6.00pm – 10.00pm. There is sufficient time and slots for training for hockey across Swale currently. There is demand for 6 hours of football use midweek. Consultation with football would be required football demand is 6 hours per week at Westlands School AGP only.

### Unmet and Latent Demand

- 6.45 Gore Court Hockey Club has stated that they would like to increase adult teams by 1 women's team in the future, Faversham Ladies Hockey Club stated that they would not be increasing teams in the future and Sittingbourne Hockey Club stated they would like to increase by 1 man's and an U12's team.
- 6.46 This would require an additional 1 match slot on a Saturday and 0.5 match slots on a Sunday.

### Displaced demand

- 6.47 There are no imported hockey clubs from other local authorities using Swale AGPs.
- 6.48 From a sub area perspective only the Sittingbourne sub area has AGP provision (2 AGPs) and 2 hockey clubs Sittingbourne and Gore Court Hockey Clubs. Faversham sub area has Faversham Ladies Hockey Club, but no AGP provision and Sheppey sub area has neither AGP provision nor a hockey club.

### Future Demand 2040 – Population Growth

- 6.49 Swale Borough Council is undertaking a local plan review. The new Local plan will run to 2040.
- 6.50 The local housing need for Swale is currently 1,040 dwellings per annum - a change from 1,086 dwellings at 1 April 2023. This change is largely due to the affordability ratio dropping from 10.95 to 9.6 in March 2024 and a slightly lower household projection for the years 2024 to 2034. **Under the standard method the Council's need for the Plan period to 2040 (16 years) would be 16,640 dwellings.**
- 6.51 For Local Plan drafting and resilience through the consultation process and Local Plan examination process Swale has applied a buffer to this figure (16,640) to cover any removal of housing sites. A buffer of 5% should ensure that there will not be the need to consult on further sites late in the Local Plan drafting process. **Applying a 5% resilience buffer to 16,640 dwellings for the proposed Plan period would result in a proposed Local Plan housing target of 17,472 dwellings.**
- 6.52 A total of 17,472 homes with an average household size of 2.4 persons provides a new resident population of 41,933. The Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator Tool identifies the need and cost for hockey AGPs and changing rooms from these developments across Swale up to 2040.
- 6.53 The table below identifies the number of hockey AGPs required to meet population increase from new developments by 2040 across Swale. The Playing Pitch Calculator identifies that developer's contributions capital costs towards hockey between 2024 and 2040 should be £670,172 with lifecycle costs per annum of £17,424 and changing room costs of £278,379.

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

6.54 The new population generates 2.52 match equivalent sessions weekly for adults and 1.99 match equivalent sessions on a Sunday for juniors and under 10s. The latent demand equates to an additional 1 match slot on a Saturday and 0.5 match slots on a Sunday. Future population and latent demand to 2040 equates to 3.52 match equivalent sessions weekly on a Saturday and 2.49 match equivalent sessions on a Sunday.

**Table 67: Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator – Population Increase 2024 – 2040. Hockey AGP Needs**

	Number of pitches required to meet the estimated demand	Capital Cost	Lifecycle Cost (per annum)	Changing rooms (number)	Changing rooms (capital cost)
<b>Total AGPs</b>	0.63	£670,172	£17,424	1.26	£278,379

6.55 Additional population will mean additional facilities for hockey to meet the needs of the new population in the future. The Playing Pitch Calculator indicates a need for 2.52 adult match equivalent sessions that will be required on a Saturday and 1.99 junior match equivalent sessions required on a Saturday by 2040. This indicates a need for an additional 1 x AGP (0.63 rounded up). for hockey in the future. With the current overplay of adult hockey on a Saturday 1 match equivalent session and the future demand 2.52 an additional 1 x AGP is required from population growth across Swale.

6.56 “Sittingbourne Hockey Club and Gore Court Hockey Club are currently discussing a possible merger. If successful the merger would create one of the largest hockey clubs in Kent alongside Canterbury Men’s and Ladies Hockey Club, Sevenoaks Hockey Club and Holcombe Hockey Club. The merger would provide economies of scale and the potential for increased success on the field of play.”

6.57 Planning application 21/503914/EIOUT Land South and East of Sittingbourne which is undecided proposes a new sport hub with 2 hockey AGPs. Gore Court Hockey Club have been in consultation with the developers of this planning application and are keen to work with the developer to develop a new sports hub for hockey if planning is approved.

6.58 Trends in hockey growth by team typology will be considered in stage D as a specific scenario.

### Hockey Summary Key Findings

6.59 This section summarises the findings from the hockey analysis, which will form the basis of the recommendation and action plan section for SBC Playing Pitch Strategy Review.

- There are 2 AGPs suitable for hockey play across Swale Borough.
- The AGPs used by hockey clubs are:
  - Borden Grammar School. The facility provides secured community use for Sittingbourne Hockey Club and Faversham Ladies Hockey Club. Lease has 28 years left on AGP and Pavilion.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- Westlands School AGP. This facility provides secured community use for Gore Court Hockey Club. Lease has 7 years left ending 2032.
- The Sittingbourne School AGP is too small for competitive hockey and is mainly used for football training. The HMP Elmley AGP is not available for community use and has no sports lighting.
- Borden Grammar School AGP is rated as good with the carpet refurbished in 2018. The life of a carpet is estimated to be 10 years depending on how the carpet is used and maintained.
- The Westlands School AGP shock pad and carpet were replaced July 2023. The lights also need upgrading to LED.
- Sittingbourne Hockey Club have a pavilion with changing and bar facilities adjacent to the AGP and is in good condition, the bar area has been refurbished. However, there is a need to replace a boiler.
- Gore Court Hockey Clubs clubhouse is not on site; it's around 1/4 mile from the AGP. The Gore Court Clubhouse at the Grove is also home to Gore Court Cricket Club and currently Sittingbourne Rugby Club. The rugby club will move to new accommodation once their new site has been provided as part of a Section 106 agreement at Wises Road Housing Development. The clubhouse has good social facilities, but the changing rooms require refurbishment. The car park at the clubhouse at Gore Court has recently been resurfaced and remarked as part of this section 106 agreement.
- Sittingbourne Hockey Club play matches and train at Borden Grammar School. The men's and women's teams play matches on Saturdays and juniors on a Sunday.
- Faversham Ladies Hockey Club has 1 adult ladies' team and plays matches on Saturdays at the Sittingbourne Hockey Club AGP in the 2024/25 season.
- Gore Court Hockey Club play matches and train at Westlands School AGP. The men's and women's teams play matches on a Saturday and juniors including Boy's U18 play on a Sunday.
- The Sittingbourne Hockey Club and Gore Court Hockey Club AGPs are both currently overplayed on a Saturday by 0.5 match equivalent sessions. A total of 1 match equivalent session weekly.
- There is match overplay currently on both existing AGPs and there will not be sufficient accessible and secured community use hockey provision to meet future demand. A third hockey AGP is required by 2040. Ideally provision of a 2 x AGP facility with changing and clubhouse would be a sustainable option but leave one of the existing AGPs possibly redundant or available for additional demand in the future.

- Gore Court Hockey Club and Sittingbourne Hockey Club are currently discussing a merger of the two clubs.

### Hockey Recommendations

6.60 The recommendations are:

1. Protect all current hockey sites and facilities in the Local Plan unless provision is made for new improved quality facilities that are accessible and provided before original facilities are closed.
2. There is a need to provide addition AGPs to meet future demand for hockey.
3. Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator should be used to identify developer contributions from each new housing development in Swale Borough. The Playing Pitch Calculator and PPS should be used to help determine the likely impact of a new development on hockey AGP demand and the capacity of existing hockey AGPs in the area, and whether there is a need for improvements to increase capacity of existing provision or if new provision is required. Where a development is located within access of existing high-quality provision, this does not necessarily mean that there is no need for further provision or improvement to existing provision, as additional demand arising from the development is likely to result in increased usage (which can result in overplay or quality deterioration).
4. New housing development if approved at Land South and South East of Sittingbourne could be seen as an opportunity to meet future needs for hockey. It is therefore essential for the local authority to collaborate with England Hockey, Gore Court Hockey Club and Sittingbourne Hockey Club to obtain the future facility needs required for both clubs from future population growth from the new developments through the Planning process.
5. Secure long-term leases/licenses for clubs where they can apply for funding to improve facilities and provide security of tenure. The clubs requiring new leases are:
  - Gore Court Hockey Club – Lease ends 2032.
6. Need to improve the quality of pavilions at the following sites:
  - Gore Court Cricket Club – changing rooms require refurbishment
  - Sittingbourne Hockey Club – New boiler in pavilion
7. Need to improve sports lighting:
  - Westlands AGP

## 7. Tennis Court Analysis and Recommendations

- 7.1 The Lawn Tennis Association's (LTA) vision for tennis which has recently been introduced following a major consultative process. The vision is 'Tennis Opened Up' and the mission is to grow tennis by making it more relevant, accessible, welcoming, and enjoyable. Strategic initiatives at county and national level aim to support this'. The recent joint LTA and UK Government Parks Tennis Project investment (£30 million) is designed to open tennis to people of all backgrounds, improve access to tennis across the nation, and provide greater opportunities for children and adults to be active. Park tennis courts are particularly important in providing affordable, engaging, and accessible opportunities for more female players and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as being the most popular venue for women to play after they have left education.
- 7.2 The LTA's mission is to grow tennis by making courts accessible, welcoming, and enjoyable. Ensuring local communities have access to quality facilities is critical to attracting and retaining more players. As such, the LTA's Quick Access Loan Scheme aims to provide interest-free loans to support venues investment in facilities, prioritising the installation and construction of covered courts.
- 7.3 The objectives of the fund are to:
- Provide covered or sports-lit playing facilities to encourage community accessible play all year.
  - Retain and increase the number of participants at the venue.
  - Offer and increase both non-members pay and play usage and coaching opportunities.
  - Grow the numbers of adults and juniors on the coaching programme.
  - Provide seamless booking of tennis courts and lessons through an [online booking system](#)

