

Thanet
District Council

An Assessment of Open Space,
Sport and Recreation (PPG 17
Compliant)

A

Final Report

By

Strategic Leisure Limited

July 2006

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SECTION I – INTRODUCTION

Introduction

- 1.1 Strategic Leisure Limited (SLL) was appointed by Thanet District Council (TDC) in July 2005 to undertake an assessment of open space, sport and recreation facilities (PPG 17¹ compliant) to identify local needs for provision, and opportunities for enhancement, development or replacement of current facilities.

Scope of the Study

- 1.2 The study adheres to the guidance detailed in *“Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17”* on undertaking local assessments of open space, sport and recreation provision. The study has included an audit of existing indoor and outdoor open space, sport and recreational facilities in terms of:

- Quantity
- Quality
- Accessibility

- 1.3 The study has also given consideration to the following factors:

- Different uses of facilities
- Classification and differing typologies of provision
- The scale and availability of resources for maintenance / management
- English Nature's *“Natural Accessible Greenspace Standards”*

- 1.4 The study undertaken has included:

- Consideration of the likely needs up to 2017
- A review of all existing applicable plans and strategies
- A review of existing open space, leisure and recreation policies contained within the Local Development Plan (LDP).
- A range of consultation exercises to ascertain the views of the local community, key interest groups and wider stakeholders
- Consideration of existing facilities within the district, including provision by the local authority (including education), private and voluntary sectors
- An assessment of playing pitch provision using the methodology detailed in *“Toward a Level Playing Field: A Guide to the Production of Playing Pitch Strategies”* (Sport England, 2002)
- Recommendations for local standards of provision with regard to quantity, quality and accessibility for inclusion within the emerging Local Development Framework

Structure of Study Report

- 1.5 A number of key tasks have been undertaken to complete the assessment and develop standards of provision and recommendations. These are detailed in Section II.
- 1.6 This report has been structured as follows, to assist in the presentation, and analysis of a vast amount of information. Technical details are provided in the Appendices. Maps used to illustrate specific points from the audit, and the consultation process, are included in separate Appendices to the report.

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¹ PPG17 – Planning Policy Guidance Note 17

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Section III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assessment Findings, by typology (types of open space/facility), on a Districtwide basis ➤ Findings, by typology, on a area basis ➤ Local Standards – their rationale, recommendations for Thanet, and implications of their application ➤ Recommendations and Conclusions 	21
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Rationale: Why Develop a Strategy?

- 1.7 The desirable outcomes from undertaking a PPG17 Assessment are to provide local people with networks of accessible, high quality open spaces and sports and recreation facilities in both rural and urban areas, which will meet the need of local people and visitors. PPG 17 strives to provide a balance between enhancing existing provision and new provision.
- 1.8 The provision of good quality, accessible open spaces, and sport and recreation facilities can make a positive contribution to a number of key social objectives. These include:
- 1.9 **Promoting and supporting the urban renaissance** agenda through the provision of local networks of well maintained and well managed, open spaces, sports and recreational facilities in order to help create urban environments that are safe, attractive and clean. Greenspaces in urban areas perform vital functions as areas for nature conservation and biodiversity and by acting as 'green lungs' can assist in meeting objectives to improve air quality.
- 1.10 **Supporting rural renewal** – the countryside can provide opportunities for recreation and visitors can play an important role in the regeneration of the economies of rural areas. Open spaces within rural settlements and accessibility to local sport and recreational facilities contribute to the quality of life and well being of those people that live in the remoter areas.
- 1.11 **Promoting social inclusion and community cohesion** – well planned and maintained open spaces and good quality sports and recreational facilities can play a major part in improving people's sense of well being in the place they live. As a focal point for community activity, they can bring people from deprived communities together providing opportunities for wider social interaction.
- 1.12 **Health and well being** – open space, sports and recreational facilities have a vital role to play promoting healthy living and preventing illness and in the social development of children of all ages through play, sporting activities and interaction with others.
- 1.13 **Promoting more sustainable development** – by ensuring that open space, sports and recreational facilities (particularly in urban areas) are easily accessible by walking or cycling and that more heavily used or intensive sports and recreational facilities are planned in locations well served by public transport.
- 1.14 **Improving** open spaces, sport and recreation facilities and to encourage greater use by all members of the community. A key driver for this is to provide the residents of the District with safe, accessible, attractive provision and facilities that are of the right type and meet the needs of the communities that use them.
- 1.15 **Protecting** valuable provision from development where there is a definite need and ensuring that new landscape schemes contribute to improving the area and that quality is maintained obtaining correct levels of funding.

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- 1.16 Identify processes for **Partnership Involvement** – the Council is keen to involve local communities in the management of greenspaces and wishes to create opportunities for people to be involved and have ownership, working together to improve the greenspace.

Key Principles of the Open Space, Sport and recreation Assessment

- 1.19 There are several key principles in the development of the assessment, they are:
- To concentrate on providing quality provision
 - To develop wider use of facilities with restricted access e.g. school facilities
 - To secure high levels of access at a local level to a range of facilities (variety of green spaces and sport/recreation facilities)
 - To respond to local needs when there is a clear articulated consensus of opinion
 - To concentrate on providing sports pitches at strategic locations fit for purpose
 - To develop local standards to meet local needs

The Thanet Approach: Methodology

- 1.20 For the assessment, the Companion Guide to PPG17 identifies five key steps to undertaking an assessment of playing pitches, indoor facilities and open space. These are broadly:
- **Step 1** – Identifying Local Needs
 - **Step 2** – Auditing Local Provision
 - **Step 3** – Setting Provision Standards
 - **Step 4** – Applying Provision Standards
 - **Step 5** – Recommendations
- 1.21 The desirable outcomes from undertaking a PPG 17 Assessment are to provide local people with networks of accessible, high quality open spaces and sports and recreation facilities in both rural and urban areas, which will meet the needs of **LOCAL** people and visitors. PPG 17 strives to provide a balance between enhancing existing provision and new provision. The study undertaken for Thanet District Council has followed the framework above.
- 1.22 The objectives of the open space and indoor recreation study are to:
- Assess the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space and recreational facilities in the district.
 - Set local standards for the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space and recreational facilities taking into account local needs and priorities in accordance with PPG17
 - Identify deficiencies or surpluses in the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space and provide recommendations for resolving them
 - Provide information to inform decisions and help determine future development proposals in the area and feed into the Local Development Framework (LDF)(In line with Central Government guidance contained in PPG12)
 - Support corporate and departmental strategies including the community strategy, cultural strategy, leisure plan.
- 1.23 A number of key tasks have been undertaken to complete the assessment and develop standards of provision and recommendations. These are summarised below:
- 1.24 **Stage 1: Identification of local needs:** The following key tasks have been undertaken:
- A review of the implications and priorities of existing strategies to identify links with existing strategic priorities.
 - A review of existing policies and provision standards relating to open space, sport and recreation facilities.

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- Consultation with the community and stakeholders via Sports Club Surveys, School Surveys and Face-to-face meetings. Additionally a 500 door to door survey to capture the views of facility users and non-users was undertaken see Appendix 1.

1.25 **Stage 2: Audit of local provision:** The following key tasks have been undertaken:

- Review of quantitative information held by the Council
- Site visits to an identified sample of over 200 known open space, sport and recreation facilities with community use (across all sectors)
- Consultation with facility providers
- Mapping facilities in respect of location and catchment area

1.26 **Stage 3: Setting Provision Standards:** The following key tasks have been undertaken:

- Quantity Standards set using the findings of facility audits, local consultation and demand modelling.
- Quality Standards set using the findings of facility audits and local consultation.
- Accessibility Standards set using the findings of facility audits, local consultation and mapping catchment areas.

1.27 **Stage 4: Application of Provision Standards:** On the basis of the standards set, application of these, such as defined catchment areas, the impact of poor quality, allows the:

- Identification of deficiencies in accessibility
- Identification of deficiencies in quality
- Identification of surpluses or deficiencies in quantity

1.28 The strategy has been developed to provide an overall framework that will guide the Council in future management and designation of open spaces

Context for Study

1.29 In undertaking this study, it has been important to reference and reflect the thinking at national level, on the role of open space, sport and recreation provision. The key strategic influences are summarised in Table 1.1

1.30 The need for improved use and management of open spaces particularly public parks in urban areas has seen increased commitment demonstrated in national regional and local government policy.

