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# **Open Space, Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports and Indoor Sports Guidance Note**

**Version 4.**

**December 2025**

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# 1. Introduction

This is the Open Space, Playing Pitch and Indoor Sports Guidance Note for Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC). It follows on from the preceding Open Space Study July 2025 ([Open Space Study](#)), Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy August 2025 ([Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy](#)) and the Indoor Sports Facility Strategy June 2025 ([Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy](#)).

The provision of good quality and easily accessible open space, playing pitches, outdoor and indoor sport facilities is paramount to the establishment of sustainable communities. Such spaces and facilities contribute to a good quality of life, enhancing the health and well-being of the local community by providing opportunities to be physically active and socialise. Open spaces, can also enhance the quality of the natural environment, including biodiversity, and are important for a place to adapt to and mitigate further climate change. In addition, open spaces also have an important role in the character of a place, providing a setting to the built environment.

New housing development can generate additional need for open spaces, outdoors and indoor sports facilities in the borough. The planning system has tools to enable those additional needs to be met by requesting additional provision on the development site or by securing planning contributions to deliver new provision off-site or to improve the quality of existing spaces or facilities.

The open space typology of Formal Outdoor Sports is covered within the associated Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Study (PPOS). The PPOS is undertaken in accordance with the methodology provided in Sport England's 'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance: An approach to developing and delivering a Playing Pitch Strategy' (2013). The Indoor Sport and Leisure Facility Strategy is in accordance with Sport England's Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (ANOG) for indoor and outdoor sports facilities 2014.

The aim of this document is to:

- Summarise the current provision and any gaps in supply in terms of open space and outdoor and indoor sport facilities in the Borough drawing on the findings from the three evidence base studies.
- Provide a methodology to enable developers and Development Management officers to calculate the needs for on-site or off-site forms of provision, according to the demand generated by the scale and type of proposed development, and to negotiate the associated land provision, financial contributions, and maintenance costs.
- Include best practice design for open space, playing pitches and indoor sports provision.

## 2. Policy and Legal Context

This section outlines the national and local policy context at the time of writing, including the current framework for seeking planning contributions.

### National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) (NPPF) states in paragraph 96 that Planning Authorities should make policies and decisions that encourage and contribute to healthy lifestyles. This includes the provision of green infrastructure such as open spaces, as well as recreational and sport facilities.

Provision of such infrastructure is important to meet the social and recreational needs of local communities and therefore contribute to the retention and creation of sustainable places and communities, as outlined in paragraph 98. In addition, paragraph 103 expends on the importance of open spaces, not only in terms of the benefit to health and well-being, but also for the positive impacts on nature, and to help adapt to climate change and mitigate future worsening of the climate crisis.

### Tonbridge and Malling Corporate Strategy

Corporate vision: The Council's current aspirations for the borough are set out in its 'Innovation, Transformation and Delivery: Corporate Strategy 2023 - 2027 (2020). The vision of the plan is 'to be an innovative and forward-thinking council, who leads the people and businesses of the borough towards a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable future.'

To achieve this vision the Strategy sets out four priorities:

- Efficient services for all our residents, maintaining an effective council.
- Sustaining a borough which cares for the environment
- Improving housing options for local people whilst protecting our outdoor areas of importance
- Investing in our local economy to help support residents and businesses and foster sustainable growth.

The Corporate Strategy states the Council's commitment to 'continue our successful management of parks, open spaces and leisure centres so the best recreational facilities are available to everyone'.

### Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Adopted Development Plan

TMBC's adopted local development plan comprises the following documents:

- Core Strategy 2006-2021 (September 2007).
- Development Land Allocations DPD (April 2008).
- Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan (April 2008).
- Managing Development and the Environment DPD (April 2010).
- Local Plan Policies Map illustrating the policies and proposals contained in the Development Plan.

- Please also see the Minerals safeguarding map for the borough that forms part of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan Saved policies (April 2010).

Policies currently used for the provision of new or enhanced open space, sports and recreation facilities include Policy CP25 from the Core Strategy and Policy OS3 from the Managing Development and the Environment DPD (April 2010). Policy CP25 comments that all development proposals must either incorporate the infrastructure required because of the scheme or make provision for financial contributions and/or land to secure such infrastructure or service provision at the time it is needed, by means of conditions or a planning obligation.

Policy OS3 sets out a requirement for housing developments of 5 (Net) or more dwellings to provide or contribute to the provision of new open spaces and playing pitches or contribute to the improvement of existing ones. The policy requires onsite open space provision where there is a local deficiency in the quantity of open space and/or where a proposed residential scheme does not have good access to existing open spaces, unless it is demonstrated that it is not appropriate or feasible to provide on-site. In those instances, the policy requires a contribution to either provide new open-space off-site or to improve the quality of existing open spaces nearby.

Policy OS3 also refers to Policy Annex OS3. This provides open space quantitative standards and accessibility standards. The source for these standards is the Tonbridge and Malling Open Space Strategy (February 2009).

## **Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council's new Local Plan**

Following the withdrawal of a Local Plan from examination in 2021, the Council has been progressing a new Local Plan. An early Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation was undertaken in Autumn 2022, and the Council has recently consulted upon (10<sup>th</sup> November 2025 – 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2026) a Stage 2 Regulation 18 Local Plan Consultation.

The New Local Plan will be the key planning document for the borough which will provide a vision for and a range of strategic objectives for the borough covering a minimum 15-year period from adoption, a long-term spatial strategy setting out the locations for future housing and employment growth and will provide both strategic and non-strategic policies to guide development contributing to social, environmental and economic (sustainability) goals. Once adopted, the plan will replace all existing adopted plans and policies and will be used to assess and make decisions on planning applications, as well as to be used to help inform investment and the provision of infrastructure to support development, including sports provision.

## **Mechanism for providing new or enhanced open space, sports and recreation provision**

Tonbridge and Malling is not a CIL charging authority. It was decided at the meeting of the Community Infrastructure Levy Panel on 19 December 2011 to not move forward with production of a CIL Schedule, although this position is continually kept under review. In determining planning applications for new development, the Council therefore relies on S106 provisions of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to ensure that appropriate and successful mitigation of development takes place in all instances.

Section 106 agreements are a mechanism designed to ensure a development proposal is acceptable in planning terms where it would not otherwise be acceptable. S106 income is used to help fund the provision of supporting infrastructure in association with development and maximise the benefits and opportunities from growth, such as employment opportunities and affordable homes. The statutory tests for such agreements are that the obligations must be:

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
- directly related to the development; and

- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

## Financial contributions and provision of Open Space, sport and recreation facilities

There are many types of open space that can be addressed through S106 agreements including Parks and Gardens, natural and semi-natural green spaces, green corridors, outdoor sports facilities, amenity green space, play areas, allotments, cemeteries, and other burial grounds.

The provision of new or the enhancement of existing indoor sport and recreation facilities can also be addressed through S106 agreements. The Open Space Strategy 2015 had previously set out standards regarding the provision of open space and identified the locations where obligations were required through S106 and other sources to address deficiencies in the borough's open space network.

## Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended)

Regulation 122(2) of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) sets out limitations on the use of planning obligations that can be sought when a planning permission is being granted. These limitations are that planning obligations should be:

- a** “(a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms”; If the proposed development is likely to create additional demand for open spaces, outdoor or indoor sport facilities or exacerbate existing deficiencies then it is considered reasonable to request planning obligations to compensate for these impacts on the local community.
- b** “(b) directly related to the development; and”; Planning contributions will be sought if future residents of the new development will not have access to an appropriate amount and quality of open spaces, outdoor and indoor sport facilities as expected by local standards set out in this document.
- c** “(c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development;” Planning contributions will be sought for major residential developments and the amount required will be based on the number of dwellings proposed. It will therefore be proportionate to the scale of development.

## Up to date open space, sports and recreation evidence

The Council has produced a new Open Space Strategy 2025, a new Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy 2025 and an Indoor Sports Strategy 2025. These three new strategies now form part of the evidence base to help inform both the new emerging local plan as well as to provide information and evidence to support planning decisions.

The Open Space Strategy 2025 provides an up-to date position on quantity standards, current deficiencies in open space and accessibility to open spaces, as well as identifies how the Borough's existing open spaces can be improved and indeed where new open spaces would contribute to the health and well-being of communities. Likewise, the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy and Action Plan (adopted 2025) replaces the Open Space Strategy typology of Formal Outdoor Sports. The 2025 Strategy and Action Plan draws findings from the current outdoor sports provision, identifies any gaps in meeting current and future demand, and sets out specific recommendations. Similarly, the Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy (2025) provides key facts on the current provision of such facilities in the Borough. The findings of these studies are summarised in Section 3.

Given that previous considerations for open space, sports and recreation provision are dated and that new and up-to-date evidence is now available, this guidance note is provided to assist in the interpretation and implementation of the open space, playing pitch and indoor sports evidence.

The Guidance Note will be used when assessing planning applications and development proposals relating to open space, sports and recreation provision including where contributions are required as part of new residential development. The Guidance note will be used as a 'material consideration' and should be used in decision making as appropriate.

### 3. Evidence Base of Open Spaces, Playing Pitch and Indoor Sport Facilities Provision in Tonbridge and Malling

In this section, the findings of the studies will be summarised, including information about the level and quality of existing provision, and any deficiencies in meeting current demand.

#### Open Space Study

The 2025 Open Space Study (OSS) assessed the quantity, quality, and accessibility of public open spaces within the Borough. The study categorised open spaces into the following typologies:

*Table 1: The typologies of formal and informal open space*

Type	Abb	Definition	Primary Purpose
<b>Parks and Gardens</b>	PG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Country Parks</li><li>• Parks</li><li>• Formal public gardens</li></ul>	Accessible, high quality open space that offers opportunities for informal recreation and community events.
<b>Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces</b>	NG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Heathland and nature reserves</li><li>• Woodland</li><li>• Wetlands</li><li>• Water course and ponds</li><li>• Unimproved grassland</li><li>• Cliffs</li><li>• Dunes</li></ul>	Wildlife, conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness. Nature conservation will usually take priority over recreational uses in determining management regimes. Where the land is subject to a statutory designation such as SSSI, SAC or SPA, the Council has a duty to proactively manage it for nature conservation purposes.
<b>Amenity Greenspace</b>	AGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Informal recreational open space</li><li>• Green space in residential development</li><li>• Village greens</li></ul>	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.