### Parks Investment Project

- 7.4 The LTA wants to work with local networks, to promote a joined up, transformational improvement to existing facilities, largely through increasing the number of courts that have sports lighting and covered but also courts that can be booked online. Swale Borough Council are engaged with the LTA and are working in partnership to increase usage and financial sustainability.
- 7.5 Swale Borough Council has been included in the Parks Investment Project in collaboration with the LTA and The Department for Digital, Culture, Media, & Sport.
- 7.6 The following works commenced in August 2023 with a finish time of 8 – 10 weeks:
- King George Playing Fields (4 Courts) - court resurface and repaint, reconstruction where required, reclad fencing, new nets and posts and lite access gate system.
  - Milton Recreation Ground (3 Courts sports lighting) - court resurface and repaint and premium access gate system.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- 7.7 SBC has provided funding for upgrading the tennis court lighting at Milton Recreation Ground to LED.
- 7.8 In addition to the above the Council have given the following commitments to the LTA:
- Maintaining the refurbished tennis courts and a repaint/resurface within the 15-year funding obligation period, with the annual sinking fund recommended by the LTA at £1,200 per court per annum, and a further £600 for each court with sports lighting per annum.
  - Commitment to ongoing sustainability to enable the above, The Council has introduced pay & play sessions at both venues while retaining some free sessions, alongside income from the incumbent Tennis Club at Milton. Season tickets will be available at both venues and coaching will be available at the Milton venue.
  - The Council will need to retain all courts as tennis courts once refurbishment works are completed for the 15-year funding obligation period if the LTA. All the courts at both sites will be dedicated to tennis.
  - The Council will remain responsible for the ongoing control, operation, management, and maintenance of both sites. The Council will then have contracts in place to outsource ongoing coaching/organised activity with local clubs/coaches.
- 7.9 A new affordable, paid for model has been implemented at all sites, ensuring the long-term playing condition of the courts, and offering a sustainable approach to their ongoing maintenance and refurbishment.
- 7.10 Residents will be able to use Clubspark – an online booking system - to book and pay for sessions on court. Additionally, through Clubspark residents can access tennis coaching sessions (for all ages and abilities), and secure household membership for just £40 a year. Household membership allows tennis court access limited to 3 sessions of up to 2 hours per session, for everyone at the registered address.
- 7.11 All LTA registered venues and accredited coaches can use ClubSpark free of charge. ClubSpark is a flexible and simple venue management platform with multiple products and applications to help venues, local authorities and coaches manage their sport. It is a tool that is offered for free as part of LTA venue registration and allows administrators to manage all functions at their venue(s).
- 7.12 LTA data on national tennis playing demand patterns is instructive for describing activity patterns in Swale.
- 7.13 **Location of play:** The importance of parks courts is emphasised by the following data on where people play tennis. Parks are the highest where people play 31%. Hence the need to protect Swale's Park facilities and enhance them.

**Table 68: National Survey – Location of Play 2018 (Source: Statistical)**

Location	% Players
Parks	31%
Education sites	22%
Tennis clubs	19%
Other (i.e., Leisure centres)	28%

7.14 **Organised play:** Parks players are less reliant on organised tennis activity but heavily reliant on using parks for social tennis with friends and family:

**Table 69: National survey Organised Play**

Type of Tennis	% Parks Players	% Club Players
Social tennis with friends/family	90%	74%
Sports Facility informal tennis	15%	18%
Individual tennis competition	2%	17%
Group coaching/lessons	2%	15%
Team tennis competition	1%	13%
Private lessons	1%	11%
Cardio tennis	3%	8%

7.15 **Satisfaction levels with courts:** The % of players of each type who are 'very satisfied' are as follows:

**Table 70: National Survey – Satisfaction Levels with Courts**

Aspects of courts	% Parks players	% Club players
Safety of courts	28%	49%

## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

Aspects of courts	% Parks players	% Club players
Proximity to home	31%	45%
Condition of courts	13%	39%
Ease of booking	16%	35%
Cost of courts	36%	31%
Availability of courts	19%	30%
Number of courts	13%	30%
Customer service	10%	27%
Ancillary facilities	5%	26%

7.16 **Awareness of local tennis courts:** The importance of publicising court availability is emphasised by the following findings.

**Table 71: National Survey – Awareness of Local Tennis Courts**

Type of court	% People aware
Parks courts	31%
Tennis club courts	28%
Leisure centres	27%
Education courts	15%
Indoor tennis centres	10%

**Swale - Supply Tennis Courts**

7.17 Table 72 below provide a breakdown of tennis court sites in the study area. The quality rating of a site is calculated using the following LTA **criteria**:

- **Good** - Good playing surface, courts recently been upgraded, resurfaced, nets and fencing in working order.
- **Average** – Court colour is fading or showing signs of wear. The surface remains largely intact. The court life, prior to needing resurfacing, would be extended for up to 5 years by cleaning and repainting of the existing surface.
- **Below Average** – Court is showing clear signs of deterioration including cracking, loosening of fretting of the surface. This indicates the court needs resurfacing.
- **Poor** - Playing surface poor, slippery playing surface, poor drainage, cracks on the playing surface and surrounding area, court markings hardly visible, no nets or nets damaged, surrounding fencing poor/dangerous.

**Table 72: Outdoor Tennis Provision by Site – Swale Borough**

Outdoor Tennis sites	Sub Area	Site Type/Secured /Unsecured Use	Tennis courts			Site Quality
			All Courts	Surface	Sports Lighting	
Borden Grammar School	Sittingbourne	Education Unsecured	6	Tarmac	No	Poor
Highsted Grammar School	Sittingbourne	Education Unsecured	7	Tarmac	Yes	Poor
King George Playing Field	Sittingbourne	Local Authority Secured	4	Tarmac	No	Good once refurbished
Milton Recreation Ground	Sittingbourne	Local Authority Secured	3	Tarmac	Yes	Good once refurbished
The Appleyard	Sittingbourne	Private Club Secured	3	2 All-weather 1 Grass	2 all-weather sports lighting	Standard
Tunstall Primary School	Sittingbourne	Education unsecured	6	Tarmac	No	Standard
Woodstock Broadoak Road	Sittingbourne	Sports Club	4	Tarmac	No	Disused - Poor
Faversham Recreation Ground	Faversham	Club Secured	3 + 2 mini	Nonporous acrylic	Yes	Good
Dawes Community Association Hernehill Tennis and 5-a-side	Faversham	Community Association Secured	1	Sand based	Yes	Standard
Queen Elizabeth Grammar School	Faversham	Education Unsecured	4	Tarmac	No	Standard
HMP Swaleside and Stamford Hill	Sheppey	HMS Prisons Unsecured not available for public use	2	Tarmac	No	Standard

## Swale Borough Council

### Playing Pitch Strategy

Outdoor Tennis sites	Sub Area	Site Type/Secured /Unsecured Use	Tennis courts			Site Quality
			All Courts	Surface	Sports Lighting	
EKC Academy Sheerness	Sheppey	Education Unsecured	3	Tarmac	No	Poor
Sheppey Leisure Complex	Sheppey	Swale Leisure Secured	1	Tarmac	No	Poor (Derelict)
Little Groves Leisure Park	Sheppey	Commercial Unsecured	1	Tarmac	No	Poor
<b>Total</b>			47+ 2 minis		16	

7.18 There are 47 tennis courts and 2 mini courts in operation in Swale Borough located at 15 sites.

7.19 Secured community use tennis sites are provided by:

- The Local Authority who manages and operates tennis courts located across 2 park sites that have recently been refurbished – King George Playing Fields Sittingbourne 4 courts and Milton Recreation Ground 3 with sports lighting.
- Sheppey Leisure has 1 court at Sheppey Leisure Centre, which is very poor quality and is currently being built on.
- The Appleyard a private sports club operates 2 all-weather tennis courts with sports lighting and a grass court in the summer months.
- Dawes Community Association Hernhill operates a tennis court that is also used for 5-a-side football with sport lighting.

7.20 There are two membership tennis clubs affiliated to the Lawn Tennis Association in Swale.

- Faversham Lawn Tennis Club – Faversham Recreation Ground 3 courts with sports lighting and 2 mini courts). Secured community use.
- Sittingbourne Tennis Club – Milton Recreation Ground (3 courts with sports lighting), Secured community use

7.21 There are 2 tennis courts at HMP Swaleside (Sheppey) that are not currently available for public use and 1 court in poor condition at Little Groves Leisure Park (Sheppey).

7.22 There are five education sites providing 26 courts. The education sites are classified as unsecure sites for community use. The usage cannot be guaranteed without a formal community use agreement in place.

7.23 There are 4 disused tennis courts at Sittingbourne FC Woodstock Park Broadoak Road, Sittingbourne. This site is part of the Highsted planning application Land to the South and East of Sittingbourne, currently undecided. The developer is proposing that 4 tennis courts will be replaced as part of any new developments.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- 7.24 Faversham Tennis Club are reaching capacity and have considered providing a fourth court at Faversham. Recreation Ground. The club cannot proceed with this due to a tree that would need to be replaced but this has a preservation order which prevents the loss of the tree.
- 7.25 Sittingbourne Tennis Club is a recently new tennis club in Sittingbourne. The club is seeking a lease agreement with SBC to use the Milton Recreation Ground Courts and to have use of a pavilion on site.
- 7.26 The Local Authority sites King George Playing Fields and Milton Recreation Ground Sittingbourne both recently refurbished provide good quality courts as do Faversham Tennis club at Faversham Recreation Ground. Faversham Tennis club are about to have their courts re painted (winter 2023).
- 7.27 Standard quality courts are provided at The Appleyard, Tunstall Primary School, Dawes Community Association Hernhill and Queen Elizabeth Grammar School. Poor quality courts are provided at EKC Academy Sheerness, Sheppey Leisure Centre, Little Groves Leisure Park, Highsted Grammar School, and Borden Grammar School.