1.31 The recent **Urban Parks Assessment** undertaken by the DETR found the shortfall in budgets for public Greenspace nationally to be in excess of £1.3 billion.

1.32 A prescribed methodology for the assessment of playing pitch provision is detailed in *“Towards a Level Playing Field”* (Sport England, CCPR, 2002). In addition to the assessment methodology, a number of policies to oppose the loss of playing fields are detailed in this guidance document.

1.33 The following key documents summarised in Table 1.1 below have provided the impetus for the development and preparation of this strategy. They include:

Table 1.1 - National and Local Planning Guidance Strategic Framework and Assessment

PLANNING GUIDANCE	Objective
Planning Policy Guidance Note 17.	Outlines the importance for local authorities to undertake robust assessments of the local need for quality open spaces. In order to develop local standards which are based on local supply and demand for facilities.
<i>“Living Places – Cleaner, Safer, Greener”</i> (Office of the	Gives a commitment to develop a clearer national framework for urban parks and greenspaces

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PLANNING GUIDANCE	Objective
<i>Deputy Prime Minister 2002)</i>	
Urban Greenspaces Task Force <i>“Greenspaces, Better Places”</i>	Recognises that parks and open spaces have the potential to make a significant contribution to urban regeneration by making places more liveable and sustainable whilst also enriching the quality of people’s lives and local communities
The Framework for Sport in England and Mission Possible (The South East Plan for Sport 2004-2008)	These documents provide the national sporting context for this study. The importance of a range of facility provision is identified, encompassing formal sporting facilities, and an environment that facilitates informal active recreation.
Thanet District Council Local Plan	The Local plan forms the basis for decisions on planning applications and provides the policies and proposal framework the Council believe will strike the right balance between the need to cater for development requirements across the District and the need to protect and enhance the environmental qualities of the area.
Thanet District Council Corporate Plan 2003 2007	<p>A Vision where Thanet will use all its energy and available resources to make Thanet somewhere that is economically successful, visually attractive, vibrant and stimulating, and a safe place in which to live and work. WE will seek to provide high quality public services that meet the needs of all residents.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan identifies the following links with open space and indoor sport and recreation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase take up of council allotment plots by 10% by March 2005 and a further 10% by 2006. • Increase active recreation within the local population by 5% by April 2005 • Develop and agree a new strategy for leisure investment in Thanet by March 2005 and implement the Strategy from April 2005 – March 2010 • Implement The North East Kent European Marine Sites Management Scheme until June2006 which seeks an effective balance between nature conservation, coastal management and leisure/tourism uses and which links to the Environmental Action Programme. Implement recommendations by March 2008.
Thanet Community Strategy 2004	<p>The Vision ‘A prosperous, secure and welcoming community. A safe, attractive place to live and work, Realising Thanet’s potential’.</p> <p>The key themes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The economy ➤ Lifelong Learning ➤ A safer Community ➤ The Environment & Housing ➤ An Inclusive Community ➤ Health and Lifestyle <p>Health and Lifestyle Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 target Increase active recreation within the local population by 5% by April 2005. • Year 1 actions Prepare and implement Thanet Walking Strategy. Promote and increase the number of employer based Bike User Group (BUGs),

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PLANNING GUIDANCE	Objective
	<p>and Cycling for Health Scheme participants. Increase the uptake of sport and exercise opportunities through the GP referral scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid term targets 3-5 years Development of new community sports facilities, increase the number of schools taking part in the Healthy Schools programme. • Long term goals Decrease child obesity, increase participation in sport and exercise across all age groups <p>Environment and Housing - Wild Life Coast & Countryside Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Year Target • Increase number of entries for the Thanet Wildlife Gardening Awards by 5% by April 2005. • 1 Year Actions • Promote wildlife gardening across Thanet through the Wildlife Gardening Awards. • Produce Thanet Nature Conservation Strategy. • Mid Term Target(s) • Increase the extent of semi-natural habitats within Thanet by 3-5 yrs) 5% by 2009. • An agreed way forward to be decided on the problem of sewage pollution off the Thanet coast (Foreness Point and Tivoli Brook) by 2006. • Mid Term Actions • Implement the management scheme for the Thanet Coast (North East Kent European Marine Sites action plan) by 2005-06. • Lobby authorities to reduce damage to habitats caused by sewage pollution in Thanet. • Long Term Goals • Increase habitats to provide wildlife havens <p>Environment and Housing - Public Open Space Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Year Target • Improve the horticultural features in Town Centres and on roundabouts, which are in high profile locations, by April 2005. • 1 Year Actions • Re-landscape roundabouts on entrance roads to Thanet. • Complete Tree Planting Project. • Investigate town centre improvements through landscaping. • Implement new maintenance management of town centre flower bed areas. • Mid Term Target(s) • Completion of Thanet residents' "Improving Your Space" (3-5 yrs) projects by 2007. • Implement recommendations and actions from the Open Spaces Strategy by April 2007. • Improve biodiversity of Council owned land where possible by April 2008. • Mid Term Actions • Thanet Council to work with community to ensure delivery of "Improving Your Space" projects (funded by New Opportunities Fund, through LSP). • Designate areas for wildlife in relevant public open spaces. • Long Term Goals • To apply for Green Flag status for one major park in Thanet.

- 1.34 Of equal importance is the need for the study to reflect the local context, to ensure that whilst the principles of the audit and assessment correspond with national policies and legislation, the outcomes of the study clearly link with the local issues, inform planning policy, and support achievement of the

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corporate priorities in Thanet. This approach has been adopted to ensure that the study sets out a clear way forward for the Council, and its partners, for the future development, provision protection and delivery of open space, sport and recreation as part of the overall regeneration and development of the District, for the benefit of local people.

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The Thanet Approach

- 2.1 The Companion Guide to PPG17 identifies five key stages to undertaking an assessment of playing pitches, indoor facilities and open space. These are broadly:

Stage 1 – Identifying Local Needs

Stage 2 – Auditing Local Provision

Stage 3 – Setting Provision Standards

Stage 4 – Applying Provision Standards

Stage 5 – Policy Options and Recommendations

- 2.2 A number of key research exercises were undertaken during the period July 2005 – February 2006, to identify the extent and condition of existing sport, leisure and open space provision in the District, and the local views on this provision. It is important to note that the 2001 Census data has been used as the baseline for this study, and all calculations are based on these figures. However, the fact that the population is increasing is acknowledged, and where possible, the figures to support this have been shown.
- 2.3 The assessments of quantity and quality have been undertaken on a District wide basis, but also demonstrate the difference between the local areas.

Thanet Profile and Demographics

- 2.4 Located in the South East of England, Thanet is bounded by the English Channel to the North East, with the historic Goodwin Sands and the French coast less than an hour away. To the west is the City of Canterbury and to the South is Dover. The Isle of Thanet comprises of the three coastal towns of Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate and a picturesque rural hinterland. The district boasts of 26 miles of sandy beaches. Four of the beaches have won blue flag awards and both Margate and Ramsgate have won holiday resort awards.
- 2.5 The three towns have their own unique character; Broadstairs with its links to Dickens, its internationally renowned Folk Week and the sheltered Viking Bay continue to attract visitors and tourists. Margate is building on its day tripper image by developing a 'Cultural Quarter' in the old town linked to the 'Turner Contemporary Project'. The beach remains a focus for visitors. Ramsgate is set in the backdrop of the Royal Harbour, which is now one of the South East's foremost yachting centres.
- 2.6 Thanet covers approximately 10,322 hectares and supports a population around 126,000. Thanet has faced decline in the past years but much work has gone into diversifying the local economy by expanding the manufacturing and service industries. Thanet now has its own University campus and in 2005 the new Westwood Cross Shopping Centre opened circumventing the need to travel to Canterbury to shop.
- 2.7 Thanet's road links have improved the Thanet Way (A299) is now duelled from the M2 to Manston, and serves the district from London and the A28 from Canterbury. The final phase of the East Kent Access will see the duelling of the remaining sections of the A253/A299 and A256 to Ramsgate New Port and linking Thanet, the major employer Pfizer, and on to Dover. The cross Channel Port of Dover is 45mins away and a further 15 minutes will get you to the Channel Tunnel Terminal at Folkestone.
- 2.8 The Thanet towns are well connected by rail but the frequency and quality of service is poor.