Type	Abb	Definition	Primary Purpose
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other incidental landscaped areas</li> <li>• Private greenspace that has visual or other value, even if no physical public access is possible.</li> </ul>	
<b>Play Areas for Children and Young People</b>	CYP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equipped play facilities</li> <li>• Wheeled sports facilities</li> <li>• (e.g. Skatepark)</li> <li>• Ball courts</li> <li>• Meeting places and shelters</li> </ul>	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people such as equipped play areas, teenage shelters
<b>Allotments</b>	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allotments</li> <li>• Community gardens</li> <li>• City farms</li> </ul>	Opportunities for those people who wish to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health, and social inclusion.
<b>Cemeteries &amp; Churchyards</b>	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public cemeteries</li> <li>• Burial grounds</li> <li>• Churchyards</li> <li>• Crematoria grounds</li> </ul>	Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead. Provision is linked to historical and cultural values. Sites may have value for the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.

Based on these typologies, the strategy provides an assessment of the existing provision across the Borough. In a first instance, the quantity assessment (i.e. the surface area of public open spaces available per 1,000 inhabitants) enables the identification of the current level of provision across the borough, and feeds into the setting of local standards. Once the local standards are set, this enables the identification of areas where deficiencies or surpluses exist.

In a second instance, the quality assessment of the spaces, including their value for the local community, enables the identification of those sites that need further investment and in a third instance, gaps identification in terms of accessibility to green spaces, using maps showing areas not located within standard accessible distances defined in guidance from the Field in Trust or Natural England, can assist in the planning decision-making process. It is to be noted that a local area might have enough public open spaces per population, but if all are concentrated in one or few locations then there could still be accessibility gaps where a new residential development is being proposed.

In total, excluding outdoor sports 357 open spaces were assessed covering 1045.57 ha.

The Open Space Study (OSS) (2025) assesses the quantity, quality, and accessibility of public open spaces within the borough and categorises open spaces into a number of typologies. Based on these typologies, the study provides an assessment of the existing provision of open space across the borough and defines local standards in relation to quality, accessibility and quantity (Table 2). This is the baseline against which requirements for open space provision from new residential developments will be assessed.

*Table 2: Summary of Open Space Standards*

Typology	Quantity Standards (ha per 1000 population)	Access Standard
Parks and Gardens	0.80	1200 radial walking distance (20 minutes' drive time for strategic parks)
Amenity Greenspace	0.80	480m radial walking distance
Natural Greenspace	1.80	960m radial walking distance
Children's and Young Peoples Play	0.25	480m radial walking distance
<b>Total for new provision</b>	<b>3.65</b>	
MUGAs	1 per 7,500 people	10 minutes' walking time
Skateparks/BMX Tracks	1 per 20,000 people	15 minutes' cycling time
Outdoor Fitness Gyms	1 per 10,000 people	15 minutes' walking time

The quantity and accessibility standards set out in table 2 should be used as a starting point to calculate future open space requirements alongside a consideration of the Council's open space priorities, evidence and any other relevant and up-to-date information. Therefore, table 2 supersedes the quantity and accessibility standards provided in Policy Annex OS3 – Open Space Standards (Managing Development and the Environment DPD (April 2010) and the standards provided in the Open Space Strategy 2015.

Access standards are a tool to capture whether communities are served by existing facilities, defined as the distance that would be travelled by most users. They are provided as a starting point to help identify deficiencies in a catchment area.

In accordance with the latest Open Space evidence, developments that deliver a net increase of 6 dwellings or more will be required to contribute to new or enhanced open space provision. When calculating requirements, the following occupancy rates should be used. This is based on 2021 census data.

New developments of 6 net dwellings will need to provide 3.65 hectares of open space provision per 1,000 population. This equates to 36.5 sqm per person.

## Occupancy Rates by dwelling size

The occupancy levels to be used to determine the additional population from a development proposal is provided below. Where occupancy is unknown, the average household occupancy rate of 2.4 can be used.

*Table 3: Household Occupancy Rates Based on Size of Dwelling*

Number of Bedrooms	Occupancy Rate (persons per household)
1 bedroom	1.80
2 bedrooms	2.30
3 bedrooms	2.70
4 bedrooms	3.10
5+ bedrooms	3.50

## On or off-site provision

The Council will take a sequential approach to the provision of open space. Firstly, on-site provision will be sought in accordance with the adopted standards set out in table 2 above, where the site is in an area of quantitative deficiency, i.e. there is a need for additional open space.

On-site provision will be dependent on the size of the development, where larger developments will be expected to provide all types of provision on-site to serve the additional population.

Best practice guidance from organisations such as Fields In Trust (FIT), recommends that provision below certain sizes should not be provided as on-site provision and instead provided as off-site contributions. This is to avoid the creation of numerous small sites often of less recreational value (and quality over time). The following minimum area sizes are suggested to help inform when new provision should be provided on-site:

*Table 4: On-site provision – minimum area sizes*

Play space	Average No. of dwellings	Minimum area (ha)
Local Areas of Playspace (LAP) and informal play space	21 – 99 homes	0.01
Local Areas of Play (LAPs), Local Equipped Areas of Play (LEAPs) and informal play spaces	100 – 499 homes	0.04
Equipped Areas of Play (LEAPs) and informal play spaces	500+ homes	0.1
<b>Open space</b>		

Play space	Average No. of dwellings	Minimum area (ha)
Amenity / Natural Greenspace	16 homes	0.05
Park – small / medium / large	41 / 208 / 416 homes	0.3 / 1.5 / 3
Natural Green Space to meet Natural England standard (AGNSt)	500+ homes	2
MUGA	100+ homes	0.08
Skateparks / BMX tracks	500+ homes	0.02 for a skatepark 0.0375 for a freestyle BMX park
Outdoor Fitness Gyms	100+ homes	0.002
Allotment / Community Garden	500+ homes	0.0125 for allotment 0.006 for community garden

New provision for amenity, parks and natural green greenspace should be considered in relation to multifunctional greenspace in relation to local deficiencies. It may be that there are circumstances where smaller parks are warranted and this will need to be considered on a case by-case basis.

Play provision requirements for any development which does not trigger the on-site contribution will generally be sought as offsite contributions. However, if the development is not within reach of an existing play site than onsite provision may be warranted regardless of the small size of the development

Consideration for the provision and requirement of allotments or community gardens will need to be on a case-by-case basis

## Open Space Study (2025) recommendations

The open space study also made six recommendations as detailed below.

### Recommendation 1 - Protect open space provision

It is important for all open space to be protected. This is due to gaps in catchment mapping and the identified additional future need as set out in Part 5 of the study. The distribution of open space varies across the borough, however, there are identified shortages of at least 1 typology of open space in all parishes. It is therefore recommended that priority is placed on protecting those open spaces where there is an existing shortfall of supply.

### Recommendation 2 - Ensure low quality sites in areas of quantity or accessibility shortfalls are prioritised for enhancement

The policy approach to these sites should be to enhance their quality. This is especially the case if the site is deemed to be of high value. Such sites should be protected, along with all open space sites, for their quality to be improved.

Annex 1 of the study identifies those sites that should be given priority for enhancement. It is also important for other low-quality sites to be addressed in terms of their quality deficiency. Some of the key observations which relate to site enhancement include:

The importance of providing high quality provision and maintenance of formal facilities such as Parks and Gardens and Play Space.

- The need for additional and improved facilities for young people.
- The need to ensure high quality open spaces are designed and provided through new development where feasible.
- The importance of rights of way and natural green space, and the need to maintain and enhance provision for biodiversity.
- The role of open space in contributing to wider initiatives and strategies, such as health and wellbeing.
- Extending and enhancing the network of green infrastructure including the connectivity between sites and improved accessibility to existing sites.

### **Recommendation 3 - Recognise role of high quality and value sites**

Sites within this category should be viewed as being key areas of open space provision. The quality and value data in Annex 1 of the Study identifies those sites rating high for quality and value. Such sites are likely to provide multiple social and value benefits. Sites rating low for quality and/or value should also be retained with a view, to either improving quality or exploring their ability to help meet gaps/deficiencies in other forms of open space.

The focus should be on continuing to improve the quality and facilities at multifunctional and strategic sites. The larger Children's Play Areas should continue to be enhanced. These sites are highly valued by residents, and many people are willing to drive there, as the facilities provide a 'day out' for visitors.

### **Recommendation 4 - Parishes identified as having gaps in quantity or catchment mapping should be recognised through protection and enhancement**

These are sites which might help to meet the identified catchment gaps, or quantity deficiencies for other open space typologies, such as amenity greenspace to natural and semi- natural greenspace, or new parks and gardens as the population grows.

Section 3.3 of the Open Space Strategy provides maps by parish showing the quality and value audit results, as identified within the quality audit, provided to the Council as an Excel database. An overview of the open space quality audit scores is provided in Annex 2. Where new housing development is proposed, consideration should be given to improving existing open spaces within the parish where the development is located and / or improving accessibility to open space types that are not available through new site provision.

### **Recommendation 5 - The need for additional allotments should be led by demand**

Waiting lists at allotment sites within some of the parishes imply that supply is not meeting demand in some areas. Consultation with the parish councils will identify if new sites are required. Therefore, waiting list numbers, rather than the application of a standard should be used to determine the need for new allotment provision.