#### Swale - Demand Tennis Courts

- 7.28 The LTA advises that the capacity of public community courts on Local Authority sites to be 7 hours per day for courts without sports lighting and 12 hours per day for courts with sports lighting.
- 7.29 When considering secured community use tennis courts only. SBC provides 7 tennis courts on sites that they manage. Three of these courts have sports lighting.
- 7.30 It is estimated that the 4 courts without sports lighting contribute 28 hours per day and 196 hours per week and the three courts with sports lighting contribute 36 hours per day and 252 hours per week of playing capacity to meet demand for informal tennis in Swale. This equates to 1,920 hours per month (30-day average) or 23,040 hours per year.
- 7.31 Faversham Lawn Tennis Club, the Appleyard, Dawes Community Association and Sheppey Leisure Centre provide 1 tennis court without sports lighting and 6 tennis courts with sports lighting. Applying the same ratio of use as public courts, clubs tennis courts without sports lighting provide 7 hours use per day and 49 hours per week. Tennis courts with sports lighting provide 72 hours per day and 504 hours per week. A total of 3,630 hours per month. (30-day average) or 43,560 hours per year.
- 7.32 When adding the parks and club courts monthly hours of court supply together, the total monthly hours of use available equals 5,550.
- 7.33 Sport England Active Lives data for 2021/2022 informs us that 2.9% of the population across Swale Borough participate in tennis activity at least once a year. The Census 2021 identifies the Swale borough population to be 151,700. 2.9 % of the population equates to 3171 persons participating in tennis.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- 7.34 Assuming an average of 3 people per court per 'booking / use' (to account for an even split between singles, doubles, and some sessions where 3 people share a court) equates to 1,850 (5,550 total hours of monthly use /3) sessions per month played on public and sports club courts. If each match lasts for 1 hour on average this means that when considering public and club courts, they are operating for 1,850 hours out of a possible 5,550 hours per month 33.3% of their total operational capacity.
- 7.35 According to data provided by the LTA's online booking system (Clubspark) with court access technology, the average level of utilisation in venues (UK wide) is 53%. By this barometer Swale is estimated to be currently operating significantly below average levels in terms of its utilisation of tennis courts. The new improved gate access systems now in place for 2023 at King George Playing Field and Milton Recreation Ground will provide Swale with up-to-date accurate usage data.
- 7.36 **Population growth:** A scenario has been modelled for future needs based on 2.9% of the population participating in tennis.
- 7.37 Swale Borough Council are currently in the process of updating and providing a new local plan that will go to 2040.
- 7.38 The local housing need for Swale is currently 1,040 dwellings per annum - a change from 1,086 dwellings at 1 April 2023. This change is largely due to the affordability ratio dropping from 10.95 to 9.6 in March 2024 and a slightly lower household projection for the years 2024 to 2034. **Under the standard method the Council's need for the Plan period to 2040 (16 years) would be 16,640 dwellings.**
- 7.39 For Local Plan drafting and resilience through the consultation process and Local Plan examination process Swale has applied a buffer to this figure (16,640) to cover any removal of housing sites. A buffer of 5% should ensure that there will not be the need to consult on further sites late in the Local Plan drafting process. **Applying a 5% resilience buffer to 16,640 dwellings for the proposed Plan period would result in a proposed Local Plan housing target of 17,472 dwellings.**
- 7.40 A total of 17,472 homes with an average household size of 2.4 persons provides a new resident population of 41,933.
- 7.41 Sport England's Sports Facility Calculator can be used to identify the tennis court need from new housing development. By applying the new resident Swale population of 41,993 from new housing development to 2040 to the Sports Facility Calculator. The calculator identifies a need for 6 additional courts (5.51 rounded up).
- 7.42 There are currently no padel courts in Swale. The LTA has stated that it is interested in any opportunity to provide Padel Tennis courts particularly as part of any developments at Sheppey Leisure Centre and new housing developments the LTA Padel Calculator for Swale identifies the need for 15 padel courts across the Borough.
- 7.43 The LTA has stated that new provision is always welcome to fulfil strong playing demand in Swale. Future trends may be the need to improve 'wrap around' facilities in parks. This includes sport lighting of courts to improve all year round play and ensure coaching income in parks is not too seasonal.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- 7.44 This also includes toilet, pavilion, and path lighting around tennis facilities to encourage comfortable and safe routes to and from courts. These facilities will also be key to driving junior and adult coaching programmes and competitions within parks.
- 7.45 The LTA are keen to increase provision in the Swale borough area and will object to the loss of any tennis court across Swale borough.
- 7.46 All tennis courts should be protected within the Swale Borough Local Plan. Any courts proposed to be lost should be replaced with at least equivalent provision in terms of quantity and quality.
- 7.47 There is a need for a Strategic Plan on how to obtain all-round tennis courts on Sheppey.

### Tennis Recommendations

1. The Protection of all community use tennis courts across Swale Borough Council. Any courts proposed to be lost should be replaced with at least equivalent provision in terms of quantity and quality.
2. Swale Borough Council and the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) to work together to:
  - Develop strong local park and other community tennis venue partnerships to deliver inclusive and sustainable tennis provision for all.
  - Invest in great people delivering great experiences in parks.
  - Target investment in “welcoming “park facilities for people to socialise and play.
3. Monitor and use the gate access systems installed to identify demand currently and for the future and use the findings to promote tennis across Swale Borough. There is a need to consider a review of tennis usage on the parks bookable courts so actual demand/use can be understood and future provision planned for more accurately.
4. Future trends may be the need to improve ‘wrap around’ facilities in parks. This includes sports lighting of courts to improve all year round play and ensure coaching income in parks is not too seasonal. This also includes toilet, pavilion, and path lighting around tennis facilities to encourage comfortable and safe routes to and from courts. These facilities will also be key to driving junior and adult coaching programmes and competitions within parks.
5. Swale Borough Council needs to broadly encourage and support the work to link between venues, coaches, and schools to ensure the young people across Swale have an opportunity to participate in tennis.
6. The LTA to work with clubs through its club network to develop opportunities for growth in the tennis workforce to support the tennis environments.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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7. There is a need to monitor the capacity of use at Faversham Tennis club and to consider how an additional court can be provided for use by the club in the future if required.
8. Regarding the lack of public tennis courts on Sheppey. There is a need for Swale Borough and the LTA to consider a Strategic Plan to bring into use the existing poor quality unused tennis courts in Sheppey and as to consider the need to provide outdoor tennis courts and padel courts in Sheppey as part of any new future housing developments.
9. There is a need to consider provision of tennis courts as part of new housing developments as there is currently a limited supply of tennis provision in Swale. The Sport England Sports Facility Calculator should be used to identify developer contributions towards tennis courts from new housing population and the LTA Padel calculator should be used to identify the number of Padel courts required.

## 8. Athletics

- 8.1. As a Governing Body, UK Athletics is responsible for developing and implementing the rules and regulations of athletics, including everything from anti-doping, health and safety, facilities, and welfare, to training and education for coaches and officials as well as permitting and licensing.
- 8.2. Locally, the sport is governed through England Athletics, which is the development and membership body for athletics and running clubs in England. It has a National Head of Clubs and Participation as well as a team of five club support managers across the Country.

### Supply Swale

- 8.3. There are currently no full size purpose-built synthetic track and field outdoor athletics tracks in Swale. The nearest full size 400m synthetic athletics tracks are:
- Medway Park, Gillingham, Medway
  - Sutton Valence, Maidstone
  - Julie Rose Stadium, Ashford
  - Canterbury Academy Trust, Canterbury
- 8.4. The only track and field athletics club in Swale, Swale Combined Athletics Club train in the summer months at Fulston Manor Schools, Cromer's Corner Playing Fields ME10 4HS.
- 8.5. Cromer's Corner is located about 0.8 miles from the main school site. This accommodation houses a purpose-built pavilion and changing rooms. The field is marked with:
- One grass athletics track (400m summer)
  - One long jump pit and run up track.
  - Changing rooms
- 8.6. The facilities at Cromers Corner Playing Fields are owned by Fulston Manor School and hired out directly by the school. The grass track facility is available for community use.

### Quality

- 8.7. The quality of the grass athletic track and ancillary facilities at Cromer Corner Playing Fields are assessed as inadequate quality. In addition, there are no lights for use outside of the summer months. The Site is subject to trespassing and anti-social behaviour due to a lack of adequate fencing. In the short term, the Site requires investment to address security and maintenance issues. The ancillary facilities provide multiple changing rooms in need of refurbishment.

### TrackMark

- 8.8. TrackMark is UK Athletics' quality assurance scheme for outdoor track and field athletics facilities. A venue that achieves TrackMark is recognised by UK Athletics as having managed, compliant facilities that are accessible to participants of all abilities. From 2021, venues that actively choose not to pursue accreditation are not eligible to apply for a competition licence at any level.

### Future provision

- 8.9. Consultation with England Athletics reveals that, nationally, no new standard 400-metre athletics tracks are planned to be constructed. Focus is instead on the retention of existing 400-metre facilities and the development of new, innovative, entry level facilities such as mini tracks and endurance loops, particularly if they can be provided as part of multi-sport developments with sports lighting.
- 8.10. Linked to the above, England Athletics is currently exploring three alternative approaches in designing new athletics provision. These three designs, outlined below, present alternative approaches to athletics provision as to offer more affordable and feasible means of creating athletics tracks.

### Compact Track

- 8.11. The first of the three alternative designs is a 'compact track' featuring a 60m sprint straight with an accompanying jump lane and shot-put space. This provision is the smallest of the three and is installed at sites with limited available land.

### Mini Track

- 8.12. A 'mini track' features a 140m four lane oval track with a six lane 60m sprint, as well as accompanying shot put and jumping provision. An advantage to a mini track design is it leaves a large space in the centre of the oval track to be used for either various field events such as long jump/ triple jump, or alternatively it can be used for other sports such as football pitches or an outdoor gym.
- 8.13. Mini track sites also feature an innovative design of shot-put practice areas in which it flattens a natural slope, and athletes throw into a hill allowing for the put to roll back to the participant thus reducing time spent retrieving the put after each throw.

### Active Track

- 8.14. Finally, an 'active track' is a synthetic loop with no fixed shape or distance (like a formula one circuit), in which a track is drawn to fit its natural surroundings such as an existing park or school field. This is installed at sites where a 400m oval would not be feasible as it allows for adaptations to the shape to suit land in its current state.

### Demand

#### Club demand

- 8.15. For the purposes of this study, athletics demand is considered to come in various forms, rather than just the traditional track and field activity. As such, running clubs are considered, as are organised running events and various running initiatives, which are governed by England Athletics. It is also acknowledged that recreational running forms a large part of demand, although this is difficult to measure.

#### Swale Combined Athletics Club

- 8.16. Established in 1986, the Club offers track and field training and competitions for its 100+ members. Membership is open to children (from age nine), young people and adults with a 50/50 split of male to female members, 80/20 split of under 16's to 16+ and 30% from minorities. The Club is affiliated with England Athletics.
- 8.17. The Club uses the grass track athletic facilities at Cromer Corner Playing fields three evenings per week during the summer season (April to October) when a 400 m athletics track is marked out over the southern section, while the northern section is used for field events training. The club holds Winter training indoors at Fulston Manor School. The Club hosts an annual Athletics Fun Day at the Site, including an Inter-primary school 2 km event and this year (2025) an Inter-secondary school 3km event. The Club arranges additional car parking and pedestrian access via the adjacent Tunstall Primary School for these events.
- 8.18. The athletics club have consulted with Fulston Manor School and the School intends to retain the Site long-term, and – crucially – it supports the need to improve the athletics facilities; the school has stated that it has funding to refurbish the Pavillion, and this could help to increase storage for the Club's equipment. The school will also pursue relevant grant funding opportunities in partnership with the Club.
- 8.19. The athletics Club intends to add event specific facility improvements as funding is secured, including a high jump area, a 150m track straight and a throws cage. With appropriate lighting to enable all year-round use. These new event facilities would be positioned away from the existing grassed football pitches. A phased design would be commissioned and agreed with the School and Milton and Fulston United Football Club before seeking planning permission.

