

# Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facility Strategy



February 2015





## Executive Summary

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## Executive Summary

This Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facility Strategy for Dover District was developed between late 2010 and 2014, using best practice guidance from Sport England. Extensive research, consultation, site assessment, data analysis and mapping was undertaken to investigate demand for playing pitches during the period of the adopted Core Strategy (until 2026). Key outputs comprise:

- A comprehensive assessment of the supply of, and demand for, publicly accessible outdoor playing pitches in Dover District, through the application of the Sport England Playing Pitch Model;
- Analysis of the quantity and quality of other publicly accessible outdoor sports facilities in the district;
- A local standard for provision of natural grass playing pitches to be used for planning purposes;
- Analysis of the adequacy of existing provision against this standard;
- Proposed strategy and policy responses to provide a robust framework for resource prioritisation;
- Projects to improve or enhance the quality of playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities;
- An approach for determining development contributions to outdoor sport facilities.

A summary of publicly accessible outdoor sports facilities in the Dover District

Sport	Pitch Type	Number
Football	Senior	44
Football	Youth	8
Football	Mini	17
Rugby	Senior	11
Rugby	Junior	2
Cricket		19
American Football		1 (+1 shared use)
Hockey		1 <sup>(1)</sup>
Tennis		60 courts
Netball		17 courts
Bowls		13 greens

1. The only hockey pitch suitable for competitive matches is available to the community on a non-secure basis



## 1 Introduction

### The purpose of the strategy

**1.1** The purpose of this strategy is to provide:

- a. clear direction and prioritised actions to ensure that a good supply of playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities is available to meet both current and future needs;
- b. robust and up to date information to aid sound evidence based decision making.

**1.2** The strategy should be of interest and benefit to all involved and concerned with the provision, management and use of playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities in the District.

**1.3** By developing the strategy in-house the Council also sought to:

- a. further develop its knowledge and expertise in assessing the supply of, and demand for, outdoor sport provision;
- b. involve officers and staff to help ensure this is a working document referred to regularly and understood by facility managers or operators in terms of delivering strategic priorities for the district.
- c. ensure a collaborative approach to the development of the strategy with key partners e.g. National Governing Bodies of Sport, local sports clubs, Town and Parish Councils, local leagues and leisure providers.

### Local drivers behind the development of the strategy

**1.4** The following key local drivers led the Council to develop this new Playing Pitch Strategy:

#### The need to encourage healthy lifestyles

**1.5** The NHS Health Profile 2013 for Dover shows that health of people in this district is mixed compared with the England average. Although deprivation is lower than the national average, about 4,100 children live in poverty. Overall life expectancy for both men and women in Dover is similar to the England average, but male life expectancy is 7.5 years lower in the most deprived areas than in the least deprived areas. About 20.5% of Year 6 children are classified as obese, which is a higher rate than our nearest neighbours<sup>(1)</sup> and higher than the England average.

1 Year 6 obesity rates in Canterbury, Shepway and Thanet are 15.2%, 19.1% and 19.4% respectively

**1.6** Sport and physical activity can play its part in reducing health inequalities and obesity levels through encouraging more people to lead active lifestyles. There is good scientific evidence that being physically active can help us to lead healthier lives. Regular activity can reduce the risk of many chronic conditions, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer, by up to 50%<sup>(2)</sup>. Adoption of a robust Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facility Strategy with appropriate action plan will help the Council to play its part in encouraging healthy lifestyles in the District through provision of an appropriate supply of quality outdoor facilities at accessible locations.

**1.7** The benefit of exercise is recognised within the Kent Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Outcome 2 'Effective prevention of ill health by people taking greater responsibility for their health and wellbeing', which includes the following text:

*"We want to ensure we have provided the right environment in Kent for people to make better choices to improve their own health... Lifestyle choices can cover a wide variety of decisions, such as type and frequency of exercise."*

**1.8** More locally the South Kent Coast Health and Wellbeing Board, which covers most of the Dover District and Shepway, has identified a number of health priorities. This includes Healthy Living, of which sport and physical activity will be a vital component. A final SKC Health Inequalities Strategy is being developed that will sit under the Kent Joint Strategic Needs Assessment / Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

### **To help maintain and increase participation levels in sport**

**1.9** Increasing participation rates in physical activity and sport is one of Sport England's key strategy aims. An indicator for this is 'participation in sport at least once a week for at least 30 minutes', which is measured by the Sport England's Active People Survey<sup>(3)</sup>. In Dover District it is estimated that 28.1% of adults participated in at least 30 minutes of moderately intensive exercise each week during the period April 2012 to April 2013. This statistic has not changed significantly since the Active People Survey began in 2005. Participation in the Dover District remains lower than the national average, which was estimated at 35.2% in April 2013.

**1.10** Sport England modelled estimates of participation at the sub-local authority level using data collected in 2008-10, which indicated variation within the District. The highest participation rates occur in parts of the wards of St Margaret's at Cliffe, Eastry and Eythorne and Shepherdswell. The lowest participation rates occur in the northern part of Dover town and in Aylesham.

**1.11** National estimates for participation in 30 minutes of moderately intensive exercise each week have increased or remained the same in most age groups since 2005, with the exception that participation by 16-25 year olds has decreased. Sport England's current strategy 'Creating a sporting habit for life' emphasises the need to create a lasting behaviour change amongst young people that will continue

2 From 'At least five a week: Evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health by the Chief Medical Officer

3 Sports participation: England, regions, counties and districts 13 June 2013, Sport England



throughout their lifetime. Therefore, projects to improve playing pitch and outdoor sports facilities should be clearly linked to achieving increased participation, especially in this age group.

### **The need for a robust and up to date evidence base, accompanied by a prioritised action and implementation plan**

I. to inform planning policy and decisions

**1.12** The Dover District Core Strategy, adopted in 2010, is based on a high growth approach; land is being allocated to accommodate 14,000 new homes by the end of the plan period (2026). Development places pressure on open space of all kinds, including outdoor sports facilities, and it is important to ensure that sufficient infrastructure is provided to support the planned development. In some cases entirely new provision will be required within a development to meet the needs of the new residents. In other situations it may be more appropriate to secure an off-site contribution via a planning agreement, to increase the capacity of an existing facility. A detailed understanding of existing provision in the District and patterns of usage will help to identify suitable projects.

**1.13** Evidence gained during the preparation of this document was used to calculate a standard for quantity of natural grass pitches required to meet the needs of the Dover District. This standard, along with standards for quality and accessibility, were published in the Dover District Land Allocations Pre-Submission Local Plan. The standards will be used to assess the additional need for playing pitch provision arising from new developments and to assist developers in preparing their schemes. Information collected for this strategy could also provide part of the evidence base required to introduce a local Community Infrastructure Levy.

II. to direct investment and help with funding applications

**1.14** Publicly accessible sports pitches are maintained by a number of organisations in Dover District, including sports clubs, Town and Parish Councils, Charitable Trusts, some schools and the District Council. Defining the desired level of playing pitch provision across the district will assist pitch providers to justify continued expenditure from their own budgets.

**1.15** Many providers struggle to finance existing maintenance costs, let alone undertake capital improvements to raise standards. However the District has a good record of securing external capital funding for sport facilities projects. Since 2007, three new artificial grass pitches have been developed on either school or leisure grounds and a 3km cycle track of national standard has been provided in Fowlmead Country Park. More recently since 2010/11 Sport England contributed £650,000 towards the development of Dover Sea Sports Centre, the Football Foundation awarded £1million towards improved sports facilities at Aylesham and Snowdown Social Welfare Scheme and the Lawn Tennis Association provided £400,000 towards a four-court indoor tennis centre in Deal

**1.16** Access to external capital grants will always be vital for providers of sports facilities in the district who wish to improve the capacity or quality of their site. A recent example is the Sport England initiative Protecting Playing Fields, which distributed £15 million of National Lottery funding in community sports projects. Although that funding programme came to an end in August 2013, it helped to improve and preserve playing surfaces across the country. Most funding bodies require evidence to demonstrate that a proposed project is justified and forms part of a strategic approach to sport provision. The information gathered to shape this strategy is comprehensive and robust, and will help to provide good supporting evidence for proposals that address the identified deficiencies. The Council will aim to support outdoor sports facility providers when they are preparing funding applications, particularly priority projects listed in the action plan at Section 6.

#### **The need to ensure that the existing stock is used efficiently and effectively**

**1.17** A large number of playing pitch and outdoor sports facilities already exist in the Dover District; the comprehensive audit considered nearly 300 pitches, courts and rinks at 89 sites. As well as the publicly accessible sports pitches, this review encompassed dormant sites and school playing fields that do not currently have a community use agreement in place. Many of the facilities are in good condition while others fall below the expected standard.

**1.18** Given the current budget pressures and constraints that many providers continue to experience, it is becoming more and more important to explore all possible options for increasing the use of existing provision by way of enabling community access, such as establishing community use agreements at private or school sites, and bringing dormant sites back into use where appropriate. These options should be fully considered before undertaking projects to create new facilities with their inevitable significant capital and revenue costs. Equally, sharing of facilities among compatible sports such as rugby and cricket with joined up thinking in terms of management and good practice should be encouraged to help ensure that existing stock is used as efficiently and effectively as possible.

#### **Promoting community cohesion**

**1.19** The Commission on Integration and Cohesion issued a report called 'Our Shared Future' in 2007 that provides practical suggestions on building the capacity within communities to reduce tensions and create shared opportunities. Sports, culture and leisure is identified as one of four areas where a focus on interaction can help to build cohesion.

**1.20** Locally obtained evidence supports this view; the centre for Sport, Physical Education & Activity Research (SPEAR) at Canterbury Christchurch University undertook research to inform the Kent Football Association's 2012-2015 strategy. It was found that grass-roots football provision can engage large proportions of young people in the community, can contribute to cross-generational community integration

and can help build respect within communities. The Kent Cricket Board also recognises the contribution that may be made by sport; one of the objectives in its current strategy is to promote cricket as a tool for health, crime prevention and respect.

**1.21** Successful sports based community cohesion projects have been undertaken within this District. The Prevent Funding Board supported a football based diversionary project in 2012. Participants included members of the local Roma, Czech and Slovak Communities. Several agencies were involved and outcomes included improved understanding of cultural preferences and differences. During 2011 the Dover District Community Safety Partnership worked with the Kent Cricket Board and Kent County Cricket Club to deliver a project under the 'Not in My Game' initiative. Weekly Kwik Cricket sessions at Dover Grammar School for Boys with a subsequent trip to the Kent County Cricket Club in Canterbury provided a diversionary activity for young people from Dover and Folkestone and helped to promote better community cohesion.

**1.22** To maintain the positive benefit of such projects it is important that pathways to local sports clubs are available and that those clubs have suitable facilities. For example within the Prevent Funding Board football project, support and advice was given to the young people on local football leagues.

## Local Policy Context

### Dover District Corporate Plan 2012-2016

**1.23** Two of the four strategic priorities identified in the Council's Corporate Plan 2012-2016 are directly related to provision of outdoor sports facilities. In particular Strategic Priority 3 'Serving our communities effectively' includes the priority action of 'supporting and identifying sport, leisure and recreation opportunities through the delivery of the Local Development Framework'. To meet this aspiration it is essential that the Council has access to an up-to-date evidence base, adopts robust local standards for the various types of open space and develops associated supporting strategies. Strategic Priority 2 'Facilitating strong communities with a sense of place and identity' includes the priority action 'Involving and engaging with the voluntary and community sector to manage and deliver the transfer of identified assets.' This is already occurring at some sports facilities, for example Sandwich Cricket Club manages the Butts and Gazen Salts cricket grounds.

### Dover District Core Strategy

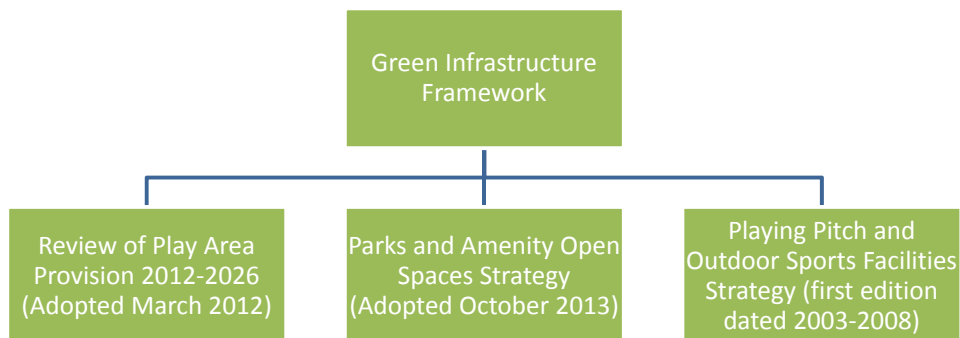
**1.24** The Dover District Core Strategy includes the following objective: 'Maintain and enhance the District's biodiversity, natural environment inheritance, open space and outdoor sport and recreational areas to create a coherent network of green infrastructure that can better support wildlife and human health.' In addition, policy CP 6 in the strategy states that development that generates a demand for infrastructure will only be permitted if the necessary infrastructure to support it is either already in place, or there is a reliable mechanism to ensure that it will be provided at the time it is needed.

## Dover District Green Infrastructure Framework

**1.25** To help achieve the Core Strategy objectives mentioned above, the Council has developed a Green Infrastructure Framework covering all forms of recreational open spaces as well as areas of importance or potential for wildlife. The GI Framework consists of an overarching descriptive document supported by strategies specific to the different types of open space. These detailed strategies feed into the GI Framework by presenting the evidence used to calculate local open space standards and providing implementation plans.

**1.26** As shown in Figure 1.1, a strategy covering playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities is integral to the Council's approach to provision of open space. This document will replace the Dover District Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2003-2008. Once it has been consulted upon publicly and adopted the overarching Green Infrastructure strategy will be fully supported by a sound evidence base.

Figure 1.1 Hierarchy of Open Space Strategies



## Dover District Sport and Recreation Strategy 2008-2018

**1.27** The Dover District Sport and Recreation Strategy 2008-2018 covers both indoor and outdoor sports facilities. It is a twenty-year strategy with an emphasis on the first ten years. The document recognises the Council's role as an enabler, or catalyst, in delivering projects and achieving objectives. Several projects discussed within that strategy have been delivered successfully, e.g. excellent facilities have been created at Dover Sea Sports Centre, Tides Indoor Tennis Centre and Aylesham Leisure Centre.

**1.28** Since the Dover District Sport and Recreation Strategy was completed there have been significant changes to the way in which Dover District Council delivers leisure services, and also structural changes within partners and stakeholders in leisure provision. Consequently there is a need to update the sports and recreation document, reviewing objectives and priorities. The forthcoming refreshed Sport & Recreation Strategy will utilise evidence gathered during preparation of this updated

Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facilities strategy, it will also link into the Review of Play Area Provision 2012-2026 and the Parks and Amenity Open Spaces Strategy 2013.

### **Kent Sport Strategic Framework for Sport and Physical Activity**

**1.29** At the County level the Kent and Medway Sports Board provides the strategic lead for and co-ordinates the development of sport and physical activity through alliances/partnerships. It has recently produced 'A Strategic Framework for Sport and Physical Activity'. The purpose of the document is to build on the success of the London 2012 Olympics and provide direction of travel for sport and physical activity across the country.

**1.30** The vision for this new Strategic Framework is that by 2021 "All people across the County will have a range of quality, accessible sport and physical activity opportunities to be more active, more often and those wishing to progress in sport will be able to do so". Improving facilities for sport and physical activity is one of the key priority themes to help achieve this vision. Facility development proposals are to be based on strategic and community need and will ensure there is a mix of multi use and sport specific facilities, including on school sites, which are accessible, affordable and welcoming to a wide range of people in the County.

### **National Policy Context**

#### **Sport**

**1.31** In January 2012 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport published a strategy entitled 'Creating a sporting habit for life – A new youth sport strategy', with the aim of increasing consistently the number of young people who participate in sport. In particular the strategy seeks to raise the participation rate amongst 14-25 year olds and to reduce the number of young people who drop out of sport when they leave school. This will be achieved by working in partnership with Sport England to:

- Build a lasting legacy of competitive sport in schools;
- Improve links between schools and community sports clubs;
- Work with sports governing bodies: focusing on youth;
- Invest in facilities;
- Work with communities and the voluntary sector.

**1.32** Between 2012 and 2017 Sport England will invest at least £1 billion of Lottery and Exchequer funding to help to ensure that young people are regularly playing sport and to break down the barriers that could prevent young people from continuing their interest in sport into their adult life. This includes £50m available to well-run sports clubs voluntary groups and others for creating exciting and appealing sporting experiences, and £160m for new and upgraded sports facilities. Sport England will

work with schools, colleges and universities, as well as local County Sports Partnerships, the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) for sport, local authorities and the voluntary sector to improve the sporting offer.

**1.33** Sport England recognises and supports over a hundred sports. For each of these, the relevant NGB has agreed a whole sport plan with Sport England, detailing how the number of people participating once a week will be increased and how talent will be nurtured. In 2012, forty-six core governing bodies were selected for funding to help deliver their whole sport plans including football, rugby union, cricket, hockey, tennis, netball, bowls and athletics. All the funded sports were either included in the London 2012 Olympics or Paralympics and/or have a participation rate of more than 75,000 people per week.

**1.34** In addition to the whole sport plans NGBs produce their own strategy documents, often including a specific strategy for facilities. This is the case for football, rugby union, cricket and athletics. Relevant documents are referenced within the sport specific chapters.

## Planning

**1.35** The National Planning Policy Framework, 27 March 2012 (NPPF) sets out 12 core planning principles which ‘*should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking*’, one of which is a stipulation that planning should ‘take account of local strategies to improve health, social, and cultural wellbeing’. The NPPF and associated National Planning Practice Guidance also recognise that an important contribution to community health and well-being can be provided by access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation.

**1.36** Planning policies for open spaces should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of local needs (paragraph 73 of the NPPF). This strategy adheres to guidance because a comprehensive audit of outdoor sports facilities was undertaken to calculate the proposed local standard for provision. The evidence base and standard were also used to prioritise projects that address quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of outdoor sport facilities.

**1.37** Local Planning Authorities should plan positively for the provision and use of community facilities, including sports venues, to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments (paragraph 70 of the NPPF). They are also required to help support a prosperous rural economy, through promoting the retention and development in villages of community facilities such as sports venues (paragraph 28). Access to an accurate audit of sport facilities, adoption of a locally determined standard for provision and supporting strategy will help the Council to fulfil these requirements.

**1.38** Publicly accessible pitches and school playing fields (including former school playing fields) identified by the audit are protected by Paragraph 74 of the NPPF and DM25 of the Dover District Core Strategy.

**1.39** The National Planning Policy Framework states that local planning authorities should work with public health leads and health organisations to understand and take account of the health status and needs of the local population, including for sports (paragraph 171).

## Health

**1.40** In July 2011 the Department of Health issued 'Start Active, Stay Active: A report on physical activity from the four home countries', providing information on which to base healthy lifestyle choices. Recommendations in the report were derived from recent systematic reviews examining the amount, frequency, intensity and type of physical activity required to achieve physical and mental health benefits. The importance of incorporating physical activities such as walking or cycling instead of travelling by car, bus or train into everyday life was recognised, but a larger quantity of activity at higher intensity (such as playing sport) can bring further benefits.

**1.41** The report recommends that everybody should participate in an appropriate level of physical activity for their age. Amongst the specific guidelines it was recommended that adults (19 years and above) should undertake physical activity to improve muscle strength on at least two days per week and at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more. Children and young people (5-18 years) should incorporate vigorous intensity activities, including those that strengthen bone, on at least three days a week. Suitable activities for young people to achieve this are described as 'resistant-type exercise during high intensity sport, dance, water-based activities or weight (resistance) training in adult-type gyms'.

**1.42** As well as advocating an active lifestyle the report also warns of the dangers associated with lack of exercise; physical inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality (accounting for 6% of deaths globally). Approximately two-thirds of adults in the UK spend more than two hours per day watching TV and using the computer. Significant proportions of adults report spending between three and four hours sitting during their leisure time.

## The benefits of developing and implementing the Strategy

**1.43** In line with the purpose and identified drivers the development and implementation of the strategy has the potential to provide a number of significant benefits including:

- A strategic and collaborative approach to the improvement of provision in the District making facilities accessible, affordable and welcoming;
- The creation of a unified, robust evidence base for the District which can be used to support the work of a number of Council departments and external organisations;
- Enhanced understanding of the needs of the local sporting community;
- Providing direction and guidance to sports development work in the District;

- Ensure the benefits of sport and physical activity is recognised and supported by local policy and decision makers;
- Highlighting local opportunities that can help to support the implementation of national sports policies and strategies (e.g. developing school club links and those schools that are keen to open up, or keep open, their facilities for use by the local community);
- As an advocacy tool to highlight the value and potential impact of the Council's and other provider's current and proposed work to enhance the provision in the District;
- Ensuring investment, management and planning decisions taken by any relevant party are informed by a robust evidence base;
- To help attract funding and investment for sport and physical activity from a wide range of sources and to co-ordinate work in a way that make best use of limited resources.

### **The objectives of the strategy**

**1.44** Based on the purpose and drivers set out above, the following objectives were set to help guide the management and development of the strategy.

- To ensure all relevant Council departments are involved in the development of the strategy;
- To engage with the appropriate National Governing Bodies of Sport throughout the development and implementation of the strategy;
- To ensure a high level of consultation with the local sporting community (e.g. local sports clubs and league secretaries);
- To ensure the development of an action plan which is area and sport specific and provides the necessary detail for all parties e.g. identifying infrastructure requirements to support planned growth;
- To clarify which providers will be able to implement any recommendations and actions, including setting out those that the Council can implement directly and those where its role will be providing support to other parties;
- To establish a clear approach to monitoring, maintaining and reviewing the strategy.



## 2 Management and Scope of the Strategy

### Project management

**2.1** Development of the strategy was overseen by a Steering Group, which consisted of elected members and officers from relevant sections of the District Council. The group met on several occasions to help guide the project. In particular, following completion of the pitch assessment and before the development of the key findings the Steering Group checked and challenged the emerging results.

**2.2** The Council decided to prepare this strategy in-house, rather than engaging consultants, for several reasons. The main advantage is that officers and members gain a broad knowledge of playing pitch provision in general and more detailed understanding of the particular needs in this district. The process has strengthened relationships with other outdoor sports facility providers, local sports clubs and national governing bodies of sport. The disadvantage is that in-house preparation can take longer.

**2.3** The majority of the original audit was undertaken in 2011, including public forum meetings with football, rugby and cricket. Analysis of the data took place in 2012. <sup>(4)</sup> Preparation of the draft strategy began in 2013, including meetings with national governing bodies of sport. A draft was prepared in 2014 and was subject to 12 weeks public consultation, including focused consultation events, which informed the final draft. Full details of the consultation are shown in Appendix 1.

**2.4** The Planning and Property Services divisions jointly led day-to-day management of the strategy. The Planning division will use this document to guide implementation of the Natural Grass Pitches standard and to calculate and allocate development contributions to projects. The Property Services division is responsible for maintaining Council owned assets, including playing pitches and pavilions. This document will help to prioritise investment in such facilities and identify projects of strategic importance. The Communication and Engagement team offer support to community groups seeking to take forward projects that underpin the objectives of and meet the needs identified in the strategy. The Community Safety Unit will continue to support youth diversionary projects that address community cohesion and antisocial behaviour.

**2.5** Use of a widely accepted and thoroughly tested approach provides confidence that the assessment is robust. The Council worked closely with Sport England during the preparation of this strategy from its inception. The assessment method followed national guidance, the principal source of information being 'Towards a level playing field: a guide to the production of playing pitch strategies' (2003). In October 2013 Sport England issued updated guidance entitled 'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance' and new approaches set out in that document were incorporated into the study where possible.

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4 Progress was delayed during 2012 while Dover hosted the arrival of the Olympic Torch

## The scope of the strategy

**2.6** The primary function of the strategy is to ensure that community access to outdoor sports facilities in Dover District meets demand; therefore most of the discussion refers to facilities with secured community use. The audit encompassed as many publicly accessible outdoor sport facilities as possible across the district; these were identified by contacting all the town and parish councils, all schools and every sports club known to the Council. As part of the audit, facility providers were asked if their site is available for public use, and if so it was included in the analysis. The only sites excluded were those where the owner told us it was private.

**2.7** Publicly accessible sites comprise:

- All local authority facilities.
- School facilities where they are subject to formal community use agreements.
- Other institutional facilities that are available to the public as a result of formal community use agreements.
- Any facilities that are owned, used or maintained by clubs/private individuals and which, as a matter of policy and practice, are available to large sections of the public through membership of a club or through an admission fee. The cost of use must be considered reasonable and affordable by the majority of the community.

### Pitches

**2.8** The strategy encompasses both natural and artificial grass pitches, with a focus on the main pitch sports of football, rugby union, cricket and hockey. The audit also identified one other pitch sport played by a community club at a publicly accessible site in the district - American football.

**2.9** In setting the scope for the playing pitch element of the strategy, the Council was guided by the definition of a pitch as set out in the Government's statutory instrument 2010/21844, which states that a **playing pitch** is:

"a delineated area which, together with any run off area, is of 0.2 hectares or more, and which is used for association football, American football, rugby, cricket, hockey, lacrosse, rounders, baseball, softball, Australian football, Gaelic football, shinty, hurling, polo or cycle polo."

**2.10** A **playing field** is defined as:

"the whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch."

### Other outdoor sports facilities

**2.11** The strategy also covers non-pitch outdoor sports that are played in the district at publicly accessible facilities. Community clubs were identified in four relevant sports: tennis, netball, bowls and athletics, therefore publicly accessible tennis courts, netball courts, bowling rinks and athletics tracks were included in the audit.

## Engagement with the sporting community

**2.12** The Council was keen to engage with the district's sporting community throughout both the assessment and development phases of this strategy, with the objective of making it as relevant as possible to outdoor sports facility users. All local sports clubs known to the Council were consulted to gather data for the audit, as summarised in Table 2.1. Existing relationships with local clubs enabled the Council to reach participants in a wide range of sports across the district. A full public consultation on was also undertaken.