Demographic Analysis

- 2.9 It is important to consider the demographic make up of the District as key demographic and socio-economic characteristics are known to influence demand characteristics. For example, certain age-groups are known to register higher participation rates in a number of sport and leisure activities; deprived communities often experience issues relating to access to services and opportunities; cultural

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backgrounds may result in some passive and active recreation pursuits being favoured over others; car ownership levels can impact on the range of facilities that can be accessed. A brief review of the key demographics for the area shows that:

Population	The total population within Thanet was just 126,702 as measured in the 2001 census. The proportion of males and females is 47% and 53% respectively.
Age Structure	In 2001, 25,526 (20.15 %) of the resident population were aged under 16, 73,608 (58.1%) were aged between 16 and 65, and 27,568 (27.1%) were aged 65 and over. The mean average age was 42. This compared with an average age of 39 within England and Wales.
Ethnic Origin	Thanet has a much higher than average proportion of white people (97.7% compared with 90.9% nationally) and figures lower than the national average for all ethnic origins.
Economic activity	There are below average numbers of people in full time employment compared to the national figure. In 2001 there were 4,096 full-time students and schoolchildren aged 16 to 74 in Thanet. Of these, 2,305 were aged 18 and over. These figures come from the 2001 census, where students were enumerated at their term time address. Of the resident population aged 16 to 74, 34.3 per cent had no qualifications, whilst 12.9 per cent were qualified to degree level or higher.
Mobility	The level of mobility is low with a higher than average level of people with no car and lower than average level of people owning 2 or more cars.

2.10 It is important to consider key statistics within the profile as some age groups have a higher propensity to participate in sport and active recreation than others (particularly young people), which therefore has an impact on the sport, recreation and open space provision.

2.11 The table below shows the Population Profile (2004 mid year estimates Office National Statistics)

Table 2.1 - Population Profile. (2004 mid year estimates)

	District
Total Population	127,900
Males	60,900 47.62%
Females	67,000 52.38%
Aged 0 to 15 years	25,200 20.7%
Aged 16 to 64 years	75,300 71.4%
Aged 65+ years	27,200

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District
8.0%

- 2.12 **Deprivation Indices.** Levels of deprivation are measured on a localised basis using data from “super output areas” (SOAs). These provide a clearer picture to ward data (on which previous indices of deprivation were based) of deprivation at a local level. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2004 ranked Thanet 85 out of 354 Local Authorities with the highest level of deprivation ranked 1. Thanet is ranked 1 out of the 12 Local Authority District in the Kent County Council area.
- 2.13 In summary, the demographic profile in the district of Thanet shows:
- A slightly higher percentage of young people aged 0-15 years old than the average in England.
 - A slightly higher percentage of older people aged 65+ than the average in England
 - Thanet has a much higher than average proportion of white people (97.7% compared with 90.9% nationally) and figures lower than the national average for all ethnic origins
 - There are below average numbers of people in full time employment compared to the national figure
 - The level of mobility is low with a higher than average level of people with no car and lower than average level of people owning 2 or more cars
- 2.14 The demographic characteristics above highlight the need for affordable, local facilities in Thanet, with an emphasis on older people and young people. The level of mobility is low and therefore facilities are required to be placed locally for ease of access. Good public transport links to facilities are required, as a large area of Thanet is rural. Young people and older people need local facilities for ease of access. Facilities should also be affordable for young people and older people to allow for participation. For the purposes of this study the 2001 census data has been used.
- 2.15 KCC have projected a population in Thanet by 2016 to be 134,300

The Thanet Methodology

- 2.16 The individual tasks undertaken to complete the assessment and develop standards of provision and recommendations are summarised below:
- 2.17 **Stage 1: Identification of local needs:** The following key tasks have been undertaken:
- A review of the implications and priorities of existing strategies
 - A review of existing policies and provision standards relating to open space, sport and recreation facilities
 - Consultation with communities and stakeholders via Sports Club Surveys, School Surveys, Face-to-face meetings, telephone consultation, Freephone and email services, and a series of Focus Groups
 - A Door to Door survey was undertaken to identify the views of facility users and non-users; the addresses were identified and sampled by TDC, to ensure representative feedback from around the District
- 2.18 **Stage 2: Audit of local provision:** The following key tasks have been undertaken:
- Review of quantitative information held by the Council
 - Site visits to all known open space, sport and recreation facilities with community use (across all sectors)
 - Qualitative assessments of all sites visited
 - Consultation with facility providers
 - Mapping facilities in respect of location and user catchment area

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- 2.19 **Stage 3: Setting Provision Standards:** The following key tasks have been undertaken:
- Quantity Standards set using the findings of facility audits, local consultation and demand modelling
 - Quality Standards set using the findings of facility audits and local consultation
 - Accessibility Standards set using the findings of facility audits, local consultation and mapping catchment areas
- 2.20 **Stage 4: Application of Provision Standards:** Application of the proposed standards in relation to defined catchment areas, and the impact of poor quality, allows the:
- Identification of deficiencies in accessibility
 - Identification of deficiencies in quality
 - Identification of surpluses or deficiencies in quantity
- 2.21 **Stage 5: Recommendations:** The findings of the process undertaken have allowed a number of key recommendations to be made and the identification of a number of key strategic priorities for the future.
- 2.22 The assessment and strategy development have been undertaken to consider the **quantity, quality and accessibility** of facilities. The **value** of facilities has also been considered.
- 2.23 The assessment has considered a number of key questions in relation to:

Quantity

- Is there enough provision to adequately serve the needs of local residents and the sporting community?
- Are current facilities in the right place?
- Is there enough provision to adequately serve the district in the future, taking into account changes to demography and the national and local strategic context?
- What is the current mix of provision across all providers?

Quality

- Is the provision available of sufficient quality to be “fit for purpose”?
- Does the quality of provision affect usage and potential usage?
- How is quality perceived by users and non-users?

Accessibility

- Is provision physically accessible to the local community?
- Is pricing (where prices apply), a barrier to usage?
- Is provision in the right place to serve local communities?
- How does the management of facilities impact on access?

Value

- Is provision viewed as “valuable” by the local community?
- Does the provision (directly and through enabling) contribute positively to the delivery of key Council corporate objectives?
- What is the perception of key stakeholders?

- 2.24 The assessment has looked at facilities on both a district-wide basis and in relation to specific area breakdowns: Margate, Birchington, Westgate, Broadstairs, Ramsgate and the Villages.

Summary of Key Tasks

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2.25 In summary the following key tasks have been undertaken to inform the study:

- Audited and mapped 450 areas, including 37 parks, 95 playing pitches on 34 sites, 15 bowls greens, 63 tennis courts, 15 Allotment Sites, and 33 Play Areas, (including multi-use games areas), 166 Natural Greenspaces, green corridors and open spaces and 3 indoor sports facilities.
- Postal surveys to 44 Schools (100% response rate after telephone follow up), over 145 Sports Clubs (100% response rate after telephone follow up),
- Stakeholder interviews with more than 30 identified stakeholders (100%)
- Consultation with all of the Parish and Town Councils (100% response).
- A review of provision in neighbouring authorities
- A review of existing consultation and market research undertaken
- 500 door to door Surveys
- A number of mapping exercises to assess levels of provision and accessibility
- Demand Modelling for indoor facilities using the parameters of the Sport England Facilities Planning Model
- The use of demographic data sets to determine the propensity to participate in key leisure activities
- Geographically mapped the sites audited by typology and quality

Types of Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

2.26 In order to assess in some detail the adequacy of open space, sport and recreation provision, it is necessary to consider the different types of provision and their primary role and function. Knowing why, and what, an open space or sports facility is there “to do” is critical to making judgements about its adequacy in respect of quantity, quality and accessibility.

2.27 The PPG17 Companion Guide provides guidance on a number of key categories (Typology) of open space, sport and recreation provision. Through consultation and slight changes to the PPG 17 typology an adaptation of this typology has been made to reflect local provision across Thanet District. This typology is summarised in Table 2.3.