### Sittingbourne Striders Running Club

- 8.20. Sittingbourne Striders was established in February 1986 as a running club affiliated with England Athletics. In 2013, a triathlon section was introduced, which is affiliated with British Triathlon. Furthermore, in April 2023, they expanded their offerings by creating a junior section under British Triathlon.
- 8.21. The club hosts various sessions throughout the week with options to suit all abilities. All runs start from The Appleyard, Sports Pavilion, Gore Court Road, Sittingbourne ME10 1QN.
- 8.22. Tuesday is the main club night, and the club has assorted options to suit all standards of runner. All runs start from The Appleyard.
- 8.23. The main club runs consist of varying routes of around 5-7 miles and are suitable for all speeds of runner. During the summer they are on country lanes and public footpaths. In the winter they are in town but do go on country lanes with runners wearing head torches.
- 8.24. Interval training takes place at the Appleyard on Thursday evenings and longer runs of ten miles upwards on Sunday mornings.

### Swale Tri Club

- 8.25. Swale Tri club is a dedicated triathlon and duathlon club, supporting triathletes of all abilities across Swale and the surrounding areas. The club is affiliated to England Athletics and meets every Tuesday at 19:00 at The West Faversham Community Centre. Occasionally the club runs start at various locations, such as track sessions at Canterbury High School. Swims are held every Thursday between 18:15 and 19:15 (meeting at 18:05pm) at Faversham Pool for a one-hour technique-based session, Saturday Social Rides. Are organised and provide an opportunity to help build up on strength and endurance. The club provides Track cycling twice a month at Betteshanger Park,

### Faversham Running Club

- 8.26. The club founded in 2015 is affiliated to England Athletics and meets every Wednesday evening from 6:30pm at the Abbey Sports Centre in Faversham. Interval training occurs on Mondays and Thursdays.

### Parkrun

- 8.27. Parkrun is a series of 5k runs held on Saturday or Sunday mornings in areas of open space around the UK, with 1,063 events now operating across the Country. They are open to all, free, and are safe and easy to take part in. Runners must first register online to access a printed barcode which gives them access to all Parkrun events.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- 8.28. There are currently three Parkrun events held weekly in Swale, which is a sizeable number as most authorities host only one or two. These are held at Faversham Recreation Ground, Faversham (Junior Park Run 2K Sunday morning), Milton Creek Country Park, Sittingbourne (Sittingbourne Park Run 5K Saturday morning), and the Leas Minster on Sea Isle of Sheppey (The Leas Park Run Sheppey 5K Saturday morning).
- 8.29. Across the venues, there have been 796 events. The Sittingbourne Park Run has been held the most times, with 398 events, and it is also the most popular, with an average attendance of 165 runners. The average attendance Leas minster on Sea is ninety-one runners, whilst it is thirty-three junior runners at Faversham Recreation Ground,

#### Other events

- 8.30. Sheppey Minster on Sea Rotary Club organise the annual Island Run. The Island Run is a 10k & 5k run and family fun run to raise funds for worthy causes and takes place along Sheerness/Minster on Sea Seafront - Starting and ending at Beach Street playground/car park.
- 8.31. The Oliver Fisher 10K & 5K is a charitable running event taking place at Milton Creek Country Park, designed to raise awareness and funds for the Oliver Fisher Special Care Baby Trust. Scheduled for June 1, 2025, this event marks the charity's 40th anniversary and promises a family fun atmosphere alongside the races. Participants can choose between a 10K or 5K distance, with the course featuring scenic park paths and minimal elevation.
- 8.32. Macknade is an exciting running event held in Faversham, offering participants a choice between a multi-terrain 10k and a half marathon. Set against the backdrop of the beautiful countryside, the event promotes community engagement through a shared love of food and drink.
- 8.33. The Sittingbourne Striders 10 Mile & 10k event returns for its third year in 2025, now featuring a new 10k route alongside the traditional 10-mile race. Set at the Kent Science Park, the event promises a scenic countryside experience with a mix of old and new routes. Participants can enjoy excellent facilities, including toilets, refreshments, and a mini event village.
- 8.34. The Faversham 10k is a well-established running event that has been a favourite for over 20 years. Set in the picturesque countryside surrounding the market town of Faversham in Kent, this road-based race offers participants a scenic route. Easily accessible from the M2, it provides a fantastic opportunity for runners to enjoy the beautiful landscape.

#### Beginners2Runners Running Club

- 8.35. Beginners2Runners organise beginners' courses that are held three times a year over 10 weeks at all their clubs in January, Spring and September. These courses are ideal for both those who want to begin from nothing or those looking to get back into running. Once you've completed the 10-week course, you will then join our current members who by now will seem like old friends for our twice weekly group sessions, consolidating your 5K and more if you wish.

8.36. There are three Beginners2Runners Clubs in Swale:

- Beginners2Runners Isle of Sheppey EKC Sheppey Secondary School Marine Parade, Sheerness ME12 2BE – Tuesdays and Thursdays 7.30pm.
- Beginners2 Runners Sittingbourne Regis Manor Primary School Sittingbourne ME10 2HT – Mondays and Thursdays 7.30pm.
- Beginners2Runners Faversham Bysing Wood Primary School ME13 7NU – Mondays and Wednesdays 7.00pm.

**Exported/imported demand.**

8.37. There is no identified imported demand. There is exported demand. Swale Integrated Athletics Club arranges additional weekend training sessions at the Juile Rose Stadium in Ashford due to the lack of a local facility and Swale Striders Running club arrange sessions at Canterbury Academy for track sessions for the same reason.

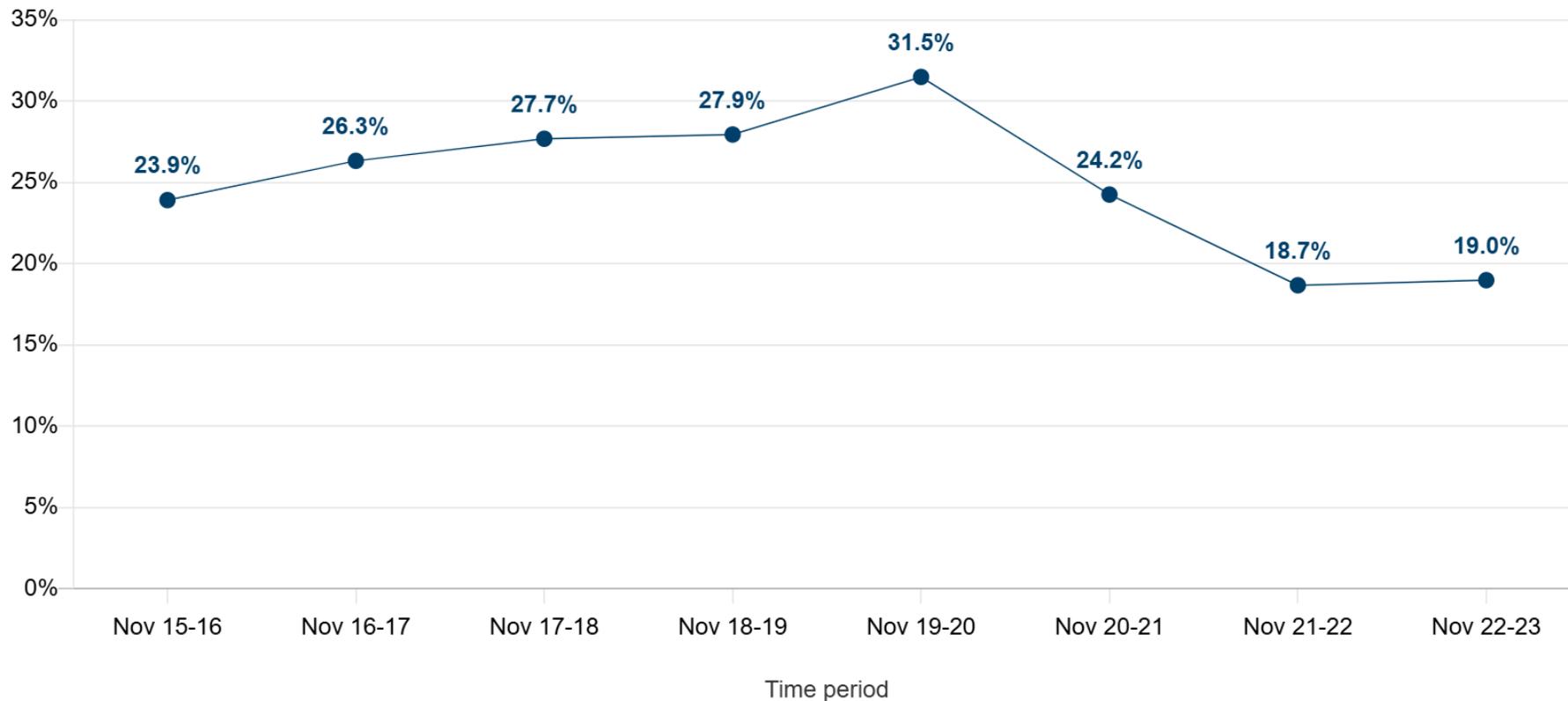
**Latent/unmet demand**

8.38. No clubs currently based in Swale express latent or unmet demand, with no waiting lists in place and each club open to new members, suggesting that anyone wanting to participate can do so via the clubs and facilities that are in place. However, it could be challenged that waiting lists alone is not a definitive measure of latent demand. The availability of facilities is also a key factor and as Swale currently has no formal facilities it is difficult to assess latent demand.

**Sport England – Active People Survey**

8.39. The figure below shows Sport England Active People Survey for Swale and identifies 19% of those aged 16 years plus participated in running or track and field athletics between November 2023 and November 2024.