## **Recommendation 6 - Keeping data, report and supporting evidence base up to date to reflect changes**

Whilst significant changes are not as common for open space, inevitably over time changes will occur through the creation of new provision, loss of provision and/or alterations to site boundaries and management. Population change and housing growth are also another consideration to review when undertaking any form of update as this may impact on quantity levels and provision standards. Keeping up to date GIS data or other records to help identify where new open space has been created is recommended.

### **Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy**

An updated Playing Pitch Strategy has been prepared in line with paragraph 103 of the NPPF and in accordance with Sport England's "Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance: an approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy" to reflect current best practice for the analysis of provision of sports facilities.

The Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPOSS) was adopted in August 2025. The pitches and outdoor sports facilities included in the strategy are as follows and were selected on the basis that there is identified demand and need for each of the sports in Tonbridge and Malling:

- Football.
- Cricket.
- Rugby Union.
- Hockey.
- Bowls.
- Netball.
- Athletics.
- Baseball.
- Multi-use Games Areas (MUGAs).

Two different methodologies were applied to assess the playing pitch and outdoor sports needs in TMBC:

- Sport England's 'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance' (2013) for football, cricket, rugby, hockey, and baseball pitches.
- Sport England's 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance' (2014) for croquet courts, tennis courts, bowling greens, netball courts, athletics tracks and MUGAs.

The methodology for the pitches follows the 'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance' (2013) developed by Sport England. The process involves five stages and ten steps as follows:

- Stage A - Prepare and tailor the approach (Step 1).

- Stage B - Gather information on the supply of and demand for provision (step 2 gather supply information and views and step 3 gather demand information and views)
- Stage C - Assess the supply and demand information and views (step 4 understand the situation at individual sites, step 5 develops the current and future pictures of provision and step 6 identify the key findings and issues).
- Stage D - Develop the strategy (step 7 develop the recommendations and action plan and step 8 write and adopt the strategy).
- Stage E - Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date (step 9 apply and deliver the strategy and step 10 keep the strategy robust and up to date).

The methodology applied to assess the needs and opportunities for outdoor sports facilities follows Sport England's recommended approach, advocated in 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance' (2014). The process involves three stages as follows:

- Stage A - Prepare and tailor the approach.
- Stage B - Gather information on supply and demand.
- Stage C - Assessment - bringing the information together.

Assessing playing pitch needs in Tonbridge and Malling using the approach advocated by Sport England in its 'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance' and outdoor sports facilities using its 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance' has ensured that the exercise is both robust and evidence-based and as a result complies with the provisions of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework.

To assist with analysing provision at a more local level and to assess the differential spatial impact on supply and demand for sports facilities arising from housing growth the borough has been divided into two sub-areas.

These have been selected on the basis that they comprise discrete areas within which the resident population will typically look to access sports facilities locally. The sub-areas are as follows:

*Table 5: PPOSS Sub Areas*

Sub-area	Wards
Tonbridge and surrounds	Hildenborough Judd Vauxhall Cage Green and Angel Higham Trench Bourne

Sub-area	Wards
	East and West Peckham, Mereworth and Wateringbury
The Mallings and surrounds	Pilgrims with Igtham Borough Green and Platt East Malling, West Malling, and Offham Kings Hill Aylesford South and Ditton Birling, Leybourne and Ryarsh Larkfield Aylesford North and North Downs Snodland West and Holborough Lakes Snodland East and Ham Hill Walderslade

## Recommendations and Options

The PPOSS has set out recommendations under the three main headings 'Protect,' 'Enhance,' and 'Provide' for Football, Cricket, Hockey, Rugby Union and Baseball and options under these three main headings.

### Football

The PPOSS has six recommendations for football arranged under the three main headings of 'Protect,' 'Enhance,' and 'Provide.' The recommendations are:

#### Protect

**Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision:** The Study identifies a need for all current and disused football pitch sites to be retained, based on the specific identified roles that each can play in delivering the needs of the sport and/or other wider open space functions in Tonbridge and Malling both now and in the future.

It is therefore recommended that existing planning policies continue to support the retention and protection of all sites, based upon the evidence in the PPS. If any pitch sites do become the subject of development proposals, this will only be permissible if they are replaced and meet policy exception E4 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. This states that 'the playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development must be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development'.

**Recommendation 2 - Security of tenure:** 3.7% of the football pitches in the borough are on sites without secured community use. Without Community Use Agreements it is impossible to assume their continued availability for the community. It is therefore recommended that efforts are made to achieve security of Community Use Agreements at sites without them at present.

## Enhance

**Recommendation 3 - Improving existing ‘poor’ quality provision, including disused sites:** 20 pitches in the borough (15.9%) are rated as ‘poor’ quality and several more are rated at the lower end of ‘standard’ quality. Additionally, 27 pitches (21.4%) are served by ‘poor’ quality or no changing facilities. This reduces the quality of playing experience and may deter potential participants. Improving the pitches at Larkfield Recreation Ground, The Racecourse Sports Ground and Wateringbury Recreation Ground would have the greatest impact on current deficiencies.

- The owners of sites with ‘poor’ quality pitches should subscribe to the Football Foundation’s Pitch Power programme, a low-cost service that provides a pitch quality assessment and recommendations on how to improve maintenance to enhance capacity.
- The site owners concerned should be supported to apply for external funding for facility enhancements, including the receipt of developer contributions (see below) where the usage capacity would be enhanced.
- User clubs at council-owned pitches should be offered the opportunity to take over the maintenance of the pitches to improve quality and capacity, with appropriate initial support such as the loan of equipment, training, and financial support.

**Recommendation 4 - Developer contributions and external funding (enhancements):** Some of the additional demand for football arising from the proposed housing development in Tonbridge and Malling to 2041 can be accommodated by enhancing existing pitches and facilities. Improving the pitches at Larkfield Recreation Ground, The Racecourse Sports Ground and Wateringbury Recreation Ground would have the greatest impact on current deficiencies. It is recommended that the site-specific action plan in the Tonbridge and Malling PPS be used as the basis for determining facility enhancements that demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under S106 developer contributions and/or through applications for external funding to cover the capital and revenue implications of the enhancements.

## Provide

**Recommendation 5 - ‘3G’ football turf pitches:** Based upon the FA’s guide figure, there is a current shortfall of three full-sized ‘3G’ pitches in the borough, with additional demand equivalent to 1.5 full-sized pitches being generated by the higher population growth projection to 2041. ‘3G’ pitches are an important component of provision because their all-weather nature and floodlights enable a high volume of play to be accommodated on good quality playing surfaces. The provision of additional ‘3G’ pitches to meet needs identified in the Tonbridge and Malling PPS should be supported as a priority in appropriate locations.

**Recommendation 6 - Developer contributions and external funding (new provision):** Some of the extra demand for football in particular arising from the proposed housing development in Tonbridge and Malling, may need to be accommodated through the provision of new pitches and facilities, once options for improving capacity at existing sites have been explored. It is recommended that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under S106 developer contributions to meet the specific future needs identified in the Tonbridge and Malling PPS to cover the capital and revenue implications of new provision.

## Cricket

The PPOSS has four recommendations for cricket arranged under the three main headings of 'Protect,' 'Enhance,' and 'Provide.' The recommendations are:

### Protect

**Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision:** The Tonbridge and Malling PPS comprise a robust and evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for cricket in the borough. The PPS identifies a need for all current cricket pitch sites to be retained and protected based on the specific identified roles that each can play in delivering the needs of the sport in Tonbridge and Malling both now and in the future. It is therefore recommended that planning policies continue to support the retention of all sites based upon the evidence in the PPS. If any pitch sites do become the subject of development proposals, this will only be permissible if they are replaced and meet policy exception E4 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. This states that 'the playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development must be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development'.

### Enhance

**Recommendation 2 - Improving existing 'standard' and 'poor' quality pitches:** The pitches at 12 sites are rated as 'standard' quality. If improved to 'good' quality, it would add 160 seasonal match equivalent sessions to overall capacity, eliminating the current deficit of 102 sessions. It is recommended that the site owners should be supported to improve pitch quality, including the receipt of developer contributions (see below) where the usage capacity would be enhanced.

**Recommendation 3 - Developer contributions and external funding (enhancements):** Most of the demand for cricket arising from the proposed housing development in Tonbridge and Malling can be accommodated through enhancements to existing pitches and facilities. It is recommended that the site-specific action plan in the Tonbridge and Malling PPS be used as the basis for determining facility enhancements that demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under S106 developer contributions and/or through applications for external funding to cover the capital and revenue implications of the enhancements.

### Provide

**Recommendation 4 - Developer contributions and external funding (new provision):** Some of the extra demand for cricket arising from the proposed housing development in Tonbridge and Malling, may need to be accommodated through the provision of new pitches and facilities. It is recommended that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under S106 developer contributions and/or through applications for external funding to provide cricket facilities to meet the future needs identified in the Tonbridge and Malling PPS.

## Hockey

The PPOSS has four recommendations for hockey arranged under the three main headings of 'Protect,' 'Enhance,' and 'Provide.' The recommendations are:

### Protect

**Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision:** The Tonbridge and Malling PPS comprise a robust and evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for hockey in the borough. The PPS has identified a need to increase local hockey pitch capacity and to this extent, it will be important for all current community used hockey pitch sites to be retained and protected. It is therefore recommended that planning policies continue to support the retention of all sites, based upon the evidence in the PPS. If proposals to redevelop hockey pitches do come forward, this will only be permissible if they are replaced and meet policy exception E4 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. This states that 'the playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development must be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development'.

Since the introduction of 3G pitches and given their popularity for football, providers have seen this as a way of replacing their tired sand-based carpet and generating money from hiring out a 3G pitch to football clubs and commercial football providers. This has come at the expense of hockey, with players now travelling further distances to gain access to a suitable pitch and many teams being displaced from their preferred geographical area.