Table 2.1 Consultation with sports clubs

Sports Clubs	Total No of Clubs Surveyed	Total No of Survey Respondents	Response Rate
Football	71	37	52%
Cricket	20	17	85%
Rugby	4	3	75%
American Football	1	1	100%
Bowls	14	12	86%
Tennis	6	6	100%
Netball	1	1	100%
Athletics	4	4	100%
Hockey	1	1	100%
	122	82	67%

**2.13** Engagement with providers and users allowed the facility assessment results to be checked and challenged as work progressed. Bearing in mind the resources available to produce this strategy, particular regard was paid to the playing pitch elements, because pitches provide facilities for the largest number of outdoor sports participants. Sport specific focus meetings were held with local football, rugby and cricket clubs to present the initial results of the assessment work. At these meetings aspects such as the quality rating assigned to each site during the survey work were reviewed.

**2.14** Where possible and appropriate, assessment findings were discussed with relevant governing bodies to ensure that the strategy was informed by the latest developments specific to each sport. This included governing bodies for football, rugby, cricket, hockey, tennis, netball and bowls.

**2.15** Beyond the specific consultation actions undertaken to prepare this strategy, the Council continues to work across the voluntary community sector to enhance service delivery. This includes support to groups such as sports clubs. In addition, a database is maintained of contact details for the volunteer community sector, including sports clubs, which allows the Council to share information such as funding opportunities.

### 3 Assessment Method

**3.1** As recommended in 'Towards a level playing field' Sport England's Playing Pitch Model (PPM) was used to calculate pitch requirements. The PPM requires two types of data to assess local playing pitch needs into the future: demand and supply.

#### **Demand for outdoor sports facilities**

**3.2** Demand is a function of both the number of active clubs and the times at which they play competitive matches. These are recorded in the model as the number of every type of team within each ward of the district (e.g. 7 junior football teams were recorded in Mill Hill) and the percentage playing during each time slot (e.g. 90% of junior football teams in the Dover District play on Saturday mornings). This information was gained through consultation with clubs, league secretaries and facility providers.

**3.3** Local rates of participation in the various sports, or 'team generation rates', are calculated using the numbers of teams recorded and current population estimates. To estimate future demand, local participation rates are applied to the population forecasts for the District. These data were obtained from the publication 'Demographic forecasts for Dover District Council Report - April 2010' by the Kent County Council Research and Intelligence Team, which formed part of the evidence base for the District's Core Strategy<sup>(5)</sup>. Sport England advises that the Playing Pitch Model functions adequately over ten years, but it does not provide robust results over a longer period. As a result estimates of future demand presented in this document do not match the Core Strategy Period exactly. However, it is likely that priorities and action plans would need to be re-examined before 2026 anyway.

**3.4** Participation rates can change over time and the Playing Pitch Model allows this to be factored into predictions of future requirements. In this study a steady participation rate was applied to the calculations because the relevant governing bodies of sport advised that in general they are working to retain participants, increasing the frequency of involvement, rather than aiming to achieve overall increases in numbers. In some cases the NGBs are targeting an increase in participation rates for a particular sector of the community, for example England Netball are looking to increase the number of 16-25 year olds playing the sport.

**3.5** It is advisable to compare local participation or provision rates with other local authorities ('bench marking') if possible. However, a detailed comparison with neighbouring authorities has been difficult to compile in this case because the majority do not have a published, up to date, Playing Pitch Strategy.

- Published information for Thanet dates back to 2005
- Canterbury City Council Open Space Strategy 2009-2014 is based on data from 2007

<sup>5</sup> Since those estimates were published, the 2011 Census data was collected and released, which KCC used to calibrate their Mid Year Population Estimates. As reported in the July 2012 Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletin, KCC revised their 2011 estimate of residents in the Dover District upwards by 3,700 (or 3.3%).

- Shepway District Council published a 'Playing Pitch Strategy Update' in July 2011

**3.6** The Shepway strategy provides local team generation rates for football, cricket, rugby union and hockey, which are compared with national average TGRs. This strategy follows a similar approach for most of the sports considered, i.e. local participation rates are compared with current national estimates. The exception is hockey; in that case an estimate of team generation rates was calculated across the whole of East Kent. Hockey requires specialist pitches and these are provided at the rate of one or two per district, therefore it should be considered at a wider scale.

**3.7** Sometimes the apparent demand for pitches in one district as evidenced through team membership can be distorted by differences in the cost of hiring pitches when compared with neighbouring areas. To investigate whether this is likely to be a significant factor in the Dover District, a survey of pitch hire costs was carried out in the East Kent area. This focused on Council owned facilities. Football pitches in the Dover District are available at a lower price than in neighbouring authorities; in Shepway and Canterbury it is considerably more expensive to hire an adult pitch, but there is only 5% difference in price when compared with Thanet. Other outdoor sports facilities, such as tennis courts are available at a similar price throughout the four districts. Therefore differences in the cost of hiring public pitches is unlikely to have a significant impact on the results and was not investigated further for the individual sports.

### **Pitch assessment (supply)**

**3.8** The supply of outdoor pitches was characterised through site assessments and, where possible, consultation with facility providers or clubs. Pitch quality at secure and non-secure community use sites was assessed by means of site visits<sup>(6)</sup>. The method used was as set out in the Sport England score sheet, which defines categories for aspects of quality such as grass cover and the presence of adequate safety margins. Users of the pitches were also encouraged to complete score sheets. The various scores are combined to provide an overall percentage rating for each pitch.

**3.9** The number of games that may be played on a pitch is largely dependent on its quality: better quality pitches can carry more matches. Quality ratings obtained through the audit were used to estimate pitch capacity as shown in Table 3.1. Carrying capacity is represented within the Playing Pitch Model by the multiplication factor shown in the right hand column. The exception to this approach is that, as advised by Sport England, school sites were assigned a carrying capacity of 0.25 regardless of pitch quality. This is because even an excellent quality school pitch is only available for community use outside school hours.

6 Some non-secure community pitches on school sites were not assessed but this does not affect the calculations because the carrying capacity is set at 0.25 for these pitches.

Table 3.1 Conversion of pitch quality ratings into estimated pitch capacity

Pitch Quality Rating		Carrying Capacity	Multiplication Factor
90%+	Excellent	3+ matches	1.5
65% - 90%	Good	3 matches	1
55% - 64%	Average	3 matches	1
30% - 54%	Poor	2 matches	0.5
Less than 30%	Very Poor	1 match	0.25

### Identification of sub-areas (structure of participation)

**3.10** If results of the analysis were expressed only at the level of the whole district it would not be clear where the deficits and surpluses occur. In addition, the way that local pitch sports are organised does not necessarily coincide with administrative boundaries. To address these concerns data was gathered at the ward level and then wards were amalgamated into sub-areas that share similar characteristics and concerns. This is the approach recommended by 'Towards a level playing field'. The definition of the sub-areas was informed by league structures and catchment areas of the main pitch sports, and then confirmed through consultation. For example in football, Dover and Deal clubs play fixtures mainly within those areas and football clubs are not generally forced to compete outside the district. This is not a hard and fast rule because rural football clubs do sometimes travel further afield especially those near Sandwich may play against clubs in Thanet and first teams within large clubs are likely to travel some distance to compete against other clubs. Catchment areas for rugby follows the sub-areas well with one club in each of the urban sub-areas and two in the rural part of the district. Cricket also follows with pattern, except that players in the Dover sub-area travel to the rural sub-area to play.

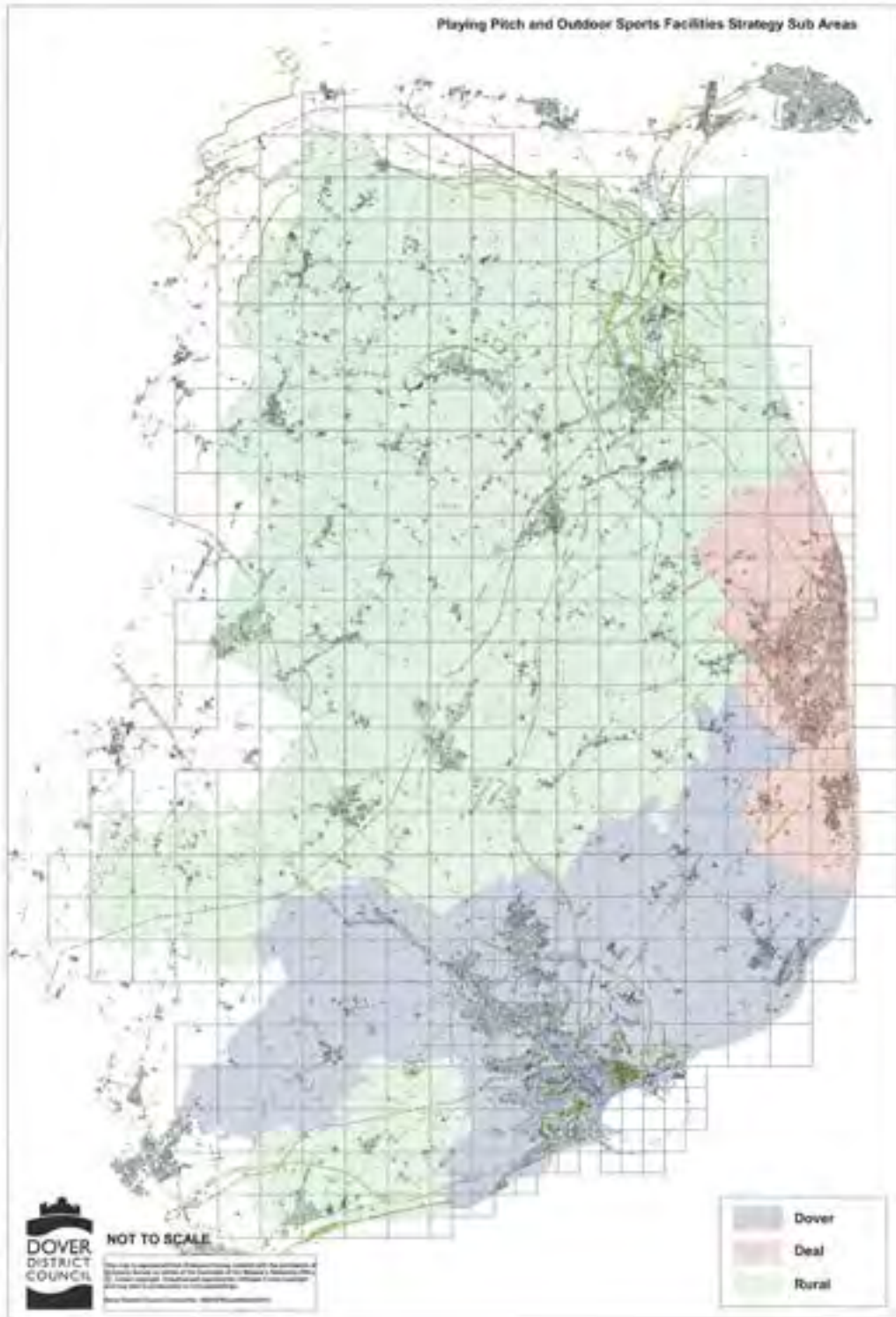
Table 3.2

DOVER	DEAL	RURAL
Buckland	Middle Deal and Sholden	Sandwich
Castle	Mill Hill	Aylesham
Lydden and Temple Ewell	North Deal	Capel le Ferne
Maxton, Elms Vale and Priory	Walmer	Eastry
River	Ringwould and Kingsdown	Eythorne and Shepherdswell
St Radigunds		Little Stour and Ashtone

<b>DOVER</b>	<b>DEAL</b>	<b>RURAL</b>
St Margarets		
Tower Hamlets		
Town and Pier		
Whitfield		



Map 3.1 Sub-Areas for Football, Rugby and Cricket



### Identification of need

**3.11** Initially the model was run using current population estimates. Then the process was repeated with populations predicted in each ward as a result of housing growth planned by the District's Core Strategy. Estimates obtained for current and emerging needs were then compared with existing levels of provision to identify any deficiencies. Results are presented separately for each sport.

**3.12** The current and future requirements for outdoor pitches were calculated for each sub-area, which will ensure that actions recommended in this report promote sufficient provision of facilities within accessible distances. Where shortfalls were identified within the sub-areas, the model was used to explore the best way to remedy them. Sport England recommends that before undertaking projects to create new sports grounds, improvements to the quality of existing pitches should be considered and, if possible, more pitches should be brought into secure community use. Therefore inputs to the model were varied to test the predicted effects of either improving pitch quality, or formally securing sites that are currently non-secure community use pitches.

**3.13** In total three scenarios were tested as outlined below:

- Scenario 1, the 'baseline' scenario
- Scenario 2 models the increase in capacity that could be achieved if all pitches were improved to achieve a good quality rating (except school sites that can only ever achieve a carrying capacity of 0.25)
- Scenario 3, as scenario 2 plus pitches currently used without formal agreement are modelled as being brought into secured community use

**3.14** On completion of the assessment, it was then possible to formulate an action plan for maintaining a supply of outdoor playing pitch facilities in the District that matched the identified need.

### Identification of the need arising from planned growth

**3.15** Where possible, the additional need arising from predicted population growth occurring over the Core Strategy period was calculated. The additional need that will arise from any individual development may be calculated by applying the Outdoor Sport Facilities standard to the number of residents expected at that development.

### Calculation of a natural grass playing pitch standard

**3.16** Sport England's Playing Pitch Model was used to calculate the level of natural grass playing pitches available for community use across the whole district for football, rugby union and cricket. The estimated adequacy of the existing supply to meet peak demands was calculated for 2011 and 2021. The 2021 estimate took projected

increases in population into account, along with a predicted increase in sports participation of 1% per year in each sport. That work enabled a local standard for natural grass playing pitch provision to be devised to meet local demand.

**3.17** The first estimate of an overall quantitative standard for outdoor pitches was consulted upon as part of the open space consultation in November and December 2011, and was revised in response to comments received. The first estimate of a standard for outdoor pitches was 1.19ha per thousand population, but additional data was obtained through that initial consultation and the figure was re-calculated as 1.17ha per thousand.

### **Non-pitch sports**

**3.18** The Sport England model is designed to calculate requirements for high participation sports that take place on natural or artificial grass pitches. Operation of the model depends on the availability of data relating to team use, such as match frequency. Some team sports, such as netball, hockey and American football, are not currently played at a competitive level by sufficient teams in the Dover District for the model to provide robust results, especially down to the sub-area level.

**3.19** Tennis, bowls and athletics are popular sports in the District but are not structured in teams and therefore participation cannot be modelled using the PPM. Requirements for these sports have been assessed on a less formal basis, although, where possible, the level of provision across the District has been assessed using participation data from local clubs and national governing bodies of sport.



## 4 Assessment Findings

### 4.1 Football

#### National Context

**4.1** The Football Association's National Strategic Plan 2011-15 will guide £200 million of investment into grassroots football across England. Key priorities for grassroots football are identified as:

- Retain and increase participation
- Develop better players and coaches
- Provide a safe and fun experience of football
- Protect and improve facilities
- Grow the women's game

**4.2** The strategy highlights the need to make sure participants have access to playing and training facilities, which provide an environment where they can enjoy the game. The Football Association (FA) recognises that local playing pitch strategies can contribute significantly towards the delivery of these objectives. Planning appropriate levels of playing pitch provision and improving the quality of facilities helps to grow the game. It also helps to enable participation for those who want to play the sport.

**4.3** According to the FA's National Facilities Strategy 2013-2015 more than 80% of football is played on publicly owned and managed facilities, at school and local authority owned sites. A national survey of grassroots football participants identified the single most pressing issue raised by 84% of respondents, was that of 'poor facilities'. The strategy states that the FA will work more closely with the owners of these facilities to identify and support local priorities for football.

**4.4** One of the targets within the FA's national strategy is to secure investment of £150 million into grass roots facilities via Football Foundation grants and other sources of capital.

#### County Context

**4.5** The Kent Football Association supports delivery of the national FA strategy as described in the Kent Football Strategy 2012-2015. The organisation aims to act as a link between those who play football and those who provide football pitches and facilities. Football facilities will be improved through securing £10 million of funding by 2015, from sources such as the Football Foundation and partnership funding. Allocation of that funding is likely to be guided by a priority list of football facility improvement projects based on strategic need.

**4.6** This Dover District Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facility Strategy will play an important role identifying football facility improvement projects that are of strategic importance and could potentially attract some of the county-wide funding.

### **Football clubs and teams in the Dover District (demand)**

**4.7** During the 2013/14 season, two clubs in the district participated in the National League System: Dover Athletic and Deal Town Football Club (at Step 2 and Step 5 respectively). However, the focus of this strategy is community participation in grass roots football. Variation in the number of teams occurs each year, a snapshot is provided by the Kent FA's 'Football Participation Report: Dover Season 13/14'. The report lists 55 affiliated clubs in the district with a total of 152 teams participating in 15 leagues. The teams may be broken down as follows:

- 54 adult teams
- 60 youth teams
- 38 mini teams

**4.8** The vast majority of senior teams cater for males in the 17-39 age-group, but there were three veteran's teams. Two of the youth teams were female, and many of the mini teams are mixed. Senior and youth teams tend to play on Sundays, while mini teams often play on Saturdays. Most of the adult teams competed in the Dover & District or Deal & District Leagues, and most of the younger players participated in the East Kent Youth League. Three teams from the Deal All Stars play outside the district in the Kent Junior Disability League.

**4.9** The FA awards their 'Charter Standard' to clubs that have achieved high standards in specified areas such as quality coaching, safety and child protection. According to the Kent FA's Football participation report for the 2013/14 season, eleven clubs in the Dover District have attained this status and 95% of junior and mini teams play in a club that has achieved a Charter Standard.

### **Assessment of pitches (supply)**

**4.10** At the time the audit was undertaken for this strategy (2010-2011) Dover Athletic and Deal Town Football Club operated on private grounds reserved exclusively for their own use. Deal Town has now opened its doors to community involvement and during the 2013/14 season it ran three youth teams. Dover Athletic is also now developing youth teams.

**4.11** The audit included only sites where formal, competitive matches take place. As shown in Table 4.1 and Map 4.1, twenty natural grass playing fields with secure community use were identified, which contained sixty pitches. Two further playing fields are available for use by the community without the benefit of secure agreements, these contain four pitches. Six dormant sites were identified. Sixty-nine community use pitches are listed in Table 4.1;

- 44 senior pitches
- 8 youth pitches
- 17 mini pitches

**4.12** The balance of pitch types may have changed since the assessment was undertaken because the FA has introduced significant changes to goal post and pitch sizes for mini and youth football. Providers of facilities had to implement the changes in time for the 2013/14 football season. However, there are unlikely to have been any significant losses or gains in the number of pitches overall because no secure community use grounds have closed or opened. One non-secure use site identified by the 2011 audit is now reserved exclusively for school sport, but Ripplevale School has recently opened its pitch up for use by Deal Town Rangers.

Table 4.1 Football grounds in the Dover District with the number of active pitches and their average quality

NAME/LOCATION of FACILITY	SUB AREA	ACCESSIBILITY	QUANTITY Of PITCHES	MAX CARRYING CAPACITY PER WEEK (1)	AVERAGE QUALITY PITCH RATING
Dover Christchurch Academy	Dover	Non-Secure Community Use	2 Senior	2	GOOD
Dover Grammar School For Boys	Dover	Non-Secure Community Use	2 Senior	2	AVERAGE
Elms Vale Recreation Ground	Dover	Secure Community Use	4 Senior, 1 Youth	11	POOR
River Recreation Ground	Dover	Secure Community Use	1 Senior, 1 Youth, 2 Mini	9	AVERAGE
St Margarets Recreation Ground	Dover	Secure Community Use	1 Senior, 2 Mini	9	GOOD
The Danes Recreation Ground	Dover	Secure Community Use	3 Senior	9	AVERAGE
Whitfield Recreation Ground	Dover	Secure Community Use	2 Senior, 1 Mini	6	POOR
Betteshanger Sports Ground	Deal	Secure Community Use	4 Senior, 1 Mini	15	AVERAGE
Castle Community School	Deal	Secure Community Use	1 Senior, 1 Youth, 2 Mini	4	GOOD

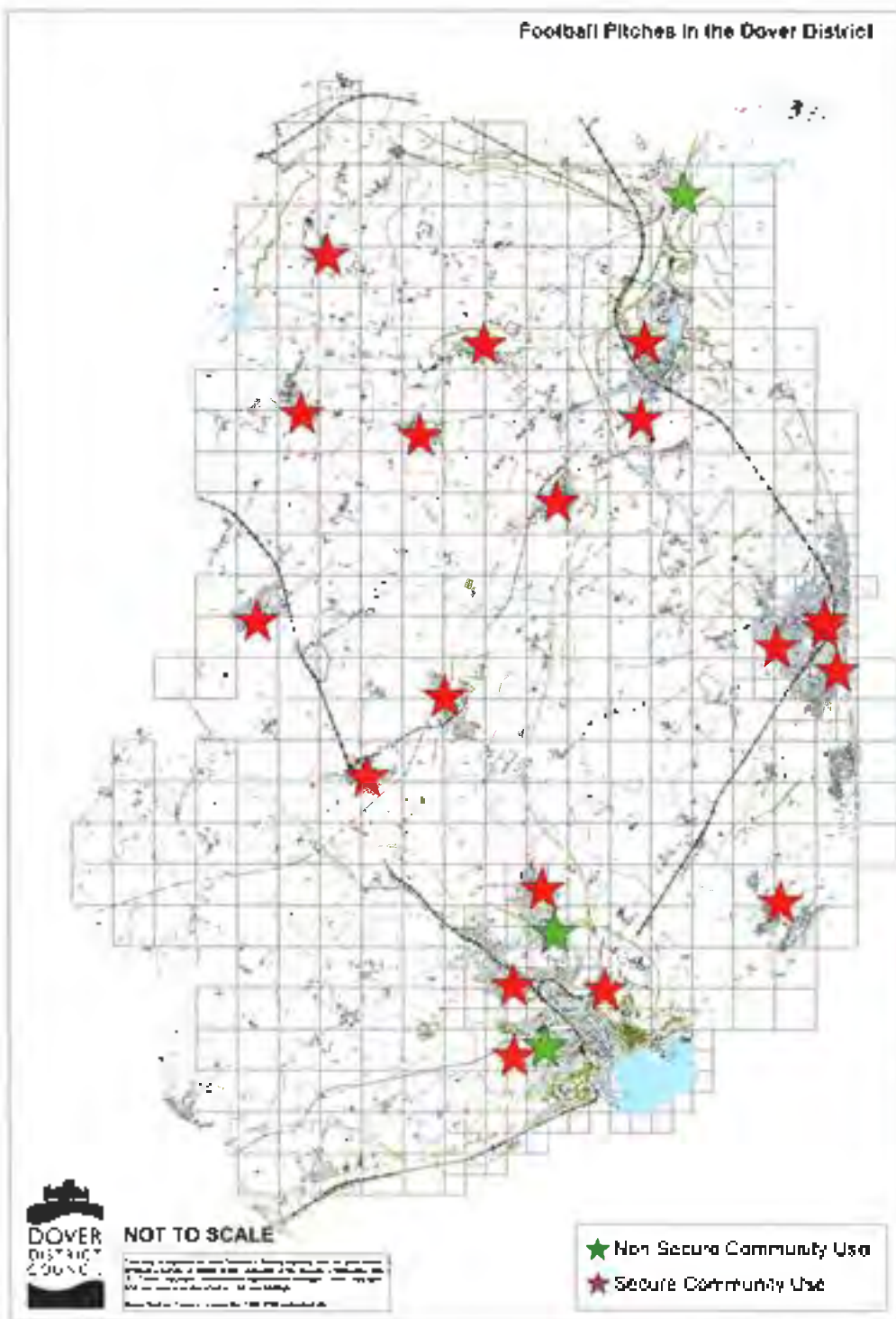


NAME/LOCATION of FACILITY	SUB AREA	ACCESSIBILITY	QUANTITY Of PITCHES	MAX CARRYING CAPACITY PER WEEK (1)	AVERAGE QUALITY PITCH RATING
Marke Wood Recreation Ground	Deal	Secure Community Use	4 Senior, 1 Youth	15	AVERAGE
Victoria Park	Deal	Secure Community Use	2 youth, 1 9x9	6	AVERAGE
Ash Recreation Ground	Rural	Secure Community Use	1 Senior	3	GOOD
Aylesham Welfare Leisure Centre	Rural	Secure Community Use	2 Senior, 1 Youth, 3 Mini	18	GOOD
Baypoint Leisure And Social Club	Rural	Secure Community Use	4 Senior, 1 Youth	15	EXCELLENT
Eastry Gun Park	Rural	Secure Community Use	1 Senior, 1 Mini	6	AVERAGE
Gazen Salts	Rural	Secure Community Use	2 Senior, 1 Mini	9	GOOD
Preston Recreation Ground	Rural	Secure Community Use	1 Senior	3	GOOD
Sandwich Technology School	Rural	Secure Community Use	1 Senior, 1 Youth	2	GOOD
Shepherdswell Recreation Ground	Rural	Secure Community Use	1 Senior, 1 Youth	6	AVERAGE
Staple Recreation Ground	Rural	Secure Community Use	2 Mini	6	GOOD

NAME/LOCATION of FACILITY	SUB AREA	ACCESSIBILITY	QUANTITY Of PITCHES	MAX CARRYING CAPACITY PER WEEK (1)	AVERAGE QUALITY PITCH RATING
Tilmanstone Welfare Ground	Rural	Secure Community Use	2 Senior, 1 Mini	9	GOOD
Wingham Recreation Ground	Rural	Secure Community Use	1 Senior, 1 Mini	8	AVERAGE

1. The maximum carrying capacity per week means the estimated number of games that a playing field can withstand in a week, this may include some mini or youth games

Figure 4.1 Location of football pitches in the Dover District



**4.13** Most pitches in the District were classified as being of average to good quality, with 5 rated as excellent. None were classified as very poor, however 14 of the pitches in use were rated poor. The carrying capacity per week of each pitch was estimated using Table 3.1 'Conversion of pitch quality ratings into estimated pitch capacity', and the total carrying capacity of each facility as listed in Table 4.1 was calculated by summing the capacity of all pitches at the site. Site quality ratings given in Table 4.1 were derived by averaging the quality rating of all active pitches at each facility.