Participation in the last year - yes or no : Participated in the last year by activity - Local Authority and County Council  
Swale LA



% Participation in the last year - yes or no by Activity:

■ Running or track and field athletics

# Swale Borough Council

## *Playing Pitch Strategy*

### Future demand

- 8.40. Of the clubs consulted, all identify and aspire to grow membership, with Swale Combined Athletics Club in particular expressing that this is a focus area for them.
- 8.41. England Athletics has used specialist sports facility planning consultants ORH to conduct an analysis of the current supply and demand for existing outdoor synthetic athletics facilities and – using 20-minute (urban) / 30-minute (rural) drivetime catchment zones. England Athletics has identified Swale as one of its 48 NEW: GEN priority areas. See the Southeast region in the table below:

**Table 73: England Athletics NEW GEN Priority Areas**

Midlands	North	East	Southwest	Southeast
BassetLaw	Cumberland	Breckland	Cotswold	Arun
Blaby	East Riding of Yorkshire	Broadland	Dorset Council	Chichester
Derbyshire Dales	Hartlepool	East Suffolk	East Devon	East Hampshire
East Lindsey	Northumberland	Fenland	North Somerset	New Forest
Harborough	North Yorkshire	Maldon	South Hams	<b>Swale</b>
High Peak	Ribble Valley	Mid Suffolk	Stroud	West Oxfordshire
Hinckley and Bosworth	South Lakeland	North Norfolk	Teignbridge	
North Kesteven	Westmorland and Furness	South Norfolk	Torrige	
Northwest Leicestershire	Wyre	Tendring		
Rutland				
South Holland				
West Lindsey				

## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

Midlands	North	East	Southwest	Southeast
Forest of Dean				
Shropshire				
Staffordshire Moorlands				

8.42. These priority locations above will be reviewed on a regular basis to reflect (amongst other factors):

- Emerging strategic housing developments that are approved and may alter the original demographic assumptions in each priority location.
- The development of new athletics facilities not included or known about in the original mapping analysis.

8.43. England Athletics also believes that demand for initiatives such as Park Run is likely to increase in the future, although to what extent is difficult to quantify. Swale BC is well set up in this regard given the number of events/programmes servicing the Borough,

8.44. Population increase from new housing developments across Swale will increase the demand on running and track and field facilities in Swale.

#### Supply and demand analysis.

8.45. There is considerable demand for athletics and in particular running in Swale as evidenced by the clubs in existence and variety of events held across the Borough. However, with only one club currently requiring regular access to a purpose-built facility (Swale Combined Athletics Club) and only having access to grass track and field facilities in the summer months and having to travel outside of the Borough alongside Swale Striders Running Club to use purpose-built track facilities.

8.46. New housing developments in Swale and particularly Sittingbourne will increase the exiting athletics demand though new population provision.

8.47. England Athletics has undertaken an Assessing Needs and Opportunities Assessment for Swale below:

## England Athletics Facility Priorities

### **Key Facilities Priority 1**

**Ensure that the allocation of resources to new and existing track and field facilities is prioritised to those that have the greatest potential to impact positively on general participation, club membership growth and retention, and improved personal performance.**

To support this priority England Athletics will:

- Encourage all tracks to seek accreditation through TrackMark.
- Help venues to identify the level in the Hierarchy of Facilities that is most appropriate for them and support clubs and operators seeking to raise funding to maintain facilities at that level.
- Prioritise new track and field facilities within multi-sport hubs.
- Seek to be actively involved in the development of local planning policies wherever possible.
- Support new 200m indoor tracks and indoor athletics training facilities where there is a proven demand and a clear geographical gap in supply.

### **Key Facilities Priority 2**

**Actively encourage athletics and running facilities to be used to their fullest extent by the sport and by all sections of the community to maximise viability.**

To support this priority England Athletics will:

- Support athletics clubs in discussions with facility operators and local authorities over the use of the track infield for other pitch sports and collate examples of good practice and design guidance.
- Support clubs and groups to ensure the facilities they use for athletics activity are accessible to all.
- Help clubs to develop a strong partnership with facility owners/operators and will share examples of good practice.
- Provide advice and guidance to clubs actively pursuing an asset transfer.
- Help athletics and running clubs to become more professional and sustainable in how they operate.
- Encourage new partnerships between athletics clubs and schools that have available indoor facilities.

**Key Facilities Priority 3**

**Encourage innovative approaches to the location and design of facilities for individual components of the sport to increase reach and create sustainability and viability.**

To support this priority England Athletics will:

- Expect all new and refurbished schemes with sports lighting to deliver a minimum of 100lux across the whole of the track and the infield.
- Support clubs in exploring options for improved environmental sustainability and will share examples of good practice.
- Support the development of MiniTracks / Compact athletics facilities where there is a viable business case based.
- Consider supporting facility innovations involving non-standard track shapes, designs, and uses providing they are backed by a sound business case.
- Continue to lobby bodies with an influence over urban design, to ensure that the needs of runners are considered alongside those of cyclists and pedestrians.
- Continue to lobby for the free use of public parks and open spaces by runners and voluntary running groups.
- Assist road running clubs that are looking for somewhere to meet, by introducing them to sports clubs in their area that have suitable facilities.

**Key priorities: PROTECT AND PROVIDE**

**PROVIDE**

- There is an identified need for an entry level athletics facility (MiniTrack/Compact/ActiveTrack) in Swale. Modelling indicates that an ideal location would be in the Sittingbourne area.

# Swale Borough Council

## *Playing Pitch Strategy*

**Table 74: England Athletics Need Assessment**

Local priority	
Is Swale identified as a priority area? If so, please summarise here.	<p><b>Outdoor:</b> [PROTECT/PROVIDE]</p> <p>Swale (Provide)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are currently no formal athletics facilities in Swale (population 150k) and track &amp; field facilities in neighbouring local authorities sit outside EA s recommended 30min drivetime catchment (the nearest track facility is Medway Park (40-60min drivetime)</li> <li>• EA would be supportive of a developmental athletics/running facility in Swale (Sittingbourne)</li> </ul>
Is there a more specific local facility plan or strategy? Please list these and attach weblink or electronic copy;	Ref: ORH supply/demand mapping documents available upon request
Does your plan have any capital or revenue investment earmarked for this area? Please list.	No NGB capital available at present
Any other comments?	

**Facility supply**

Is there enough facility time/sites for athletics in Swale. Are there any specific requirements such as entry level participation venues?

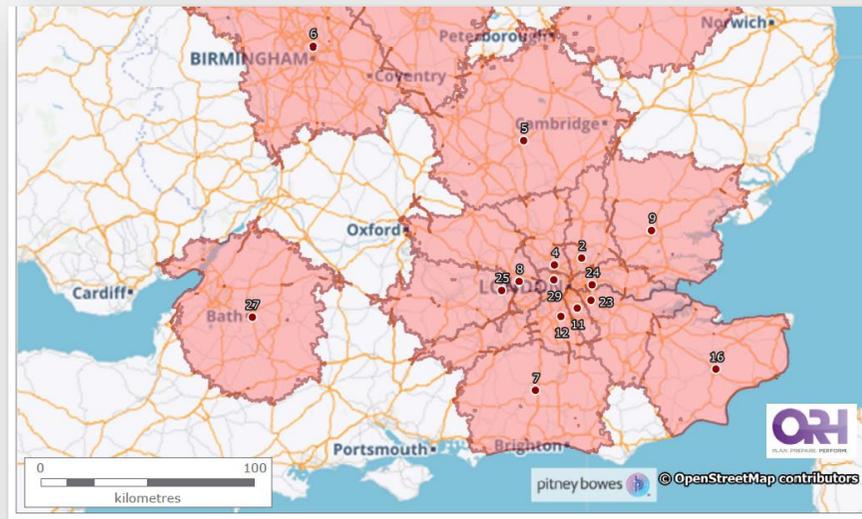
**OUTDOOR**

**Swale**

There are currently no formal track & field athletics/running facilities located in Swale.

**INDOOR**

Athletes from Swale are serviced by the Indoor Athletics facility at the Julie Rose Stadium which sits within EAs recommended 60 minute drivetime zone for indoor athletics facilities.



**Key**

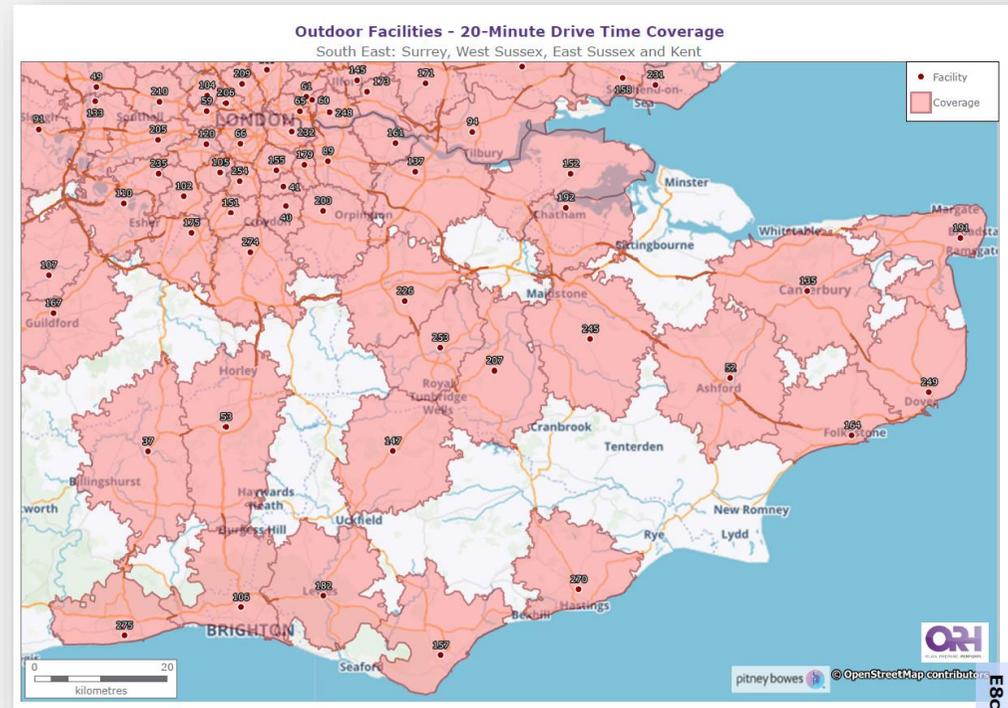
[16] Julie Rose Stadium (indoor straight)