Assessing Quantity

2.28 The assessment of quantity has been undertaken on the basis of:

- A review of the number of sites and size of provision, in relation to local population; it is also important to assess what needs to be protected, what can be lost, what functions of open space, indoor and outdoor sport and recreational facilities can be changed,
- Comparison of specific types of facilities e.g. playing pitches and allotments against known demand (from consultation)

NB. The assessment does not consider privately owned gardens, grass verges alongside transport routes or school grounds with no community access

Assessing Quality

2.29 The assessment of quality has been undertaken on the basis of:

- Site visits to community accessible facilities to rate a number of key criteria affecting quality.
- Quality ratings from key users, residents and specific user groups

2.30 The overall quality scores place a site within certain key categories along the “quality value line”. Each aspect of a site is rated for its quality out of a given score (these are shown in detail in Appendix 4, which includes the individual ratings for each site, by typology). If a site does not have a specific aspect, its

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quality score is calculated on the basis of what it does have, but if it is missing critical elements such as e.g. signage, its overall quality rating will be lower. The various quality lines are illustrated below; these reflect the different quality values assessed for each specific typology:

Quality Line – Open Space (Parks, Natural and Semi Natural Green Space, Green Corridors, Amenity)

0% - 15%	16% - 30%	31% - 45%	46% - 60%	61% - 75%	76% +
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent

Quality Line – Allotments

0% - 19%	20% - 39%	40% - 59%	60% - 79%	80% +
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

Quality Line – Playing Pitches

0% - 30%	31% - 39%	40% - 59%	60% - 89%	90% +
Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent

Quality Line – Bowling Greens, Tennis Courts,

0% - 19%	20% - 39%	40% - 59%	60% - 79%	80% +
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

2.31 The quality 'value' is assessed via a scored proforma which rates the quality of the provision against specific criteria (See Table 2.2) such as:

- Presence and quality of signage and available information
- Quality and presence of seats, bins and toilets
- Maintenance of boundary hedges, etc
- Quality of additional provision on site

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2.32 Table 2.2 below details the criteria used for each typology;

Table 2.2 – Quality Assessment Criteria

	Parks/Gardens or Recreation Ground	Informal Open Space	Natural and Semi Natural Space	Green Corridors	Allotments	Cemeteries and Churchyards	Provision for Children and Young People
Assessment Criteria							
Entrance areas	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Presence and quality of signage and information	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Boundary fencing and hedges	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Tree management	✓	✓	✓				
The quality of key furniture including seats, bins, toilets	✓	✓	✓				✓
The quality of maintenance, grass cutting, pathways	✓	✓	✓				
Cleanliness	✓	✓	✓				✓
The quality of specific facilities including play provision, bowls greens and multi-use games areas (shown as separate assessment)	✓						✓
The presence of water supply Whether the site is served by toilets					✓		
Secure fencing around the site					✓		
Signage to identify management, usage arrangements, special events and the availability of plots					✓		
The presence of facilities such as composting bins, a shop and car parking.							

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	Parks/Gardens or Recreation Ground	Informal Open Space	Natural and Semi Natural Space	Green Corridors	Allotments	Cemeteries and Churchyards	Provision for Children and Young People
Cemetery Specific						✓	
Main entrance safety, cleanliness, and natural presence							
Signage						✓	
Upkeep and safety of the graves						✓	
Quality of roads and pathways						✓	
Provision of bins and seats						✓	
Boundary fencing and hedges						✓	

Assessing Access

2.33 The assessment of accessibility has been undertaken on the basis of:

- Auditing factors known to affect the access to certain types of facility
- Consultation with local residents
- Mapping exercises to identify catchment areas for different types of provision

2.34 GIS mapping, by typology, has been used in undertaking the audit and assessment to illustrate the location, quantity, and where possible, the accessibility, and distribution of existing provision. Map 1 (in the attached document) shows the location of all sites, colour coded to reflect the primary typology of the site i.e. all sites by typology.

2.35 Table 2.3 identifies the green space typology used in this study.

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Table 2.3 – Thanet District Council Greenspace Typology

Typology		Primary Purpose	
GREEN SPACES	Parks and Gardens:	Large Urban and Country Park	These include Formal Urban and Country Parks that meet the AGMA/ ILAM definition of a formal park. These are high quality parks that offer a wide range of facilities for formal and informal recreation and events
		Local Park and Recreation Site	These include small parks and recreation grounds that offer a limited range of facilities for informal and formal sport, play and recreation. These sites offer more than just areas for children's play
		Formal Garden	Normally high quality laid out gardens including memorial gardens that include formal grass areas, floral and permanent landscaping and seating.
	Natural and semi natural greenspaces	Countryside and Woodland	Including Nature Reserves, woodlands. Wildlife conservation, bio diversity and environmental education awareness
	Green Corridors - Wildlife		Walking cycling or horse riding whether for leisure purposes travel or wildlife migration.
	Outdoor Sports		Participation in outdoor sports such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics, or countryside and water sports
	Amenity Open space	Informal Recreational Green Space	Opportunities for informal activities close to residential areas and improve the visual appearance of residential or other areas
		Visual Amenity Green Space	
	Provision for children and young people		Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, multi use games areas, skateboard areas and teenage play zones
	Allotments		Opportunities for those people who wish to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion these include allotments provided by the Council and those managed by allotment societies
Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial grounds		Areas where the primary function is a Cemetery, Churchyard or other burial grounds which provide facilities for quiet contemplation and often provide areas for walking and wildlife conservation	

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- 2.36 Appendix 2 provides a detailed listing of all sites, by typology across the District. This table is used as the basis for all the audit and assessment findings in section III. The typologies have been developed on the basis of the primary purpose for which the open space/facility is used.
- 2.37 The types of green space that have been excluded from the strategy, are:
- Beaches and Hard Surfaced areas designed for pedestrians. Although they provide many of the same benefits as green spaces, the inclusion of hard- landscaped areas is not compatible with a strategy concentrating on green spaces. Whilst beaches provide a valuable source of recreational green space in a district with a coastal setting, there are methodological difficulties in calculating the amount of space they provide (because of tidal differences) and physical access to some beach areas is problematic.
 - Some private green spaces provide a degree of visual amenity and in a few instances may be available to the public on a paid basis; access is either restricted by cost or limited opening hours, thereby excluding the public from general use. However, bringing private green space into public use offers one option for making good deficiencies.
 - Very small areas of public green space have been excluded on the basis that they are difficult to survey and map. However, they still serve valuable functions and the same planning provisions relating to larger green spaces will apply to them.

Consultation - Background and Methodology

- 2.38 In order to develop a PPG17 Assessment and set provision standards, it is essential to consult with the local community to gain an insight into local needs and aspirations. It is also important to ascertain the views of local communities as part of the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) and Community Planning process.
- 2.39 A door to door survey of 500 households randomly selected across Thanet District has been undertaken to establish views on the above. The questionnaire and results can be found in Appendix 1
- 2.40 The door to door survey was designed to assess views of residents, their attitude and aspirations with regard to open space, indoor and outdoor sport and recreational facilities across the district as set out above.

Sample Selection

- 2.41 Participants from the random sample addresses, provided by the Council, were selected to cover all demographic aspects of the population over the age of 16 years. Table 2.4 shows how representative the door to door survey was compared to the Census 2001 for Thanet.

Table 2.4 – Comparison of Representative Door to Door Survey to 2001 Thanet Census

	Census 2001	Door to Door Survey Response
Male	47%	41.68%
Female	53%	58.32%
White	97.7%	95.98%
Ages	Aged 16 – 59 52.7 % Aged 60+ 27.1 %	Aged 16 -59 50.71% Aged 74+ 49.29 %

Non-Pitch Sports: Assessment Methodology

- 2.42 The assessment of demand for and supply of, Outdoor Bowling Greens, Tennis Courts, and Athletics Tracks (Section 3) falls outside the scope of the assessment methodology detailed in 'Towards a Level

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Playing Field (only covers playing pitches) (Sport England 2003). The provision of tennis courts (quantitative) has been based on the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) guidance on courts per population numbers, and the quantitative assessment of bowling greens relates to the General Household Survey (GHS) figures. The quantitative assessment for athletics provision is based on the guidance figure issued by UK Athletics i.e. one major track facility per 250,000 people. A number of factors make these sports difficult to assess, from both a demand and supply perspective. These include:

- **Demand** for these sports manifests itself in a variety of ways. Participation for example, can be on an individual, casual basis or as part of a team playing in a formal competitive match.
- **Access** to these facilities, can be complex in some cases. For example, membership policies of clubs can vary from full open access, through to nomination based policy. Casual use of facilities can vary from the need to purchase a season ticket through to traditional pay and play access of staffed facilities.
- **Supply** of facilities can also vary greatly. The actual size of a bowling green for example, whether it has floodlighting, and the presence of ancillary facilities can greatly affect the capacity of facilities to meet demand.