**4.14** In most cases all pitches within a facility were given a similar quality rating, with the exceptions of Dover Grammar and Staple Recreation Ground. In 2011 one of the pitches at Dover Grammar was of poor quality, showing evidence of unofficial use and damage to the surface, but the other was rated as good quality. At Staple Recreation Ground one of the mini pitches was judged to be average quality, while the other was good, by March 2014 the mini pitches had been converted into a single adult sized pitch.

**4.15** Two of the sites still in use by community teams were given an overall rating of poor during the original audit, both in the Dover sub-area. Their condition was checked in 2013/14 Elms Vale is heavily used for matches and suffers from unofficial use giving rise to dog fouling, litter and damage to the surface. In addition one of the pitches is sloped. At the end of the 2013/14 season at Whitfield Recreation Ground there were many areas of damage to the pitch surface and the pitches were very uneven.

### **Artificial Grass Pitches**

**4.16** The focus of this audit and analysis is natural grass playing pitches, but the district also contains several Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) that are suitable for football. Both Castle Community College and Sandwich Sports and Leisure Centre have rubber crumb (3G), floodlit, full-sized pitches available for community use. In addition, Aylesham Leisure Centre and BayPoint Leisure near Sandwich, have smaller 3G rubber crumb pitches suitable for 5-a-side games.

**4.17** Provision of AGPs in the Dover District was analysed in detail by Sport England in its 2011 'Facilities Planning Model, Dover District Council – Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) Assessment'. The two full sized AGP facilities were reported as already operating at 100% of their capacity in 2011 and the additional population expected in 2021 was calculated to generate demand for additional provision equivalent to approximately one third of an AGP. Sport England's report recommended that if any new facility were to be provided it should be football focused and located close to the Dover urban area.

## Trends in participation

**4.18** Football has the highest participation rate of any team sport in England. According to the Sport England Active People 7 survey, 4.25% of the population over 16 years play the game for at least 30 minutes per week, while 16.64% of 18 year olds play at least once a week. However participation has significantly declined since the Active People surveys began nearly ten years ago.

**4.19** The Football Association experienced a reduction of 1,650 (5%) affiliated men's 11-a-side teams between 2008 and the launch of its National Strategic Plan 2011-15. On the other hand, there was growth in different types of participation during the same period, for example there was a 44% increase in youth teams (15,000 new teams) and small sided football for adults, such as 5-a-side, is also growing. According to the FA more than 1.5 million adults play small sided football in England each week<sup>(7)</sup>.

**4.20** Locally derived evidence appears to show that changes in Dover District club football participation generally follow national trends. A steady decline in usage figures for Sunday league football has been noted at Dover District Council owned football pitches over recent years. The precise number of teams varies from year to year, but comparing the Kent FA report 'Football Participation Report Dover Season 13/14' with results of DDC's 2010/11 audit shows a substantial fall in adult 11-a-side participation (70 teams in 2011 falling to 54 in 2014). This is offset by increases in the numbers of youth (54 rising to 60) and mini teams (28 rising to 38 respectively). Both the Kent FA report and DDC audit identify a total of 152 teams, but the number of clubs fell from 71 to 55. In other words there is a trend for fewer clubs running more teams per club.

**4.21** Participation in small sided football is more difficult to measure. There are commercially operated leagues, for example a six-a-side league plays two evenings a week at the Castle Community School in Deal. However, small sided football is often casually organised by the participants. Generally this type of football takes place at AGPs and sports halls, largely because floodlighting is required to maintain participation through the winter.

**4.22** The FA's National Strategic Plan sets out an objective to retain and support 11-a-side teams, while encouraging growth of new formats of football, such as 5-a-side and informal kickabouts, which are more compatible with changing player lifestyles. To develop young players (who may well progress to adult 11-a-side teams) the FA aims to increase access to high quality coaching for children in primary school education and increasing the number of mini-soccer and youth teams in clubs and leagues with Charter Standard status. In addition, there is an objective to increase the number of women's and girl's teams.

7 <http://www.thefa.com/my-football/player/5-a-side-and-futsal>

## Analysis

**4.23** If the participation rate of 4.25% is applied to the 2012 mid-year population estimate of 91,900<sup>(8)</sup> residents in the Dover District aged 16+, it indicates that around 3,900 regular football players should be expected. The Kent FA 'Football Participation Report: Dover Season 13/14' estimates the total number of active participants in club football as 2,327. The number involved in adult 11-a-side teams was around 972, additionally there were 12 teams in the 16 to 18 age range, representing a further 216 active participants. Club football therefore accounts for approximately 30% of the regular adult football players expected in the district. The other main types of regular participation are likely to be informal small sided football and, amongst 16 to 18 year olds, P.E. in school.

**4.24** Information gathered by the 2011 DDC audit on participation in formal competitive football at publicly accessible pitches was analysed using the Sport England Playing Pitch model, as described in the assessment method section of this document, to determine whether supply of natural grass football pitches in the Dover District meets demand now and in the future. The model was run presuming a steady participation rate into the future, because the FA is focusing resources on retaining and developing the existing number of affiliated teams. A summary of the results by sub area are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Summary of the current and predicted level of football pitch provision by sub-area and type

Sub-area	Type	Current situation	10-15yrs
Dover	Senior	Shortfall of 3 pitches	Shortfall of 4 pitches
Dover	Youth	Shortfall of 7 pitches	Shortfall of 8 pitches
Dover	Mini	Surplus of 2 pitches	Surplus of 2 pitches
Deal	Senior	Supply meets demand	Shortfall of 1 pitch
Deal	Youth	Shortfall of 8 pitches	Shortfall of 8 pitches
Deal	Mini	Surplus of 2 pitches	Surplus of 2 pitches
Rural	Senior	Surplus of 5 pitches	Surplus of 4 pitches
Rural	Youth	Shortfall of 4 pitches	Shortfall of 5 pitches
Rural	Mini	Surplus of 7 pitches	Surplus of 9 pitches

**4.25** As outlined in table 4.2, the initial analysis indicated several shortfalls, particularly in the Dover sub-area, while a shortfall in senior pitches is predicted to develop in the Deal area over the coming years. Youth facilities are under provided

8 Estimate of population aged 16yrs + derived from KCC 2012 Mid Year Population Estimates. As reported in the July 2012 Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletin and on-line toolkit

for in all sub areas, in contrast a surplus provision of mini pitches was identified. Once deficiencies had been identified, the playing pitch model was used to explore how best they could be remedied.

## Dover

**4.26 Senior Football:** A current shortfall is identified, which is predicted to intensify in the coming years. This deficiency could be rectified through a combination of improving the quality of existing facilities combined with increasing the number of secure community use sites and/or reinstating dormant facilities.

**4.27** Six of the eleven senior secure use football pitches in the Dover sub-area are rated as poor; if these were brought up to an average quality rating the predicted deficiency would be reduced to 2 pitches. Some of school sites that are currently used on a non-secure basis could perhaps be secured for community, but it is unlikely that this would be achieved in every case. Therefore the option of bringing dormant sites back into use should be considered.

**4.28 Youth Football:** Again a current and increasing shortfall in provision is identified; however this shortfall is more severe than noted for senior football. If dormant sites were brought back into use that would make a valuable contribution, but would not meet the calculated need for youth football in full.

**4.29** All but one of the secure use youth football pitches in the Dover sub-area are rated as average quality. Standards could be improved, but that alone would not increase capacity enough to meet the demand. There are also 3 dormant sites suitable for football pitches. Even if all these were brought into secure community use, a shortfall would remain. It should also be noted that some of the current sites have no changing rooms, although this could be addressed in part by working with nearby community facilities.

**4.30 Mini Football:** The modelling suggests a surplus in capacity of 2 pitches now and into the future. In spite of this identified surplus, one of the 5 sites would benefit from receiving improvements as it currently has a 'poor' quality rating.

## Deal

**4.31 Senior Football:** Currently supply of pitches meets demand, but the model predicts that in ten years a shortfall of one pitch will have developed. It is possible that a reinstatement of a dormant pitch or creation of a new pitch may be required to meet this need. In addition changing provision at Victoria Park is very poor and has reached the end of useful life.

**4.32** All the senior football pitches in the Deal sub-area are of an average to good quality; therefore capacity cannot be increased sufficiently through improvements to the pitches themselves. Castle Community is the only school with a senior football pitch and it already has a secure community-use agreement in place.

**4.33 Youth Football:** A shortfall of eight pitches exists now and will continue into the future. As was found for senior football in the Deal sub-area, all the existing pitches are average to good quality and the only school site with youth football pitches already has a secure use agreement in place.

**4.34 Mini Football:** The modelling suggests a surplus in capacity of 2 pitches, now and into the future.

### Rural

**4.35 Senior Football:** The modelling suggests that a surplus of 5 pitches exists currently in the Rural Sub-Area, which will decline slightly in the coming years. The pitches were all rated as average to good quality, but some sites had poor or very poor changing facilities. It should also be noted that some Dover teams use pitches in the rural sub-area due to the lack of quality/capacity in the Dover sub-area and that overall in the district there is a deficiency in this type of pitch.

**4.36 Youth Football:** A current shortfall is identified that will increase slightly during the strategy period. Existing youth football pitches in the rural sub-area are rated as 'average' to 'good' quality; therefore capacity cannot be increased by pitch improvements.

**4.37 Mini Football:** The situation is similar as found for senior football facilities in the rural sub-area; although in this case the surplus is likely to increase. Again the majority of pitches have all been rated as 'average' to 'good' quality, but, some sites have 'poor' or 'very poor' changing facilities.

### Discussion

**4.38** Secure and non-secure community use pitches are distributed across the district with good quality facilities available in all three sub areas. In common with national trends, the number of adult 11-a-side teams is decreasing but youth participation is growing. An assessment of the need for natural grass pitches based on participation in formal club football indicates a shortfall in youth pitches across the district, and in the Dover sub-area this is accompanied by a shortage of adult pitches. There may be around twice as many adults taking part in small sided football as are involved in 11-a-side teams, but this type of participation is more difficult to quantify and therefore has not been modelled. In any case small sided football tends to take place on artificial pitches and in sports halls.

**4.39** The results of the modelling should be interpreted with care. Results obtained from modelling of local data could lead to the conclusion that top priority should be placed in increasing provision of youth pitches across the Dover District. However, booking records from publicly managed youth pitches, such as those at Victoria Park, indicate poor usage of such facilities. The recent changes in F.A. pitch specifications to ensure that youth football is truly child focused, combined with the trend for increasing numbers of youth teams in this district, is likely to cause increased numbers



of bookings for youth pitches. On the other hand, young people who are currently playing in youth teams may move into adult 11-a-side football within a few years, boosting the need for that type of facility in the future.

**4.40** Looking at the sub-areas in turn; the clear finding from modelling data from the Dover sub-area is an overall deficiency in football pitch provision (except for mini pitches). All options for increasing capacity should be examined. As shown in the action plan (Chapter 6) priority will be given to quality improvements at Elms Vale Recreation Ground. In the longer term the dormant site at the Danes could be brought back into use and new opportunities for securing public access to schools pitches should be explored.

**4.41** The Action Plan in Chapter 6 proposes various football projects for the Deal sub-area, some of which are already in progress. The need for more youth facilities will be addressed through improvement of facilities at Victoria Park, which could share changing facilities with neighbouring Castle Community College. A grassroots football project is also being delivered at Deal Town Football Club, while the focus for senior provision will be improved facilities at Marke Wood. Modelling suggested even if all these projects are completed successfully, further work will still be required to meet the identified demand in full. Sport England guidance states that once all possible improvements have been completed at existing pitches, then dormant sites should be considered. There are dormant sites in the town that could perhaps be brought back into use, such as the former playing field at Freemans Way. However, given the amount of change planned for pitches in the Deal sub-area, need should be re-assessed in consultation with local clubs before any subsequent project is undertaken.

**4.42** Modelling appears to indicate a surplus of adult pitches in the rural sub-area while there is a deficit of youth pitches, so providers may wish to reconfigure their sites accordingly. However adult teams from Dover town are known to make use of spare capacity in the rural sub-area. A major issue for rural football clubs is the quality of changing facilities. Sandwich Town Cricket Club was recently awarded a grant by the National Lottery to upgrade changing and club house facilities at Gazen Salts, which will also be used by football teams. Elsewhere in the rural sub-area teams and providers are actively fund raising to improve changing facilities in Eastry and Shepherdswell. It is important to consider long term maintenance when any such project is put in place, for example the project at Sandwich will increase revenue by catering for several sports including table tennis.

**4.43** Football is the most popular team sport in the country and this district, therefore meeting the need for football provision should take a high priority in the action plan. Analysis of supply and demand data has identified some clear priorities, but patterns of participation are changing and some projects are already being delivered. Once these early projects have been delivered it will be appropriate to review the action plan. In addition, a separate study of artificial grass pitches indicated a need for additional senior provision in the Dover urban area (equivalent to one third of an AGP). If a new secure community use AGP is provided that may have an impact on the demand for grass pitches.

## 4.2 Rugby

### National Context

**4.44** The form of rugby played in Dover District is governed by the Rugby Football Union (RFU). The RFU Strategic Plan 2012-2017 defines five key national objectives for the game.

- Communicating effectively with stakeholders to create a modern brand
- Increasing revenue for the game
- Rugby for everyone, including a minimum yearly £27m direct and indirect investment in grassroots rugby
- Securing international success
- Delivering the most inspiring Rugby World Cup ever

**4.45** Details of achievements against these objectives during the first year of the plan are given in the RFU annual report for 2012/13. The organisation is working towards hosting the Rugby World Cup, which should inspire many players to take up or return to the sport. A good playing experience and modern facilities are essential to retain participants; consequently a great deal of time and finance is being invested into grassroots clubs. The RFU Community Game Board is working to recruit and develop high quality coaches, referees, medics and volunteers.

**4.46** In the lead up to the 2015 Rugby World Cup the RFU has committed an investment of £10m to create £25m worth of improvements in club equipment and facilities benefiting over 500 clubs nationwide. £3.25m of the funding is coming from Sport England (under the Whole Sport Plan for Rugby) and the remaining £6.65m is being provided by the RFU via ticket sales etc. Projects will range from new kit and equipment to clubhouses, changing rooms and floodlights to all-weather pitches. Several pitch projects have been identified, legacy centres are being identified now (but applications have closed).

### County Context

**4.47** Kent RFU is developing an action plan for the county that will specify local priorities over the coming years. It is likely to be published during the consultation period for this document and the final version of this Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facility Strategy will take the Kent RFU's conclusions into account.

**4.48** Support for club development is available from the RFU development officer for Kent.

### Rugby clubs and teams in the Dover District (demand)

**4.49** There are four rugby clubs in the district; one each in the Dover and Deal sub-areas, and two located in the rural sub-area. First teams from Dover and Deal & Betteshanger clubs competed in the RFU league structure during the 2013/14 season. Other adult teams from those clubs, along with the Ash and Snowdown

Colliery adult teams compete in locally run Kent RFU leagues. All the clubs except Snowdown Colliery have junior teams. Dover RFC has fielded a ladies team in previous years, and is in the process of re-establishing this during 2014/15, in addition many of the mini teams are mixed gender. Dover and Ash clubs are Clubmark accredited, and Ash has also received the RFU Club Accreditation Award. Deal & Betteshanger is working towards Clubmark and has been nominated as an 'RFU Focus Club'.

**4.50** The precise number of teams fielded by each club varies from year to year, for example Ash ran two adult teams in 2012/13, only one in 2013/14, but is preparing to have two again in 2014/15. Year on year growth is being experienced in the Ash RFC juniors. A summary of the teams fielded by each club during the 2014/15 season is given below:

- **Dover RFC** had 4 regular senior teams and 3 occasional veterans' teams. There were also 5 junior teams (aged U13 to U17) and 7 mini team (aged U6 to U12). Dover men's 1<sup>st</sup> team compete in the RFU 'London 1 South' league (RFU level 6), which is the highest regional league.
- **Deal & Betteshanger RFC** had 3 senior, 3 junior and 4 mini teams. The 1<sup>st</sup> team competed in the RFU 'London 2 South East' league.
- **Ash RFC** had 1 senior, 3 junior and 7 mini teams
- **Snowdown Colliery RFC** had 1 senior team

### Assessment of pitches (supply)

**4.51** Each of the four clubs has a home ground, they also make use of pitches at the following schools; Astor College, Dover Christchurch Academy, Dover Boys Grammar and Sandwich Technology College. In most cases use of the school facilities is not secured by a long term agreement (as detailed in Table 4.3). Locations of the pitches are illustrated in Map 4.2.

**4.52** Most of the rugby pitches available for community use are of good quality. As previously described for football, pitch quality was assessed by means of site visits during 2011 and Sport England score sheets. The RFU supported the audit with professional inspections carried out by an expert from Twickenham, which were used to moderate the results. The quality rating was used to estimate pitch capacity as specified in Table 3.1 in the Assessment Method chapter.

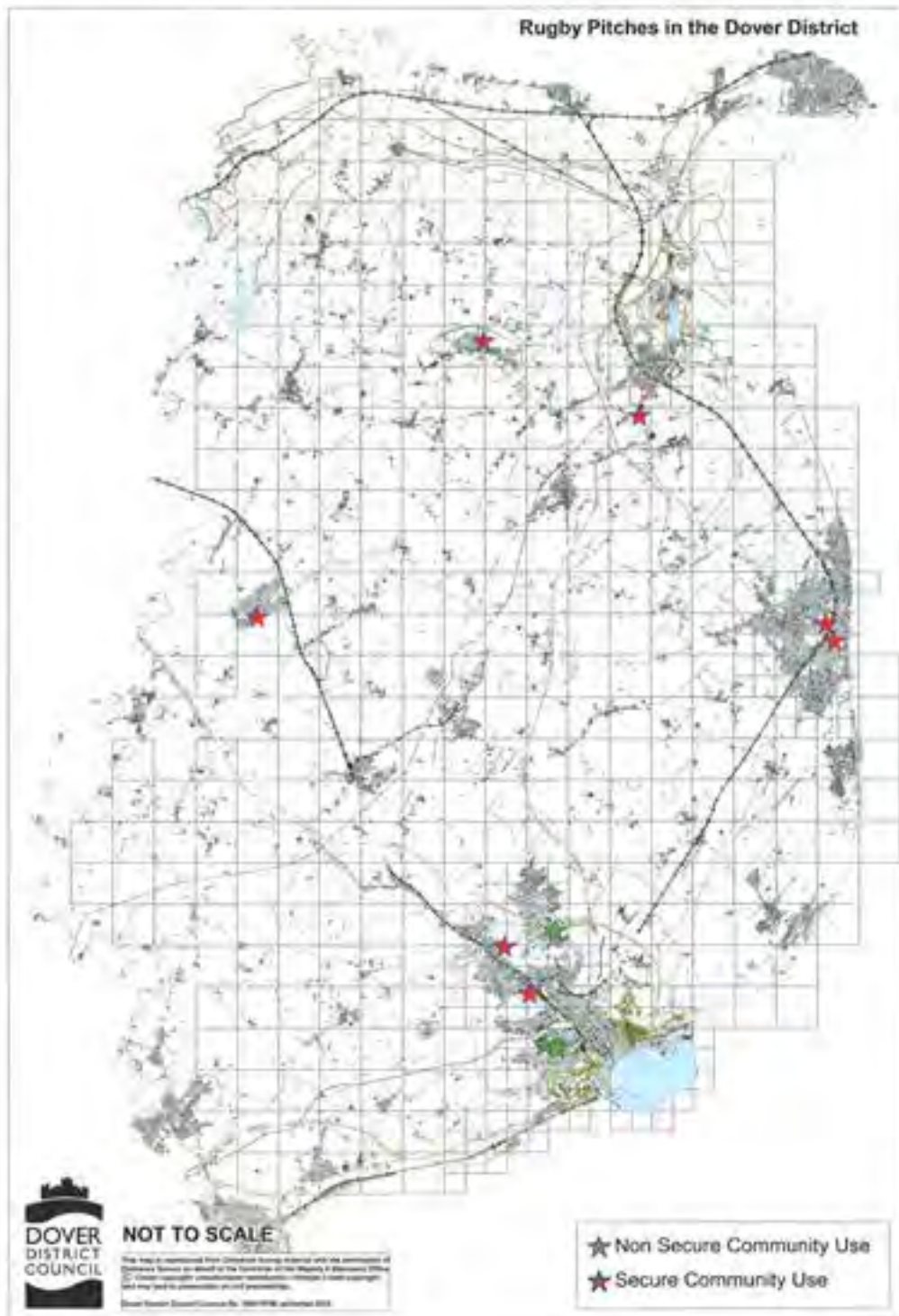
Table 4.3 The quantity, quality and accessibility of ruby pitches in the Dover District

Name/Location of Facility	Sub Area	Accessibility	Quantity Of Pitches	MAX CARRYING CAPACITY PER WEEK <sup>(1)</sup>	Average Pitch Quality Rating
Crabble Athletic Ground	Dover	Secure Community Use	2 Senior	4 games	Poor
Kearsney Camp Site	Dover	Secure Community Use	1 Senior	3 games	Good
Drill Field, Walmer	Deal	Secure Community Use	2 Senior	6 games	Good
Castle Community College	Deal	Secure Community Use	1 Junior	1 game	Good
Aylesham Welfare Recreation Ground	Rural	Secure Community Use	1 Senior <sup>(2)</sup>	3 games	Good
Ash Recreation Ground	Rural	Secure Community Use	2 Senior	6 games	Good
Sandwich Technology College	Rural	Secure Community Use	1 Senior	1 game	Good
Astor College	Dover	Non-Secure Community Use	1 Junior	1 game	Poor

Name/Location of Facility	Sub Area	Accessibility	Quantity Of Pitches	MAX CARRYING CAPACITY PER WEEK <sup>(1)</sup>	Average Pitch Quality Rating
Dover Christchurch Academy	Dover	Non-Secure Community Use	1 Small Senior (90m)	1 game	Average
Dover Grammar School for Boys	Dover	Non-Secure Community Use	1 Senior	1 game	Average

1. The maximum carrying capacity per week means the estimated number of games that a playing field can withstand in a week, this may include some mini or youth games
2. Shared use with American Football

Map 4.1 Location of rugby pitches in the Dover District



**4.53** Dover RFC is located in the Dover urban area at Crabble Athletic Ground. There are 2 senior pitches at the ground, which are very heavily used and are of poor quality. Floodlighting was installed on one pitch in 2009, partly funded by the RFU. The club also uses a pitch at Kearsney Campsite, 1 mile away from their main site.

**4.54** Deal & Betteshanger RFC's home ground is located in the Deal urban area at the Drill Field in Walmer. There are 2 senior pitches, which were rated as good in the audit but the restricted size of the site means that pitch run-offs fall below recommended levels. On Sundays the club also uses open space at the neighbouring primary school, Deal Parochial, for training their juniors.

**4.55** Ash RFC is based at Ash recreation ground, which also provides facilities for football, cricket and tennis. There are two rugby pitches; one of these becomes the cricket outfield during summer months. Demountable floodlighting was installed at one of the pitches in 2013/14, partially funded by the RFU.

**4.56** Snowdown Colliery RFC is based at the Welfare Recreation Ground in Aylesham. The Aylesham Welfare Leisure Centre was built in 2011 providing excellent changing rooms and social facilities.

### **Artificial Grass Pitches**

**4.57** The focus of this audit and analysis is provision of natural grass playing pitches, but Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) can also have a role in meeting the need for rugby facilities. Recent developments in AGP specifications and governing body regulations mean that dual use for football and rugby union has become possible. Pitches that meet RFU regulation 22 are suitable for rugby matches, but the only one in the district is the half size AGP at Aylesham Welfare Leisure Centre. Pitches with different specifications may be suitable for non-contact and non-lineout training. This applies to the full size community use pitches at Castle Community College and Sandwich Technology School.

**4.58** Sport England undertook a study of AGPs in the Dover District in 2011, which concluded that the District could support 1 to 2 primarily football focussed AGPs, preferably within the Dover Urban Area. Now it is possible to build dual use pitches and therefore the need for rugby pitches should also be considered if any such additional facility is provided.

### **Trends in participation**

**4.59** According to the latest Sport England Active People survey<sup>(9)</sup>, nationally 0.38% of the population aged 16+ was taking part in Rugby Union (including touch and tag forms of the game) at least once a week in 2012-13. The participation rate has decreased significantly from 0.56% recorded in 2007-08. In contrast, 'once a

month sport indicator for drop off sports' statistics for 18 year olds show that participation in rugby varies a little year to year, but has not changed significantly (roughly 2%).

**4.60** Participation rates vary from season to season, being especially affected by severe winters. According to the RFU's annual report for 2012/13 although there was a decrease indicated by the Active People Survey, organised participation and club membership increased during the period. Also, there were more college and university students playing the game. This was in spite of particularly bad winter weather.

**4.61** At the time the original audit was undertaken for this strategy (2010-2011) the 4 local clubs generated 43 teams. There were 15 senior teams, of which 1 was a women's team and 3 were veterans. During the 2013/14 season there were 38 teams in total, of which 12 were seniors, including the veterans. Two senior teams were lost from Snowdown Colliery RFC during that time and the ladies team at Dover folded (although the club aspires to run a ladies team again). Perhaps local participation is in decline, alternatively the changes may be due to yearly fluctuations, as discussed above. In particular, the number of junior teams changed by only 7% from 28 to 26.