Due to its impact on hockey, it is appropriate to ensure that sufficient sand-based AGPs are retained for the playing development of the sport. To that end, a change of surface should require a planning application and, as part of that, the applicants should have to show that there is sufficient provision available for hockey in the locality. Opportunities to incorporate this into planning policy should therefore be explored, and advice from Sport England and EH should also be sought prior to any planning application being submitted.

It should also be noted that, if a surface is changed, it could require the existing floodlighting to be changed and, in some instances, noise attenuation measures may need to be put in place.

The 3G surface is limited in the range of sport that can be played or taught on it. Those proposing a conversion should take advice from the appropriate sports' governing bodies or refer to Sport England guidance 'Selecting the Right Artificial Grass Surface which can be found on Sport England's website: <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-costguidance/artificial-sports-surfaces/>

**Recommendation 2 - Managing the football-hockey demand interface:** Football clubs in the borough currently use 24 hours per week of midweek artificial grass pitch time for training purposes, displacing some hockey demand. Managing this demand via co-operative working between the FA and England Hockey is key to ensuring that all existing hockey pitches are retained and that additional '3G' pitches provision is made to redeploy demand from football for sports lit training/match facilities. England Hockey will also support schools with hockey pitches with business modelling for hockey-only pitch operation.

### Enhance

**Recommendation 3 - Maintaining existing pitch capacity:** The pitches in the borough will all need to be resurfaced in the next five years to ensure that they remain usable.

## Provide

**Recommendation 4 - Developer contributions and external funding:** It is recommended that the action plan in the Tonbridge and Malling PPS be used as the basis for seeking an appropriate level of financial contributions under S106 developer contributions and/or through applications for external funding to cover the capital and revenue implications of securing additional hockey pitch capacity to meet the needs of the additional population arising from housing growth.

## Rugby

The PPOSS has three recommendations for Rugby arranged under the three main headings of 'Protect,' 'Enhance,' and 'Provide.' The recommendations are:

### Protect

**Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision:** The Tonbridge and Malling PPS comprise a robust and evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for rugby union in the borough. The PPS has identified a need to increase local rugby pitch capacity and to this extent, it will be important for all current community used rugby pitch sites to be retained and protected. It is therefore recommended that planning policies continue to support the retention of all sites, based upon the evidence in the PPS. If proposals to redevelop rugby pitches do come forward, this will only be permissible if they are replaced and meet policy exception E4 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. This states that 'the playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development must be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development'.

### Enhance

**Recommendation 2 - Improving existing pitch capacity:** Additional pitch capacity would best be developed at existing pitches by improving the quality of pitch drainage and maintenance at the Jack Williams Ground with related floodlighting provision.

**Recommendation 3 - Developer contributions and external funding:** All the additional demand for rugby arising from housing development in Tonbridge and Malling, should be accommodated through the recommendations outlined above. It is recommended that the action plan in the Tonbridge and Malling PPS be used as the basis for seeking an appropriate level of financial contributions under S106 developer contributions and/or through applications for external funding to cover the capital and revenue implications of the enhancements, in conjunction with any other external sources of funding that might be available.

The PPOSS has three recommendations for Baseball arranged under the three main headings of 'Protect,' 'Enhance,' and 'Provide.' The recommendations are:

### Protect

**Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision:** The Tonbridge and Malling PPS comprise a robust and evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for baseball in the borough. The PPS identifies a need for all current baseball pitch sites to be retained and protected based on the specific identified roles that each can play in delivering the needs of the sport in Tonbridge and Malling both now and in the future. It is therefore recommended that planning policies continue to support the retention of all sites based upon the evidence in the PPS. If any pitch sites do become the subject of development proposals, this will only be permissible if they are replaced and meet policy exception E4 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy.

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

## Enhance

**Recommendation 2 - Enhancing existing facilities:** Disability access is 'poor' at Borley Field and 'standard at Williams Field. It is recommended that the site owners should be supported to improve pitch quality, including the receipt of developer contributions (see below) where the usage capacity would be enhanced.

**Recommendation 3 - Developer contributions and external funding (enhancements):** Most of the demand for baseball arising from the proposed housing development in Tonbridge and Malling can be accommodated through enhancements to existing pitches and facilities. It is recommended that the site-specific action plan in the Tonbridge and Malling PPS be used as the basis for determining facility enhancements that demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under S106 developer contributions and/or through applications for external funding to cover the capital and revenue implications of the enhancements.

## Tennis

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

## Protect

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

## Provide

There is a need to provide six additional courts to meet demand arising from the higher population growth projections and there is a case for making locally accessible provision in any major new housing developments.

## Enhance

Enhancing existing tennis court capacity by:

- Addressing the disabled access issues at the five sites where this is rated as 'poor.'
- Ensuring that the courts and ancillary facilities receive regular maintenance and improvements, funded by S106 developer contributions where appropriate.
- Considering the addition of floodlights at appropriate sites, particularly in conjunction with netball developments at shared use sites.

The additional lights will extend the time that outdoor facilities can be used, particularly in the winter, thereby increasing the health and well-being benefits they provide.

There are an estimated 3,504 playable daylight hours per year for an unlit court. This would increase to 4,368 hours per year for a sports-lit court, an increase of about 25%. For working adults or school age juniors available (on average) after 5pm on weekdays, the availability increase is even more significant. The additional capacity provided by sports lighting would allow year-round activity and therefore provide more opportunities for local people to maintain healthy and active lifestyles.

## **Bowls**

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

### **Protect**

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

### **Provide**

There is no need to provide additional facilities based on current and projected future demand.

### **Enhance**

Enhancing existing bowls green capacity by:

- Addressing the issues at the site where features are rated as 'poor.'
- Ensuring that the greens and ancillary facilities receive regular maintenance and improvements.

## **Netball**

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

### **Protect**

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

### **Provide**

There is a current need to provide one additional court as part of the proposed facilities development project at Aylesford Bulls RFC, two further additional courts will likely be required to meet demand arising from the lower population growth projections and three additional courts to meet demand from higher population growth projections as currently tested as part of the emerging Local Plan. There is a case for making locally accessible provision in any large strategic new housing developments.

### **Enhance**

Enhancing existing netball court capacity by delivering indoor courts at Aylesford Bulls RFC.

## Athletics

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

### Protect

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

### Provide

England Athletics has identified potential demand for an 'ActiveTrack' in the Malling sub-area. The feasibility of this should be examined further.

### Enhance

The Tonbridge School Track should complete the requirements for achieving 'TrackMark' status.

## Informal sports

The options for securing existing informal outdoor facilities capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

### Protect

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

### Provide

A range of informal outdoor facilities will be required to meet the needs of the additional population arising from housing developments.

### Enhance

Enhancing existing informal outdoor facilities capacity by ensuring they receive regular maintenance, and improvements will be key to preserving current provision.

The Key Strategic Actions for each sport are set out in Annex 3 and the Individual Site-Specific Actions are set out within Annex 4 of this guidance note. Further information on all playing pitches / sports considered can be found within the Playing Pitch Strategy (2025).

Tonbridge and Malling is made up of 28 Parish Councils, which are often responsible for the management of the parks, playgrounds, public open spaces, and equipped areas for children's and young people's play activities in their area. Within Tonbridge, sites are usually managed by the Borough Council.

The strategy summarised the current provision in open spaces in the Parish Council areas of the Borough.

Finally, the Strategy made six recommendations:

## **Recommendation 1 - Protect open space provision**

It is important for all open space to be protected. This is due to gaps in catchment mapping and the identified additional future need as set out in Part 5. The distribution of open space varies across the borough, however, there are identified shortages of at least 1 typology of open space in all parishes. It is therefore recommended that priority is placed on protecting those open spaces where there is an existing shortfall of supply.

## **Recommendation 2 - Ensure low quality sites in areas of quantity or accessibility shortfalls are prioritised for enhancement**

The policy approach to these sites should be to enhance their quality. This is especially the case if the site is deemed to be of high value. Such sites should be protected, along with all open space sites, for their quality to be improved. Annex 1 identifies those sites that should be given priority for enhancement. It is also important for other low-quality sites to be addressed in terms of their quality deficiency. Some of the key observations which relate to site enhancement include:

The importance of providing high quality provision and maintenance of formal facilities such as Parks and Gardens and Play Space.

- The need for additional and improved facilities for young people.
- The need to ensure high quality open spaces are designed and provided through new development where feasible.
- The importance of rights of way and natural green space, and the need to maintain and enhance provision for biodiversity.
- The role of open space in contributing to wider initiatives and strategies, such as health and wellbeing.
- Extending and enhancing the network of green infrastructure including the connectivity between sites and improved accessibility to existing sites.

## **Recommendation 3 - Recognise role of high quality and value sites**

Sites within this category should be viewed as being key areas of open space provision. The quality and value data in Annex 1 identifies those sites rating high for quality and value. Such sites are likely to provide multiple social and value benefits. Sites rating low for quality and/or value should also be retained with a view, to either improving quality or exploring their ability to help meet gaps/deficiencies in other forms of open space.

The focus should be on continuing to improve the quality and facilities at multifunctional and strategic sites. The larger Children's Play Areas should continue to be enhanced. These sites are highly valued by residents, and many people are willing to drive there, as the facilities provide a 'day out' for visitors.

## **Recommendation 4 - parishes identified as having gaps in quantity or catchment mapping should be recognised through protection and enhancement**

These are sites which might help to meet the identified catchment gaps, or quantity deficiencies for other open space typologies, such as amenity greenspace to natural and semi- natural greenspace, or new parks and gardens as the population grows.

Section 3.3 Open Space Strategy provides maps by parish showing the quality and value audit results, as identified within the quality audit, provided to the Council as an Excel database. An overview of the open space quality audit scores is provided in Annex 2. Where new housing development is proposed, consideration should be given to improving existing open spaces within the parish where the development is located and / or improving accessibility to open space types that are not available through new site provision.