Techniques Used

2.43 The following techniques have been employed in undertaking the audit and assessments:

- Site visits and visual inspections of all identified facilities
- Attribution of a score to each site, and its constituent element
- Completion of on site proformas to record visual inspection
- Transfer of individual site data to overall spreadsheet (by typology)
- Translation of scores into individual and overall quality percentages
- Comparison of these percentages with the identified quality line for each typology
- Identification of position on quality line
- Comparison of individual sites by typology, on a Districtwide basis and Parish basis

All technical information for each typology and the individual sites are contained in Appendices 7a – 7f.

Applying the Standards

- 2.44 The standards of provision for each type of facility, surpluses and deficiencies in provision have been considered on the basis of the assessment undertaken. GIS mapping has been used to illustrate a number of key findings, particularly in relation to access. These maps are contained in the appendices to this report.
- 2.45 The findings of the door to door and other consultation exercises have been used to inform appropriate distance thresholds (findings are reported in more detail within the appendices to this report). The survey findings also reveal local perceptions about the quantity and quality of local provision.
- 2.46 Residents were asked a number of questions about current provision in relation to quantity, quality and accessibility. The responses have been used to set provision standards, which have then been applied using GIS mapping.
- 2.47 **Future Needs:** In the future, population across the District is projected to increase very slightly from 126,702 (2001) to 134,300 by 2016. It is therefore not considered that there will be a substantial increase in demand for provision. However, it is important that existing levels of provision are maintained, in both qualitative and quantitative terms to continue to provide for the population level; only where there is a significant surplus of a specific type of provision should this be considered for alternative

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use. It is also particularly important to recognise that the District has a larger number of younger people now, who will, as they grow up, increase demand for provision. Equally, as these existing young people grow older, there will be a need to continue, as at present, to provide for a larger than average elderly population.

- 2.48 It is also critical to recognise that there is currently a national focus on increasing activity levels amongst the general population; Sport England aim to achieve 70% participation, on a regular basis, amongst the population by 2020. If these figures are achieved, there will be an impact on the local levels of participation and the demand for provision. Equally, there may well be changes in the type of activity in which people wish to participate. There is therefore a need to retain flexibility in what is provided, and the levels of provision, to be able to respond to these participation issues.

Standards of Provision

- 2.49 The development of local standards for the open space typologies (as classified in Section I and applied throughout the study) are based on the components of Quality, Quantity and Accessibility, that is to say, surpluses and deficiencies in provision on the basis of quantitative, and qualitative analysis, and accessibility (informed by consultation undertaken) to provision. The door-to-door survey of local residents and other consultation findings have been used to inform the appropriate distance thresholds (access) which have been applied using GIS to demonstrate potential surplus/ deficiencies in provision.
- 2.50 In order to set provision standards it is important to consider the standards previously applied by the Council and through the planning framework. The current standard for open space as applied by the Council reflects the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) standard of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population; this level of provision equates to 1.6 ha of formal provision for playing pitches, and 0.8 ha of provision for children and young people) (see Table 5.1). The location, accessibility and quality of open space is also important in ensuring that the areas are well used and appropriate to the needs of the community. Explain standards 2.4 ha.
- 2.51 In relation to wildlife links and corridors the guiding principles for provisional standards include:
- Standards for quality should enhance the natural aspects of the corridor/wildlife link
 - Quality standards should provide opportunities to link various bits of green space, so that the whole corridor has a greater value than the sum of the individual links
 - Standards for the quantitative provision of wildlife links and corridors should be about overall level of access to this typology, rather than a standard per 100 population, to ensure existing provision is safeguarded and enhanced rather than destroyed
 - The provision of wildlife links and corridors should protect existing natural habitats for species
- 2.52 In developing and applying standards of provision, it is important to be clear that:
- **National standards of recommended provision have been used for comparative purposes only**
 - **Existing standards of provision relate to the current level of provision of a specific typology**
 - **Recommended standards of provision are based on local assessment and analysis, but may be the same as a national recommended standard if appropriate, and specifically where current levels of provision do not meet a nationally recommended standard as a minimum. Equally, the future recommended standard may be the existing level of provision, if it is particularly high, and to lose it would significantly change the natural character of the area**

SECTION III – AUDIT OF LOCAL PROVISION

Introduction

- 3.1 The results and findings of the various consultation, research and audit tasks undertaken across the identified typologies are reported in this section of the report. A number of key research exercises were undertaken during the period July 2005 – April 2006.

Parks, Formal Gardens and Recreation Grounds

- 3.2 Parks, formal gardens and recreation grounds provide accessible, high quality opportunities for a range of informal recreation, formal sporting opportunities and community events. Many parks have historic features and are of heritage value.
- 3.3 Parks provision has been sub-categorised into, Local Parks, and Recreation Grounds and Formal Gardens on the basis of discussions with Leisure and Planning Services Officers about the primary role and function of the parks facilities across the district.
- 3.4 Clearly the delivery of these key objectives is affected by quantity, quality and accessibility which in turn can affect the value of the current portfolio of facilities in meeting the stated objectives.

Quantity: Parks, Formal Gardens and Recreation Grounds

- 3.5 The audit undertaken has revealed that there are **37 Local Parks, Formal Gardens and Recreation Grounds** within the Thanet District.

Table 3.1 – Thanet District: Current Parks, Recreation Grounds and Formal Gardens Provision

Area	Population	Local Park and Recreation sites	Total Hectares	Total Hectares per 1,000 population	HA Higher (+) or Lower (-) than the National Guidance 0.76 HA per 1,000 population
Margate	40,386	7	65.26	1.61	+0.85
Ramsgate	39,639	14	37.66	0.95	+0.19
Westgate	6,594	3	4.07	0.61	-0.15
Broadstairs	24,370	7	13.91	0.57	-0.19
Birchington	9,827	2	4.84	0.49	-0.27
Villages	5,886	4	8.94	1.52	+0.76
TOTALS	126,702	37	134.68	1.06	+0.3

- 3.6 The identified parks and recreation grounds total 134.68 ha across the district and the location of these facilities is shown in Map 3a. From the table, a number of observations can be made:
- The total Ha per 1000 population across the district equals 1.06ha
 - Provision of parks is primarily concentrated in the urban areas
 - Margate has the highest ha per 1,000 population 1.61, followed by The Villages, Ramsgate, Broadstairs, Birchington and Westgate.

Quality: Local Parks, Formal Gardens and Recreation Grounds

- 3.7 Quality Inspections have been undertaken via a site visit to the local parks and formal gardens in within this typology and completion of a scored proforma. Recreation grounds have been quality assessed under playing pitches and children's play grounds. The quality assessment proforma is based on a number of key criteria encompassing the quality aspects of the Green Flag Programme, ILAM Parks Management Guidance and the Tidy Britain Scheme. The assessment considered the physical, social and aesthetic qualities of each individual park. In summary the scoring included the criteria of:

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- Entrance areas
- Presence and quality of signage and information
- Boundary fencing and hedges
- Roads, paths and cycle ways
- Quality of planted areas (flower and shrub beds)
- Tree management
- The quality of key furniture including seats, bins, toilets
- The quality of specific facilities including play provision, bowls greens and multi-use games areas

3.8 The quality audit provides an indicative rating of quality out of 100%. It is important to note that the quality score represents a “snapshot” in time and records the quality of the site at the time of the visit audit. Map 3b shows the sites with quality audits.