**4.62** The RFU's Community Game Board has the role of promoting and growing the sport. Its core purpose is to strengthen clubs and grow the game in communities around them. The primary focus is retaining and developing current 15-a-side players. Simultaneously, different formats of the game are being promoted to attract and retain players. Smaller sided and less formal versions of rugby are increasing in popularity and status. For example the sport of 7-a-side rugby will be included within the 2016 Olympics, this is played by Dover Boys Grammar. Touch rugby is a social version of the game that is being promoted by the RFU and occurs locally, e.g. Dover RFC host the East Kent O2 Touch Rugby tournament for under 7s. Dover RFC also hosts Tag Rugby tournaments as part of the RFU's Emerging Schools programme.

## Analysis

**4.63** When the national participation rate in rugby union of 0.38% is applied to the 2012 mid-year population estimate of 91,900<sup>(10)</sup> residents in the Dover District aged 16+, it indicates that around 350 regular participants could be expected. In the 2014 season there were six hundred members of the four community clubs, of which 220 were aged 16 years +. In addition to club players, three schools in the district offer rugby to 16-18 year olds.

**4.64** Information gathered by the audit of clubs was analysed using the Sport England Playing Pitch model, as described in the assessment method of this document, to determine whether supply of natural grass rugby pitches for community use in the Dover District meets demand now and in the future. A summary of the

10 Estimate of population aged 16yrs + derived from KCC 2012 Mid Year Population Estimates. As reported in the July 2012 Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletin and on-line toolkit



results by sub area are shown in Table 4.4. The impacts and requirements of Touch rugby on pitch provision is minimal because it takes place in the summer, out of the main season, and may be played on informal kick about areas as well as formal sports pitches.

**4.65** Participation data for senior, junior and mini forms of rugby were amalgamated to calculate demand, and the analysis for rugby provision presents results for senior pitches only. This is because most participation occurs on senior pitches, using cones to define mini pitches as required (there are only two community use junior sized pitches in the district). The Sport England document 'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance 2013' advises that if mini teams play on half a senior pitch every week for half the time of a senior match then it may be appropriate to record the use as a quarter (0.25) of a match equivalent session per week. This enables the demand to be captured against the senior pitches while reflecting the limited impact on the quality and carrying capacity of the pitches compared to senior play.

**Table 4.4 Summary of the current and predicted level of rugby pitch provision required by sub-area, if no action is taken (based on 2011 audit)**

Sub-area	Type	Current situation	10-15 years
Whole District	Senior	Surplus of 1 pitch	Surplus of 1 pitch
Dover	Senior	Shortfall of 2 pitches	Shortfall of 3 pitches
Deal	Senior	Supply meets demand	Supply meets demand
Rural	Senior	Spare capacity of 1 pitch	Spare capacity of 1 pitch (1)

1. At the time of the analysis there were two rugby pitches at Aylesham Welfare Recreation Ground, one of these is now devoted to American football and the other is shared use between the two sports, Ash RFC continues to grow and is exploring options to secure additional pitch space

**4.66** The analysis outlined in Table 4.4 presumed an increase in participation of 0%, because the primary focus of RFU's Community Game Board is retaining and developing current 15-a-side players. The overall finding across the district was a predicted surplus of one pitch, but since the analysis was completed one of the pitches at Aylesham has been devoted to exclusive use by American football, therefore it is unlikely that any surplus exists. As the initial analysis results indicated shortfalls in the Dover sub-area, the model was used to explore the best way these could be remedied.

## Dover

**4.67** Dover RFC has secure access to 3 pitches and also uses the pitch at Dover Christchurch Academy as required (on a non-secure basis). Modelling indicated the Dover sub-area requires a total of 5 secure community-use pitches to meet demand, consequently there is a current shortfall of 2 pitches. The shortfall will increase to 3 pitches by 2021.

**4.68** The pitches at Crabble Athletic Ground were rated as 'poor' quality, so capacity could be increased by raising their standard. Even if this were achieved the shortfall would remain, currently it amounts to 1 pitch, increasing to 2 by 2021. The 3 non-secure community-use pitches on school sites are of average or poor quality. Even if these were improved and secured for community use (combined with improvements at Crabble) a shortfall of 1 pitch would remain now and into the future. Additionally, there are 2 dormant sites in the Dover sub-area that are suitable for rugby pitches, with a total capacity of four pitches.

### **Deal**

**4.69** Deal and Betteshanger RFC's home ground at the Drill Field contains 2 good quality pitches. The club also uses the junior sized pitch at Castle Community School and has access to an all-purpose grass space at the neighbouring primary school. Modelling indicated that the Deal sub-area requires a total of 2.25 secure community-use pitches to meet demand, so there is no shortfall in capacity.

### **Rural**

**4.70** The Ash and Snowdown Colliery clubs have secure access to a total of 3 pitches in their home grounds at Ash Recreation Ground and Aylesham Welfare Recreation Ground respectively. All are good quality. A pitch is also available for community use at Sandwich Technology College. At the time of the audit spare capacity of one pitch was identified in the rural area, but since that time one pitch in Aylesham has been converted to American football. So long as pitch quality remains good, modelling suggests that supply will match demand in the rural area.

### **Discussion**

**4.71** The district contains a thriving rugby club in each sub-area and there is an adequate supply of good quality rugby pitches for community use in two of the three sub-areas. The strongest finding arising from the modelling of natural grass pitch provision is a shortfall of provision in the Dover sub-area. The results of this analysis should be considered in the context of a previous study of Artificial Grass Pitches, which indicated a need for additional provision in the Dover urban area. If a new AGP comes forward it should be designed to accommodate both football and rugby.

**4.72** Dover RFC is the largest club in the district. Currently it maintains pitches at two separate sites, and two of the pitches are of poor quality due to overuse. The club aspires to consolidating its operations on a single site, having a home ground that contains sufficient pitches in one place with a club house. This would improve opportunities for sponsorship and income from social activities, thus aiding sustainability of the club. Therefore a long term aim specified by the action plan in Chapter 6 is to find a new site for the club. In the short to medium term, if a project to provide a dual use full size AGP in the Dover sub-area came forward, that would accommodate some of the unmet demand for rugby pitches. The RFU advises that this type of pitch would be particularly useful for attracting events such as regional festivals.

**4.73** Whilst there is not a significant shortfall in capacity in the Deal sub-area, neither is there spare capacity. The pitches at Deal and Betteshanger RFC's home ground have a good quality rating but both pitches are 5 metres short of the minimum size for rugby and the safety margins are inadequate. For the purposes of resilience these issues should be addressed, or in the longer term perhaps an alternative site considered. The audit did not identify any further opportunities for secure community use of full sized rugby pitches at school sites and there was only 1 dormant site suitable for rugby in the Deal sub-area. Another issue for the club is that as membership increases the club is outgrowing its ancillary facilities.

**4.74** Pitch provision in the rural sub-area meets demand and the quality is good. So long as the quality can be maintained, the model predicted no additional need for pitches during the plan period. The main issue in the rural sub-area relates to ancillary facilities, for example limited changing facilities at Ash RFC mean that the club is struggling to accommodate growing numbers of participants.

**4.75** The Sport England playing pitch model provides an objective indication of shortfalls and surpluses in natural grass pitch provision for rugby, both now and in the future. The results must be interpreted with care because, as with any model, the output is only as good as the data entered. Current participation rates and pitch quality were assessed as accurately as possible, but parameters for future population levels and participation rates may only be predicted. The number of pitches in the district devoted to rugby has fallen since the 2011 audit, so it is unlikely that the surplus provision exists now and if participation increases then a deficit may arise overall.

### 4.3 Cricket

#### National Context

**4.76** Cricket is governed by the English Cricket Board (ECB). The organisation's current strategic plan 'Champion Counties', dated 2014-2017, encompasses all levels of the game from global sporting events to grass roots involvement. Actions will be delivered using local partnerships, which were developed under previous strategies. A major priority is identified as consolidating the gains in participation that occurred between 2005 and 2012. Participation targets will be achieved by retaining more players, who will take part more frequently. Four key themes, or 'pillars', are set out, the most relevant to local pitch provision being:

'Engaging participants through the maintenance of existing facilities, supporting club/school links, supporting volunteers and expanding women's and disabilities cricket.'

**4.77** In 2012 the ECB published its 'National Club Strategy', which focuses on supporting a healthy network of clubs to build a sustainable future for the game. A comprehensive review of clubs highlighted several major issues, including economic

sustainability and lack of growth due to poor access to, and quality of, club facilities. The ECB will work with partners to support the needs of clubs, within available resources.

**4.78** The strategic plan 'Champion Counties' describes several funding programmes for cricket at all levels, including an interest-free loan fund of £10 million for community clubs. This will be distributed via the Cricket Foundation, in conjunction with county boards.

### **County Context**

**4.79** In this county the Kent Cricket Board (KCB) manages recreational cricket from its grass root foundations through to the interface with the first class game. Current priorities for Kent are set out in the KCB document 'The Strategy for Cricket in Kent 2012-2015'. The overarching target is to create long-term sustainability for Cricket in Kent. One of the specific objectives is to support clubs to become thriving hubs within their community through the following actions:

- Awareness of Environment
- Encourage a family friendly environment
- Quality Grounds
- Provide and access resources

**4.80** The 2014 National Player Survey of cricket participants carried out by ECB included more than 2,000 respondents from Kent. It revealed that in Kent the spirit of the game is the most important factor for participants, closely followed in equal second place by pitch and umpire quality. A quarter of the respondents from Kent were not satisfied with pitch quality.

**4.81** As well as the need for traditional cricket grounds, KCB's strategy also recognises the contribution of indoor facilities to supporting all year round cricket and encourages the use of alternative cricket formats to attract the widest spectrum of people.

### **Cricket clubs and teams in the Dover District (demand)**

**4.82** In 2014 there are 18 active cricket clubs in the district, generating 78 teams. The teams may be summarised as follows:

- 50 senior outdoor teams
- 17 junior teams
- 11 indoor teams

**4.83** The clubs vary in character; some contain one or two adult teams participating purely in friendly matches, such as Alkham Cricket Club. In contrast there are some large clubs that contain multiple teams of various types. For example in 2014 Nonington Cricket Club is generating 15 teams in total (6 adult and 9 junior) almost all of which compete in leagues.

**4.84** In 2013 Sandwich Town first team was promoted to the premier division of the Kent Cricket League. Dover District teams compete in various divisions of the Kent Cricket League as well as the Thanet League (Sunday adult and Sunday junior), Saxon Shore (junior), Lords East Kent League (senior) and the Kent Village League (senior). The indoor teams compete in the Dover and District Indoor League, based at facilities in the county cricket grounds in Canterbury, except that Tilmanstone play at Folkestone and Sandwich Town play in Thanet at the Marlowe Academy.

**4.85** Most local clubs are affiliated to the Dover District Development Group, which is supported by KCB. The following clubs have achieved Clubmark: Betteshanger Colliery Welfare, Nonington, Sandwich Town and Walmer. Other clubs, including Deal Victoria and Barnes Close and St Margarets are working towards Clubmark. In addition, Betteshanger Colliery Welfare, Nonington and Sandwich Town have achieved Focus club status from the KCB. Focus Clubs are selected on the basis that:

- They are identified as a key deliverer within the County Cricket Board Strategic Development Plan.
- They are committed to delivery of junior development programmes and/or development activities with specific target groups (disability, women/girls, and ethnic minorities).
- They are able to access and utilise ECB, County Cricket Board and local development resources to support the delivery of their club development plan.

**4.86** Data collected during the 2011 audit showed that several of the clubs' junior sides were mixed, but no women's teams were recorded within the clubs during 2014, but it is not uncommon for women to play in men's teams. However, Sir Roger Manwood and Sandwich Technology schools have girls' cricket teams, which compete in Lady Taverners competitions. KCB has an aspiration to run a district junior team for women building on the existing school participation. Disability cricket is mainly organised across larger scale areas than individual districts, with the most local activity occurring in Thanet, at Margate Cricket Club.

### **Assessment of pitches (supply)**

**4.87** In most cases the clubs manage their own pitches themselves, although Dover Cosmopolitans play at the Tilmanstone Welfare and Nonington grounds. The larger clubs require more than one pitch, for example Sandwich Town maintains two pitches and also uses local school facilities. Nonington plays some club matches at Wingham Recreation Ground.

**4.88** The 2011 audit examined 22 secure community use cricket pitches, including three pitches at school sites. Several private and dormant sites were also identified. Table 4.5 provides details of the 19 cricket pitches that are still in use during 2014 (some pitches have become dormant in the meantime). The quality ratings and carrying capacities presented adhere to guidelines recently provided by the ECB.

The level of use a cricket pitch can accommodate is primarily determined by the number and quality of strips within the square; usually there are between 8 and 15 strips per square. The locations of the active cricket pitches are shown on Map 4.3.

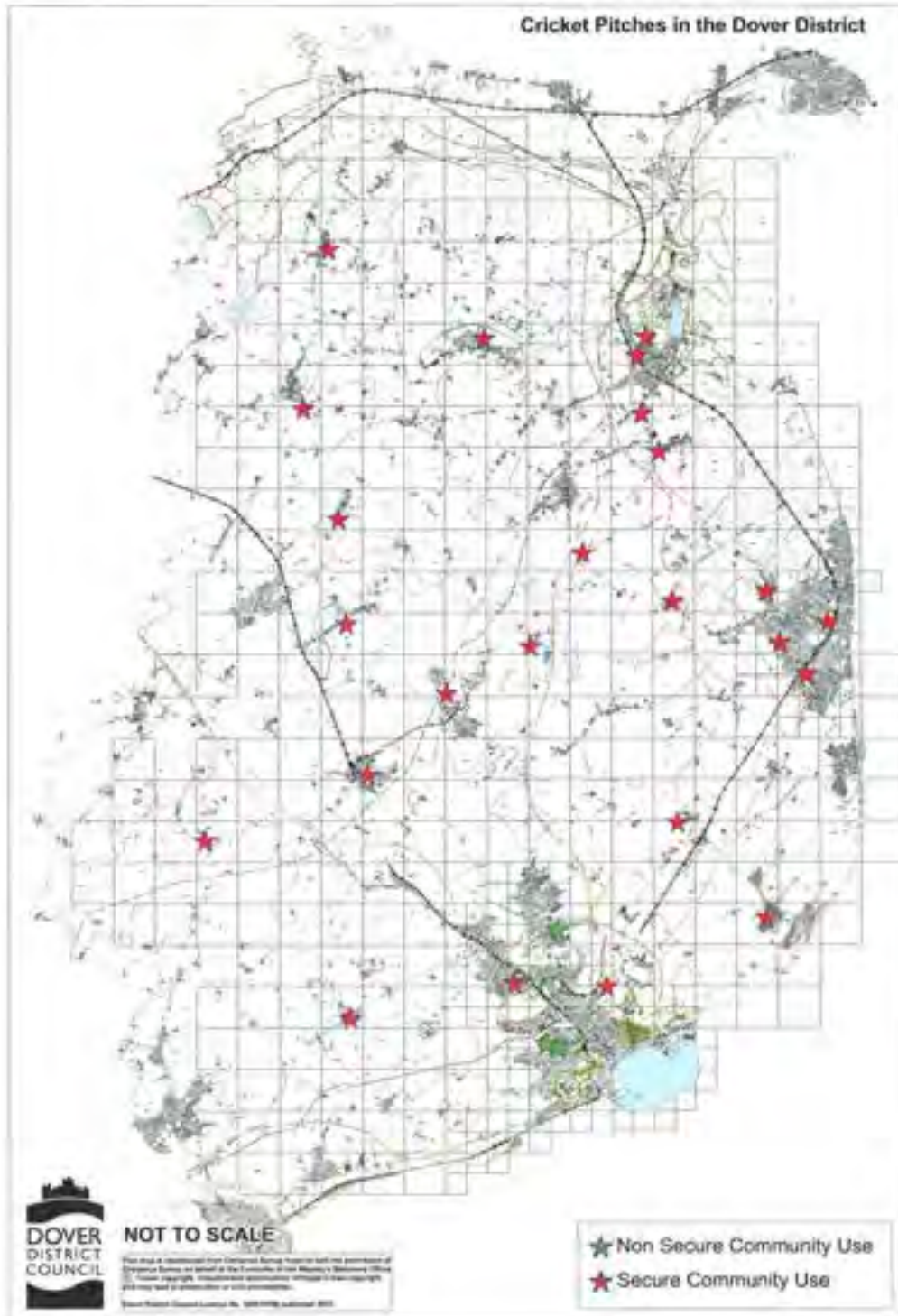
Table 4.5 The Quantity, Quality and Accessibility of Cricket Pitches in the Dover District

NAME/LOCATION of FACILITY	SUB AREA	ACCESSIBILITY	PITCH QUALITY RATING	MAX CARRY CAPACITY PER STRIP PER SEASON
Alkham Cricket Ground	Dover	Secure Community Use	POOR	2 Games
Dover Christchurch Academy	Dover	Non-Secure Community Use	POOR	1 Game
East Langdon Cricket Ground	Dover	Secure Community Use	AVERAGE	3 Games
King George V Playing Field, St Margarets	Dover	Secure Community Use	AVERAGE	3 Games
Betteshanger Sports Ground, Deal	Deal	Secure Community Use	AVERAGE	3 Games
Deal Victoria & Barns Close Cricket Ground, Walmer	Deal	Secure Community Use	AVERAGE	3 Games
Hull Park Sports Ground, Sholden	Deal	Secure Community Use	AVERAGE	3 Games
Ash Recreation Ground	Rural	Secure Community Use	AVERAGE	3 Games
Gazen Salts Recreation Ground, Sandwich	Rural	Secure Community Use	AVERAGE	3 Games
Goodnestone Park Cricket Ground	Rural	Secure Community Use	AVERAGE	3 Games
Nonington Cricket Ground	Rural	Secure Community Use	AVERAGE	3 Games
Shepherdswell Recreation Ground	Rural	Secure Community Use	AVERAGE	2 Games

NAME/LOCATION of FACILITY	SUB AREA	ACCESSIBILITY	PITCH QUALITY RATING	MAX CARRY CAPACITY PER STRIP PER SEASON
Sir Roger Manwoods School, Sandwich	Rural	Secure Community Use	AVERAGE	1 Game
The Butts, Sandwich	Rural	Secure Community Use	GOOD	5 Games
Tilmanstone Ravens Cricket Ground	Rural	Secure Community Use	AVERAGE	3 Games
Tilmanstone Welfare Ground, Eythorne	Rural	Secure Community Use	AVERAGE	3 Games
Updown, Northbourne Road, Eastry	Rural	Secure Community Use	AVERAGE	3 Games
Wingham Recreation Ground	Rural	Secure Community Use	AVERAGE	3 Games
Worth Cricket Ground	Rural	Secure Community Use	AVERAGE	3 Games



Map 4.2 Location of cricket pitches in the Dover District



**4.89** The Alkham Cricket Ground is highly valued by local participants. The rating of poor given to that ground did not arise from a lack of maintenance, rather it was due to unchangeable factors at the site. Alkham Cricket Ground is located on a considerable slope; it would be inappropriate and unrealistic to consider levelling the site but this means the quality rating as defined by the model cannot be raised.

### Artificial Wickets

**4.90** The focus of this audit and analysis is provision of natural grass facilities that are suitable for competitive sport and artificial wickets are not used in competitive matches due to league regulations. However, they are helpful for youth teams and practise purposes because they provide an even, predictable bounce. Artificial wickets also offer the benefit of being useable in wet weather. It is not possible to take artificial wickets into account when using the Playing Pitch Model because demand data entered into the model is derived from the number of matches played by local teams.

**4.91** Artificial wickets identified in the 2011 audit as being available for public use are detailed in Table 4.6. Wickets are located at 6 sites that benefit from secure community use sites, and two further school sites that are available on a non-secure basis.

Table 4.6 The Quantity, Quality and Accessibility of Artificial Cricket Wickets in the Dover District

NAME/LOCATION of FACILITY	SUB AREA	ACCESSIBILITY	QUALITY RATING
Dover Grammar School for Boys	Dover	Non-Secure Community Use	GOOD
Deal Victoria & Barns Close Cricket Ground	Deal	Secure Community Use	GOOD
Hull Park Sports Ground	Deal	Secure Community Use	GOOD
Castle Community School	Deal	Secure Community Use	GOOD
Tilmanstone Welfare Ground, Eythorne	Rural	Secure Community Use	GOOD
Sandwich Technology School	Rural	Secure Community Use	GOOD
Sir Roger Manwood's School, Sandwich	Rural	Non-Secure Community Use	GOOD
The Butts, Sandwich	Rural	Secure Community Use	GOOD

## Trends in participation

**4.92** According to the latest Sport England Active People survey<sup>(11)</sup>, nationally 0.44% of the population aged 16+ was taking part in cricket at least once a week in 2012-13. The participation rate has decreased significantly from 0.48% recorded in 2007/08, however a participation rate of 0.51% was recorded in 2010/11. The ECB's strategic plan 'Champion Counties' emphasises the need to build on the excellent growth in cricket participation that occurred across the country up to 2011, and suggests that over the last couple of years grass roots cricket has been negatively affected by very poor weather. Another possible explanation for the recent dip in participation is that the London Olympics did not feature this sport.

**4.93** On a positive note, cricket remains a popular sport in Kent; according to the KCB it has the second highest level of cricket participation in the country with 67,000 people taking part regularly. Also, according to ECB's 'National Club Strategy 2012' although clubs experience difficulties in recruiting and retaining adult players, record numbers of juniors are coming into the game.

**4.94** The number of cricket teams in this district varies between seasons, particularly in the mini (under 9 years) category. However, a long-term trend may be discerned; small clubs that contain one or two adult teams may struggle to continue, while clubs with a healthy youth section appear to be stable or growing. Between the original audit in 2011 and 2014 two clubs folded, and the total number of outdoor teams fell by just over 16% (80 falling to 67). Most of the loss was due to a reduction in senior teams (60 falling to 50). The 2011 audit did not record the number of indoor teams that existed at that time.

**4.95** As with football and rugby, different playing opportunities for all ages and abilities are now available. For example Kwik Cricket is designed for juniors and uses a soft ball. Twenty20 cricket is a short and lively form of the game, which lasts for around three hours. It is the most popular form of cricket in terms of spectators, but participation rates remain low with the majority of matches played in the district on a casual basis. Walmer and Sandwich Town Cricket Clubs participated in a competitive county Twenty20 competition within this district during 2013 and 2014.

**4.96** These forms of the game can attract new players, also indoor cricket helps to retain all year round participation. The KCB's current strategy commits to promoting such formats and emphasises the importance of developing doorstep clubs for engaging school age players. If such initiatives are successful this may increase the need for pitches locally.

## Analysis

**4.97** When the national participation rate in cricket of 0.44% is applied to the 2012 mid-year population estimate of 91,900<sup>(12)</sup> residents in the Dover District aged 16+, it indicates that around 400 regular participants could be expected. In the 2014 season there are 50 active senior outdoor teams, i.e. 550 team members. In addition to the adult teams, Sandwich Town runs an under 18 team and participation takes place in at least three secondary schools. Some cricketers play for more than one team, so the number of active individuals is likely to be somewhat lower than a simple estimate obtained from the number of teams. Even so, there appears to be a healthy participation level in this district compared to the national rate.

**4.98** Information gathered by the 2011 audit was analysed using the Sport England Playing Pitch model, as described in the assessment method of this document, to determine whether supply of cricket pitches in the Dover District meets demand now and in the future. A summary of the results by sub area are shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Summary of the current and predicted level of cricket pitch provision required by sub-area

Sub-area	Current situation	10-15yrs
District wide	Surplus of 1 pitch	Shortfall of 1 pitch
Dover	Surplus of 1 pitch	Supply meets demand
Deal	Shortfall of 2 pitches	Shortfall of 2 pitches
Rural	Supply meets demand	Supply meets demand

**4.99** The analysis outlined in Table 4.7 presumed an increase in participation of 0%, reflecting the ECB current objective of retaining participants. The overall finding across the district was an initial surplus of one pitch, developing into a shortfall of one pitch in 10 to 15 years.

**4.100** Since the analysis was completed three cricket pitches have become dormant. The DDC owned facility at the Danes in the Dover sub-area, which was rated as poor, is now used exclusively for football. Two of the clubs covered by the 2011 audit are no longer active, resulting in the loss of another pitch in the Dover sub-area (at River Recreation Ground, which is still used for various sports) and one in the rural sub-area (at Almonry Meadow in Northbourne, which functions as a recreation ground). The total maximum carrying capacity of cricket pitches in the district has fallen by 15% since 2011. Given that both the supply and demand have fallen by a similar proportion, it is likely that results of the analysis are still valid overall.

**4.101** Many more cricket clubs are active in the rural part of the district than the main urban areas of Dover and Deal. Due to the way the Playing Pitch Model is designed, the demand identified in Table 4.7 is based on -club locations, rather than

12 Estimate of population aged 16yrs + derived from KCC 2012 Mid Year Population Estimates. As reported in the July 2012 Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletin and on-line toolkit

participants' home locations. Analysis of anonymised membership data indicated that active cricketers live across the district in a fairly even distribution, so participants must be travelling out of the urban areas to play at their club of choice. In addition, at the time of the audit, one of the Deal cricket teams was forced to play in the rural sub-area due to a lack of capacity in the town (and Dover Cosmopolitans now play outside Dover). For these reasons patterns of participation do not neatly follow the sub-areas as defined for football, and breaking the analysis down by sub-area may not accurately identify areas of need.

**4.102** Results of the analysis are best considered in a holistic manner across the district; there may be spare capacity currently, but a shortfall of one cricket pitch will be created by planned housing development and it is unlikely this additional need could be met through improvements to cricket grounds that are in use currently. The need for additional cricket capacity is most intense in the urban areas of Dover and Deal.

## Discussion

**4.103** Adult cricket participation in the Dover District appears high compared to the national rate and across the district there is adequate (or possibly even surplus capacity) of cricket pitches at present. In the rural sub-area supply of pitches is expected to meet demand for the foreseeable future, and in most cases the pitch quality is already good. The number of cricket clubs and adult outdoor teams has fallen in recent years and there is a trend towards fewer clubs with more teams per club. Where pitch supply and quality are good the highest priority is likely to be improvements in ancillary facilities, because up-to-date changing and social facilities are crucial to support participation in large clubs, which need to attract players and volunteers.