## **Recommendation 5 - The need for additional allotments should be led by demand**

Waiting lists at allotment sites within some of the parishes imply that supply is not meeting demand in some areas. Consultation with the parish councils will identify if new sites are required. Therefore, waiting list numbers, rather than the application of a standard should be used to determine the need for new allotment provision.

## **Recommendation 6 - Keeping data, report and supporting evidence base up to date to reflect changes**

Whilst significant changes are not as common for open space, inevitably over time changes will occur through the creation of new provision, loss of provision and/or alterations to site boundaries and management. Population change and housing growth are also another consideration to review when undertaking any form of update as this may impact on quantity levels and provision standards. Keeping up to date GIS data or other records to help identify where new open space has been created is recommended.

## **Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy**

An updated Playing Pitch Strategy has been prepared in line with paragraph 103 of the NPPF and in accordance with Sport England's "Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance: an approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy" to reflect current best practice for the analysis of provision of sports facilities.

The Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPOSS) was adopted in August 2025. The pitches and outdoor sports facilities included in the strategy are as follows and were selected on the basis that there is identified demand and need for each of the sports in Tonbridge and Malling:

- Football.
- Cricket.
- Rugby Union.
- Hockey.
- Bowls.
- Netball.

- Athletics.
- Baseball.
- Multi-use Games Areas (MUGAs).

Two different methodologies were applied to assess the playing pitch and outdoor sports needs in TMBC:

- Sport England's 'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance' (2013) for football, cricket, rugby, hockey, and baseball pitches.
- Sport England's 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance' (2014) for croquet courts, tennis courts, bowling greens, netball courts, athletics tracks and MUGAs.

The methodology for the pitches follows the 'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance' (2013) developed by Sport England. The process involves five stages and ten steps as follows:

- Stage A - Prepare and tailor the approach (Step 1).
- Stage B - Gather information on the supply of and demand for provision (step 2 gather supply information and views and step 3 gather demand information and views)
- Stage C - Assess the supply and demand information and views (step 4 understand the situation at individual sites, step 5 develops the current and future pictures of provision and step 6 identify the key findings and issues).
- Stage D - Develop the strategy (step 7 develop the recommendations and action plan and step 8 write and adopt the strategy).
- Stage E - Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date (step 9 apply and deliver the strategy and step 10 keep the strategy robust and up to date).

The methodology applied to assess the needs and opportunities for outdoor sports facilities follows Sport England's recommended approach, advocated in 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance' (2014). The process involves three stages as follows:

- Stage A - Prepare and tailor the approach.
- Stage B - Gather information on supply and demand.
- Stage C - Assessment - bringing the information together.

Assessing playing pitch needs in Tonbridge and Malling using the approach advocated by Sport England in its 'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance' and outdoor sports facilities using its 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance' has ensured that the exercise is both robust and evidence-based and as a result complies with the provisions of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework.

To assist with analysing provision at a more local level and to assess the differential spatial impact on supply and demand for sports facilities arising from housing growth the borough has been divided into two sub-areas.

These have been selected on the basis that they comprise discrete areas within which the resident population will typically look to access sports facilities locally. The sub-areas are as follows:

*Table 6: PPOSS Sub Areas*

Sub-area	Wards
Tonbridge and surrounds	Hildenborough Judd Vauxhall Cage Green and Angel Higham Trench Bourne East and West Peckham, Mereworth and Wateringbury
The Mallings and surrounds	Pilgrims with Igtham Borough Green and Platt East Malling, West Malling, and Offham Kings Hill Aylesford South and Ditton Birling, Leybourne and Ryarsh Larkfield Aylesford North and North Downs Snodland West and Holborough Lakes Snodland East and Ham Hill Walderslade

## Recommendations and Options

The PPOSS has set out recommendations under the three main headings 'Protect,' 'Enhance,' and 'Provide' for Football, Cricket, Hockey, Rugby Union and Baseball and options under the three main headings for

The PPOSS has six recommendations for football arranged under the three main headings of 'Protect,' 'Enhance,' and 'Provide.' The recommendations are:

### Protect

**Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision:** The Study identifies a need for all current and disused football pitch sites to be retained, based on the specific identified roles that each can play in delivering the needs of the sport and/or other wider open space functions in Tonbridge and Malling both now and in the future. It is therefore recommended that existing planning policies continue to support the retention and protection of all sites, based upon the evidence in the PPS. If any pitch sites do become the subject of development proposals, this will only be permissible if they are replaced and meet policy exception E4 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. This states that 'the playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development must be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development'.

**Recommendation 2 - Security of tenure:** 3.7% of the football pitches in the borough are on sites without secured community use. Without Community Use Agreements it is impossible to assume their continued availability for the community. It is therefore recommended that efforts are made to achieve security of Community Use Agreements at sites without them at present.

### Enhance

**Recommendation 3 - Improving existing 'poor' quality provision, including disused sites:** 20 pitches in the borough (15.9%) are rated as 'poor' quality and several more are rated at the lower end of 'standard' quality. Additionally, 27 pitches (21.4%) are served by 'poor' quality or no changing facilities. This reduces the quality of playing experience and may deter potential participants. Improving the pitches at Larkfield Recreation Ground, The Racecourse Sports Ground and Wateringbury Recreation Ground would have the greatest impact on current deficiencies.

- The owners of sites with 'poor' quality pitches should subscribe to the Football Foundation's Pitch Power programme, a low-cost service that provides a pitch quality assessment and recommendations on how to improve maintenance to enhance capacity.
- The site owners concerned should be supported to apply for external funding for facility enhancements, including the receipt of developer contributions (see below) where the usage capacity would be enhanced.
- User clubs at council-owned pitches should be offered the opportunity to take over the maintenance of the pitches to improve quality and capacity, with appropriate initial support such as the loan of equipment, training, and financial support.

**Recommendation 4 - Developer contributions and external funding (enhancements):** Some of the additional demand for football arising from the proposed housing development in Tonbridge and Malling to 2041 can be accommodated by enhancing existing pitches and facilities. Improving the pitches at Larkfield Recreation Ground, The Racecourse Sports Ground and Wateringbury Recreation Ground would have the greatest impact on current deficiencies.

It is recommended that the site-specific action plan in the Tonbridge and Malling PPS be used as the basis for determining facility enhancements that demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under S106 developer contributions and/or through applications for external funding to cover the capital and revenue implications of the enhancements.

## Provide

**Recommendation 5 - '3G' football turf pitches:** Based upon the FA's guide figure, there is a current shortfall of three full-sized '3G' pitches in the borough, with additional demand equivalent to 1.5 full-sized pitches being generated by the higher population growth projection to 2041. '3G' pitches are an important component of provision because their all-weather nature and floodlights enable a high volume of play to be accommodated on good quality playing surfaces. The provision of additional '3G' pitches to meet needs identified in the Tonbridge and Malling PPS should be supported as a priority in appropriate locations.

**Recommendation 6 - Developer contributions and external funding (new provision):** Some of the extra demand for football in particular arising from the proposed housing development in Tonbridge and Malling to 2041, may need to be accommodated through the provision of new pitches and facilities, once options for improving capacity at existing sites have been explored. It is recommended that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under S106 developer contributions to meet the specific future needs identified in the Tonbridge and Malling PPS to cover the capital and revenue implications of new provision.

The PPOSS has four recommendations for cricket arranged under the three main headings of 'Protect,' 'Enhance,' and 'Provide.' The recommendations are:

## Protect

**Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision:** The Tonbridge and Malling PPS comprise a robust and evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for cricket in the borough. The PPS identifies a need for all current cricket pitch sites to be retained and protected based on the specific identified roles that each can play in delivering the needs of the sport in Tonbridge and Malling both now and in the future. It is therefore recommended that planning policies continue to support the retention of all sites based upon the evidence in the PPS. If any pitch sites do become the subject of development proposals, this will only be permissible if they are replaced and meet policy exception E4 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. This states that 'the playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development must be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development'.

## Enhance

**Recommendation 2 - Improving existing 'standard' and 'poor' quality pitches:** The pitches at 12 sites are rated as 'standard' quality. If improved to 'good' quality, it would add 160 seasonal match equivalent sessions to overall capacity, eliminating the current deficit of 102 sessions. It is recommended that the site owners should be supported to improve pitch quality, including the receipt of developer contributions (see below) where the usage capacity would be enhanced.

**Recommendation 3 - Developer contributions and external funding (enhancements):** Most of the demand for cricket arising from the proposed housing development in Tonbridge and Malling to 2041 can be accommodated through enhancements to existing pitches and facilities. It is recommended that the site-specific action plan in the Tonbridge and Malling PPS be used as the basis for determining facility enhancements that demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under S106 developer contributions and/or through applications for external funding to cover the capital and revenue implications of the enhancements.

## Provide

**Recommendation 4 - Developer contributions and external funding (new provision):** Some of the extra demand for cricket arising from the proposed housing development in Tonbridge and Malling to 2041, may need to be accommodated through the provision of new pitches and facilities. It is recommended that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under S106 developer contributions and/or through applications for external funding to provide cricket facilities to meet the future needs identified in the Tonbridge and Malling PPS.

The PPOSS has four recommendations for hockey arranged under the three main headings of 'Protect,' 'Enhance,' and 'Provide.' The recommendations are:

## Protect

**Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision:** The Tonbridge and Malling PPS comprise a robust and evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for hockey in the borough. The PPS has identified a need to increase local hockey pitch capacity and to this extent, it will be important for all current community used hockey pitch sites to be retained and protected. It is therefore recommended that planning policies continue to support the retention of all sites, based upon the evidence in the PPS. If proposals to redevelop hockey pitches do come forward, this will only be permissible if they are replaced and meet policy exception E4 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. This states that 'the playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development must be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development'.

Since the introduction of 3G pitches and given their popularity for football, providers have seen this as a way of replacing their tired sand-based carpet and generating money from hiring out a 3G pitch to football clubs and commercial football providers. This has come at the expense of hockey, with players now travelling further distances to gain access to a suitable pitch and many teams being displaced from their preferred geographical area.