Table 3.2 –Thanet District: Local Parks and Recreation Grounds

Town and Parish	Quality Audited Sites	Quality Range
Margate	5	Range: Poor – Very Good 28% -62.67%
Ramsgate	9	Range: :Average – Very Good 36.76% - 69.14%
Westgate	1	Range: Poor 29.28%
Broadstairs	6	Range: Average – Very Good 36.92% - 70.21%
Birchington	1	Range: Good 48.85%
Villages	All Recreation Grounds	Range:
TOTALS	22	Good District Average 50.23%

3.9 Key quality findings include:

- Local Parks and Recreation Grounds in Thanet District range from poor to very good. Only two sites were rated as poor Streete Court Westgate and Palm Bay Recreation in Margate. Both Streete Court and Palm Bay are known as recreation grounds but have no playing pitches and have been quality assessed on this basis. Across the District the average District score was 50.23% which is good.
- The quality score does reflect the facilities in parks and recreation grounds e.g. if they have tennis and bowls provision the rating will be higher. The lower scoring sites scored low on lack of information boards, signage and bins.
- The highest scoring formal garden was Wellington Crescent, Ramsgate and the lowest was Charlotte Court, Ramsgate 36.76% rated as average.
- The highest scoring park was Reading Street, Broadstairs 70.21% and the lowest scoring park was Tivoli Park, Margate 34.47% rated as average.

Accessibility

3.10 Given that national guidance suggests a standard of 0.76 ha per 1000 population, and Thanet has a standard of 1.06ha per 1000 population. This is 0.3ha above the national guidance. Accessibility has been assessed using a variety of techniques including mapping exercises and consultation. Map 3c

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Local Parks and Recreation Grounds with Buffers; illustrate accessibility buffers for identified sites. The key findings show that:

- Results from respondents to the household survey revealed that 28.82% use Parks at least weekly and 17.29% at least daily. However 28.07% of door to door respondents had never used a park.
- 79% of door to door respondents said they can walk to their nearest park within 9 minutes and this equates to a distance travelled of 0.97 kilometres rounded to 1 kilometre.
- The consultation and audits identified that there is a need for improved toilet facilities, parks could be cleaner and tidier, lighting is needed and they need to be more secure and there is a need for more facilities for children in Local Parks and Recreation Grounds.
- The Parks and Recreation grounds are also used as part of the Councils Events programme and for community events. These activities need to be safe guarded for the future.

Summary of Consultation Findings

3.11 A number of consultation exercises have been undertaken as part of the development of this strategy. The consultation provides a number of varying opinions about the current quantity, quality and accessibility of parks and gardens across the district. Key results include:

- 30.47% of residents rated the quality of parks near to their homes to be above average, 21.86% rated quality as good, 10.04% very good and 5.38% excellent.
- Only 3.2% of respondents identified parks being too far away as a barrier to use.
- Respondents stated that they perceived the biggest barriers to use are anti social behaviour, vandalism; don't feel safe, lack of time and age.
- Some people's perception of the quality of their local park is based on a poor personal experience or negative local press coverage.
- Issues of anti-social behaviour, dog fouling and vandalism were raised in relation to Parks. It is often difficult to quantify comments about anti-social behaviour as this can be a personal reaction, rather than an actual event. Similarly, reaction to dog fouling can be exaggerated, depending on personal experience.
- Some residents felt that dog fouling was a big issue across all parks and recreation grounds in the district.
- There are community concerns in Broadstairs over the loss of parkland at Pierremont Park to provide for a built community facility. This loss of parkland may be justified on the basis of a lack of community available facilities for indoor sport and recreation in Broadstairs. The consultation identified willingness for a community facility on the existing hall site or within the existing building lines currently taking into consideration the age concern building and not intruding into the open space of the park. The consultation also identified alternative sites for the new community building away from Pierremont Park at the Memorial Recreation Ground Broadstairs on the existing tennis courts and also a car park site in Broadstairs. The main concerns of the community include the size of open space lost not to be replaced, the siting of the new building and its effect on the setting of Pierremont Hall, Other concerns are vandalism, safety and car parking issues.
- There are community concerns over the loss of recreational space at Jakey Bakers as part of the Industrial and new road development. However, it is proposed that a greater amount of agricultural land than current recreation land will be brought into use as recreational land at Jakey Bakers to compensate for this loss in the future.

Developing and Applying Standards: Parks

3.13 **Quantity:** There is an existing level of provision of 1.06 ha per 1000 population. The recommended minimum standard of future provision for Parks is 1.06ha per 1000 population across the district; to reduce the current level and location of provision, given the nature and topography of the district, would significantly alter the local environment.

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- 3.14 Respondents (86.72%) to the Door to Door Survey felt that the parks in their areas met the needs of their families for outdoor recreation.
- 3.15 **Quality:** The average quality score for all Local Parks, Formal Gardens and Recreation Grounds is rated as 'Good' facilities. Local residents (30.47%) considered the quality of parks near their homes to be above average 21.86% rated quality as good 10.04% very good and 5.38% as excellent. Two important issues for parks are dog fouling and the perception that some users and non users feel unsafe using parks.
- 3.16 **Access:** The consultation has revealed that the average distance travelled to a Park is 1 km; this relates to walking distance.

Recommended Provision Standard

All dwellings should be within 1 kilometre of a good quality Local Park, Formal Garden or Recreation Ground
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- 3.17 **Applying the Standard:** Map 3c shows the current provision of Local Parks and Recreation Grounds with a theoretical catchment area of 1 kilometre based on the average walking travel time identified by residents as part of the door to door survey.
- 3.18 Local Parks and Recreation Grounds – most Parishes have one of this type of provision, hence most settlements have access within the walking time.

Recommendations: Parks

- 3.19 The Council should adopt a policy of providing "Good" sites as a minimum, rather than "Average" or "Poor". A 'Good' site is one which provides appropriate infrastructure to facilitate usage, for example, signage, seating and bins, is clean, safe, welcoming, and attractive.
- Continue to develop and support Friends Groups for key parks, and recreation grounds to increase local involvement and ownership
 - Continue to develop parks to meet the needs of people with disabilities and continue working with the Thanet Access Group to identify what is required
 - Continue to develop and improve Parks Management Plans and extend the practice of management planning to a greater range of parks.
 - Test the quality and "performance" of parks through entering externally judged competitions and quality recognition schemes, for example, the Green Flag Award.
 - Consider alternative sites for the community building at Pierremont Park, for example the tennis courts at the Memorial Recreation Ground or look at the whole building line within the park to see if the development could be contained within this to allow for no intrusion in to park space.

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Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace

- 3.12 Natural and semi-natural green space has been categorised into Countryside and Woodland areas both of which have been assessed separately and the findings are set out in this section.
- 3.13 The importance of nature conservation and natural green space in Thanet District is reflected in the number of different designations: internationally important candidate Special Areas of Conservation (Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay, Special Protection Area and RAMSAR site) It is appropriate to state that Thanet has two coastal SSSI Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes and Thanet Coastal, an NNR area Sandwich and Pegwell Bay, RAMSAR Thanet the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay, and sites of Nature Conservation Importance which are of County Importance. The Thanet Coast has also been designated by English Nature as one of the 27 most sensitive marine areas in England. SSSIs cover most of the Thanet coastline, with the exception of Viking Bay, Broadstairs and some of the beach areas around Ramsgate, and are ranked Grade 1 in the Nature Conservation Review.
- 3.14 Leaving aside the intertidal habitats, only some 4% of the districts land area is comprised of semi-natural habitats. This does not compare well with other districts in Kent. This is due to the very high quality of agricultural land in the area which has meant that historically the island has been very intensively farmed leading to the low level of natural habitats. Agricultural land quality in other parts of Kent is lower.
- 3.15 There are features and areas within the District which provide a high level of landscape and public amenity value. This is especially true of Pegwell Bay and the former Wantsum Channel, where long views of the sea, the marshes and the attractive and undeveloped coastline exist towards Sandwich, the Ash Levels and Reculver.
- 3.16 Pegwell Bay is an extensive area of mixed coastal habitats including mudflats, saltmarsh and coastal scrub.
- 3.17 The former Wantsum Channel includes all the flood plain of the River Stour, and historically represents the former sea channel, the Wansum Channel, which previously separated the Isle of Thanet from mainland Kent and which silted up over several centuries.
- 3.18 The central part of the district is characterised by a generally flat or gently undulating landscape consisting of the central chalk plateau.
- 3.19 Quex Park is unique within the Thanet context, comprising a formal and extensive wooded parkland and amenity landscape within an otherwise open intensely farmed landscape. The farmland is intensively cultivated between the tree belts, with limited grazing pasture remaining.
- 3.20 The urban coastal areas of Thanet form an almost continuous conurbation along the coast between Pegwell Village and Minnis Bay. With the exception of the green wedges, this area is heavily urbanised. The coastal strip is characterised by the presence of traditional seaside architecture, active harbour areas and beaches and extensive public open cliff top areas.