**4.104** A shortfall of one cricket pitch is likely to develop in the coming years, due to need arising from planned housing development. Increased community use of school facilities should be investigated as a means of meeting the additional need, especially where there is a need for 'pay and play' use. Given that the greatest need occurs in the Dover and Deal sub-areas, consideration should be given to the possibility of re-opening a dormant site in these parts of the district. Such a project would only be successful if a cricket club is willing to undertake management of the site, because maintaining a wicket requires intensive and specialised care.

**4.105** The focus of this strategy is provision of outdoor sports facilities, but in the case of cricket consideration should be given to the role of indoor forms of the game. Hardball indoor cricket offers the opportunity for players to keep their fitness and skill levels up through the winter months. Currently there are no facilities in the district suitable for indoor cricket league games and ten indoor teams attached to local clubs play in neighbouring districts. This version of the game may be played in traditional sports halls that are equipped with adequate lighting. Provision of indoor facilities combined with sports development programmes could help to reinvigorate cricket in Dover town, where no outdoor pitches exist at the moment.

## 4.4 American Football

### National and Local Context

**4.106** American Football was introduced to the UK relatively recently and the national participation rate is lower than for the other sports discussed in this strategy. There are three divisions of national leagues featuring 50 senior teams and a further 58 teams are playing youth (14 to 17 year olds), junior (17 to 19 year olds) and flag (a non-contact 5-a-side version of American football). Participation rates for this sport are recorded by the once a month Active People data set of sports that are not funded by Sport England; during 2012/13 an estimated 0.05% of the population aged 16+ took part, equating to 23,000 participants in England. Participation is strongest in the further education sector; the British Universities American Football League boasts more than 60 teams, comprising more than 3,500 players and coaches.

**4.107** The national governing body is the British American Football Association (BAFA), which is responsible for regulatory, competition, performance and development aspects of the game. Activities include promotion of the game to people of all ages, background and abilities, and the provision of opportunities for their engagement and development. According to BAFA's current strategy<sup>(13)</sup> their priority action is to grow participation and membership. BAFA has approximately 8,500 members across players, coaches, officials and volunteers, but the organisation aspires to increase this to a figure approaching the Sport England estimate of participants in this sport.

### Clubs and Pitches (demand and supply)

**4.108** East Kent Mavericks home ground is at Aylesham Welfare Leisure Centre. The club has an adult and a junior team. In 2014 the adult team joined the South Division of the BAFA National Leagues Premier Conference. Membership of the East Kent Mavericks is increasing; in 2014 there are 85 players and 12 coaches / support team, while in 2011 the total active membership was 80. The members mostly live in east Kent, although participants come from as far afield as Croydon.

**4.109** American football teams from Canterbury Christ Church University and the University of Kent also make use of the grass pitches at Aylesham, although they only play around 5 home games each. The University of Kent team trains on campus and Canterbury Christ Church University trains on the AGP at Aylesham. Membership of the university clubs varies from year to year.

**4.110** Two pitches at Aylesham Welfare Leisure Centre are used for American football. One is dedicated to the sport, the other pitch has shared use. Snowdown Colliery Welfare Rugby Club play their league matches on that pitch until mid-January, it then has a 3-month recovery period before the American Football season that runs from mid-April until the end of July.

13 'From School Yard to Super Bowl 2013 and Beyond'. British American Football Association (undated)

**4.111** The shared use pitch is of good quality, while the dedicated pitch does not meet run-off and length requirements and has a less even surface. East Kent Mavericks play on the shared use pitch and the university teams use the dedicated pitch.

### **Discussion**

**4.112** In this district participation in American football is well above the national average, although many of the participants commute into the district to play. There are only two further American football clubs in Kent, in addition to those that play at the Aylesham Welfare Leisure Centre. They have home grounds in Maidstone and Orpington.

**4.113** BAFA's strategy states that participants often have to play on 'community pitches adapted from other sports and often with inappropriate markings and changing facilities'. Aylesham Welfare Leisure Centre provides two American football pitches, one of which is dedicated to the sport, along with recently built changing facilities and as a result three out of five clubs in the county choose to play there. Therefore even though one of the pitches is less than ideal, no actions are required at this time.

## **4.5 Hockey**

### **National and County Context**

**4.114** England Hockey is the national governing body that sets a strategic direction for field hockey, it also co-ordinates the competition structure and development of elite players. Core objectives are set out in the document 'A nation where hockey matters, Business and brand strategy 2013-17':

1. Grow participation
2. Deliver international success
3. Raise the profile of the sport
4. Enhance infrastructure
5. Be a strong and respectful governing body

**4.115** Elements of the strategy that are most relevant to grass roots hockey clubs include the objectives of growing participation and enhancing infrastructure. Growth will be achieved through provision of formal and informal playing opportunities for adults and young people. In the document, England Hockey commits to improving the playing experience through enhancements to facilities, coaching, officiating and the support offered to clubs, volunteers and stakeholders. The focus of England Hockey's capital investment programme is the refurbishment of existing artificial pitches and the development of new pitches; it will work closely with key national and local agencies to support investment that protects existing facilities and secure new opportunities where there is demand for hockey.

**4.116** The Southern Counties Hockey Association administers leagues that operate across London and seven surrounding counties. It also runs the junior talent development pathway across relevant areas. In addition, as part of the national development team England Hockey employs a relationship manager with the remit of developing hockey in Kent, Sussex and Surrey.

**4.117** The Kent Hockey Association represents 37 clubs and numerous schools in the county. It administers Kent leagues and the junior talent pathway within the county. Grass roots hockey development is achieved utilising the club structure by offering playing, coaching and umpiring opportunities.

### **Hockey clubs and teams in the Dover District (demand)**

**4.118** There is one club in the Dover District; Deal Hockey Club. It runs three senior teams, two men's and one women's that compete in Kent leagues, and occasionally a sociable mixed team is formed for tours or competitions.

**4.119** Prior to the mid-1990s Deal Hockey Club played on grass pitches at Hull Park Sports Ground in Sholden, near Deal. Peak membership occurred in that era; the club had 4 men's, 2 ladies and 2 veteran's teams. Once it became routine for hockey matches to be played on artificial pitches the club began to compete on facilities in Dover town. Training takes place at various locations but Deal Hockey Club has always used the club house at Hull Park for social events, which is shared with the cricket club.

**4.120** Little or no indoor hockey is played in the district by adults, but many primary schools use their playgrounds or sports halls for the 'Quicksticks' version of the game.

### **Assessment of pitches (supply)**

**4.121** The assessment considers only artificial grass pitches because all league, national and international hockey matches take place on AGPs. The rules of hockey have evolved to take account of the more precise ball control and faster passing that are possible on artificial surfaces. Hockey clubs now avoid using grass pitches, even for training.

**4.122** Specialist AGPs that are irrigated with water can provide the best performance for international matches, but are only suitable for hockey. Most sand filled or dressed artificial pitches that provide a good surface for hockey may also be used for recreational football<sup>(14)</sup>. Although third generation AGPs with rubber crumb filling do not generally meet the performance requirements for hockey, some are acceptable for training purposes (as detailed in England Hockey's 'Long Pile Turf Pitch Policy').

**4.123** Competitive hockey must be played on a full size pitch (100m x 60m). The only full sized artificial pitch in Dover District with a suitable construction is the sand based facility at the Duke of York Royal Military School, in Dover town. That pitch

14 Selecting the Right Artificial Surface for Hockey, Football, Rugby League and Rugby Union, published by Sport England 2010



is used for matches by Deal Hockey Club on an informal basis; there is no secure community-use agreement in place. As shown in Table 4.8, all the other publicly accessible pitches are of rubber crumb type. Deal Hockey club occasionally uses the full sized 3G pitch at Castle Community College in Deal for recreational hockey.

Table 4.8 The quantity, quality and accessibility of publicly accessible artificial pitches in the Dover District

Name & Location	Surface Type	Pitch Size	Floodlit	Year Built	Sub Area	Accessibility	Suitability for Competitive Hockey
Duke of York Royal Military School, Dover	Sand Based	full size	Yes	1994	Dover	Non Secure Community Use	Yes
Sir Roger Manwoods School, Sandwich	Sand Based	half size	No	1999	Rural	Private Use by School only	No
Dover College Sports Ground, Dover	Sand Based	half size	No	1997 (refurb in 2007)	Dover	Private Use by School only	No
Aylesham Leisure Centre, Aylesham	Rubber Crumb	half size	Yes	2010	Rural	Community Use, Pay & Play	No
Bay Point Club, Sandwich	Rubber Crumb	half size	Yes	1998 (refurb in 2006)	Rural	Community Use, Pay & Play	No
Sandwich Technology College, Sandwich	Rubber Crumb	full size	Yes	2009	Rural	Secure Community Use, on a School Site	No

Name & Location	Surface Type	Pitch Size	Floodlit	Year Built	Sub Area	Accessibility	Suitability for Competitive Hockey
Castle Community School, Deal	Rubber Crumb	full size	Yes	2006	Deal	Secure Community Use, on a School Site	No

**4.124** The artificial pitch at Dover Christchurch Academy is not listed in Table 4.8 because it reached the end of its useful life and is currently closed. The school plans to renovate this facility as a 3G pitch suitable for rugby and football. Half sized sand based pitches are located on two further school sites in the district, but these are not available for community use and are not floodlit.

### Trends in participation

**4.125** Hockey participation (age 16+) has not changed significantly at the national level over recent years, as evidenced by the Sport England Active People surveys. In 2006, 0.23% of adults in England played hockey once a week, while in 2013 the figure was 0.21%. Locally, the membership of Deal Hockey club has remained steady over the same period. Around half the members are fully paid up, the others pay and play. According to England Hockey, this membership ratio is typical.

**4.126** One of England Hockey's major objectives is to grow participation. The document 'A nation where hockey matters, Business and brand strategy 2013-17' describes how this will be achieved. Initiatives include working with educational establishments to improve pathways to club hockey, e.g. developing more relationships between clubs and schools. Also England Hockey has committed to developing more opportunities for over 40s to play hockey and working with clubs to increase the number of junior hockey sessions being provided. Effective projects include one-off tournaments or festivals.

**4.127** England Hockey has devised a programme of quicker or simplified versions of the game, which should also help to increase participation. Adults and young people playing informal hockey will be increased through provision of Quicksticks sessions on community sites. Quicksticks has already been successfully introduced to primary schools in the district, for example, an inter-school hockey festival in April 2014 attracted 120 participants. Rush Hockey is a mixed five-a-side version of the game with fewer rules, a larger ball and smaller goals that can be played on any surface, both indoors and out, which is popular at colleges and universities. Opportunities will also be provided specifically for women through the Back to Hockey programme.

### Analysis

**4.128** The 'Sport England Active People Survey 7' estimate that 0.21% of the adult population (16 years +) plays hockey once a week may be applied to the population of the Dover District aged 16 years and over (91,900<sup>(15)</sup>). This indicates that 193 regular participants may be expected locally, while Deal Hockey Club has a steady membership of around 70 members.

**4.129** Approximately half the members of Deal Hockey Club pay and play so they can participate on a more casual basis than full members, for example in the club's social mixed team. Also, some members are juniors although they play in the adult

15 Estimate of population aged 16 yrs+ derived from KCC 2012 Mid Year Population Estimates. As reported in the July 2012 Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletin

teams. Adult hockey participation is unlikely to occur outside recognised clubs due to the need for specialist pitches. However, regular hockey participation probably occurs amongst 16-18 year olds at the three schools with sand based pitches.

**4.130** As there is only one hockey club in the district, the analysis for this sport will not attempt to investigate variation between sub-areas of the district in terms of participation rates or provision of facilities. However, the apparent shortfall in participation should be investigated, so information was gathered on hockey clubs and members in neighbouring districts, as shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Hockey Clubs in East Kent

Name of Club	Home Ground	District	No of Teams	Total Membership 2013/14
Deal Hockey Club	Duke of York School, Dover	Dover	2 men 1 ladies	70
Folkestone Optimist Hockey Club <sup>(1)</sup>	Cheriton Road Sports Ground, Folkestone	Shepway	7 men 4 ladies 4 junior	260
Canterbury Hockey Club <sup>(2)</sup>	Polo Farm, nr Canterbury	Canterbury	10 men 5 ladies 6 junior	400
University of Kent Hockey Club	University of Kent, Canterbury	Canterbury	5 men 4 ladies	At least 99 <sup>(3)</sup>
Herne Bay Hockey Club	Herne Bay High School, Herne Bay	Canterbury	3 men 1 ladies	150
Cliftonville Hockey Club	St Lawrence College, Ramsgate	Thanet	4 men 3 ladies	100
Ashford Hockey Club	Ball Lane, Kennington	Ashford	8 men	300

Name of Club	Home Ground	District	No of Teams	Total Membership 2013/14
			4 ladies 5 junior	

1. Folkestone hockey club is accredited with the Hockey England 'Club First' kite mark
2. Canterbury hockey club is accredited with the Hockey England 'Club First' kite mark
3. Team and membership information was obtained from club websites and England Hockey, except that membership data was not available for the University of Kent Hockey Club so the figure was estimated based on the number of teams

**4.131** In order to make meaningful comparisons between the districts, the raw data on club membership numbers was converted into club hockey participation rates in the East Kent districts, as shown in Table 4.10.

**Table 4.10 Hockey Participation Rates in East Kent**

District	Total Hockey Club Membership	Population Aged 16+	Participation Rate
Canterbury	649	127,400	0.51%
Dover	70	91,900	0.08%
Thanet	100	109,880	0.09%
Shepway	260	89,600	0.29%
Ashford	300	95,280	0.31%
East Kent	1,379	514,060	0.27%

**4.132** Overall the club hockey participation rate in East Kent is slightly above the national average of 0.21%, but the rate varies considerably between districts. Participation in Canterbury is much higher than elsewhere, probably due to the presence of two universities in that district. Shepway and Ashford have similar participation rates, slightly above the national average, as measured by club membership. Dover and Thanet have similar, apparently low, participation rates. To determine whether this is due to higher numbers of Canterbury and Shepway residents participating in hockey, or due to hockey players commuting out of Dover and Thanet, it would be necessary to study (anonymised) club membership data.

## Discussion

**4.133** There is one community hockey club in the Dover District, which is typical for East Kent. Deal Hockey Club has retained a steady membership for more than five years, but the number of members is considerably lower than the national average participation rate. Hockey participation within this district was higher before artificial pitches became the norm; at that time the club ran twice as many teams.

**4.134** The apparently low hockey participation rate amongst adults in Dover District may be due either to fewer people than usual taking part in the sport, or because a substantial number of hockey players commute to clubs in neighbouring districts; the available data does not distinguish between these factors. It is interesting to note that hockey participation rates in Shepway, Ashford and Canterbury, as measured by club membership, are much higher than in Dover. Those districts benefit from specialist hockey pitches with secure community use, floodlighting and associated club houses, while Deal Hockey club has to compete and socialise at different locations. Further investigation would be required to identify whether there is sufficient latent demand to support the enhancement of existing facilities or creation of additional specialist facilities in this district, because in East Kent overall participation is slightly above the national average.

**4.135** Development of any project requiring capital investment would need to be driven by potential providers and/or clubs. In the first instance consideration should be given to formalising arrangements at the Duke of York's Royal Military School. Failing that, if a suitable potential site for a new pitch comes forward, further work should be undertaken to investigate whether combined school and community demand will be sufficient to support it. This strategy focuses on community participation rather than school sports, but the specialist requirements for hockey combined with high capital costs (around £700,000) mean that it is particularly important to consider all sources of demand.

**4.136** The most suitable location for any new facility is likely to be at a school, which would help to achieve England Hockey's objective of supporting transition of young participants from the school sport environment into a community club. Youth participation in community clubs is also identified by Hockey England's accreditation scheme as a crucial factor in long term sustainability of hockey clubs.

## 4.6 Tennis

### National Context

**4.137** The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), also known as British Tennis, is the national governing body for this sport across the three home countries. It is responsible for promoting tennis, supporting talented players and their coaches at the top of the sport and safeguarding the integrity of the game. The LTA has always had a strong relationship with clubs; there are more than 600,000 members of tennis

clubs across the UK<sup>(16)</sup>. Now an emerging priority is tennis in the community, the LTA Annual Review for 2013 introduced a new mission for the organisation, 'to get more people playing tennis more often'.

**4.138** 'A guide to Tennis in the Community' was published by the LTA in March 2014, featuring recent case studies of successful projects. Community park venues are ideal for attracting more people into tennis due to their welcoming environments and affordable courts. YouGov research established that the largest proportion of tennis participation takes place on public courts owned by local authorities, while the LTA's 2013 Annual Review recognises the importance of establishing partnerships, including building strong relationships with local authorities, as part of a joined up approach to tennis delivery.

**4.139** The Tennis Foundation is Great Britain's leading tennis charity. It works closely with the LTA (and other partners) to promote community participation in tennis as an inclusive and accessible sport. The main focus is to advance tennis in educational settings and for disabled people.

### **County Context**

**4.140** The Kent County Lawn Tennis Association deals with governance of the sport at a county level and also delivers coach education, club development and competition at this level. In September 2013 there were 43,000 tennis club members in the county.

**4.141** The LTA's Kent section is responsible for the development of tennis clubs, centres, schools and parks across the county, plus the London Boroughs of Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich and Lewisham. The Kent Tennis Board of Management has as its overarching objective 'to work together, as field force team and volunteers, to increase the level of tennis participation, and improve the playing standards across the County'.

**4.142** The County contains several tennis beacon sites, these are local authority facilities that provide access to affordable quality coaching programmes and competitive opportunities. Examples of beacon sites are the Hollybush Tennis Centre at Sevenoaks, South Hill Woods in Bromley, Greenwich Park Tennis Centre and Deal Indoor Tennis Centre. Opportunities for disability tennis include the wheelchair form of the game, which is promoted through the Kent Wheelchair Tennis Development Plan 2011-2020. The closest location to Dover District where regular wheelchair tennis sessions are supported is at Canterbury Indoor Tennis Centre.

### **Tennis clubs in the Dover District (demand)**

**4.143** In October 2014 there were six community tennis clubs in the District, located in Ash, River, St Margarets, Sandwich, Walmer and Wingham. The total club membership was 616, of which 492 are affiliated to the LTA (most of the non-affiliated



club members were attached to Ash Tennis Club). Adults comprise just under two thirds of the membership (343), and the split between male and female players within the clubs is approximately equal.

**4.144** National surveys indicate that most participation takes place on council owned facilities, but the demand from tennis participants who are neither LTA affiliated nor club members is difficult to quantify in this district. There is no pre-booking system at the District Council owned outdoor courts, so the only usage records arise from park keepers collecting payments from players on site. Given that the park keepers finish work at 6pm, any use after that time is un-recorded. Between April 2011 and March 2012 there were 133 payments for use of courts at Marke Wood, Connaught Park and Russell Gardens. All recorded use occurred between May and October.

**4.145** This strategy is focused on outdoor sports facilities in the district. However a significant proportion of tennis participation occurs at Deal Indoor Tennis Centre. In October 2014 there were nearly 400 members of the centre, alongside a junior coaching programme with over 120 players. This four court facility is a beacon site and holds the only tennis 'Clubmark' award in the district.

#### **Assessment of courts (supply)**

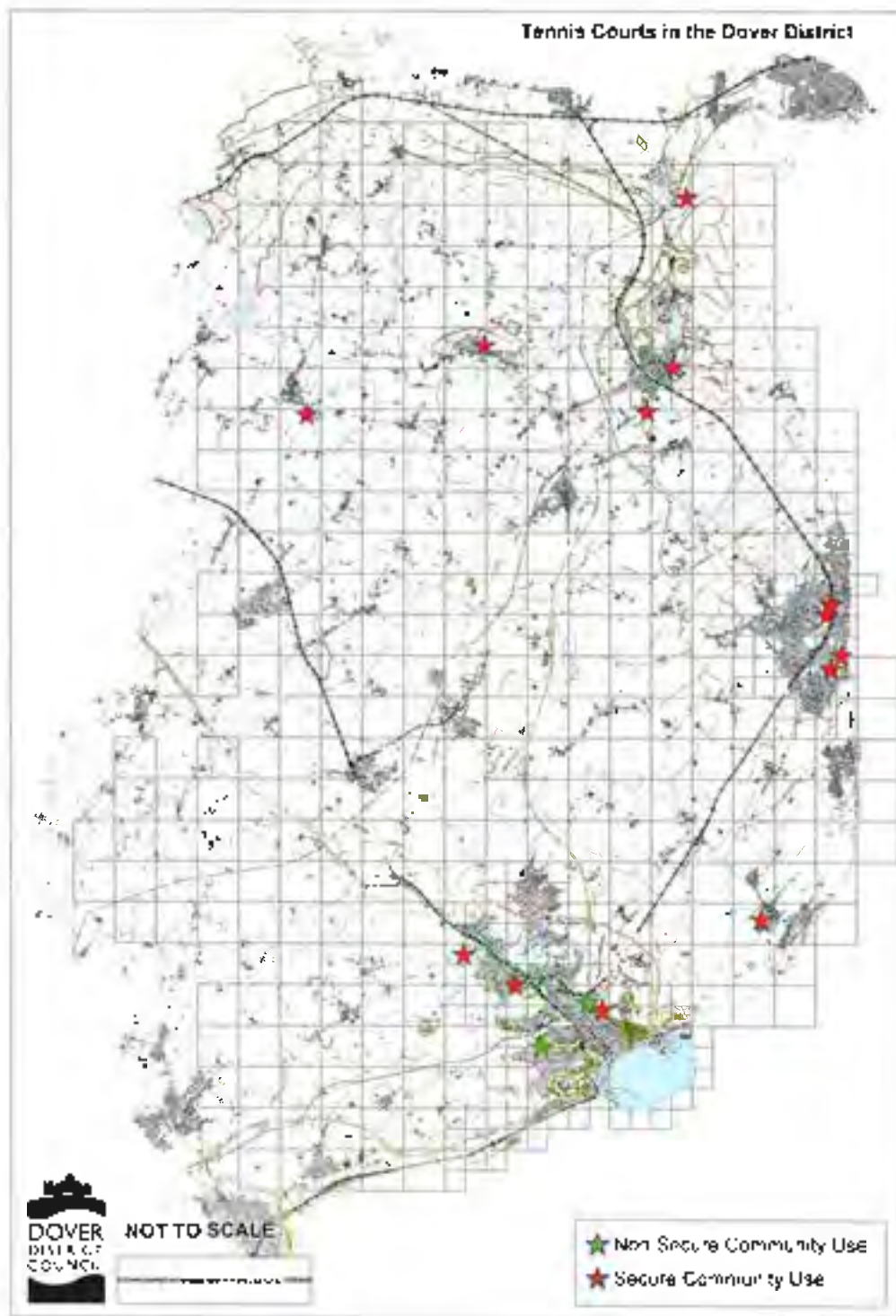
**4.146** Tennis courts were assessed by means of site visits. The Council also consulted with the owners/operators of tennis courts and with the tennis clubs that use the facilities. As shown in Table 4.11 and depicted in Map 4.4, there are 52 tennis courts in Dover District with secure community use. Of these 48 are outdoor facilities and 4 are located at the Deal Indoor Tennis Centre. An additional 11 courts on school sites are available for community groups to hire on a non-secure basis. Further to the sites listed in Table 4.11, the audit identified a further 43 tennis courts at schools that are reserved for private use by the schools only.

Table 4.11 Supply of Tennis Courts in the Dover District

Site Name	Sub Area	Quantity	Type	Flood Lit	Pitch Quality Rating	Accessibility
Connaught Park	Dover	2	Tarmac	No	Very Poor	Secure Community Use
Connaught Park	Dover	8	Grass	No	Very Poor	Secure Community Use
King George V, St Margaret's	Dover	2	Macadam / Acrylic	No	Average	Secure Community Use
River Recreation Ground	Dover	4	Grass	No	Average	Secure Community Use
Russell Gardens	Dover	4	Grass	No	Poor	Secure Community Use
Marke Wood Recreation Ground	Deal	4	Tarmac	No	Average	Secure Community Use
Victoria Park (beside Bowls Club)	Deal	3	Tarmac	No	Poor	Secure Community Use
Victoria Park (beside Tides Leisure Centre)	Deal	4	Indoor	Yes	Excellent	Secure Community Use
Walmer Lawn Tennis Club	Deal	2	Macadam / Acrylic	No	Excellent	Secure Community Use
Walmer Lawn Tennis Club	Deal	6	Grass	No	Excellent	Secure Community Use
Ash Recreation Ground	Rural	2	Macadam / Acrylic	No	Good	Secure Community Use
Bay Point, Sandwich	Rural	3	Macadam / Acrylic	Yes	Excellent	Secure Community Use

Site Name	Sub Area	Quantity	Type	Flood Lit	Pitch Quality Rating	Accessibility
Sandwich Technology College	Rural	3	Macadam / Acrylic	Yes	Excellent	Secure Community Use
Sandwich Tennis Club	Rural	3	Macadam / Acrylic	No	Good	Secure Community Use
Wingham Recreation Ground	Rural	2	Macadam / Acrylic	No	Good	Secure Community Use
Astor College	Dover	6	Tarmac	No	Poor	Non-Secure Community Use
St Edmunds School	Dover	2	Tarmac	No	Poor	Non-Secure Community Use
St Edmunds School	Dover	3	Macadam / Acrylic	No	Good	Non-Secure Community Use

Figure 4.2 Location of tennis courts in the Dover District



**4.147** The community use courts are provided by a variety of organisations. Several are District Council owned, some of which are operated by a non-profit social enterprise leisure provider, while others belong to parish councils, schools, tennis clubs and a commercial operator.

**4.148** Most of the tennis courts with secure community use are of good or excellent quality; however the courts at Connaught Park in Dover were rated as very poor, while the courts at Russell Gardens and the tarmac facility in Victoria Park were found to be poor. These courts are owned and operated by Dover District Council.