Due to its impact on hockey, it is appropriate to ensure that sufficient sand-based AGPs are retained for the playing development of the sport. To that end, a change of surface should require a planning application and, as part of that, the applicants should have to show that there is sufficient provision available for hockey in the locality. Opportunities to incorporate this into planning policy should therefore be explored, and advice from Sport England and EH should also be sought prior to any planning application being submitted.

It should also be noted that, if a surface is changed, it could require the existing floodlighting to be changed and, in some instances, noise attenuation measures may need to be put in place.

The 3G surface is limited in the range of sport that can be played or taught on it. Those proposing a conversion should take advice from the appropriate sports' governing bodies or refer to Sport England guidance 'Selecting the Right Artificial Grass Surface which can be found on Sport England's website: <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-costguidance/artificial-sports-surfaces/>

**Recommendation 2 - Managing the football-hockey demand interface:** Football clubs in the borough currently use 24 hours per week of midweek artificial grass pitch time for training purposes, displacing some hockey demand. Managing this demand via co-operative working between the FA and England Hockey is key to ensuring that all existing hockey pitches are retained and that additional '3G' pitches provision is made to redeploy demand from football for sports lit training/match facilities. England Hockey will also support schools with hockey pitches with business modelling for hockey-only pitch operation.

## Enhance

**Recommendation 3 - Maintaining existing pitch capacity:** The pitches in the borough will all need to be resurfaced in the next five years to ensure that they remain usable.

## Provide

**Recommendation 4 - Developer contributions and external funding:** It is recommended that the action plan in the Tonbridge and Malling PPS be used as the basis for seeking an appropriate level of financial contributions under S106 developer contributions and/or through applications for external funding to cover the capital and revenue implications of securing additional hockey pitch capacity to meet the needs of the additional population arising from housing growth by 2041.

The PPOSS has three recommendations for Baseball arranged under the three main headings of 'Protect,' 'Enhance,' and 'Provide.' The recommendations are:

## Protect

**Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision:** The Tonbridge and Malling PPS comprise a robust and evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for rugby union in the borough. The PPS has identified a need to increase local rugby pitch capacity and to this extent, it will be important for all current community used rugby pitch sites to be retained and protected. It is therefore recommended that planning policies continue to support the retention of all sites, based upon the evidence in the PPS. If proposals to redevelop rugby pitches do come forward, this will only be permissible if they are replaced and meet policy exception E4 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. This states that 'the playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development must be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development'.

## Enhance

**Recommendation 2 - Improving existing pitch capacity:** Additional pitch capacity would best be developed at existing pitches by improving the quality of pitch drainage and maintenance at the Jack Willams Ground with related floodlighting provision.

**Recommendation 3 - Developer contributions and external funding:** All the additional demand for rugby arising from housing development in Tonbridge and Malling to 2041, should be accommodated through the recommendations outlined above. It is recommended that the action plan in the Tonbridge and Malling PPS be used as the basis for seeking an appropriate level of financial contributions under S106 developer contributions and/or through applications for external funding to cover the capital and revenue implications of the enhancements, in conjunction with any other external sources of funding that might be available.

The PPOSS has three recommendations for Baseball arranged under the three main headings of 'Protect,' 'Enhance,' and 'Provide.' The recommendations are:

## Protect

**Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision:** The Tonbridge and Malling PPS comprise a robust and evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for baseball in the borough. The PPS identifies a need for all current baseball pitch sites to be retained and protected based on the specific identified roles that each can play in delivering the needs of the sport in Tonbridge and Malling both now and in the future.

It is therefore recommended that planning policies continue to support the retention of all sites based upon the evidence in the PPS. If any pitch sites do become the subject of development proposals, this will only be permissible if they are replaced and meet policy exception E4 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. This states that 'the playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development must be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development'.

## Enhance

**Recommendation 2 - Enhancing existing facilities:** Disability access is 'poor' at Borley Field and 'standard at Williams Field. It is recommended that the site owners should be supported to improve pitch quality, including the receipt of developer contributions (see below) where the usage capacity would be enhanced.

**Recommendation 3 - Developer contributions and external funding (enhancements):** Most of the demand for baseball arising from the proposed housing development in Tonbridge and Malling to 2041 can be accommodated through enhancements to existing pitches and facilities. It is recommended that the site-specific action plan in the Tonbridge and Malling PPS be used as the basis for determining facility enhancements that demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under S106 developer contributions and/or through applications for external funding to cover the capital and revenue implications of the enhancements.

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

## Protect

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

## Provide

There is a need to provide six additional courts to meet demand arising from the higher population growth projections and there is a case for making locally accessible provision in any major new housing developments.

## Enhance

Enhancing existing tennis court capacity by:

- Addressing the disabled access issues at the five sites where this is rated as 'poor.'
- Ensuring that the courts and ancillary facilities receive regular maintenance and improvements, funded by S106 developer contributions where appropriate.
- Considering the addition of floodlights at appropriate sites, particularly in conjunction with netball developments at shared use sites.

The additional lights will extend the time that outdoor facilities can be used, particularly in the winter, thereby increasing the health and well-being benefits they provide.

There are an estimated 3,504 playable daylight hours per year for an unlit court. This would increase to 4,368 hours per year for a sports-lit court, an increase of about 25%. For working adults or school age juniors available (on average) after 5pm on weekdays, the availability increase is even more significant.

The additional capacity provided by sports lighting would allow year-round activity and therefore provide more opportunities for local people to maintain healthy and active lifestyles.

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

## **Protect**

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

## **Provide**

There is no need to provide additional facilities based on current and projected future demand.

## **Enhance**

Enhancing existing bowls green capacity by:

- Addressing the issues at the site where features are rated as 'poor.'
- Ensuring that the greens and ancillary facilities receive regular maintenance and improvements.

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

## **Protect**

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

## **Provide**

There is a current need to provide one additional court as part of the proposed facilities development project at Aylesford Bulls RFC, two further additional courts by 2041 to meet demand arising from the lower population growth projections and three additional courts to meet demand from higher population growth projections. There is a case for making locally accessible provision in any major new housing developments.

## **Enhance**

Enhancing existing netball court capacity by delivering indoor courts at Aylesford Bulls RFC.

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

## Protect

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

## Provide

England Athletics has identified potential demand for an 'ActiveTrack' in the Malling sub-area. The feasibility of this should be examined further.

## Enhance

The Tonbridge School Track should complete the requirements for achieving 'TrackMark' status.

The options for securing existing informal outdoor facilities capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

## Protect

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

## Provide

A range of informal outdoor facilities will be required to meet the needs of the additional population arising from housing developments.

## Enhance

Enhancing existing informal outdoor facilities capacity by ensuring they receive regular maintenance, and improvements will be key to preserving current provision.

The Key Strategic Actions for each sport are set out in Annex 3 and the Individual Site-Specific Actions Annex 4 to this SPD.

## 4. Indoor Sports Facility Strategy

The Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy (2025) provides information on the current provision for:

- Multi-use sports halls (including consideration of specific requirements for gymnastics).
- Competition and leisure swimming pools including diving facilities.
- Health and fitness facilities.
- Squash courts.
- Indoor tennis facilities.
- Indoor bowls facilities.

The study assessed the supply and demand for the above facilities and undertook an audit of the facilities. As with the PPOSS the borough has been divided into sub areas shown in Table 5 above.

To supplement and complement the strategic assessment, TMBC commissioned an additional assessment of sports hall and swimming pool needs using the Sport England Facilities Planning Model (FPM) spatial modelling tool. The FPM study is a quantitative, accessibility and spatial assessment of the supply, demand and access to sports halls and swimming pools in the borough.

The sports hall modelling included three modelling 'runs':

- A baseline assessment of provision in 2023.
- A forward assessment of demand for sports halls and their distribution, based on the projected changes in population including residential development between 2023 and 2041.
- An assessment of a reduction in supply at The Angel Centre in meeting the demand for sports halls and their distribution up to 2041, given its potential role in town centre redevelopment.

The swimming pool modelling included two modelling runs:

- A baseline assessment of provision in 2023.
- A forward assessment of demand for swimming pools and their distribution, based on the projected changes in population including residential development between 2023 and 2041.

The Angel Centre - Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council is currently considering options for the reprocision of facilities currently provided at the Angel Centre in Tonbridge. This is in the wider context of regeneration proposals for the town centre. The facility was built in 1982, has a sub-optimal layout and requires major refurbishment, in particular:

- The boilers need replacing.
- The centre is not watertight.

- The drains are in poor condition.
- The Medway Hall floor is in poor condition.

No structural or condition surveys have been carried out, but it is estimated that around £2 million of work is required on mechanical and electrical services and structural repairs. This expenditure would be remedial and would not expand the range of leisure opportunities available to customers.

The recommendations for the Indoor Sports Facility strategy are:

## Protect

**Recommendation 1: Safeguarding existing provision** - The Tonbridge and Malling Sports Facilities Strategy (SFS) comprises a robust and evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for sports facilities in the borough. The Assessment has identified a need for all current facilities to be retained, based on the specific identified roles that each can play in delivering the needs of sport in the borough both now and in the future. It is therefore recommended that existing planning policies continue to support the retention of all sites, based upon the evidence in the SFS.

**Recommendation 2: Community access to education sports facilities** - A significant proportion of some types of sports facility (sports halls) in Tonbridge and Malling are located on school sites. Most of these facilities are not subject to formal Community Use Agreements and external use could, therefore in theory be withdrawn at any time. Some education sports facilities have no community use at all at present, which does not optimise the use of public resources. Furthermore, the management arrangements for many school sports facilities with external use are not conducive to maximising that use. It is therefore recommended that:

- Efforts are made to secure formal Community Use Agreements at existing education sports facilities.
- Community Use Agreements become a standard condition of planning consent at all new education sports facilities, along with a design and specification that is consistent with maximising school and community use.
- Community Use Agreements become a standard condition of receiving funding from developer contributions to improve or enhance the capacity of existing sports facilities on education sites, to meet the additional demand arising from housing developments.
- Support be offered to schools with their community use management arrangements, including funding for community access improvements if feasible.