# Swale Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy

## Facility supply

ORH report – Outdoor Facilities: 20 minute drivetime

*Detailed maps available on request*



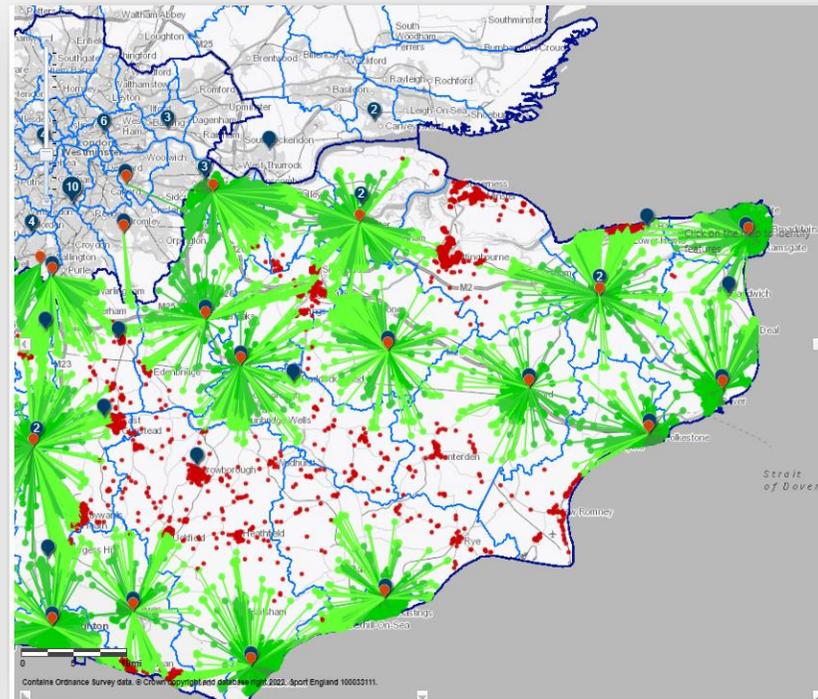
### Key

- [152] Deangate Ridge
- [192] Medway Park
- [245] Sutton Valence
- [207] Paddock Wood Athletics Track
- {253} Tonbridge School Athletics Track
- [52] Julie Rose Stadium

**Facility supply**

**SPORT ENGLAND 20 minute access analysis report**

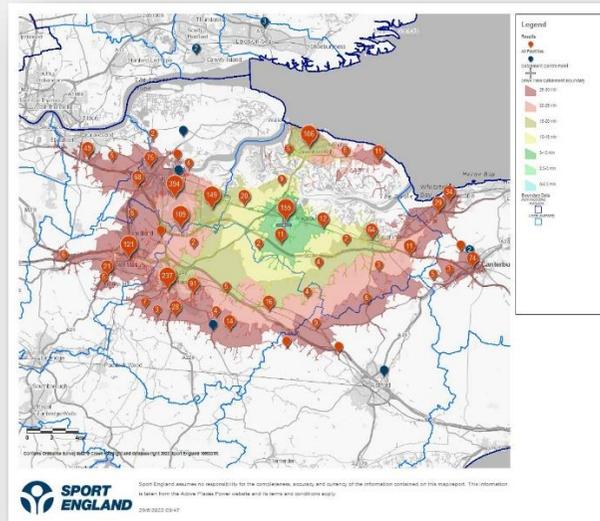
**SPORT ENGLAND 20 min AREA ACCESS REPORT – SWALE (Outdoor 400m Athletics Facilities)**



**Facility supply**

**SPORT ENGLAND 30 minute pindrop report**

**SPORT ENGLAND AREA PINDROP REPORT – Sittingbourne (modelling)**



Combined	0-14	15-24	25-39	40-59	60-79	80+	Total
0-2.5	826	514	746	1,234	979	283	4,582
2.5-5	3,399	2,044	3,447	4,721	3,879	1,108	18,598
5-10	8,188	4,509	7,984	10,121	6,542	1,419	38,763
10-15	3,193	1,698	2,930	4,614	3,628	769	16,832
15-20	22,742	12,530	21,379	32,517	27,933	6,704	123,805
20-25	46,289	25,889	49,622	62,684	41,995	10,000	236,479
25-30	49,495	32,272	51,224	67,393	48,245	12,001	260,630
Total	134,132	79,456	137,332	183,284	133,201	32,284	699,689

# Swale Borough Council

## *Playing Pitch Strategy*

Facility supply							
Are the facilities well located to meet the needs of athletics? If there are any areas with access issues, please list.	<p><b>Swale</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swale is lacking any formal track and field / running provision, and EA is supportive of an entry level athletics facility to service the area (Modelling suggests that Sittingbourne would be an ideal location)</li> </ul>						
What is the quality of the existing athletics facilities in the area? Please summarise here.	<b>Swale Not Applicable</b>						
Are there any relevant strategies and plans that need to be considered?							
Any other comments?							
Demand Issues							
Please provide an overview of your sport in Swale using data such as Active People, club membership. How important is athletics in Swale and Tunbridge Wells?	<p><b>EA AFFILIATED CLUBS</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Club Name</th> <th>Category</th> <th>Athletes Membership</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Swale Combined AC</td> <td>Track &amp; Field &amp; Off Track</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Club Name	Category	Athletes Membership	Swale Combined AC	Track & Field & Off Track	100
Club Name	Category	Athletes Membership					
Swale Combined AC	Track & Field & Off Track	100					
Any other comments?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add info.</li> </ul>						

# Swale Borough Council

## Playing Pitch Strategy

Summary/conclusions	
What are the key challenges and opportunities for athletics in Swale?	<b>Outdoor:</b>  <b>Swale</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek opportunities to develop an entry level, multi-sport facility with athletics provision in Tunbridge Wells (Sittingbourne)</li> </ul>
Is there any NGB funding potentially available to support the delivery of your facility priorities in Swale and Tunbridge Wells?	EA does not currently have any capital funds available. However, it does work with Sport England/external partners to identify and support projects of strategic significance.
Any other comments?	Add comments

### Conclusion

- 8.48. England Athletics supports the development of NEW: GEN athletic facilities in Swale and has identified Sittingbourne as the most suitable area to provide such a facility. To ensure that demand can continue to be met, it is imperative that activity can continue to be accommodated, and purpose-built track and field facilities provided for at Cromer Corner Playing Fields. As such, improvements should be seen as a priority given current quality issues and Swale Combined Athletics Clubs Plans for future development of facilities. There is an opportunity to explore England Athletics' current focus on developing innovative facilities as part of this and provision of funding through new housing development.
- 8.49. Away from the formal track and field facilities, emphasis should also be placed on supporting the other activities taking place in Swale BC, with a focus on retaining and increasing participation and growing the various initiatives that exist. This, however, does not require dedicated provision.

### Athletics – Summary

- There is a high demand of athletics and running within Swale BC.
- England Athletics NEW: GEN Strategy identifies Swale as an area requiring NEW: GEN athletic facilities.
- England Athletics Assessing Needs and Opportunities Assessment identifies Sittingbourne in Swale as the most suitable area to provide NEW: GEN facilities.
- To ensure that demand can continue to be met, priority should be placed on protecting and improving provision, with a particular focus on purpose-built track and field facilities and improving changing provision at Cromers Corner Playing Fields given current quality issues. This does not mean a 400m synthetic track but a suitable facility to meet the existing club's needs for training. These facilities can also be used by other Swale running clubs for track and interval training.

- Away from the formal track and field facilities, emphasis should also be placed on supporting the other activities taking place in Swale BC, although this does not require dedicated provision.

### Shortfall in Provision

- 8.50. Current - Athletics Tracks Provision required (entry level for track and field activity and running clubs/groups e.g. mini tracks and endurance loops).
- 8.51. Future - Provision required (entry level for track and field activity and running clubs/groups e.g. mini tracks and endurance loops).

### Recommendations

1. Explore opportunities to establish purpose-built facilities at Cromer Corner Playing Fields, linked to England Athletics current priorities, and seek funding from developer contributions from new housing developments to assist with new athletic facility developments.
2. Support clubs, running groups, events, and England Athletics initiatives such as Park Run and pursue increased participation, where possible.
3. Ensure all clubs/groups continue to have home bases to operate from and pursue improved security of tenure where it is required.

## 9. Bowls Green Analysis and Recommendations

- 8.1. Bowls England is responsible for governance administration and promotion of Flat Green Lawn Bowls in England. It was formed in 2008 following a unification of the English Bowling Association (EBA) and English Women's Bowling Association (EWBA).
- 8.2. The 2021-26 England Bowls Strategy 'Fit for the Future' frames a new and exciting course for the sport. England Bowls believe it will:
- Unite the sport behind a compelling vision, creating a sense of belonging and source of inspiration for its volunteers.
  - Guide the staff team's activity allowing it to better allocate resources to the areas that matter most.
  - Help put issues and problems into a broader context, engendering a can-do, optimistic culture.
  - Build confidence and enthusiasm amongst current partners and act as a catalyst to forge new relationships.
  - Enable it to articulate with one voice because those outside its sport should care.
- 8.3. The five-year plan, launched in August 2021, is designed with the goal of getting more people playing and enjoying bowls.
- 8.4. It sets out the England Bowls vision for the sport, how it plans to achieve its objectives and what success looks like in 2026. The priorities that will get England Bowls to its target of **One Million Bowls Experiences** by 2026 are:
- **Building the brand of bowls** by increasing focus on international & top domestic bowls and utilising opportunities such as Birmingham 2022 to achieve larger media coverage.
  - **Ensuring the sport is truly accessible** to all by offering different formats of the game which suit all time constraints, as well as driving more people to clubs in new ways.
  - **Creating positive playing experiences for everyone** who steps on the green, both for casual and competitive players, as well as growing our events calendar and introducing a Performance Pathway
  - **Putting volunteers first**, as the lifeblood of our sport, by increasing our support for clubs to empower them to thrive.
  - **Leading the sport with purpose** by developing our Governance structures, diversifying our revenue streams, and work collaboratively with all the sport's key stakeholders.
- 8.5. The bowls facilities in Swale Borough provide for England Bowls – Flat green and is played on a flat grass (or artificial) surface called the 'green' that should be either rectangular or square. The length of the green in the direction of play should be between 31 metres and 40 metres.
- 8.6. The green is divided into sections called 'rinks' which should be between a minimum of 4.3 metres and a maximum of 5.8 metres wide for outdoor play.
- 8.7. Surrounding the green is a ditch, and a bank where markers indicate the boundaries and centre lines of each rink.

## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

8.8. Each game is split into individual ends. At the start of each end one player will place the mat on the centre line of the rink and deliver the jack. The jack is then put on the centre line at the other end of the rink. The jack must be a minimum of 23 metres from the mat at the start of the end.

### Swale Borough Supply

8.9. There are eight England Bowls flat green bowls greens in Swale Borough.

8.10. Table 73. below provides details of the bowls sites, which all have one green and six rinks except for Leavelands Bowls Club that has 2 rinks. All but one green is considered secure. The green at Kemsley Bowls Club is considered unsecured due to problems with the lease between the new landlord and the club.