**4.149** Seven of the 53 secure community use courts are floodlit; 3 outdoors in the rural sub-area and also the 4 indoor courts at Deal. In addition, a recently built, floodlit MUGA at Aylesham Leisure Centre could be used for tennis if nets were installed.

### Trends in participation

**4.150** More than 2.5 million people play tennis every year, the majority only once or twice<sup>(17)</sup>. Across the UK around 750,000 adults play tennis at least once a week in the summer<sup>(18)</sup>, but the Active People Survey 7 revealed that only one third of these participants (275,000) play throughout the year. The once a week participation rate measured by the Active People Survey has fallen significantly from 1.18% in 2008 to 0.98% in 2013.

**4.151** The number of affiliated tennis clubs in this district has not changed since the initial audit in 2011, although an unaffiliated club has folded. Membership of Ash and Sandwich tennis clubs has increased significantly since 2011, but overall the number of community club members has fallen by about 40 in that time. On the other hand, membership of the Deal Indoor Tennis Centre has increased each year since it opened in 2011, therefore the total number of regular tennis participants appears to be rising.

**4.152** The LTA's British Tennis Participation Strategy 2013-2017 identifies that there is significant latent demand for tennis in the UK, from people who would like to play but perceive barriers to participation. The strategy sets a target of 80,000 additional adults playing once a week by 2017. Various initiatives have been developed to help achieve this objective, for example the LTA document 'A Guide to Tennis in the Community' describes how the introduction of electronic key fobs to control access and/or on-line booking systems can increase the use of publicly accessible tennis courts. For example, in Dorset 550 fobs were sold in less than a year and the courts were occupied over 75% of the time during July and August 2013. In Islington an on-line booking system introduced in 2012 has over 2,000 registered users. LTA sports development schemes such as mini tennis at primary schools and national campaigns like the Great British Tennis Weekend and National Mini Tennis Month are intended to instil a tennis habit early in life or increase the number of adults who play into the autumn or winter.

17 Annual Review 2013, LTA

18 British Tennis Participation Strategy 2013-2017, LTA

## Analysis

**4.153** When the Active People 7 national weekly participation rate is applied to KCC's estimate of district residents over the age of 16, the expected number of adult weekly tennis participants is calculated as 900. A locally derived estimate of 1,016 active adult tennis players may be obtained by adding the number of community tennis club members (616) to the membership of Deal Indoor Tennis Centre (400). However, according to the LTA, in December 2014 there were only 405 affiliated adults living in this district (and 258 juniors). Not all participants affiliate, but the large discrepancy between these two figures suggests that some tennis players are members of more than one club, for example an outdoor community club and Deal Indoor Tennis Centre. Another explanation could be that a significant proportion of Deal Indoor Tennis Centre members are travelling from outside the district to participate. This is likely because no equivalent facility exists in Thanet or Shepway, however post-code data was not available for members of the indoor tennis centre.

**4.154** As shown in Table 4.12 tennis participation is unevenly distributed through the district. In Deal and the rural sub area participation is above expected levels, but there is a substantial shortfall in the Dover sub area.

Table 4.12 Outdoor and indoor tennis participation in the Dover District

	Dover District	Dover Sub Area	Deal Sub Area	Rural Sub Area
Estimated population aged 16 years + in 2012 <sup>(1)</sup>	91,900	38,662	27,065	25,695
Estimated number of participants aged 16 years + (0.98%)	900	379	265	251
Total club membership 2014	1,016 (616)	59	601 (201) <sup>(2)</sup>	356
Difference between expected and actual	+92 (-284)	- 320	+ 336 (-64) <sup>(3)</sup>	+ 105

1. Estimate of population aged 16yrs + derived from KCC 2012 Mid Year Population Estimates. As reported in the July 2012 Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletin and on-line toolkit
2. The figures in brackets refer only to outdoor tennis participation, i.e. they exclude Deal Indoor Tennis centre
3. The figures in brackets refer only to outdoor tennis participation, i.e. they exclude Deal Indoor Tennis centre

**4.155** Table 4.12 shows two sets of results, one including the contribution to participation by members of the Deal Indoor Tennis Centre and one excluding that group of participants. Overall the recorded level of participation compares well with the national average, especially given this estimate cannot take into account non-affiliated tennis players outside the club structure who use district and parish council owned facilities. However, the number of affiliated tennis players resident in this district is low when scaled against the total number of affiliated players in the

county. According to the Kent County Lawn Tennis Association there were 43,000 tennis club members throughout Kent in September 2013. Kent County Council estimated the mid-2012 population for Kent as 1,480,200, while in the Dover District it was estimated as 111,800. If tennis club members were evenly distributed across the county, then approximately 3,250 would be expected in the Dover District.

**4.156** There is a wide range of tennis court types in the district, from recently created indoor facilities to grass courts with almost un-restricted access, no floodlighting and poor quality rating. In an attempt to quantify the contribution to total capacity made by different types of court, guidance from the LTA<sup>(19)</sup> regarding the capacity of various court types was applied to the raw data (as show in Table 4.11). On average, at good quality facilities, the following number of hours play are possible:

- Hard court, not floodlit - 7 hours/day
- Hard court, floodlit - 12 hours/day
- Indoor court - 14 hours/day

**4.157** Unfortunately the LTA does not provide guidance on the capacity of grass courts, which is more complex than for hard courts because they are vulnerable to wear. For example, Walmer Lawn Tennis club only allows members to use the grass courts for six months of the year, and during that time play before mid-day is discouraged. An average of 3.5 hours usage per day has therefore been assumed for grass tennis courts when calculating the results shown in Table 4.13.

**4.158** Tennis courts with non-secure community use at a school site were assumed to have a capacity of 0.25 times the figure stated by the LTA, because they are only available outside school hours. This is similar to the approach recommended by Sport England for assessing sports pitches on school sites.

Table 4.13 Estimated capacity of tennis courts compared with membership numbers

	Dover District	Dover Sub Area	Deal Sub Area	Rural Sub Area
Total club membership 2011	1016 (616)	59	601 (201) <sup>(1)</sup>	356
Number of courts	63 (59)	31	19 (15)	13
Theoretical number of court hours available per day	364 (308)	103	140 (84)	121
Number of hours available per day per club member	0.4 (0.5)	1.7	-0.2 (0.4)	0.3

19 <http://www.lta.org.uk/clubs-schools/Develop-Your-Facilities/Priority-projects/>

1. The figures in brackets refer only to outdoor tennis participation, i.e. they exclude Deal Indoor Tennis centre

**4.159** Results shown in Table 4.13 indicate that there is no relationship between the number of courts or estimated number of court hours available and the number of club members. The analysis does not take account of variation in quality because no guidance is available on that topic. However, it is interesting to note that there are more affiliated tennis club members per number of available court hours in the Deal and rural sub-areas, where most courts are good to excellent in quality, than in the Dover sub-areas, where most courts are below average in quality.

### Discussion

**4.160** A range of tennis court types is available for community use in the district and the number of club members appears to exceed the national average. The quality of tennis provision varies widely, and higher levels of participation are recorded in parts of the district where the better quality facilities are located. Almost 40% of the recorded participation occurs at Deal Indoor Tennis centre, some of which may arise from players resident in other districts. Improved understanding of the distribution of these users would be useful in identifying areas of the district where participation is below the expected level.

**4.161** Nationally, most tennis participation occurs at council owned courts but this type of participation could not be measured accurately at outdoor courts in the Dover District. Introduction of on-line booking systems and / or controlled access by key fob has proved effective at engaging the community in a variety of authorities, e.g. Bournemouth, Bromley and Poole. Such systems also bring the benefits of increased income for court maintenance and improved understanding of public participation in the sport. Introduction of access via fob should be considered at suitable locations, such as the tarmac courts in Victoria Park, Deal. This is recommended by the action plan presented in Section 6.

**4.162** The quality of publicly accessible tennis provision is least satisfactory in the Dover sub-area of the district and measured participation is also lowest there. The ten courts at Connaught Park represent around half of the courts available for secure community use in that part of the district. Eight of the courts are grass and were rated as very poor. Grass courts are particularly challenging to manage. They require a closed season, evenly distributed use during the open season and specialist equipment if they are to be maintained at peak condition. It is unlikely that the standard of these grass courts at Connaught Park can be raised significantly, and then maintained, unless a tennis club is involved. Therefore the way in which tennis is provided in Connaught Park should be reviewed; hard surfacing should be considered. In addition, there may be opportunities to improve access to courts in the Dover urban area that are currently reserved for private use.



## 4.7 Netball

### National and County Context

**4.163** The relevant national governing body of sport is England Netball, whose key functions include governance, elite performance, and participation. The current national strategy entitled 'Your Game, Your Way', which runs from 2013-2017, sets out four strategic goals:

- Grow participation by 10,000 per year
- Deliver a first class member and participant experience
- Win the World Netball Championships
- Lead an effective and progressive infrastructure enabling all involved in the netball experience to collaborate

**4.164** England Netball divides the country into nine regions, each with a volunteer management board and a team of paid staff who oversee competition, talent identification, coach education and increasing participation. The relevant region for Dover District is called 'London & South East Netball' and comprises the four counties of; Essex Metropolitan, Kent, Middlesex, and Surrey.

**4.165** Kent Netball is made up of a voluntary committee with a paid netball development officer. For the purposes of England Netball the county of Kent includes Lewisham, Greenwich, Bexley and Bromley. There are 9 leagues affiliated to England Netball within that area, plus two non-affiliated leagues.

### Netball teams in the Dover District (demand)

**4.166** The Dover and District Netball League has been in existence for more than 35 years. It co-ordinates a summer league between April and September, and a winter league between October and March. The winter 2013/14 league included 9 named teams, including 1 youth team. In May 2014 there were 85 members, all female.

**4.167** Dover and District Netball League is not affiliated to England Netball (the other non-affiliated league in Kent is located in Thanet). The centralised venue for the league is St Edmunds School in Dover, and all league matches have been played there since 2005.

### Assessment of courts (supply)

**4.168** Owners and operators of netball courts were consulted alongside the Dover and District Netball League, to establish the quantity, quality and accessibility of courts in use. Thirty-two courts were identified within the district, but fifteen of them are reserved for private use by the school at which they are located. Table 4.14 and Map 4.5 detail the 17 netball courts available for community use.

**4.169** Five courts in the rural sub-area have the benefit of a secure community-use agreement; all of these are floodlit and have associated changing facilities. In the Dover sub-area twelve netball courts are available for community use on a non-secure basis at three school sites. None of these are fully flood lit, and changing facilities are not available for community use. There are no publicly accessible netball courts available in the Deal sub-area, because all the facilities located on school sites in that part of the district are reserved for school use only.

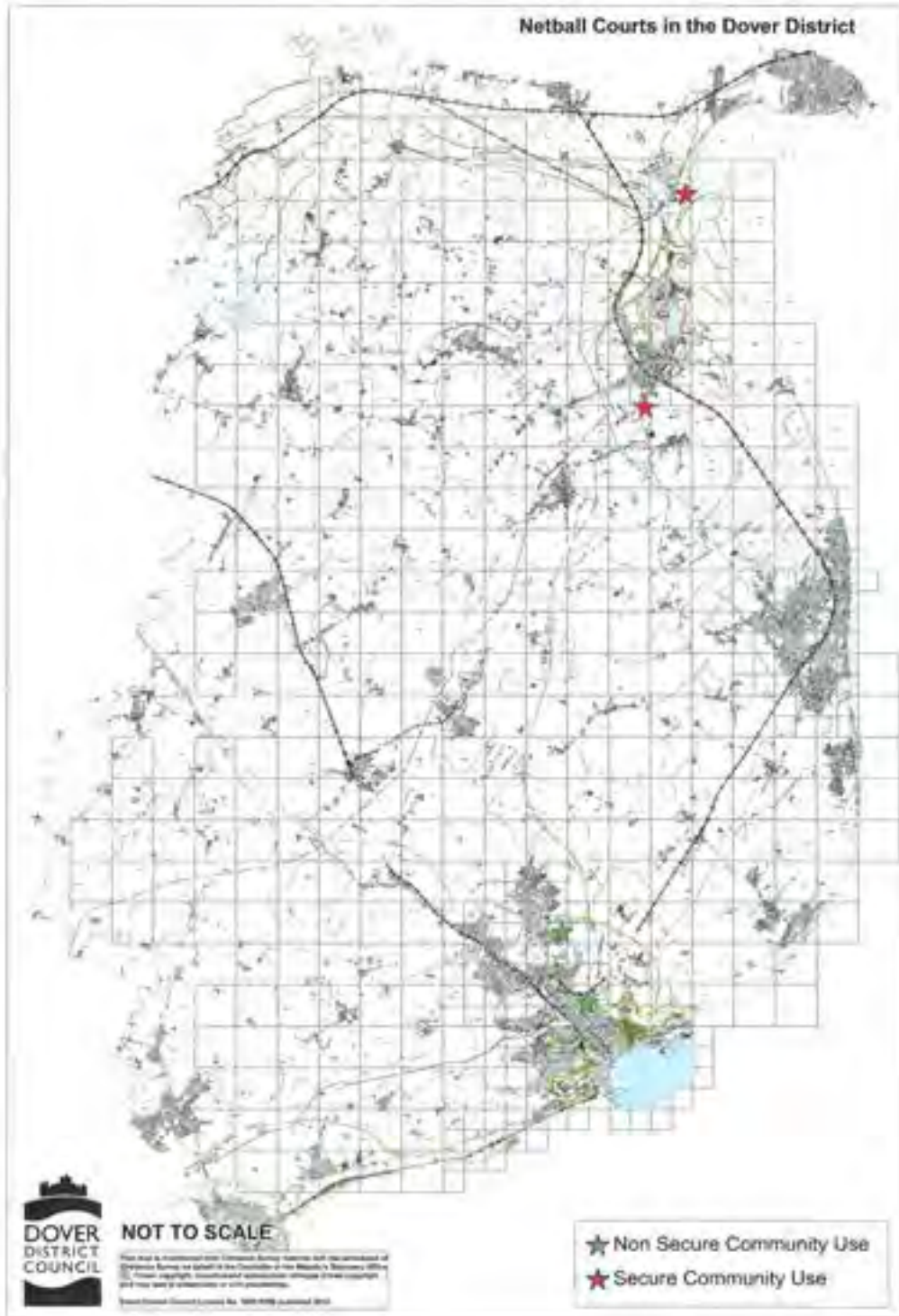
Table 4.14 The quantity and quality of netball courts available for community use in the Dover District

Site Name	Sub Area	No of Courts	Flood Lit	Pitch Quality Rating	Access Type
Sandwich Technology School/Sandwich Leisure Centre <sup>(1)</sup>	Rural	3	Yes	Excellent <sup>(2)</sup>	Secure community Use
BayPoint, Sandwich	Rural	1	Yes	Excellent	Secure community Use
Aylesham Welfare Leisure Centre	Rural	1	Yes	Excellent	Secure community Use
St Edmunds School	Dover	2	Part Lit	Average	Non-Secure Community Use
St Edmunds School	Dover	2	No	Excellent	Non-Secure Community Use
Astor College	Dover	6	No	Average	Non-Secure Community Use
Dover Christchurch Academy	Dover	2	No	Average	Non-Secure Community Use

1. Fully refurbished in 2013

2. Fully refurbished in 2013

Map 4.3 Location of netball courts in the Dover District



**4.170** St Edmunds School in Dover is listed twice in Table 4.14 because there are two pairs of courts with distinctly different characteristics. During summer months the Dover and District League matches are played on the better quality tarmac courts (grade 2). As those courts are not floodlit, during winter months matches are moved to the other courts (regular tarmac construction), where there is some lighting.

### Trends in participation

**4.171** Over recent years adult participation rates (age 16+) in netball have generally followed a strong upward trend, as evidenced by the Sport England Active People surveys. In 2006 the national participation rate was measured as 0.27%, rising to 0.35% in 2013 as recorded by the most recent survey<sup>(20)</sup>. Netball was the only non-Olympic sport to show a significant increase in participation figures during that period.

**4.172** Participation by 16-25 year olds increased markedly between 2006 and 2012 (as demonstrated by the results of Active People 6), but the last national survey noted a decrease in this age group. Consequently, building participation of 16-25 year olds is a current priority for England Netball. Participation is still increasing amongst adults over 25 years of age and the Active People Survey shows that even more people would like to play the game. In addition NGB membership by adults over 18 years is increasing year on year.

**4.173** Locally, participation in the Dover and District Netball league has remained fairly steady. At the time of the original audit there were 80 members. In recent years; the number of teams has fluctuated between 7 and 11, the exact number of teams varying from year to year and between the summer and winter seasons.

**4.174** England Netball has developed several participation initiatives. Back to Netball provides pay and play sessions for all abilities lead by qualified coaches over a 10 to 12 week period. Since 2010 nearly 40,000 women have taken part in Back to Netball sessions. A Back to Netball programme was delivered at the newly refurbished courts in Sandwich Technology School early in 2014, consistently attracting 24 participants. Initiatives to encourage participation in the younger age groups include 'High 5', a version of the game designed for children between 9-11 years.

### Analysis

**4.175** The 'Sport England Active People Survey 7' estimated that 0.35% of the population in England (aged 16yrs+) is playing netball once a week. Applying this statistic to the population of the Dover district aged 16 years and over (91,900<sup>(21)</sup>) indicates that 322 participants may be expected locally. According to England Netball 37% of people who play netball once a week become affiliated members of the governing body meaning that they play competitively in leagues. This is likely to fall

20 Active People Survey 7, Once a week participation rates by sport 13 June 2013

21 Estimate of population aged 16yrs + derived from KCC 2012 Mid Year Population Estimates. As reported in the July 2012 Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletin and on-line toolkit

slightly below the true figure because some leagues are not affiliated, but it provides a useful tool to help estimate the number of competitive players that may be expected locally in community teams. When this participation rate is applied to the population of Dover District, then an estimate of 120 league players, or approximately 13 teams is obtained.

**Table 4.15 Estimated number of potential netball participants & competitors in the Dover District compared with actual number of competitors**

	Dover District Total	Dover Sub Area	Deal Sub Area	Rural Sub Area
Population of 16yrs+ in 2012	91,900	38,662	27,065	25,695
Potential number of casual and competitive netball participants <sup>(1)</sup>	322	135	95	90
Potential number of netball competitors (i.e. likely affiliate / join a league) <sup>(2)</sup>	120	50	35	33
Potential number of netball teams generated (average of 9 players per team)	13	6	4	4
Actual number of netball teams in 2013	9	9	0	0

1. Calculated by applying the national participation rate of 0.35% from the Sport England Active People Survey 7 – Once a week participation rates by Sport 13 June 2013
2. Calculated using the England Netball national estimate that 37% of netball participants affiliate to the governing body

**4.176** Table 4.15 compares the predicted number of netball league participants against the actual number recorded in 2014. Netball participation outside leagues is more difficult to measure locally, at least some of it is likely to be occur amongst 16-18 year olds in schools, and therefore does not require access to community use facilities. Table 4.15 shows that the total number of community netball teams in the Dover District falls below the number predicted by national participation rates. However, all competitive netball participation by community teams occurs in the Dover sub-area, and in that part of the district team membership exceeds the national average.

**4.177** Following the success of the Back to Netball programme in Sandwich, England Netball has decided to run a Netball Now project during the summer of 2014 at Baypoint Leisure, north of Sandwich. These will be un-coached, pay and play sessions, with the objective of assessing whether there is sufficient demand in the north of the district (and south Thanet) to form additional teams or to provide more participation programmes during the winter 2014/15 season.

**4.178** Although it may take several years for casual participation to develop as far as forming competitive teams, there appears to be demand for community use of netball facilities in the rural sub-area. There may also be latent demand in the Deal sub-area. This is more difficult to assess due to the lack of community use facilities in Deal at present, the England Netball projects should help in gathering evidence.

**4.179** Demand for netball is likely to grow in Dover District during the Core Strategy plan period. In 2026 the district's predicted population aged 16+ will be 99,730. If the national participation rate remains as now, 350 casual and competitive netball players would be expected at that time. If England Netball's target of growing participation by 10,000 per year is achieved through to that date, the national participation rate would be close to 0.5% and local netball participation across the district would come close to 500 players.

## Discussion

**4.180** Competitive netball participation in the Dover sub-area of the district is well above the national average, and this high participation rate has been maintained for a number of years. Currently there is no competitive netball based in the Deal or rural sub-areas. The difference between participation in the Dover sub-area and other parts of the district may possibly have arisen from the historic distribution of publicly accessible netball facilities, or it could be explained by the way in which the Dover and District Netball League operates, or a combination of the two. Regarding facilities: there are no community use netball courts in the Deal sub-area and the community use facilities in the rural sub-area have been either recently established or refurbished. The court at Aylesham Leisure Centre was opened in 2011, while facilities in Baypoint Leisure became publicly accessible in 2012. The courts at Sandwich Leisure Centre were refurbished in 2013. With regard to management, Dover and District League matches are held at a time and location that is convenient for members and the league is not affiliated to England Netball in order to minimise the cost for participants; in 2013/14 annual fees amount to about £20.

**4.181** Currently all community participation in competitive netball takes place at a site where the courts are variable in quality, lack changing facilities, are only partially floodlit and do not benefit from a secure community use agreement. Feedback from the Dover and District Netball League indicates that the location of the courts is important to many league members, because a significant number do not own cars. This finding accords with information gained by England Netball during surveys of Back to Netball participants in other areas, who state that the location of facilities is more important than their quality. England Netball identifies lines as the crucial court feature, followed by floodlighting because sport development programmes are most successful when held during mid-week evenings.

**4.182** Even though court quality may not be the top priority for community netball, improvements should be considered where possible. The Dover and District Netball League transfers its matches to lower quality courts during winter because they are

partially lit. A planning application for floodlighting at St Edmunds School <sup>(22)</sup> made in 2005 failed due to concerns over impact of noise on neighbouring dwellings. It may be worth re-investigating this issue; possibly mitigation measures could be put in place. The environmental health impacts of any proposals would have to be examined in detail by relevant agencies. Alternatively, perhaps a different venue in the town could be secured for community use. The action plan in Chapter 6 recognises the need to address this issue.

**4.183** Initial evidence from the Back to Netball programme in Sandwich indicates there is demand in the rural area for community netball participation. With the appropriate support, this may develop into additional competitive teams in the long term. It is to be hoped that any increase in participation outside the Dover sub-area would not attract participants away from the Dover and District Netball League. Overall, participation in the district falls below national levels, which suggests that more people could be attracted to the sport.

**4.184** The lack of publicly accessible netball courts in the Deal sub-area is an obvious gap in provision. If participation activities delivered by England Netball identify latent demand for netball in Deal priority should be given to developing a project that meets the need. A possible solution would be refurbishment of the tarmac courts in Victoria Park as a dual tennis and netball facility, similar to the courts at Sandwich Technology School. Victoria Park is located in central Deal with good public transport links.

## 4.8 Bowls

### National and County Context

**4.185** Sport England recognises several national governing bodies (NGBs) for the sport of bowls; there are various forms of the game and some NGBs represent particular geographic regions. Bowls England is the NGB for the sport of outdoor flat green lawn bowls, which is played in Dover District. Bowls England organises national championships and manages international teams. The organisation's 'Strategic Plan 2014-2017' identifies increasing participation in the sport as a major objective and emphasises the need to support county associations and clubs through challenging financial times. Key functions of the organisation that support grass roots clubs include provision of information on legislation and policies, and loans schemes.

**4.186** Bowls England identifies recruiting and retaining club members as a top priority. To help achieve this objective the Bowls Development Alliance (BDA) was created jointly by Bowls England and English Indoor Bowling Association Ltd to deliver sports development projects. The BDA estimates there are currently 400,000 flat green bowls club members in England participating at over 7,500 venues <sup>(23)</sup>.

22 Reference: DOV/05/01183 Proposal: Provision of floodlighting to hard surface external sports area

23 Figures taken from the Bowling Development Alliance strategy 'Growing the Sport of Bowls 13-17'



**4.187** Bowls England represents 35 member counties, including Kent. Within the County outdoor flat green lawn bowls fixtures are organised by the Kent County Bowling Association. In 2013 there were 168 affiliated clubs comprising 139 mixed, 25 men only and 4 ladies only clubs. Kent has the highest number of participants affiliated to Bowls England of any county. A small number of unaffiliated clubs exist in the county (less than 5), but none are located in the Dover District.

#### **Bowls teams in the Dover District (demand)**

**4.188** Thirteen bowls clubs supplied membership information to the Kent County Bowling Association in 2013, with a total membership of 912. These club members represent the vast majority of active bowls players in the district because according to the KCBA usually all club members participate in the sport, even though only approximately 10% play competitively. A very small number of bowls players who are not club members participate in open competitions; estimated as only 1% of participants in Kent.

**4.189** All the clubs in the Dover District have a mixed membership, although fixtures are usually separate for men and women. Local club membership data collected during the 2011 audit showed that membership was split almost equally between males and females. Interestingly, according to the KCBA, the approximate male to female membership split across the county is 2:1.

**4.190** Three bowls clubs in the Dover District have achieved Clubmark status; Betteshanger, St Margarets and Tilmanstone.

#### **Assessment of greens (supply)**

**4.191** There are 13 greens in the district. Most are maintained by the resident club, but the green at Maison Dieu Gardens is maintained by Dover District Council and the green at River is managed by the Parish Council. Quality of the bowling greens was assessed by means of site visits, the Council also consulted with bowls clubs and (in 2014) the KCBA.

**4.192** All the greens are more than adequate in quality for friendly matches, but some of the smaller greens are not used for competitive matches. Greens of less than 1,000m<sup>2</sup> are challenging to maintain at peak condition because the direction of rinks cannot be changed through the season and therefore wear is not distributed evenly. The sites are well distributed between the three sub-areas of the district, with at least one very good quality green in each sub-area. The quality of club houses varies, from excellent at River to poor at Eastry.

**4.193** All the bowling greens in the district may be classified as 'secure community use'. Players must join a club to use its green, but annual membership fees in the district do not currently exceed £100. Bowls England advises this sum is reasonable for community clubs.