## Enhance

**Recommendation 3: Capacity improvements** - Some of the current demand for sports facilities in Tonbridge and Malling can be accommodated through enhancements to existing facilities that will facilitate extra usage at existing sites. It is recommended that the site-specific action plan in the Tonbridge and Malling SFS be used as the basis for prioritising facilities enhancements that will help to alleviate the current identified and future projected deficits.

**Recommendation 4: Developer contributions (enhancements)** - Some of the additional demand that will arise from future housing development and the related population growth in Tonbridge and Malling, can be accommodated through enhancements to existing sports facilities. It is therefore recommended that:

- The action plan in the Tonbridge and Malling SFS be used as the basis for determining facility enhancements that demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments.
- An appropriate level of financial contributions should then be sought under Section 106, using Sport England's Sports Facility Calculator tool, to cover the capital and revenue implications of the enhancements. This has been applied to calculate the future need for, and related costs of, additional sports halls, swimming pools, and indoor bowls facilities in this strategy.

## Provide

**Recommendation 6: New sports facilities** - The Tonbridge and Malling SFS consider two population growth scenarios:

- The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 152,859 by 2041, an increase of 20,659 (or 15.6%).
- A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population of 168,864 by 2041, an increase of 36,664 (or 27.7%).

Whilst spare capacity in most types of sports facility can meet current and future needs to 2041, subject to maintaining the quantity quality and accessibility of existing provision, specific shortfalls identified in the Tonbridge and Malling SFS by an evidence-based needs assessment based upon the above projections, that would best be met through new provision include:

*Table 7: Future needs*

Facility type	Current Needs	Future needs (lower)	Future needs (higher)
Sports halls	All needs met subject to re-provision of the Angel Sports Centre sports hall	All needs met subject to reprovision of the Angel Sports Centre sports hall	All needs met subject to re-provision of the Angel Sports Centre sports hall
Swimming pools	All needs met with some programming and opening times refinements	All needs met by current spare capacity	All needs met by current spare capacity
Health and fitness	All needs met	All needs met by current spare capacity	42 extra fitness stations
Squash courts	All needs met	Additional needs met by current spare capacity	Additional needs met by current spare capacity
Indoor tennis courts	All needs met	Additional needs met by current spare capacity	Additional needs met by current spare capacity
Indoor bowls	All needs met	Additional needs met by current spare capacity	Additional needs met by current spare capacity
Gymnastics facilities	Additional capacity needed	New provision in the Mallings sub-area or extension to the existing specialist facility	New provision or extension to the existing specialist facility

**Recommendation 7: Developer contributions (new provision)** - Some of the additional demand arising from future housing development in Tonbridge and Malling can be accommodated through the provision of new sports facilities. It is therefore recommended that:

- The action plan in the Tonbridge and Malling SFS be used as the basis for determining new facility provision that demonstrably relates to the scale and location of specific developments.
- An appropriate level of financial contributions should then be sought under Section 106, using Sport England's Sports Facility Calculator tool, to cover the capital and revenue implications of providing the facilities. This has been applied to calculate the future need for, and related costs of, additional sports halls, swimming pools, and indoor bowls facilities in this strategy.

Annex 5 provides the Indoor Sports Facility Strategies Key Specific Actions and Annex 6 provides the Indoor Sports Facilities Individual Site-Specific Actions.

# 5. Determining Open Space and Sports Provision from New Residential Development

In this section the process to assess whether provision for open space, playing pitches and/or indoor built sport facilities should be required for the proposed development is set out. This could take the form of providing or contributing to new provision (either on the development site or off-site) or contributing to the maintenance/improvement of existing sites/facilities.

## Open Space Study

Section 106 developer contributions will be applied to all proposals of 5 residential units or above (Net) as set out in TMBC Managing Development in the Environment Development Plan Document (Adopted April 2010). A sequential approach will be pursued by the Council to the provision of open space. Firstly, on-site provision will be sought in accordance with the adopted standards set out in Table 2 of this Guidance Note, where the site is in an area of quantitative deficiency, i.e. there is a need for additional open space.

Where this is not practicable, new off-site open space provision will be sought within the relevant accessibility threshold for the category of open space in accordance with the adopted standards. If it is not practicable to achieve this, or if there are no deficiencies in quantity of certain forms of open space provision, developer contributions will be sought to enhance the quality of existing provision within the relevant accessibility threshold, with priority given to those sites listed in Annex 1 Open Space to be Protected and Enhanced, although regard should also be paid to any relevant projects listed in the Council's Capital Plan.

If, after going through the previous steps, it is evident that deficiencies in quality cannot be met within the relevant accessibility threshold, contributions will be sought to enhance the quality of open spaces that fall beyond the outer limit of the relevant accessibility threshold but still reasonably accessible to the proposed development. The contributions will be spent on enhancing their quality in terms of their recreational, biodiversity, amenity, and/or historic value.

The following 4 steps will be used in determining planning applications involving the requirement for open space:

**Step 1** - Determine the open space requirement resulting from the development based on the recommended quantity standards. The following forms of development will generate an open space requirement:

- Open market housing
- Affordable housing (including proposals for 100% affordable housing)
- Permanent mobile homes and static caravans
- Substitution house types where the number of bedrooms is different (subject to re-calculation)

Proposals for sheltered housing may generate an open space requirement, depending on the type of accommodation and the characteristics of residents. They will be considered on their own merits but in all cases, they will not generate a requirement for children's play space.

The following forms of development **will not** generate an open space requirement:

- Extensions to dwellings
- Nursing homes
- Substitution house types where the number of bedrooms remains the same.

**Step 2** – Consider whether the size of the development warrants onsite provision as per table 4? If certain typologies are not warranted, consider increasing the size of other typologies considering the size and location of the development and proximity to other open spaces.

**Step 3** – If on site provision is not suitable or appropriate, determine which sites could benefit most from an offsite contribution considering recommendations set out in the Open Space Strategy 2025.

**Step 4** - Calculate the financial offsite contribution.

The additional pressure on open spaces arising from demand from new development will be calculated according to the following two steps, based on a standard occupancy rate.

a) First, the new population arising from the proposed development should be estimated:

$$\text{2.4 people per household} \times \text{no. of dwellings} = \text{estimated population.}$$

For example, a development of forty dwellings is expected to result in a population of 96 people.  
(2.4 \* 40 dwellings ).

b) Then, the amount of open space required for each typology should be calculated based on the quantity standards (for Option A – local standards these are set out in Table 2):

$$(\text{Quantity standard of the open space typology} \times \text{estimated population from new development}) / 1000 = \text{amount of open space needed}$$

For example, a development of 40 dwellings will require a minimum of 0.25ha of Children and Young People based on the quantity Standard (0.25 x 96)/1000).

## How is Maintenance to be included in the calculations ?

The cost of open space maintenance is dependent on a number of different elements and can only be calculated on a case-by-case basis. The cost is expected to cover a period of 20 years.

It is important that for a cost to be provided, the applicant provides as much information as possible regarding the proposed open space. Information on the following items should be provided:

- Amount of grass
- Number of trees
- Number and type of bins.
- Number and type of gates.
- Length of and size of hedges and fencing

- Number and type of signage.
- Type and length of footpath
- Number and type of seating.
- Play area – number and type of equipment.
- Any planting areas

Where applications are in outline and the details of the open space are not yet known, the S106 will include a clause so that the figure is finalised at the reserved matters stage.

**Pooling of Contributions** - Off-site contributions may be pooled and subsequently allocated to a relevant facility within the immediate area or settlement catchment. Pooling may take place if the level of open space generated by the development proposal will have some impact but not sufficient to justify the need for a discrete piece of infrastructure.

## Adoption of open spaces and the use of management companies

The Council cannot dictate who adopts or maintains open space or pitch assets and there are several options available to the developer/applicant including the Borough Council, the Parish Council, an appropriate community association, or a private management company.

The most important objective is that facilities are made available and that the maintenance of the facilities is effectively and permanently secured at the point of decision making, with such details agreed and specified in a legal agreement.

Where an application is in outline and the details are not yet known, options for the future maintenance will be set out in a legal agreement, with the exact details to be set out with the reserved matters application.

For those applications where on-site provision is to be provided, regardless of who is to be responsible for the maintenance of the open space, the applicant/developer will be required to seek agreement of the Council that the provision has been completed to the required quality standard.

In those situations where the open space will be signed over to a management company, the applicant/developer or management company must provide a copy of the management plan to TMBC for agreement. Where appropriate consultation on the management plan will take place. Management Plans should include:

- Name and Contact of Management Company
- Arrangements for the management group set up including terms of reference etc.
- Full maintenance schedule for each element of the open space
- Arrangements for resident liaison e.g. a resident association set up or use of a liaison officer.

In those situations where a management company will be the responsible party, paid for by a service charge, it is vital that home purchasers are made aware of the responsibility for making any ongoing financial contributions towards the maintenance of playspace and recreational areas. This information will be obtained via the home purchasers' solicitor during the conveyancing process.

In determining contributions, the TMBC S106 Calculator for open space and other sports not covered by the Playing Pitch or Indoor Sports Calculator should be used.

## Calculating the Cost of Playing Pitches

The use of the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator [Playing Pitch Calculator | Sport England](#) to calculate planning contributions for playing pitches should be used. The calculator estimates the demand arising from a proposed development and calculates the costs of providing the required number of pitches to meet the demand. The Playing Pitch Calculator will need to be accessed via TMBC Planning Officers.

It considers demand for football, rugby, hockey, and cricket but excludes demand for tennis courts, netball, courts, baseball pitches, bowling greens, and athletics tracks.