8.11. This leaves seven of the eight bowling greens classed as secured community use. Two bowls club sites are owned by Swale Borough Council - Faversham Recreation Bowls Club have a self-management arrangement although the council remains responsible for the buildings and Queenborough Bowls Club. Has a long lease with 10-year reviews first review is due 2023.

8.12. Boughton under Blean leases its site from a local farmer. The remainder are in private club ownership.

**Table 75: Flat Green Bowls Sites in Swale Borough**

Site Name	Sub Area	Ownership	Management & Membership	Security of Use	Number: Green – Rinks	Quality: Green – Clubhouse
Boughton under Blean Bowls Club ME13 9NA	Faversham	Club -Long term lease from Local Landowner Wellbrook Farm	Club – 41 Members	Secured	1 – 6	Standard - Standard
Faversham Recreation Bowls Club (Faversham Recreation Ground) ME13 8HA	Faversham	Faversham Municipal Charities Lease to the Local Authority – the club have a self-management agreement although the Council remains responsible for the structure and external maintenance of the buildings.	Club – 48 members	Secured	1 - 6	Good -Good
Leavesland Bowls Club ME13 0NP	Faversham	Club – Private house	Club – Members 10	Secured	1 – 2	Good– Good
Kemsley Bowls Club ME10 2RL	Sittingbourne	Private ownership Leased to club	Club – 21 members	Unsecured	1 – 6	Standard – Good

## Swale Borough Council

### Playing Pitch Strategy

Site Name	Sub Area	Ownership	Management & Membership	Security of Use	Number: Green – Rinks	Quality: Green – Clubhouse
Milton Regis Bowls Club ME10 2PS	Sittingbourne	Club	Club – 32 members	Secured	1 – 6	Good – Good
Appleyard Bowls Club ME10 1QN	Sittingbourne	Private	Club – 22 Members	Secured	1 – 6	Standard – Good
Queenborough Bowls Club ME11 5DP	Sheppey	Local Authority – Leased to Club 99 years subject to 10-year reviews.	Club – 37 members	Secured	1 – 6	Standard – Good
Sheerness Town (St Georges) bowls Club ME12 1QT	Sheppey	Club Ltd Company	Club – 37 Members	Secured	1 – 6	Standard – Good

8.13. There is a disused bowls club at Sittingbourne FC, Woodstock Park. This site is part of the Highsted planning application Land to the South and East of Sittingbourne, currently undecided and is proposing that the disused bowls green will be replaced.

8.14. Table 73 also provides non-technical site assessment scores for the quality of the bowling green and the clubhouse.

- Boughton under Blean Bowls Club – in 2021 the green was attacked by leather jackets. The grubs of this insect eat the grass roots and decimated the green until in 2022 the green had to be closed as it had become unplayable. The club has taken big steps to ensure the green is in tip top condition for 2023 season and is quality rated as standard. The pavilion/clubhouse is rated as good quality.
- Faversham Recreation Bowls Club has an annual fine turf assessment carried out by STRI on behalf of Swale Borough Council. The assessment identifies the work needed to keep the fine turf bowls green in good condition. The visual assessment undertaken as part of this study rated the green as good quality and the pavilion as good quality. There are areas of squirrel damage on the green.
- Leaves end Bowls Club is in the grounds of Monks Cottage which is a private dwelling. There are 10 members, and the 2-rink green is maintained to a good quality by the owner. The pavilion is small but of good quality.
- Kemsley Bowls Club green is maintained by the club members and is rated as standard quality with a good quality pavilion. There are issues with the ownership with the club not having any long-term lease in place and the owner wishing to sell the land. Due to the lease issue the site is rated as unsecured.

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- Milton Regis Bowls Club green s maintained by the club and provides a good quality green and clubhouse.
- Appleyard Bowls Club green is maintained by the private sports club and is rated as standard with a good quality pavilion.
- Queenborough Bowls Club has an annual fine turf assessment carried out by STRI on behalf of Swale Borough Council. The assessment identifies the work needed to keep the fine turf bowls green in good condition. The visual assessment undertaken as part of this study rated the green as good quality and the pavilion as good quality. The club has installed a new hi-tech watering system that will be able to water more of the green and will be controlled by an app so can be watered more often. The club are also getting a better-quality seed that has a greater germination period along with a better wetting agent. With these improvements the visual quality assessment is standard, but this will probably improve to good with the watering and other maintenance improvements the club are undertaking. The clubhouse is rated as good.
- Sheerness Town St Georges Bowls Club the fine turf bowls green rated as standard quality and good quality rated clubhouse.

### **Bowls Demand**

- 8.15. This study has identified 248 affiliated bowls members in Swale Borough. The clubs have stated that membership remains roughly the same as previous years and that they are targeting younger players as it is hard to maintain an ageing membership.
- 8.16. Although Bowls England has noted a decline in membership rates since its inception in 2008. Kent Bowling Association has seen a decline in club memberships and clubs in the Kent County area.
- 8.17. Faversham Recreation Bowls Club has the highest membership with 48 members and Leavesland Bowls Club has the lowest with 10 members.
- 8.18. Future demand patterns are likely to be like current levels, based on participation trends. Sport England Active Lives survey suggests 368 respondents participated in flat green bowls activities in 2022/2023 across Swale. Based on the Census population 2021 of 154,619. 368 equates to 0.24% of the population.
- 8.19. Swale Borough Council are currently in the process of updating and providing a new local plan that will go to 2040.
- 8.20. The local housing need for Swale is currently 1,040 dwellings per annum - a change from 1,086 dwellings at 1 April 2023. This change is largely due to the affordability ratio dropping from 10.95 to 9.6 in March 2024 and a slightly lower household projection for the years 2024 to 2034. **Under the standard method the Council's need for the Plan period to 2040 (16 years) would be 16,640 dwellings.**

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- 8.21. For Local Plan drafting and resilience through the consultation process and Local Plan examination process Swale has applied a buffer to this figure (16,640) to cover any removal of housing sites. A buffer of 5% should ensure that there will not be the need to consult on further sites late in the Local Plan drafting process. **Applying a 5% resilience buffer to 16,640 dwellings for the proposed Plan period would result in a proposed Local Plan housing target of 17,472 dwellings.**
- 8.22. A total of 17,472 homes with an average household size of 2.4 persons provides a new resident population of 41,933.
- 8.23. If participation trends remain the same. The projected population projections will create a requirement for 0.24% additional capacity of the new population by 2040. This equates to approximately 100 additional bowls players. Spare capacity at the existing bowls facilities will be able to accommodate all additional future demand. Based on the 8 clubs across Swale Borough this equates to 13 (12.5 rounded up) new members each by 2040.
- 8.24. If the Highsted Housing development comes to fruition and the disused bowls green at Sittingbourne Football Club is replaced with a new bowls green this would provide for 9 bowls greens across Swale. To accommodate this participation clubs may wish to consider artificial grass replacements for the fine turf greens ensuring bowls play all year round.
- 8.25. There will be a need to ensure that bowls clubhouses are large enough to accommodate the additional demand.
- 8.26. It is also recommended that Bowls England work with Clubs to encourage improved awareness of facilities and that Clubs are well linked to participation programmes and support with marketing.

### **Bowls Green Recommendations**

- 8.27. Protecting existing bowls greens through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility or create improvements to be able to increase capacity at nearby bowls greens. This includes protecting the disused green at Woodstock Broadoak Road Sittingbourne.
- 8.28. Where clubs have larger memberships artificial grass greens should be considered to replace the fine turf green and provide for all year-round participation.

## 10. Netball Analysis and Recommendations

- 9.1. England Netball is the governing body of the sport and supports the development of the game in Swale Borough.
- 9.2. In November 2021 England Netball launched a 10-year 'Adventure Strategy' for the game with a new brand identity for the organisation.
- 9.3. England Netball's 'Adventure Strategy' shares a purpose-led ambition for the game, to build on the momentum the sport has seen in recent years and take it to new heights for the decade ahead.
- 9.4. The 'Adventure Strategy' outlines the intention to: -
- accelerate the development and growth of the game at every level, from grassroots to the elite,
  - elevate the visibility of the sport, and
  - lead a movement to impact lives on and beyond the court.
- 9.5. At the heart of its purpose, England Netball, will remain dedicated to increasing opportunities for women and girls to play the game as a priority, working tirelessly to address the gender participation gap in sport that has widened since the global pandemic.
- 9.6. Underpinned by years of engaging with and delivering netball for female communities, the organisation pledges to understand, support and nurture women and girls more deeply at every life stage, at every age.
- 9.7. The organisation is also committed to opening the sport to new audiences in every community, so netball better represents the rich diversity of the country it proudly represents, and ensures the sport continues to evolve and adapt to thrive in the future, helping to create a truly inclusive sport for all where everyone can belong, flourish and soar. A recent partnership announcement with England Men's and Mixed Netball Association (EMMNA) to help develop and grow male participation in the game, supports this commitment as England Netball pledges to promote difference and embrace the opportunity to make the sport a possibility within everyone's reach.
- 9.8. Transforming netball for children and young people is a strategic priority to protect the future of the sport. Collaborating with schools and policy makers to extend physical literacy within, and after the school day with a focus on netball specific provision will pave the way for greater community participation. The organisation will accelerate the expansion of its Bee Netball programme for young children, whilst supporting teens and young women to stay in the game to keep them physically active and in the game for life.

9.9. The facility development aspirations stated within the Strategy are to: -

- Take a fresh look at the spaces required to support the sport, creating accessible places in every community to allow netball to be incorporated into how and where women and girls live their lives.
- Protect, enhance, and extend the network of homes that house the sport at a local and regional level. Develop an elite domestic professional competition that supports full time athletes underpinned by a world class infrastructure and environments.

9.10. For England Netball to achieve its ambitions to make the game accessible to wider audiences and in every community, it encourages Local Authorities to adopt policies within Playing Pitch Strategies and Built Facilities Strategies that: -

- Facilitates informal netball activity within neighbourhood multi use games areas for example by installing combined outdoor basketball and netball goals and part courts in Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs).
- Incorporates the cultural and health needs of women and girls within any designs for improved or new facilities.
- Protects and enhances netball facilities within all Primary and Secondary School environments so they offer a positive first experience of the sport for students and the wider community during out of school hours.
- Supports the installation of sports lighting on outdoor courts to increase all year-round use.
- Facilitates the development of netball growth programmes, club training and competition within public leisure centres.
- Where appropriate, supports the development of netball homes and performance environments that enable local women and girls to pursue a career in netball as an elite athlete, official, coach or administrator.