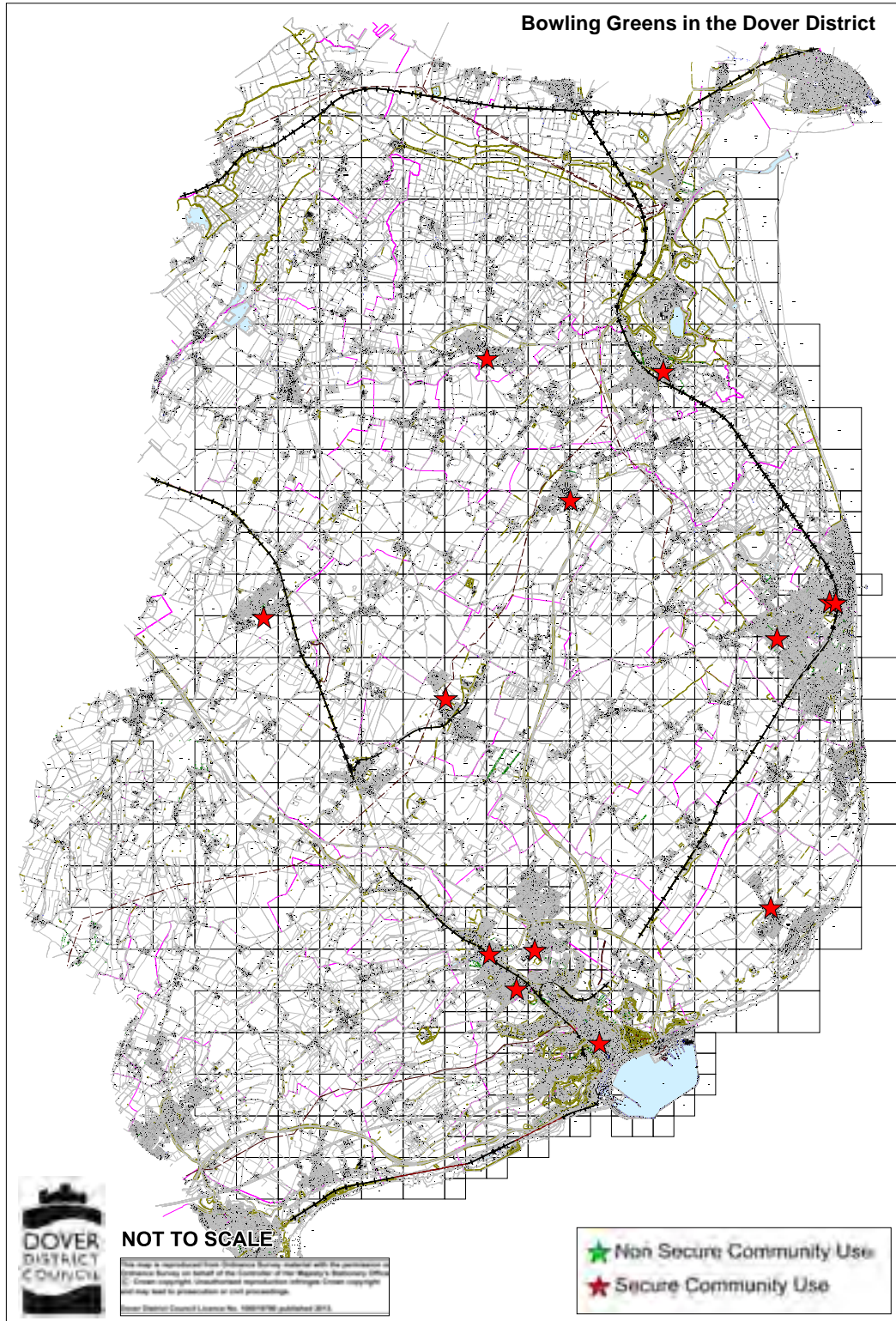
**4.194** During the off-season around 50% of club members choose to continue playing bowls, participating in indoor forms of the game. Short mat bowls (20 metres) is played in the Aylesham club house and in several village halls. Full size indoor bowls is only available at Betteshanger.

Table 4.16 Supply of Bowls Facilities in the Dover District

Club	Location	Sub Area	Green Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Quality	Notes
Dover Bowling Club	Maison Dieu Gardens	Dover	1444	Poor	Uneven green due to overshadowing from adjacent tall building
Gateway Bowling Club	Dover Harbour Board Sports and Social Club	Dover	1369	Good to Excellent	
Kearsney Bowling Club	Lower Road	Dover	1444	Good	
River Bowling Club	River Recreation Ground	Dover	1444	Poor	Uneven surface
St Margarets Bowls and Social Club	Kingsdown Road, St Margarets	Dover	777	Poor	Two sides not ditched, sloped at one edge
Betteshanger Indoor and Outdoor Bowls Club	The Sports Ground, Mill Hill	Deal	1444	Good to Excellent	
Deal Bowling Club	Mill Road	Deal	1369	Average	
Victoria Park Bowling Club	Victoria Park	Deal	1444	Good	
Ash Bowling Club	Moat Lane, Ash	Rural	999	Average	

Club	Location	Sub Area	Green Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Quality	Notes
Aylesham and Snowdown Bowling Club	Welfare Ground, Aylesham	Rural	1369	Good to Excellent	
Eastry Bowling Club	Church Street, Eastry	Rural	925	Good	
Sandwich Bowling Club	Millwall Place, Sandwich	Rural	1369	Good to Excellent	
Tilmanstone Welfare Bowling Club	Adelaide Road, Elvington	Rural	1521	Average to Good	

Map 4.4 Location of bowling greens in the Dover District



### Trends in participation

**4.195** A general trend of decreasing numbers of participants is evidenced by data from several sources. The 'Sport England Active People Survey 7' reported that 2.47% of the population in England aged 65 or over plays bowls at least once a week<sup>(24)</sup>, a significant drop since 2008 when the figure was 3.40%. This includes participants in crown green bowls, flat green outdoor, flat green indoor, short mat bowls and carpet bowls. Bowls England (which represents flat green lawn bowls) has experienced a decline in membership of more than 10% between 2008 and 2013<sup>(25)</sup>. The national decline is mirrored by a decrease in Dover District club membership; at the time the initial audit was undertaken in 2011 there were 963 members in 14 bowls clubs, but in 2013 the number of members had fallen by just under 5% and there were 13 clubs<sup>(26)</sup>.

**4.196** The average age of bowls participants is perceived as increasing by organisations such as the KCBA, but the evidence for this is less clear cut than for changes in rates of participation. For example Bowls England currently holds no demographic information on its members, which is recognised in its strategic plan as a major weakness for the sport because future membership cannot be predicted with any certainty. Data obtained from the Sport England Summary 'Active People Interactive' showed that across England the proportion of participants aged 65+ was 78% in 2008 rising to 81% in 2013. Perhaps this is a trend that has taken place over many years; a study of more than 5,200 bowls players in three counties published in 2000<sup>(27)</sup> found that 56% of participants were aged 65+.

**4.197** Demographic data was collected from bowls clubs within the Dover District during the 2011 audit, which showed that more than 80% of the membership was over 60 years in age and around 15% was aged between 40 and 59 years. The KCBA have noted a decline in the number of players who participate competitively, from the year 2000 in the region of 2-3% per year, but in 2014 the drop was 8%, which may be due to the increasing age of club members.

**4.198** The Bowling Development Alliance is working to reverse the decline in participation, with the aim of bowls becoming the most popular sport in the 55+ age group. The BDA strategy 'Growing the Sport of Bowls 13-17' describes an intensive recruitment programme designed to boost participation. Road shows in high footfall areas raise awareness and are co-ordinated with informal events at a local club. The initial taster day may be followed up with Play Bowls4Fun, which is a series of non-pressurised sessions running once a week for a month that could lead on to more formal coaching. The BDA reports that nationally more than 1,000 new members aged 55+ have been recruited into the sport since 2013. Clubs in Kent that wish to run recruitment programmes can apply to the BDA for a support package.

24 Once a week sport participation rates by sport 13 June 2013

25 The Bowls England Strategic Plan 2014-2017 reports there 132,000 members in 2008, which fell to 117,000 in October 2013

26 A club that had been located at the former Pfizer social club no longer exists

27 Summary Report Bowls – Supply and Demand Study (2000), MEW Research on behalf of Sport England

**4.199** Much of the recruitment effort is focused on older age groups, because Sport England considers bowls as a 'light intensity' sport except for those aged 65+. However, the BDA programme may also increase the number of young participants. Taster days generally attract those aged 50+, while juniors often take part in the road shows. Bowls England has identified youth development as an important area and will introduce an Under 18 Open Tournament to be held during the National Championships in 2014. In addition, the BDA is working to provide more bowls opportunities for those aged 16+ with a disability.

### Analysis

**4.200** The participation rates for bowls published by Sport England generally refer to players aged 65+, but estimates applicable to a wider age range are available from the Active People Survey Interactive tool. An analysis for bowls in Kent shows that 1.2% of the 16 + population in Kent participates at least once a week. Table 4.17 compares the predicted number of participants with club membership numbers.

Table 4.17 Bowls participation in the Dover District by all adults

	Dover District	Dover Sub Area	Deal Sub Area	Rural Sub Area
Estimated population aged 16 years + in 2012 <sup>(1)</sup>	91,900	38,662	27,065	25,695
Estimated number of participants aged 16 years + (1.2%)	1,103	464	325	308
Total club membership 2013	919	304	268	347
Difference between expected and actual	-184	-160	-57	+39

1. Estimate of population aged 16yrs + derived from KCC 2012 Mid Year Population Estimates. As reported in the July 2012 Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletin and on-line toolkit

N.B. Sub-area populations do not sum to the total population figure because ward level estimates are based on older data

**4.201** The number of adults playing bowls falls below the nationally expected level overall; at 1% rather than 1.2%. When participation is broken down by sub-area it is apparent that participation rates vary, being highest in the rural part of the district with a participation rate of 1.35%.

**4.202** As most bowls players are in older age groups, it is worth examining participation levels in more detail against that demographic. An over 55 years national participation rate of 1.73% derived from the Active People 7 survey is quoted in the Sport England report 'Once a week participation in funded sports amongst people aged 16 years and over (October 2012 – October 2013)'. Table 4.18 shows the number of bowls participants expected in each sub area of the Dover District aged

55 or more compared with club membership figures for the same age group derived from results of the 2011 audit. In general, measured participation amongst those aged 55+ exceeds the estimates, with the exception of the Deal sub-area.

Table 4.18 Bowls participation in the Dover District by those aged 55 years +

	Dover District	Dover Sub Area	Deal Sub Area	Rural Sub Area
Estimated population aged 55 + in 2012	38,361	12,230	14,547	11,485
Expected number of participants aged 55 + (1.73%)	664	213	252	199
Number of club members 55+ years in 2011	818	294	190	334
Difference between expected and actual	+154	+81	-62	+135

N.B. club membership has fallen by 5% since the 2011 audit

**4.203** Based on KCBA advice, an approach was developed to investigate whether current levels of provision meet the needs of bowls participants. All clubs in the district, except Dover Bowling Club, maintain their own greens and keeping them in good condition requires intensive maintenance using expensive equipment. In the experience of KCBA, clubs with a membership of 50 or fewer struggle to achieve this. For long term survival around 100 members is optimal. A full size green of 1,444 m<sup>2</sup> can accommodate up to 150 members comfortably, if numbers rise higher than that the green cannot withstand the wear. Therefore a sustainable and reasonable level of provision is around 9.6 to 14.5 m<sup>2</sup> per member.

**4.204** Table 4.19 compares the number of club members with green areas in each sub area and in the Dover District overall. In all sub-areas the current level of provision exceeds the upper end of the sustainable range, in other words the membership is theoretically too low to maintain that quantity of green.

Table 4.19 Provision of bowling greens across the Dover District, against demand

	Dover District	Dover Sub Area	Deal Sub Area	Rural Sub Area
Total green area 2013 (m <sup>2</sup> )	16,927	6,478	4,257	6,183
Total club membership 2013	919	304	268	347



	Dover District	Dover Sub Area	Deal Sub Area	Rural Sub Area
Area of green per club member	18.4	21.3	15.9	17.7

**4.205** The number of bowling participants expected in 2026 was estimated to investigate whether the level of bowling provision required will change before the end of Core Strategy plan period, as shown in Table 4.20. Current participation rates for the district were applied to 2026 population estimates. The rationale for this approach is based upon Bowls England's intention to stabilise national membership at 115,000 (it was 117,000 in October 2013). To calculate appropriate areas of green provision the projected numbers of participants in 2026 was multiplied by the optimum green provision rate per member (9.6 to 14.5 m<sup>2</sup> per participant).

Table 4.20 Predicted demand for bowling greens in 2026

	Dover District	Dover Sub Area	Deal Sub Area	Rural Sub Area
Estimated population aged 16 or over + in 2026 <sup>(1)</sup>	99,748	45,218	27,836	26,704
Current local participation rate	1%	0.79%	0.99%	1.35%
Predicted number of participants aged 16 +	997	358	276	360
Area of green required to meet the predicted need (m <sup>2</sup> )	9,600 – 14,500	3,400 – 5,191	2,700 – 4,000	3,500 – 5,200

1. Population estimates were obtained from 'Demographic forecasts for Dover District Council Report - April 2010' by the Kent County Council Research and Intelligence Team

**4.206** Table 4.20 demonstrates that the existing quantity of provision is likely to be more than adequate to meet needs through the plan period; across the district an ideal level of provision would be somewhere between 9,600 and 14,500 m<sup>2</sup>, while there are nearly 17,000 m<sup>2</sup> currently provided, regardless of quality. These results should be treated with some caution because the predicted numbers of participants are based on many assumptions.

## Discussion

**4.207** Participation rates for bowls in the national target age group of 55 years + is generally higher than the national average and the current level of outdoor provision is generous. Behind this positive headline there has been a local decrease in the

number of bowls club members, which mirrors a national trend of declining participation levels. The Bowls England Strategic Plan 2014-2017 states that many clubs 'continue to operate in the face of decreasing membership and rising costs'. Bowls England highlights that the sport is reliant on a voluntary workforce, which is dwindling in number.

**4.208** Anecdotal evidence suggests that the average age of participants is rising, although published evidence on this topic is sparse. The Kent County Bowling Association has noted some success regarding increased youth participation, but there are very few adult club members under the age of 50 and a declining number under the age of 65. Maintenance of bowls greens is an intensive activity, so the combined effects of falling participation and reduced numbers of young adults presents a challenge.

**4.209** The quantity of greens currently existing in the Dover District may be unsustainable, unless participation rates can be increased and age profiles broadened. Levels of provision are high when compared with the estimated ideal levels, even when planned housing growth is taken into account. As a point of reference there are four bowling greens in the Dover urban area, compared with one in Canterbury (although that is double the size of any in Dover town). Furthermore, small clubs can struggle to survive in the long term and the district contains one club with fewer than 50 members and five with 50 to 60 members. Some consolidation of facilities should be considered if current participation trends continue. For example, it may be possible for more than one club to operate out of a single green, sharing the workload and expense of running a green.

**4.210** More broadly, the BDA's national recruitment programme is focused on over 55 year olds but the sport would benefit from a development initiative to raise the profile amongst younger adults. This would help to sustain bowls participation in the long term.

## 4.9 Athletics

### National and County Context

**4.211** The sport of athletics covers various disciplines; as well as track and field disciplines it includes recreational running, road running, cross country running, fell running and ultra-marathon running. England Athletics works with affiliated clubs, officials, schools and coaches to develop grass roots athletics in this country. The organisation has three core objectives <sup>(28)</sup>:

- To increase participation across a wider cross-section of the community
- To improve the quality of experience of every participant
- To support the development of the next generation of champions

**4.212** England Athletics 'Strategic Facility Plan 2012-2017' identifies priority locations for capital investment during the plan period as eleven cities across the country, the nearest being London. Priority types of facility provision were identified as road and off-road running environments, track and field venues, indoor training facilities, clubhouses and social facilities, and finally 'Compact Athletics Facilities' <sup>(29)</sup>. The strategic plan states that there is a sufficient number of formal competition tracks in England overall, albeit with a slightly uneven distribution and some ageing facilities.

**4.213** Regarding road and off-road running, whilst there is a limited number of parks nationally that can meet the requirements of major formal cross-country events, the availability of road and off-road courses and trails does not appear to be a constraining factor based on the increasing numbers of participants and events reported in the last few years. England Athletics 'Strategic Facility Plan 2012-2017' identifies the major issue for most of these disciplines as infrastructure provision for events such as parking, changing, catering and toilets.

### County Context

**4.214** The Kent County Athletics Association (KCAA) organises championships for the county of Kent, which for the purposes of athletics includes the following boroughs; Greenwich, Lewisham, Bexley and Bromley. Fifty clubs are affiliated to the KCAA. Within the postal county of Kent, England Athletics supports the Kent and Medway Athletics Network. This is a cluster of clubs who work together to improve all areas of provision including the quality of coaching and links with community groups such as schools and competitions. Eleven clubs are members of the network, the nearest to Dover District being Canterbury Harriers and Thanet Roadrunners Athletics Club.

**4.215** England Athletics 'Strategic Facility Plan 2012-2017' identifies five track and field venues in Kent that are certified for use in athletics competitions. Three of these meet all the specifications and requirements for competitions under UK Athletics rules, including Canterbury High School and Marlowe Academy in Ramsgate. Both venues have six lane synthetic athletics tracks. In addition, the Julie Rose Stadium in Ashford is a publicly accessible athletics venue with an eight lane synthetic running track, which has access to an indoor training area.

**4.216** Various national programmes have provided facilities or support for road and off-road runners in Kent. For example RunKent collaborated with Run England on their 3-2-1 programme to provide marked running routes; in July 2014 there were 22 designated routes in the county. The average number of marked routes per district is around two, but the distribution is somewhat uneven; Dover, Thanet and Shepway districts have one each, while Canterbury has 7. Weekly, free to enter, timed 5km Parkrun events occur at nine locations in the county, the closest being at Pegwell Bay country park in Thanet.

### Athletics in the Dover District (demand)

**4.217** There are no community clubs in the district for track and field athletics, although these disciplines are very popular in schools. For example all secondary schools in the Dover District attend the Super 8's Athletics section of the Kent School Games.

**4.218** Four community clubs in the Dover District are affiliated to England Athletics; Deal Tri Club, Dover Roadrunners AC, Jelly Legs Running Club (Deal and Walmer group) and Pfleet Feet Running Club. In 2014, the combined membership of these clubs was in excess of 500, the largest being Deal Tri with more than 400 members although a proportion of their members focus on cycling or swimming rather than running. In addition, there are several informal, non-affiliated running groups that are not constituted as clubs, for example Deal Running Buddies and Building 510 runners in Sandwich.

**4.219** Wingham Trotters is registered with UK Athletics, but is formed solely for the purpose of organising an annual road race in the village; over 180 participants completed the main 10km race in 2014. Other regular community running events in the district include the annual Dinosaur 10k in Deal organised by Deal Tri, which attracted more than 400 entrants in 2014.

### Assessment of Athletics Facilities (supply)

**4.220** As shown in Table 4.21, three temporary grass tracks are available to community groups on a secure basis between April and July. These facilities are evenly distributed across the district with one located in each sub-area. The only permanent athletics track in the district is a 400m cinder track at the Duke of York Royal Military School. It does not benefit from a secure community use agreement, but has been hired out to local running clubs from time to time. Three further grass tracks at schools are available on a non-secure basis. None of the running tracks are floodlit. The secure community use site at Sandwich Technology College also has a sand pit and shot-putt area.

Table 4.21 The supply of Athletics Tracks in the Dover District

Site Name	Sub Area	Type of Track	Pitch Quality Rating	Accessibility
The Danes Recreation Ground	Dover	400m <b>Temporary</b> Grass Track	Average	Secure community use
Castle Community School	Deal	300m <b>Temporary</b> Grass Track	Average / Good	Secure community use on a school site

Site Name	Sub Area	Type of Track	Pitch Quality Rating	Accessibility
Sandwich Technology School	Rural	400m <b>Temporary</b> Grass Track plus jump pit	Good	Secure community use on a school site
Duke of York Royal Military School	Dover	400m Permanent Cinder Track plus jump pits	Average	Community use not secured by agreement
Dover Grammar School for Boys	Dover	300m <b>Temporary</b> Grass Track plus jump pit	Average / Poor	Community use not secured by agreement
Dover Christchurch Academy	Dover	400m <b>Temporary</b> Grass Track	Good	Community use not secured by agreement
Sir Roger Manwoods School	Rural	400m <b>Temporary</b> Grass Track plus jump pits	Good	Community use not secured by agreement

**4.221** Much of the running training that occurs within the affiliated clubs takes place on- or off-road. Deal Tri and Dover Road Runners sometimes use grass running tracks at the school sites when they are available in the summer, and have occasionally hired the permanent, floodlit, synthetic track in Canterbury. Deal Tri has also used the cinder track at the Duke of York's Royal Military School for coaching days, but the lack of floodlighting and non-secure access arrangements limit use of this facility.

**4.222** There are two measured running routes with designated meeting points and signage in the district. The only Run England designated route is a 3.5km circuit at Samphire Hoe in the Dover sub-area, but Fowlmead Country Park in the Deal sub-area has marked circuits of 1, 3 and 5 miles. Both venues benefit from parking, toilets and availability of refreshments; at Fowlmead there are also showers. Deal Tri makes use of Fowlmead Country Park for running, in particular for cycling/running

duathlon and cross country events. Clubs and unaffiliated runners also make use of the good supply of parks and recreation grounds in Dover District, and the vast network of footpaths, bridleways, and country roads for training.

### Trends in Participation

**4.223** Athletics is the second most popular sport in England when measured by participation rate; the only sport that more people take part in is swimming. According to Sport England's Active People survey, in 2012/13 4.65% of the population over the age of 16 took part in athletics at least 1 x 30 minutes per week. The vast majority participated in various types of running (4.49%), while the rate of participation in track and field athletics was much lower (0.21%).

**4.224** Overall athletics is growing in popularity, the rate of participation has increased significantly since 2008, when it was estimated as 3.89%. However, during that time participation in track and field athletics has reduced from 0.34% to 0.21%. England Athletics has noted that the number of school aged club members and affiliated athletes is increasing steadily, but relatively few adult athletics participants are club members (just over 4% of participants according to Active People 7), therefore the majority of regular participants are un-affiliated runners.

**4.225** England Athletics is delivering several programmes to further increase participation in running, as described in 'A Nation that Runs, a recreational running and athletics plan for England 2013-2017'. Relevant examples include the establishment of Run England to assist affiliated clubs in reaching out to their wider communities and attracting new members and volunteers. There were over 2,200 affiliated community based groups in September 2013. The project 3-2-1 Routes involves collaboration between Run England and organisations, such as local authorities, with the aim of providing at least one permanently marked route accessible in each major town and city by 2017.

**4.226** Other national initiatives that promote participation in running include Parkrun, a not-for-profit organisation that provides weekly free 5km timed races. By 29th June 2014 there had been more than 30,000 such events in the UK attracting nearly half a million runners<sup>(30)</sup>. Also, the NHS has prepared a set of podcasts called 'Couch to 5K' that is designed to guide new participants in achieving 5k or running for half an hour within 9 weeks.

**4.227** In 'A Nation that Runs' England Athletics committed to achieve growth in track and field athletics participation through an adult engagement programme named AthleFIT. In 2014 AthleFIT sessions appear only to be available in London.

### Analysis

**4.228** When the national participation rate in athletics of 4.65% is applied to the 2012 mid-year population estimate of 91,900 residents in the Dover District aged 16+, it indicates that 4,273 regular participants could be expected. Of these an

estimated 4,126 would be runners, while 193 would be participants in track and field athletics. Given that nationally less than 5% of athletics participants are club members, a little over 200 affiliated participants could be expected in the Dover District. Therefore membership of local affiliated clubs is well over double the expected level, although a proportion of those members may be primarily interested in swimming or cycling rather than running.

**4.229** The clubs are distributed through the three sub-areas of the district – Dover Road Runners are based in the Dover sub-area, Deal Tri and Jelly Legs are in the Deal sub-area, while Pfleet Feet is in Sandwich. Most of the running training for Deal Tri occurs in the Deal sub-area and as this is the largest club that means the majority of affiliated athletic activity occurs in that part of the district, however membership of the club is drawn from across the district and beyond. In addition, there is no information available about where participation by the estimated 3,900 non-affiliated runners occurs.

**4.230** Given that there are no community track and field athletics clubs in the Dover district, non-school age residents who wish to participate in those sports have to travel to neighbouring districts. Therefore this demand is currently displaced.

## Discussion

**4.231** Overall, affiliated athletics participation in the Dover District is well above the national average and it is likely that a great deal of non-affiliated activity takes place as well. The national trend towards an increasing gap between the level of participation in road and off-road running compared with track and field disciplines appears to be occurring in this district; membership of running clubs is high but there are no community clubs for track and field athletics. However participation in track and field athletics is strong amongst young people at school.

**4.232** England Athletics 'Strategic Facility Plan 2012-2017' states that nationally, the availability of road and off-road courses and trails does not appear to be a constraining factor for participation in running. This assertion is supported by the fact that Dover District has only a couple of marked running routes, which does not seem to be hindering participation rates and in any case this number of marked routes is typical for the county. It is not clear how many non-affiliated runners are active, although participation in annual events such as the Dinosaur 10k in Deal is healthy. Currently there is no Parkrun event in the district; these weekly runs could encourage participation and perhaps help to gain an understanding on non-affiliated participation.

**4.233** There may be scope for improving public access to existing track and field athletics facilities at schools, or even improving those facilities. For example, currently the only site at which there is secure community access to jump pits is in Sandwich. However, unless a new club with a focus on track and field is formed, or an existing club expands its range of athletic activity, it is not certain that community groups

would come forward to use such facilities. Currently demand for track and field athletics is displaced to neighbouring districts, but no data is available to indicate how many Dover District residents are members of clubs in those areas.