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Countryside and Woodland (Natural and Semi Natural)

Definition

‘Sites that are nature reserves, woodlands or for wildlife conservation, bio diversity and raising environmental education awareness’

Quantity: Countryside and Woodland

- 3.21 The audit undertaken has revealed that there are **15 sites** that have been classified as countryside and woodland within the Thanet District. The location of these sites is presented on Map 4a.
- 3.22 The English Nature standards have been applied to Thanet with the results reported in the key findings. For the purposes of assessing against these standards of provision, all provision classified (on the basis of their primary purpose) as countryside or woodland has been included.
- 3.23 The table below provides a brief summary of natural and semi-natural green space provision within Thanet District.

Table 3.6 – Thanet: Current Countryside and Woodland provision

Area	Population	Number of Sites	Total Hectares	Ha Per 1000 Population
Margate	40,386	4	19.34	0.47
Ramsgate	39,639	4	40.87	1.03
Westgate	6,594	0	0	0
Broadstairs	24,370	3	53.78	2.21
Birchington	9,827	1	0.72	0.07
Villages	5,886	3	6.40	1.08
Totals	126,702	15	121.11ha	0.95Ha

- 3.24 A number of observations in terms of quantity can be made from the table above:
- 3.25 In terms of hectarage there are **121.11 ha** of **accessible provision across the whole district**, accounting for accessible ha of **0.95 ha per 1,000** population. This is below the minimum recommended English Nature standard of 2ha per 1,000 population. (The English Nature Standard relates only to accessible natural open space; the calculation for the district is based on the amount of accessible natural open space). In assessing Natural and Semi-Natural sites, consideration has been given to English Nature's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards. English Nature make the following recommendations in relation to provision levels:
- Provision of at least 2ha of accessible natural green space per 1,000 population. No person should live more than 300m from their nearest area of natural green space
 - There should be at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km from home
 - There should be at least one 100ha site within 5km
 - There should be at least one 500ha site within 10km
 - Assessment against English Nature Standards of Provision (also encompassing Green Corridors) is considered in more detail under Standards of Provision.
 - On a area basis the deficiencies and surpluses in this type of provision are variable:
 - residents in Broadstairs, have a supply of natural and semi natural space above the English Nature Standard
 - The area of Westgate has 0 natural and semi natural green space.
 - All other areas are below the English Nature Standard.
- 3.26 The Thanet Local Plan proposes two new woodland sites the first and larger community woodland, is proposed to be located on Council land at Twenties, fronting Hartsdown Road and Shottendane Road on

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the Southern Edge of Margate and Garlinge. The second proposed site again in Council ownership, is in Dane Valley. It abuts the railway line and has a frontage to Dane Valley Road. Dane Valley woodland is currently in development by the Dane Valley Woodland Group and the first trees have been planted.

- 3.27 These two new community woodland sites will assist towards meeting the English Nature Standard of 2ha of accessible natural green space per 1000 population for the district. There will still be a deficit against the English Nature Standard.

Quality: Countryside and Woodland

- 3.28 Quality inspections have been undertaken via a site visit and completion of a scored proforma. The quality assessment proforma is based on a number of key criteria encompassing the quality aspects of Green Flag, Tidy Britain and ILAM Parks Management best practice. The assessment considered the physical, social and aesthetic qualities of each individual site. Given that areas of countryside and woodland are likely to have less formal facilities than a formal park, a number of criteria were not included in the quality assessment of this typology. The focus of the quality assessment was on pathways, general access, signage, provision of bins where appropriate etc. Quality ratings are summarised in the table below.

Table 3.7 – Thanet: Countryside and Woodland Quality Ratings

Area	Provision Details	No of sites audited	Quality Range
Margate	4	3	Range: 41.28 %– 69.17%
Ramsgate	4	2	Range: 68.22% -78.02%
Westgate	0	0	Range: 0%
Broadstairs	3	3	Range: 32.96% - 78.00%
Birchington	1	1	Range: 29.87%
Villages	3	3	Range: 61.60%– 76.15%
TOTALS	15	12	Average 59.24%

- 3.29 Map 4c shows the results of the quality audit for these sites. Two key comments can be made in respect of the quality of countryside and woodland sites.

- Average quality scores range from 32.96% (Average) across the District to 78.02% (Excellent); the overall average quality score across the district is 59.24% "Good".
- Signage, benches and bins are absent from the majority of sites.

NB. It is important to note that sites have been assessed against the identified criteria for this provision, See Table 2.2 because bins and benches have the potential to help keep a site tidy, and facilitate its use by a wider range of users than simply, for example, dog walkers. This type of 'outdoor furniture', together with appropriate signage, is recommended for sites providing for public access, whether they are formal or informal. The lack of such provision is reflected in the level of quality score awarded to a site, for this reason. However, it is recognised that areas of natural woodland are less likely to have this type of provision.

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Accessibility: Countryside and Woodland Sites

3.30 Accessibility has been assessed using a variety of techniques including mapping exercises and consultation. Map 4e illustrates the buffer distance of 2.25 kilometres that people travel to countryside and woodland sites. The key findings show that:

- 6.52 % of the door to door survey respondents access a nature area (woodland and countryside sites) weekly.
- 52.29% of respondents said they could access woodland and countryside within a 20 minute walk from their home.
- Generally, door to door respondents walk for an average of 21 minutes to reach an area of woodland or countryside; this equates to a distance travelled of 2.25 kilometres.
- The Quex and Minster Marshes have not been included in this study as neither site is publicly accessible.
- Ramsgate Cemetery has been included within the natural and semi natural typology. However, it is recognised that the whole site is not natural and semi natural but for purposes of drawing the boundary the whole site has been included.

Summary of Consultation Findings

3.31 A number of findings have emerged from consultation with stakeholders, users and non-users. These are summarised below:

- The primary concern of users is the level of maintenance required to develop a sustainable and valuable habitat, whilst also providing an attractive and safely accessible site for the public, within the very limited resources available
- Woodlands are a major concern for those involved in conservation and open space maintenance as there are insufficient resources to address all identified maintenance requirements.
- There are community concerns over the lack of semi natural and natural provision across the District.
- There is a need for more partnership working with Nature Conservation groups and the District Council.
- The main issues raised regarding accessibility is the problem experienced by people with disabilities particularly when visiting countryside sites. Access needs to be considered holistically rather than in isolation, e.g. improvements to gates is not supported by improvements to footpaths therefore whilst people can get through the gate they then cannot travel any further due to inaccessible, and poor footpaths.
- It is important to note that if sites are not easily accessible to people with disabilities, then it is likely they will also exclude the elderly and young parents with pushchairs and buggies.
- Improving internal communication and consultation through the establishment of an Open Spaces Steering Group

Key Findings:

3.32 Two key conclusions can be drawn from the research undertaken. These are summarised as:

- The quality audits undertaken show sites are generally good in quality.
- Quantity varies across the District; both in terms of the number of sites and hectares / size of provision and that the current ha does not meet the current English Nature Standard of 2ha per 1000 population.

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Developing and Applying Standards: Natural / Semi-Natural Greenspace

- 3.33 **Quantity:** There is an existing level of provision of 0.95 ha per 1000 population. This equates to 1.05ha less than the national recommended level of provision i.e. English Nature Standard. The recommended minimum standard of future provision for Natural/Semi-Natural Greenspace is 2ha per 1000 population. This could be achieved with the provision of new community woodlands and by transferring other space within parks and Informal Recreation areas to natural and semi natural greenspace. The standard should be to achieve 2 ha per 1,000 population.
- 3.34 **Quality:** The average quality score for sites classified as natural greenspace is 59.24%. Local residents (26.67%) made positive comments about quality, rating local provision as “Good”.
- 3.35 **Access:** The consultation has revealed that the majority of residents walk to natural greenspace facilities. An average distance travelled to access natural green space of 2.25 kilometres has been calculated, based on the average travel time identified by local residents as part of the door to door survey.