Using the team data for football, rugby, hockey and cricket from the Playing Pitch Strategy (2025), the calculator estimates capital cost for grass and artificial pitches, lifecycle cost, and ancillary facilities costs such as changing rooms. This would be a simpler approach which harvests the findings from the assessment report built onto the calculator and would not need to be reviewed yearly based on inflation due to the calculator being updated by Sport England based on their facility cost guidance.

Once a planning application is received, the demand based on the number of dwellings proposed will be entered onto the calculator to estimate the level of contributions.

The new population arising from the proposed development will be estimated based on the number of dwellings proposed multiplied by the average of 2.4 person per dwelling.

New development demand for tennis courts / netball courts can be calculated by using Sport England Sports Facility Calculator. See Indoor Sports Facilities cost calculations below.

For baseball pitches, athletics tracks and netball courts it is advised to use the Fields In Trust Calculator: [Green space calculator | Fields in Trust](#) as relevant to 'Courts, greens, tracks and trails. This will set out what a development should provide in terms of hectares of provision, which will allow a contribution of costs to be identified for either on or off site provision by using the Sport England Facility Cost Guidance [Facility Costs 3Q2024](#).

For informal sports, the quantity standard is identified in Table 1. The facility cost element can be provided by using Sport England Facility Cost Guidance above.

## Calculating the cost of Indoor sports Facilities

The Sport England Built Sport Facilities Calculator [Sports Facility Calculator | Sport England](#) will be used to calculate development contributions to either combine/ pool resources for the provision of a new sports hall or swimming pool, or for the maintenance or improvements of existing facilities in the Borough.

As for the Playing Pitch Calculator above, once a planning application is received, the new demand based on the number of dwellings proposed will be entered onto the calculator to estimate the contribution.

The new population is estimated based on the number of dwellings proposed multiplied by the average of 2.4 person per dwelling. As for the Playing Pitch Calculator, there will be no need to review annually this figure for inflation as the calculator considers facility costs which are updated every quarter by Sport England.

An example of the use of the Sport England Built Facility Calculator and Playing Pitch Calculator is provided via the following hyper link.

The Built Facility Calculator has been added to by the Local Authority to provide for fitness gyms, fitness space and village and community halls [Microsoft Word - Appendix C Calculation examples](#)

To use the Green Space Calculator for netball courts, the scale of the development i.e. number of residential units x the average occupancy is used to calculate the number of courts needed.

## 6. Design Principles and Stewardship

All developments should demonstrate consideration of active design principles as set out by Sport England. Active Design sets out how the design of our environments can help people to lead more physically active and healthy lives – it's about helping to create environments [Active Design | Sport England](#). The key relevant principles are:

- 1 Activity for all - Neighbourhoods, facilities and open spaces should be accessible to all users and should support sport and physical activity across all ages.
- 2 Walkable communities - Homes, schools, shops, community facilities, workplaces, open spaces, and sports facilities should be within easy reach of each other.
- 3 Connected walking & cycling routes - All destinations should be connected by a direct, legible, and integrated network of walking and cycling routes. Routes must be safe, well lit, overlooked, welcoming, well-maintained, durable, and clearly signposted. Active travel (walking and cycling) should be prioritised over other modes of transport.
- 4 Co-location of community facilities - The co-location and concentration of retail, community and associated uses to support linked trips should be promoted. A mix of land uses and activities should be promoted that avoid the uniform zoning of large areas to single uses.
- 5 Network of multifunctional open space - A network of multifunctional open space should be created across all communities to support a range of activities including sport, recreation and play plus other landscape features including Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), woodland, wildlife habitat, and productive landscapes (allotments, orchards). Facilities for sport, recreation and play should be of an appropriate scale and positioned in prominent locations.
- 6 High quality streets and spaces - Flexible and durable high-quality streets and public spaces should be promoted, employing high quality durable materials, street furniture, and signage.
- 7 Appropriate infrastructure - Supporting infrastructure to enable sport and physical activity to take place should be provided across all contexts including workplaces, sports facilities, and public space, to facilitate all forms of activity.
- 8 Active buildings - The internal and external layout, design and use of buildings should promote opportunities for physical activity.
- 9 Maintaining high-quality flexible spaces - Spaces and facilities should be effectively maintained and managed to support physical activity. These places should be monitored to understand how they are used, and flexible so that they can be adapted as needed.
- 10 Activating spaces - The provision of spaces and facilities which can help to improve physical activity should be supported by a commitment to activate them, encouraging people to be more physically active and increasing the awareness of activity opportunities within a community.

In addition, Sport England provide other design and planning guidance that can be obtained her. [Facilities and planning | Sport England](#).

The [National Design Guide](#) provides useful guidance on well-designed natural environment and public spaces. For example, it sets out that well-designed places for nature:

- Integrate existing and incorporate new natural features into a multifunctional network that supports quality of place, biodiversity, and water management, and addresses climate change mitigation and resilience.
- Prioritise nature so that diverse ecosystems can flourish to ensure a healthy natural environment that supports and enhances biodiversity.
- Provide attractive open spaces in locations that are easy to access, with activities for all to enjoy, such as play, food production, recreation, and sport, to encourage physical activity and promote health, wellbeing, and social inclusion.

Also, well-designated public spaces:

- Include well-located public spaces that support a wide variety of activities and encourage social interaction, to promote health, well-being, social and civic inclusion.
- Have a hierarchy of spaces that range from large and strategic to small and local spaces, including parks, squares, greens, and pocket parks.
- Have public spaces that feel safe, secure, and attractive for all to use; and
- Have trees and other planting within public spaces for people to enjoy, whilst also providing shading, and air quality and climate change mitigation.

Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework includes a [Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide](#) with guidance on the building block of Green Infrastructure including green spaces and how to design these spaces to derive multiple functions or benefits and on how to apply the Green Infrastructure standards in various area types.

Design guidelines available on the [Make Space For Girls](#) website should also be taken into consideration to design open spaces and parks that are attractive and feel safe for teenage girls.

In addition, an Urban Greening Factor [The Urban Greening Factor and New Developments - urbanspec](#) has also been developed by Natural England. This is a voluntary tool which aims to enhance the delivery of green infrastructure and improve the amount of greening in towns. The tool sets out a target score for a minimum proportion of greening for a particular site. In general, a factor of 0.4 is recommended for residential sites and a factor of 0.3 is advised for commercial sites. The calculation attributes different weights to different types of surface cover.

There are a number of council policies to be considered:

- Lighting Policy DC5 of the Council's Managing Development and the Environment Development Plan states that proposals for new leisure facilities will be permitted subject to there being no unacceptable adverse impacts arising from lighting.
- Policy CP2 (Sustainable Transport) of the Council's Core Strategy seeks to ensure that new developments are well located relative to public transport links, provide a choice of transport modes, are compatible with the character and capacity of the highway network, provide for any necessary enhancements to the safety of the highway network and ensure accessibility for all.

- Policy SQ8 (Road Safety) of the Council's Managing Development and the Environment Development Plan comments that development proposals will only be permitted where they would not significantly harm highway safety and where they comply with parking standards.
- Parking and cycle parking - maximum standards are set out within Kent County Council guidance, within the Kent and Medway Structure Plan (Supplementary Planning Guidance 3 and 4) and with other relevant guidance.
- Electric Vehicle charging facilities proposed should be provided in accordance with the relevant building requirements.
- Any planning proposed initiatives would be considered to minimise the need to travel by private car and would promote sustainable travel modes as required by the provisions of the NPPF. The submission of a Travel Plan pursuant to the approved Framework Travel Plan will need to be secured.
- Policy CP10 (Flood Protection) of the Council's Core Strategy ultimately seeks to reduce flood risk and Policy CC3 (Adaptation - Sustainable Drainage) of the Council's Managing Development and the Environment Development Plan comments that development proposals will not be permitted unless they incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) appropriate to the local ground water and soil conditions, local drainage regimes and in accordance with the Groundwater Regulations.
- Policy NE2 (Habitat Networks) of the Council's Managing Development and the Environment Development Plan sets out that biodiversity of the borough and in particular priority habitats, species and features, will be protected, conserved, and enhanced. The restoration and creation of new habitats will be pursued and promoted.
- Policy NE3 (Impact of Development on Local Biodiversity) of the Council's Managing Development and the Environment Development Plan comments that development that would adversely affect biodiversity or the value of wildlife habitats across the borough will only be permitted if appropriate mitigation and/or compensation measures are provided which would result in overall enhancement.
- Policy NE4 (Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland) of the Council's Managing Development and the Environment Development Plan seeks to retain and where possible enhance tree and hedgerow coverage along with preserving ancient woodland.
- Policy SQ6 (Noise) of the Managing Development and the Environment Development Plan Document requires proposals to demonstrate that noise levels are appropriate for the proposed use and respect the surroundings. The policy also identifies that proposals for built development should incorporate design measures such that internal noise levels are in accordance with relevant guidance.
- Policy SQ4 of the Council's Managing Development and the Environment Development Plan Document relates to air quality and sets out that development will only be permitted where the following criteria are met: (a) the proposed use does not result in a significant deterioration of the air quality of the area, either individually or cumulatively with other proposals or existing uses in the vicinity; (b) proposals would not result in the circumstances that would lead to the creation of a new Air Quality Management Area; (c) proximity to existing potentially air polluting uses will not have a harmful effect on the proposed use; and (d) there is no impact on the air quality of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites of nature conservation interest or appropriate mitigation is proposed to alleviate any such impact.
- Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development) of the Council's Core Strategy refers to the need for 10% of energy consumption to be generated on-site from alternative energy sources for proposed developments. Policy CC1 (Mitigation - Sustainable Design) of the Managing Development and the Environment Development Plan Document discusses the requirement for proposed developments to incorporate passive design

measure into the design to reduce energy demand. Further noting how developments should be configured, type of ventilation and the use of green roofs to ensure a reduction in energy demand.

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