**4.234** There are venues certified for use in national athletics competitions in the neighbouring districts of Thanet and Canterbury. These are relatively accessible for residents in the north of the district, but residents in the south of the district have to travel a considerable distance to reach specialist track and field athletics facilities. However, given the high cost of installing and maintaining synthetic athletics tracks, strong evidence would be required to deliver such a project in this district. Currently there is insufficient evidence to support a new specialist athletics venue, but this will be kept under review during the lifetime of the strategy.



## 5 Key Findings and Issues

### Deficiencies and spare capacity

**5.1** The initial facility audit was undertaken in 2011, and club questionnaires were distributed at the same time. Information presented in the lists of facilities and current levels of participation was comprehensively revised during more recent consultations, however it was not possible to revisit the football, rugby and cricket modelling work. As discussed in Chapter 4, the model outputs combined with more recently obtained data form a valid basis upon which to develop action plans. For example there has been a local decline in the number of adult 11 a side football participation but this has been balanced by an increased in the number of youth teams.

**5.2** Details of deficiencies and spare capacities for each of the sports are discussed in Chapter 4. In summary, modelling suggests that currently provision of almost all pitch types either just meets demand or is deficient. There is little in the way of spare capacity except in the case of mini-football. It is clear that the most severe deficiencies occur in the Dover urban area, while provision of youth football pitches appears to be deficient everywhere in the district. Unless projects are developed to increase capacity, provision of all pitch types (except mini football) will be deficient by the end of the Core Strategy period due to planned growth.

**5.3** Provision of facilities for non-pitch sports cannot be modelled in the same way. Bespoke analyses for these sports indicate that there may be some spare capacity either now or in the future for bowls and for outdoor tennis provision, although there are issues regarding the quality of pay and play outdoor tennis courts. There are no publicly accessible netball facilities in the Deal area.

**5.4** Identification of spare capacity is particularly helpful when planning how to make the most efficient use of existing assets; where spare capacity is identified change of function should be considered to meet a deficiency in a different sport. However, the only spare capacity identified was in mini-football pitches and a significant proportion of these are located at schools which are unlikely to be willing or able to reconfigure their pitches to rectify deficiencies in other pitch types.

**5.5** This strategy focuses on an analysis of pitch provision, however discussions with facility providers revealed that deficiencies in the ancillary facilities sometimes present the greatest barrier to participation. For example, a major issue for rural football clubs is the quality of changing facilities. In addition, cricket and rugby clubs highlighted the need for separate changing facilities for cricket umpires and the current lack of female changing facilities for rugby and cricket.

### Planning approach

**5.6** Historically Dover District Council has secured off-site development contributions via Section 106 agreements and this will continue at least until a locally determined Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is introduced. The Council is preparing to introduce CIL to the district, and may choose to secure funding for outdoor sport

provision via that route in the future. In the meantime, the 2010 CIL regulations have introduced restrictions to the way in which S106 agreements may be used. Planning obligations (such as off-site contributions) may only be secured if they are:

- a. necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- b. directly related to the development; and
- c. fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

**5.7** Sport England's playing pitch calculator has been used to develop a local standard for natural grass playing pitch provision at 1.17 ha per 1,000 population. This standard was adopted as part of the Land Allocation Development Plan Document in January 2015. Therefore any development coming forward in the Dover District must address additional need for playing pitches that is created by that development. This includes strategic allocations set out in the adopted Core Strategy that have not yet been the subject of a planning application, such as Connaught Barracks.

**5.8** As shown in Map 3.1, the district has been divided into three subareas that reflect league structures and catchment areas of the main pitch sports. Projects that increase the capacity of pitch facilities within the same sub-area of the district as the development will be presumed to contribute towards meeting the need arising from that development (unless evidence to the contrary is presented for a particular development). Therefore in the case of playing pitches 'directly related' means appropriate projects within the same sub-area as defined in this document.

**5.9** Adoption of a playing pitch standard will allow the Council to calculate obligations that are fairly related in scale. To calculate additional sports pitch requirements the standard will be multiplied by the number of new residents expected as a result of a development. New residents may be estimated using the 2005 KCC new build survey or a similar source. For off-site contributions, Standard Sport England costings for pitch provision may be used to determine a suitable sum.

**5.10** If the Council decides to secure development contributions for outdoor sports facilities via CIL, this strategy will still provide valuable information. Priority projects identified in the action plan may be included in the list of infrastructure projects that that will be, or may be, wholly or partly funded by the levy ('Section 123' list).

**5.11** In the particular case of planned expansion in Aylesham, information gathered during the preparation of this strategy will help to ensure that development contributions for outdoor sports facilities (through direct provision or monetary contribution) are delivered in a way that meets current needs. Obligations relating to that development were determined on the basis of the previous playing pitch strategy and a local leisure needs analysis that was prepared before recent investment in the leisure centre.

## 6 Recommendations and Action Plan

### Introduction

**6.1** This section contains the action plan for implementing the Dover District Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facility Strategy. Although most of the recommendations refer to land owned by the local authority, it is strongly recognised that all providers must work together to help upgrade and improve quality of provision across the district. The strategy supports projects outside of local authority ownership that (i) are tailored to individual sporting needs (ii) are projects developed as a result of the findings in this strategy and (iii) support strategic objectives.

**6.2** The Action Plan addresses each of the sports previously discussed and refers to timescales equating to the following periods:-

- a. Short term: By December 2015
- b. Medium term: Between December 2015 and December 2017
- c. Long term: Between December 2017 and December 2020

### Resources and Development Contributions

**6.3** In order to deliver much of the Action Plan it is recognised that external partner funding will need to be sought. Development contributions to meet additional need that arises from new dwellings combined with existing local funding or community schemes will go some way towards delivering the objectives set out in the tables below. In addition other sources of funding should be investigated, e.g. applications to grant making bodies.

**6.4** It is important that maximum benefit is achieved from any funds secured, including development contributions obtained via S106 agreements or possibly in the future by means of a local Community Infrastructure Levy. To gain the most benefit it is important that, where possible, funds are allocated in line with identified strategic priorities. Within the action plan some projects have had an indicative priority rating added to them, a rank of 1 indicating highest priority.

**6.5** Projects with an indicative priority attached are most likely to meet the additional need for outdoor sports facilities arising from planned development in the district. For example, football is the most popular team sport in the UK and has the highest number of participants in the Dover District of any pitch sport examined by this strategy, therefore projects that increase capacity for participation in football will make a significant contribution to meeting the need of additional residents. Another of the projects identified as priority will address identified need for two sports simultaneously; tennis and netball.

## Delivery Partners

**6.6** The strategy sets out the strategic approach for improving and sustaining future delivery of provision in outdoor sports that occur at accessible sites across the district. Partnership working among providers and users of these facilities will help to raise the quality of standards in provision, address the shortfalls in capacity and sustain future delivery. Key stakeholders include Kent County Council, the County Sports Partnership, National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs), experienced clubs, leisure providers such as Leisure Trusts, Town and Parish Councils, schools and Dover District Council.

**6.7** The Action Plan strategic delivery group consists of DDC, KCC and the County Sports Partnership. This will convene twice each year. The strategic delivery group will work together to identify project(s) that will be brought forward in order of opportunity and need, to identify delivery partners and their roles, and to help to scope the projects so that a strategic approach is achieved. A delegated project lead will be identified for each project.

**6.8** A set of Action Plan local delivery partners will be identified for each project, drawn from sport specific NGBs, Clubs, Leisure Trusts, Parish Councils and other providers of facilities. These groups will convene monthly throughout delivery of the relevant project, or on a basis that is tailored to suit the project needs and its progress. The role of these groups will be to work together on a local level to agree the final the scoping of the project, to explore opportunities for delivery including funding and/or location, to assign specific responsibilities for delivering each element of the project and to report progress to the strategic delivery group.

## Indicative costs

**6.9** The indicative costs of implementing key elements of the Action Plan can be found on the Sport England website: <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>

**6.10** The costs are for the development of community sports facilities and are based on providing good quality sports facilities. These rounded costs are based on typical schemes most recently funded through the Lottery (therefore are based on economies of scale) and CAD layouts developed in accordance with Sport England Design and Guidance Notes, updated regularly in conjunction with current forecast indices provided by the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS) and other quantity surveyors.

**FOOTBALL**

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:** Maintain current participation levels and meet identified deficiencies in Youth Football and Mini Soccer provision. Ensure there are a range of centralised facilities across the district to service all categories of the game in need. Explore opportunities of working with other providers to manage facilities.

Table 6.1

Key Action	Corporate Priority	Timescale	Resources / Development Contribution Rank	Delivery Partners
Explore the opportunities and cost of improving adult and junior playing pitches at Elms Vale Recreation Ground, Dover	Serving our communities effectively	Medium	Internal & external funding / Rank 1	DDC
Consider bringing the use of pitches in the Danes Recreation Ground, Dover back into use for adult/junior provision	Serving our communities effectively	Long	External funding N/A	DDC
Support the refurbishment of Artificial Grass Pitch at Christchurch Academy in Dover	Serving our communities effectively	Immediate to short	External funding N/A	Christchurch Academy DDC
Explore community use opportunities with schools within Dover area	Serving our communities with a sense of place and identity	Long	Officer time N/A	DDC Schools

Key Action	Corporate Priority	Timescale	Resources / Development Contribution Rank	Delivery Partners
Seek to focus all adult games in Deal at Markewood Recreation Ground in Deal	Serving our communities effectively	Short	Officer time N/A	DDC
Explore the opportunities and cost of improving quality of playing pitches and facilities at Markewood Recreation Ground in Deal	Serving our communities effectively	Medium - Long	Internal and external funding / Rank 2	DDC
Seek to secure community use agreement with Castle Community College for access to changing rooms for users at Victoria Park Playing Field, Deal	Facilitating strong communities with a sense of place and identity	Immediate to short	Officer time N/A	DDC Castle Community College
Reconfigure and focus all Youth Football and Mini Soccer in Deal at Victoria Park Playing Field	Serving our communities effectively	Short	Officer time N/A	DDC
Explore long term future management opportunities for playing fields at Victoria Park, Deal	Facilitating strong communities with a sense of place and identity	Medium - Long	Officer time N/A	DDC Castle Community College, Leisure Providers

Key Action	Corporate Priority	Timescale	Resources / Development Contribution Rank	Delivery Partners
Reassess provision in Deal following implementation of above priorities to review whether an additional senior pitch is required.	Serving our communities effectively	Long	Officer time N/A	DDC
Explore the opportunities and costs of improving quality of existing changing facilities in the rural sub-areas	Facilitating strong communities with a sense of place and identity	Long	External funding/N/A	Experienced clubs, DDC

**RUGBY**

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:** Maintain quality of existing provision, work towards improving quality of facilities to meet the varying needs of established clubs in the district. Continue to work with other providers to manage facilities and support projects to help facilitate consolidation of improved facilities.

Table 6.2

Key Action	Corporate Priority	Timescale	Resources / Development Contribution Rank	Delivery Partners
Seek to encourage the accommodation of rugby in any possible future AGP provision in Dover	Facilitating strong communities with a sense of place and identity	Short	Officer time/ External funding	DDC Schools (Christ Church Academy)
Explore long term opportunities to consolidate provision for Dover RFC on one site	Facilitating strong communities with a sense of place and identity	Long	Officer time/ External funding	Dover RFC DDC
Explore opportunities to address size of pitches and secure use of training grounds for Deal and Betteshanger RFC	Facilitating strong communities with a sense of place and identity	Long	Officer time/ External funding	Deal and Betteshanger RFC DDC
Explore long term opportunities to improve ancillary facilities for Ash RFC	Facilitating strong communities with a sense of place and identity	Long	Officer time/ External funding	Ash RFC DDC



**CRICKET**

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:** Retain and maintain current participation levels and meet identified deficiencies. Explore opportunities of working with experienced clubs to manage facilities where in house expertise is used to maintain and manage facilities to a high quality standard.

Table 6.3

Key Action	Corporate Priority	Timescale	Resources / Development Contribution Rank	Delivery Partners
Explore opportunities of working with experienced clubs to manage and maintain council owned dormant facilities that could be considered for future use for example Danes Recreation Ground	Facilitating strong communities with a sense of place and identity	Medium - Long	Officer time/ N/A	Experienced clubs DDC
Explore opportunities to provide indoor cricket through possible future indoor sports hall projects in the district	Serving our communities effectively	Long	Officer time/ N/A	DDC Leisure Providers
Engage with other providers on shared or future provision of facilities where need is identified	Facilitating strong communities with a sense of place and identity	Long	Officer time/ N/A	DDC Leisure Providers Town and Parish Councils

Key Action	Corporate Priority	Timescale	Resources / Development Contribution Rank	Delivery Partners
Maintain quality of pitch provision in Sandwich by working with experienced clubs in facilitating long term provision	Facilitating strong communities with a sense of place and identity	Long	Officer time/ Internal and external funding/ N/A	Experienced clubs. DDC

**HOCKEY**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: Explore opportunities for community use facilities at school sites suitable for competitive hockey.

Table 6.4

Key Action	Corporate Priority	Timescale	Resources / Development Contribution Rank	Delivery Partners
Explore opportunities to secure community use suitable for social, training and match purposes for Deal Hockey Club	Facilitating strong communities with a sense of place and identity	Medium	Deal Hockey Club	Deal Hockey Club, Schools
If the above action point is unachievable, explore the possibilities of potential future provision of an AGP for hockey.	Facilitating strong communities with a sense of place and identity	Long	Officer time/External funding	NGB Deal Hockey Club Leisure Providers Schools

**TENNIS**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: Provide fewer but better quality facilities. Centralise provision and explore community managed facilities.

Table 6.5

Key Action	Corporate Priority	Timescale	Resources / Development Contribution Rank	Delivery Partners
Seek to replace grass courts with improved hard court provision at Connaught park, Dover	Facilitating strong communities with a sense of place and identity	Medium - Long	Officer time and external funding N/A	DDC Experienced clubs
Explore options of community management of hard tennis courts at Connaught Park, Dover	Facilitating strong communities with a sense of place and identity	Long	Officer time N/A	DDC Experienced clubs Leisure Providers
Explore opportunities for securing community access to tennis facilities in the Dover urban area	Serving our communities effectively	Long	Officer time N/A	DDC Leisure Providers Schools
Retain and improve quality of two grass courts at Russell Gardens, Dover	Serving our communities effectively	Medium - Long	Officer time and external funding N/A	DDC

Key Action	Corporate Priority	Timescale	Resources / Development Contribution Rank	Delivery Partners
Explore possible mixed use of netball and tennis provision at Victoria Park in Deal and consider piloting a community fob entry system	Facilitating strong communities with a sense of place and identity	Medium - Long	Officer time / Rank 3	DDC Leisure Providers Schools
Retain and raise quality of provision at Markewood, Deal. Explore options of community management.	Serving our communities effectively	Long	Officer time / Rank 3	DDC Experienced Clubs Leisure Providers
Install nets at the MUGA in Aylesham	Serving our communities effectively	Short - Medium	External Funding / Rank 1	DDC Leisure Providers
Maintain quality of provision in Sandwich	Serving our communities effectively	Long	Officer time/ N/A	DDC, Leisure Providers Experienced Clubs
Seek to enhance tennis capacity by means of floodlighting where need of provision is evidenced and sustainable	Serving our communities with a sense of place and identity.	Long	Officer time/ N/A	DDC Experienced clubs Leisure Providers

**NETBALL**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: Increase and retain current participation levels and meet identified deficiencies in provision.

Table 6.6

Key Action	Corporate Priority	Timescale	Resources / Development Contribution Rank	Delivery Partners
Seek to secure use of one central all year round facility in Dover with floodlighting and access to changing rooms	Facilitating strong communities with a sense of place and identity	Long	Officer time/ N/A	Experienced clubs Schools Leisure Providers DDC
Explore possible mixed use of netball and tennis provision at Victoria Park in Deal.	Facilitating strong communities with a sense of place and identity	Medium - Long	External funding, Officer time / Rank 3	DDC Experienced Clubs Leisure Providers Town Council NGBs
Maintain quality of provision in Sandwich and Aylesham	Serving our communities effectively	Ongoing	N/A	Leisure Providers

**BOWLS**

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:** To promote participation in a broader age group & explore the potential consolidation of facilities and pitch provision to enable long term sustainability.

Table 6.7

Key Action	Corporate Priority	Timescale	Resources / Development Contribution Rank	Delivery Partners
Community Clubs to engage with Bowls Development Alliance (BDA) to explore opportunities of promoting participation in broader age groups	Serving our communities effectively	Medium	N/A	Community Clubs and BDA
To consider and explore the potential consolidation of bowls facilities to improve and strengthen sustainability in the long term.	Facilitating strong communities with a sense of place and identity	Long	Officer time, Community Clubs/ N/A	Community Clubs DDC





## 7 Monitoring and Maintaining the Strategy

**7.1** It is important that there is good governance in place to ensure that the recommendations and action plan are implemented. The fact that the strategy was developed in-house will contribute towards a successful delivery and monitoring process. A steering group consisting of portfolio holders and officers from key services areas such as Planning and Property Services have been involved in all stages during development of this study and are therefore familiar with its content and proposed recommendations. Officers from these service areas will monitor the study through regular day to day contact and formal quarterly meetings that will be set up to discuss the progress of this strategy and will also cover other open space strategies such as the Review of Play Area Provision 2012-2026.

**7.2** A report for the steering group will be produced annually and will be shared with wider service areas including Community Engagement and Communications as well as Corporate Leadership Support. This report will identify suggested updates to information presented within the strategy document where changes in demand or provision have occurred, for example following the successful delivery of a project. The steering group may choose to update the action plan, in response to such changes so that it continues to reflect current needs and priorities. Updates regarding outdoor sports provision and the strategy action plan will be communicated through the Council's Annual Monitoring Report, which is published towards the end of each calendar year.

**7.3** It is proposed that the strategy will be refreshed approximately every 5 years, therefore the next edition will be due in 2020. However, if very significant changes in demand or supply occur before that date it may be necessary to consider an earlier review and the Council will consult Sport England on this matter. The approach to the full refreshment will be in line with Sport England's current guidance at that time.



## Glossary

**GRASSROOTS SPORT** - amateur participation usually characterised by being local or community-based and dependent on volunteers.

**LATENT DEMAND** - potential demand for outdoor sports facilities that is not being met but which could be realised by certain actions.

**MAXIMUM CARRYING CAPACITY** - number of games that a playing field can withstand in a week without a negative affect on quality.

**NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY (NGB)** - typically these are independent, self-appointed organisations that govern their sports through the common consent of their sport. Sport England has a recognition process for NGBs that aims to identify a single lead NGB structure which governs a sport at UK, GB or home country level.

**NON-SECURE SITES COMMUNITY USE** – these are pitches that are currently used or available for community-use, however there is no secure management/usage agreement in place.

**SECURED COMMUNITY USE** - these pitches will be managed as either; a ‘play & play’ site by the local authority or leisure trust, by a specific sports club or Parish Council, or by an education establishment with secure community-use agreements in place.

**TEAM GENERATION RATE** - ratio between the number of teams within a defined area, and the total population within a given age range for that area.



## Appendix 1 Playing Pitch Strategy Consultation Statement

**1.1** This statement sets out information as to how Dover District Council has involved the sports community and stakeholders throughout the process of preparing the Dover District Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facility Strategy. The statement will discuss the various stages of consultation, how it was undertaken, with who and when, what types of issues were raised and how these have been addressed.

**1.2** Dover District Council initiated work on the strategy in 2010. Throughout this time, DDC has had continued engagement with local clubs, providers of facilities and stakeholders across the district, including representatives of sports organisations at county and regional levels. The purpose of engagement was to ensure that all sectors of the sports community were involved from the earliest stages of the process. The engagement has helped to gather information on quality and quantity of provision, it helped to tease out local issues and challenges that providers were facing, it helped to test and challenge the findings to reach conclusions from which a district wide action plan could be developed. The engagement also enabled the Council to seek advice and support from sports clubs, professional bodies and experts such as Sport England to help ensure the strategy was being tailored in line with national and local objectives.

**1.3** The consultation process has been overseen by the steering group which consists of portfolio holders and officers from key service areas such as Planning and Property Services. The process has been supported at various stages by county level sports organisations and national governing bodies of sport.

**1.4** In 2010 preliminary work involved research and audit of facilities. This was undertaken by writing to every provider of sports facilities for sports covered within the strategy and visiting facilities to inspect and record information. All providers were asked to provide their own assessment and score the quality of provision.

**1.5** Between 2011 and 2012 public forum meetings were held for Football, Rugby and Cricket. The aim of the forums was to verify the data being used to make calculations on provision & to check and challenge the findings. The forums were also supported by representatives from either national governing bodies of sport or local club development officers. Notes were taken by council officers to consider suggested amendments to quality ratings, issues arising such as dog fouling, poor ancillary facilities and in some cases poor maintenance arrangements. The issues were taken back to officers at DDC and discussed with the steering group before amending the draft document.

**1.6** The arrival of the Olympic Torch to Dover for London 2012 Games and other internal organisational restructures reduced officer resource in developing further engagement. Consultation work resumed in 2013 to seek clarification of information and update information as much as possible to help ensure accuracy was maintained throughout development of the strategy. This was undertaken by a number of officers

through email and phone contacting the several clubs and facility providers to verify information concerning facilities, memberships, types of competitions and club standards.

**1.7** Comprehensive research of local and national policies involved gathering information on line but more importantly engagement work with national governing bodies of sport. This process involved one to one meetings with representatives from Football, Rugby, Cricket, Tennis, Netball, Bowls and Hockey. Each sport representative was provided with a draft chapter for discussion, areas of concern were highlighted, advice was sought and planning developed around the proposed strategic objective for each sport with key action points. In the case of athletics email correspondence with England Athletics informed the relevant chapter.

**1.8** The Council's Cabinet members were consulted in July before DDC undertook formal public consultation on the draft strategy from July to October 2014 in line with Dover & District Compact guidance. Compact is about local groups and public bodies working together to achieve more for the local community. Dover District Council aims to deliver quality services and support sustainable communities. The Compact represents a collective commitment to improve the way we work together for the benefit of all communities. The public consultation approach for the draft strategy is detailed in the table at schedule A.

**1.9** Sport England has guided the preparation of the document from the earliest stages and was involved and consulted upon draft versions prior to and during the public consultation period. Sport England provided a long and detailed set of questions to the council just before the official consultation period, the issues raised were explored further during a meeting in September 2014. A number of changes to the strategy were proposed to address Sport England's concerns, particularly regarding implementation of the action plan.

**1.10** The last phase of consultation will involve the steering group reporting to the Council's Cabinet in February 2015 for final approval of the strategy.

## SCHEDULE A

### Consultation Approach for the draft Dover District Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sports Facility Strategy 2015-2026

Name of Document	Review of Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sports Facility Strategy 2015-2026
Topic	The Core Strategy (Adopted in 2010) requires the Council to work with partners to develop a Green Infrastructure Strategy and Action Plan. An important element of this work is the development of open space standards, including standards for outdoor sports provision. The draft strategy covers provision across nine sports and will help to improve or enhance the quality of playing pitches and outdoor

Name of Document	Review of Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sports Facility Strategy 2015-2026
	sports facilities throughout the District. It will also provide evidence to support the outdoor sports facility open space standard, demonstrate its deliverability, highlight priority areas for improvement and enable the Council to pursue funding bids to help direct capital investment.
Period	<p>Week commencing 14 July – 6 October</p> <p>The consultation period is 12 weeks in line with Dover District Council's 'Statement of Community Involvement'.</p>
Promotion and Publicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Notice in local paper</li> <li>● District newsletter</li> <li>● Alerts on the homepage of Dover District Council website, Regeneration Delivery and Community &amp; Leisure</li> <li>● Notices to be circulated to main and area offices of the District Council</li> <li>● Promotion will also include social media through Facebook and Twitter at the following addresses:-Facebook.com/doverdc and twitter@doverdc</li> </ul>
List of Consultees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Local clubs</li> <li>● Special Interest Community Groups</li> <li>● Leisure providers (Trusts and schools who have registered an interest)</li> <li>● Relevant National Governing Bodies of Sport</li> <li>● List of individuals with expressed interest in Playing Pitch provision and the Local Development Framework</li> <li>● South Kent Coast Health &amp; Well Being Board.</li> <li>● Statutory consultees for planning consultations, such as KCC, Parish Councils and Sport England</li> <li>● Elected members of Dover District Council</li> </ul>
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Organise district club consultation meetings for Football, Rugby &amp; Cricket.</li> <li>● Communicate with consultees via email providing a web link to on-line version of the document. <a href="http://www.dover.gov.uk/ldf">http://www.dover.gov.uk/ldf</a> and invitation to consultation meeting if applicable.</li> <li>● Electronic copies available on request.</li> <li>● Consultees are requested to submit their comments via the Council's website if possible, this will make analysis of comments more cost effective.</li> </ul>

Name of Document	Review of Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sports Facility Strategy 2015-2026
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternatively comments may be emailed to regenerationdelivery@dover.gov.uk or propertyservices@dover.gov.uk</li> <li>• Consultees can also make representations by letter.</li> <li>• A hard copy of the document will also be available to view at the main council offices and area offices.</li> <li>• Consultees who do not have an email address will be contacted by letter.</li> </ul>
Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All comments to be provided in written form and compiled by subject matter.</li> <li>• Officers to request clarification of comments as required.</li> </ul>
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automated responses will be sent to everyone who submits a comment to confirm receipt.</li> <li>• A report will be presented to Cabinet detailing issues raised through the consultation. The Council will consider all comments received to determine whether changes should be made before the documents are finalised.</li> <li>• The final report will be made electronically available to everyone who has submitted a comment.</li> </ul>
Costs	<p>Costs will be kept to a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consultation work will be undertaken in-house</li> <li>• communication via electronic means as far as possible</li> <li>• press notice costs (estimated at £250)</li> <li>• postage &amp; printing (estimated £100)</li> </ul>
Points of Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regeneration Delivery team on (01304) 872120 or regenerationdelivery@dover.gov.uk.</li> <li>• Property Services Team on (01304) 872442 or propertyservices@dover.gov.uk</li> </ul>