9.11. England Netball's programmes of recognised and authorised activities are:

- 7-a-side Netball – single gender full seven aside version of the game in accordance with England Netball and/or World Netball rules.
- Fast5 / FastNet – single gender five/seven aside version of the game in accordance with England Netball and World Netball rules and regulations.
- Indoor Netball (or Nets) – single gender or mixed gender version of the game in accordance with England Netball and/or World Indoor Netball Association (WINA) rules and regulations.
- ParaNetball – Versions of the game that are endorsed by England Netball in recognition of the participants' disability.
- England Netball participation programmes delivered by approved persons/groups, including:
  - Back to Netball
  - Bee Netball
  - Netball Now
  - Walking Netball

## Swale Borough Council

### Playing Pitch Strategy

- Mixed Netball (all versions listed above) – England Netball welcomes Mixed Netball as a growing form of the game and recognises Mixed Netball in the following contexts:
  - At a recreational level – defined as the casual participation in training, a non-competitive or competitive game at a local or county level, where the result does not have a consequence on a league, tournament, or series of games at a regional level or above.
  - At a Performance level– training and competition delivered specifically by England Netball, England Netball Men’s, and Mixed Netball Association (EMMNA) and registered VNSL Clubs only. In this context mixed netball can be in the form of mixed gender teams or competition between single gender teams of opposing gender.

### Swale - Supply Netball Courts

9.12. Table 74 below provide a breakdown of netball court sites in the study area. The quality rating of a site is calculated using the following **criteria**:

- **Good** - Good playing surface, courts recently been upgraded, resurfaced, posts and fencing in working order.
- **Average** – Court colour is fading or showing signs of wear. The surface remains intact. The court life, prior to needing resurfacing, would be extended for up to 5 years by cleaning and repainting of the existing surface.
- **Below Average** – Court is showing obvious signs of deterioration including cracking, loosening of fretting of the surface. This indicates the court needs resurfacing.
- **Poor** - Playing surface poor, slippery playing surface, poor drainage, cracks on the playing surface and surrounding area, court markings hardly visible, no post or posts damaged, surrounding fencing poor/dangerous.

**Table 76: Netball Court Provision by Site – Swale Borough**

Outdoor Netball sites	Sub Area	Site Type/Secured / Unsecured Use	Netball Courts			Site Quality
			All Courts	Surface	Sports Lighting	
Borden Grammar School	Sittingbourne	Education Unsecured	4	Tarmac	No	Poor
Highsted Grammar School	Sittingbourne	Education Unsecured	7	Tarmac	Yes	Poor
The Sittingbourne School	Sittingbourne	Education Unsecured	3	MUGA	Yes	Standard
Westlands School	Sittingbourne	Education Unsecured	6	Tarmac	No	Poor
Queen Elizabeth Grammar School	Faversham	Education Unsecured	4	Tarmac	No	Standard
EKC Academy Minster Road	Sheppey	Education Unsecured	4	Tarmac	Yes	Standard
<b>Total</b>			28		14	

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- 9.13. There are twenty-eight outdoor netball courts across Swale Borough all located at 6 education sites. Courts used by the community are at the Sittingbourne School and EKC Academy.
- 9.14. The Sittingbourne School 3 netball courts are provided on a MUGA, and the EKC Academy 4 netball courts are provided on tarmac with no additional markings.
- 9.15. All netball sites are on education sites and are therefore considered unsecured. They can only be in secured use if a formal community use agreement is in place.
- 9.16. Standard quality courts are provided at The Sittingbourne School, EKC Academy and Queen Elizabeth Grammar School. Poor quality courts are provided at Westlands School, Highsted Grammar School, and Borden Grammar School.

#### Swale - Demand Netball Courts

- 9.17. In the past an England Netball affiliated league has taken place at The Sittingbourne School but currently this league is not operating.
- Sittingbourne & District Netball league games were played on Sunday mornings at 9:30am and 11am for the Winter Season which ran from September to April and the Summer Season which ran from May to August.
- 9.18. However, there are two unaffiliated netball leagues operated by Bloom Netball Leagues 4 You. One at EKC Academy on Monday evenings providing netball (Indoor League) for the following unaffiliated teams:
- Belles
  - Sheppey Ballers
  - Minster Maidens
  - Sheppey Netchicks
  - Double Ds
  - Flyers
  - The Cheeky Girls
  - Sheppey Lions
  - Red Devils

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- 9.19. A second non-affiliated league operates at The Sittingbourne School (Outdoor League) on Wednesday evenings and caters for the following unaffiliated teams:
- Spectrum
  - Tunstall Mums
  - Chaos
  - Mavericks
  - The Sideliners
  - Bourne Belles
  - Sittingbourne Sapphires
  - Shooting Stars
  - Pink Panthers
  - Green Beans
  - Court Queens
- 9.20. The above leagues identify that there is a demand for netball across the Swale Borough community. In addition, there is a walking netball club that organises sessions at the sports hall at The Abbey School Faversham on Tuesdays. This is organised by Age UK Faversham and Sittingbourne.
- 9.21. The one identified affiliated netball club in Swale is Comets Netball Club.
- 9.22. Comets Netball Club has been competing in Swale, Kent, and the Southeast for over 20 years and has grown to over ninety members. Throughout the Junior and Senior Squads, the clubs aim is to play at the best of our ability and just as importantly to have fun and enjoy it.
- 9.23. Comets Netball Club currently run U12, U14, U16, and Senior Teams which participate in the following Leagues:
- London and Southeast Regional League
  - Kent County Senior and Junior Leagues
  - Polytechnic Invitational League
  - Medway Summer League
  - Maidstone & Malling Netball League
- 9.24. The club is Sport England Clubmark accredited as we have achieved the England Netball Silver CAPS award.
- 9.25. The CAPS netball scheme helps clubs' function in the most efficient way and is linked to Sport England Clubmark scheme. This scheme ensures good practice in the development of players, coaches and umpires at all levels and offers a way of maximising SAFE and CHILD FRIENDLY activities. In line with the Clubmark award, CAPS focuses on four key area that impact netball clubs:
- Duty of care and child protection
  - Coaching and Competition
  - Club Management and Administration

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- Sports Equity and Ethics
- 9.26. Training is held weekly for all age groups. Summer training takes place at The Sittingbourne School outdoor courts and winter training takes place indoors at the following sites:
- Senior Members Wednesday evenings 7:45pm – 9.30pm The Abbey School Sports Centre, London Rd Faversham ME13 8RZ September 2024 to April 2025.
  - Junior Members Wednesday evenings 6.00pm – 7.30pm The Abbey School Sports Centre, London Rd Faversham ME13 8RZ September 2024 to December 2024 & January 2025 to March 2025 or Tuesday evenings 5.00pm – 6.30pm Fulston Manor School, Sittingbourne, ME10 4EG September 2024 to December 2024 & January 2025 to March 2025
- 9.27. The senior team play indoors at the Polo Farm Canterbury where a two-court netball sports hall is available. The Teams also play at central venue sites out of Swale Borough at the following venues:
- London & Southeast Regional League – Various venues in Kent, Surrey, Sussex & Middlesex—Comets home Venue – Polo Farm Sports Club, Littlebourne Road Canterbury Kent CT3 4AF - played Saturdays.
  - Kent County Senior League - Various Venues throughout Kent — Comets home Venue – Polo Farm Sports Club, Littlebourne Road Canterbury Kent CT3 4AF -played Sundays.
  - London Polytechnic Invitational league 0 Home matches - Dartford Science Technology College Health Lane Dartford Kent DA1 2LY mostly Saturdays and some Sundays Away matches played at various venues within the M25.
  - Kent Junior League— Central venue—Rainham School for Girls Derwent Way Gillingham Kent ME8 0BX – played Sundays twice a month.
  - Medway Junior Netball League – Central Venue – Rainham School for Girls Derwent Way Gillingham Kent ME8 0BX – played Saturdays.
- 9.28. **Population growth:** A scenario has been modelled for future needs based on 0.5% of the population participating in netball based on participation data for Swale Borough taken from Sport England Active Lives data 2022- 2023.
- 9.29. The local housing need for Swale is currently 1,040 dwellings per annum - a change from 1,086 dwellings at 1 April 2023. This change is largely due to the affordability ratio dropping from 10.95 to 9.6 in March 2024 and a slightly lower household projection for the years 2024 to 2034. **Under the standard method the Council’s need for the Plan period to 2040 (16 years) would be 16,640 dwellings.**
- 9.30. For Local Plan drafting and resilience through the consultation process and Local Plan examination process Swale has applied a buffer to this figure (16,640) to cover any removal of housing sites. A buffer of 5% should ensure that there will not be the need to consult on further sites late in the Local Plan drafting process. **Applying a 5% resilience buffer to 16,640 dwellings for the proposed Plan period would result in a proposed Local Plan housing target of 17,472 dwellings.**

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## Swale Borough Council

### *Playing Pitch Strategy*

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- 9.31. A total of 17,472 homes with an average household size of 2.4 persons provides a new resident population of 41,933.
- 9.32. By applying the Active Lives 0.5% of Swale Borough residents participating in netball in the past twelve months to the increased population 41,933 equates to an increase in participation of 210 people. This will create a requirement for additional capacity by 2040. With 2 teams of 7 and 6 reserves equating to 20 persons. A minimum requirement of 11 (10.5 rounded up) netball courts is required to meet the needs of future housing development.
- 9.33. The Kent Netball Development Officer has stated that the England Netballs current priorities in Swale Borough are to rebuild England Netball participation programmes including Back to Netball, Walking Netball, Netball Now and Bee Netball and to support local leagues and clubs, and to grow volunteers and coaches.
- 9.34. There is no evidence of unmet demand for outdoor netball courts in Swale Borough at present, although future demand patterns are likely to increase based on participation trends and population projections.

### Netball Recommendations

1. The Protection of all community use netball courts across Swale Borough Council. Any courts proposed to be lost should be replaced with at least equivalent provision in terms of quantity and quality.
2. Swale Borough Council and England Netball to work together to rebuild England Netball participation programmes in Swale Borough including Back to Netball, Walking Netball, Netball now and Bee Netball.
3. There is a need to ensure that new housing developments provide for new netball courts through developer contributions to meet the need of the new population.
4. When developing new Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) in the future. Provide netball markings, this is to ensure that netball courts are marked on all MUGAs to promote the expansion of the game.
5. Negotiate formal community use agreements s part of the planning process on education sites current and at new school developments to ensure use by the community of sports courts on education sites in the future.
6. Swale Borough and England Netball to work together to provide indoor provision for netball.