Recommended provision standard
All dwellings should be within 2.25 kilometres of a good quality natural / semi-natural greenspace

- **Applying the Standard:** Map 4e shows the current provision of sites categorised as natural / semi-natural greenspace with the recommended catchment area.

Applying the English Nature Standards

- 3.36 As reported earlier, an assessment has also been undertaken against the nationally recognised English Nature standards. These standards make recommendations for the quantity and accessibility of natural greenspace. It is acknowledged that other sites, particularly a number of sites classified as Amenity Greenspace have elements of natural provision. It must also be recognised that the beach and promenades have not been included in this or any typology as part of this study. Whilst beaches provide a valuable source of recreational green space in a district such as Thanet with a coastal setting, there are methodological difficulties in calculating the amount of space they provide (because of tidal differences) and physical access to some beach areas are problematic. Application of the standard reveals the following:

- There is currently insufficient provision to meet the quantitative standards set by English Nature, of 2ha of provision per 1,000 population.

NB. Privately owned formal gardens such as the Quex have been excluded from this calculation. It may be appropriate to consider the Quex as a future Country Park. In addition the importance of nature conservation along the Thanet Coast must be noted as the beaches are not included in this study,

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Recommendations: Natural / Semi-natural Greenspace

- 3.37 A number of recommendations are made in response to the assessment findings. These are:
- The Council should adopt a policy of providing “Good” sites rather than “Average” or “Poor”. A ‘Good’ site is one which provides appropriate infrastructure to facilitate usage, for example, signage, seating and bins, is clean, safe, welcoming, and attractive.
 - Prioritise improvements to quality of sites that fall below the District average.
 - The provision of signage, bins and seating (where appropriate) are seen as key to improving the quality of current provision. There is a need to develop a rolling programme of renewal and improvements.
 - Identify and develop circular routes for people with disabilities to enjoy
 - Work in partnership to implement comprehensive habitat management plans
 - Work in partnership to raise the hectareage of natural and semi natural green space per 1,000 population and where possible transfer existing park land and informal open space to natural and semi natural green space.
 - Investigate further the development of the Quex as a Country Park.

Green Corridors (Natural/Semi Natural Greenspace)

- 3.38 This open space typology includes cycle ways, certain rights of way, disused railway lines and towpaths along canals and riverbanks.

Definition

‘Sites that provide venues for walking, cycling and horse riding amongst others uses. Often they can provide a key “green” link and offer travel routes for both local residents and local wildlife migration’.

Quantity: Green Corridors

- 3.39 The audit undertaken has revealed that there are 2 **Green Corridors** within Thanet. The location of these is shown in Map 4b.
- 3.40 Annex A of the Companion Guide to PPG 17 relates to Open Space Typology and clearly states:
- ‘The need for Green Corridors arises from the need to promote environmentally sustainable forms of transport such as walking and cycling within urban areas. This means that there is no sensible way of stating a provision standard, just as there is no way of having a standard for the proportion of land in an area which it will be desirable to allocate for roads’
- 3.41 It is therefore proposed that a provision standard should be set as PPG17 goes on to state:
- ‘Planning policies should promote the use of green corridors to link housing areas to the Sustrans national cycle network, town and city centres, community facilities such as schools, community centres and sports facilities, places of employment and shops. To this end Green Corridors are demand led. It is down to the planning authorities to seize opportunities to use linear routes that are established for example canal corridors, river banks or disused railway lines, supplementing them through links from urban areas and developing circular routes and trails’.
- 3.42 The Green Corridors provide opportunities in Thanet to link both rural and urban communities together.
- 3.43 With regards to green corridors PPG 17's emphasis appears to be on sites in urban areas. This is due to the guidance adopting the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce Report 'Urban Typology'. As a result elements of the guidance appear to be contradictory. For example the guidance suggests that all corridors

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including those in remote rural settlements should be included. However, the PPG 17 companion guide insinuates that unless a green corridor is used as a transport route that links facilities such as home to school or town and sports centre it should not be included as part of the audit.

- 3.44 Linear green space in Thanet plays an important role as wildlife corridors in addition to their wider amenity green space role and natural and semi natural open space. Although they are measured by area (typically green corridors are measured by length not area) they have been included within the green corridor Typology.
- 3.45 **Green Corridors also contribute to the overall provision of natural and semi-natural green space but at this stage have not been included in analysis against the English Nature recommended standards of provision.**
- 3.46 Thanet has developed a Cycling Strategy and a Walking Strategy. Neither of these clearly mentions green corridors. In the future green corridors can contribute to the Cycling Strategy and Walking Strategy and green corridors should be intrinsic to the promotion of cycling and walking in the District.
- 3.47 The key statistics relating to the number of green corridors are detailed in the table below. These statistics should be used with caution as numerous other pathways do exist that provide people with informal access to get from A to B. The locations of sites identified as part of this strategy are shown in Map 4b.
- 3.48 A further Green Corridor should be recognised by Thanet District Council. This is the Dickens to Turner Flagship walking route developed by KCC. It uses the St Peters footpath and goes alongside the Councils Churchyard at St Peters and then along a cleared piece of ex allotment land at Dane Valley before coming on the road by Drapers School. A second consideration for a green corridor should be the Nash Road disused railway line.

Table 3.8 – Thanet: Current Provision of Green Corridors

Area	Population	Number of Sites Identified	Total Hectarage
Margate	40,386	0	0
Ramsgate	39,639	0	0
Westgate	6,594	0	0
Broadstairs	24,370	2	2.75
Birchington	9,827	0	0
Villages	5,886	0	0
TOTALS	126,702	2	2,75

Quality: Green Corridors

- 3.49 Green Corridors do not have any national standards of provision although the Countryside Agency does give an indication of what a user should expect to find:
- A path or un-vegetated natural surface
 - Ground that is not soft enough to allow a cycle or horse to sink into it
 - A path provided by the reinforcement and protection of natural vegetation
- 3.50 As Green Corridors are often remote and isolated areas it is important they are maintained to high standards and provide certain basic features :
- Signage, benches and bins
 - Clean, well maintained grass and trees
 - Main entrance and side entrances

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- 3.51 Quality inspections have been undertaken via a site visit and completion of a scored proforma. The quality assessment proforma is based on a number of key criteria encompassing the quality aspects of Green Flag, Tidy Britain and ILAM Parks Management good practice. The assessment considered the physical, social and aesthetic qualities of each individual area, but focussed on key criteria relating to access, as with sites categorised under natural/semi-natural green space. Key findings are illustrated in the table below.

Table 3.9 – Thanet: Summary of Quality Assessment Findings

Area	Provision	No of sites audited	Quality	Range
Margate	0	0		
Ramsgate	0	0		
Westgate	0	0		
Broadstairs	2	2	48% - 58.22%	Good
Birchington	0	0		
Villages	0	0		
TOTALS	2	2	Average 53.11	Good

- 3.52 The results of the quality audits are shown in Map 4d.

Green Corridors: Accessibility

- 3.53 It is not realistic to set catchments for this typology although a distance / time travelled has been calculated from the consultation as a guide. This typology is not readily influenced by planning policy or implementation and is very often opportunity led rather than led by demand. Additionally these spaces tend to aim at providing a network across the district that complements the Rights of Way networks

Developing and Applying Standards: Green Corridors

- 3.54 **Quantity:** There is potential for the district council in partnership with the local community and other organisations to look at and discuss the designation of particular routes across the green wedges as Green Corridors in the future and formally designate a number of Green Corridors across the District.
- 3.55 **Quality:** The designation of any formal Green Corridors should be undertaken with the aim of providing good quality provision, meeting the criteria for this typology.
- 3.56 **Access:** No accessibility standard is recommended as Green Corridors should be accessible from a number of access points to facilitate access across, and through a wide area.

Recommendations: Green Corridors

- 3.57 A number of recommendations are made in response to the assessment findings. These are:
- It has been identified that there are currently no formally adopted green corridors; identified opportunities to increase current levels of provision should be addressed as a priority through Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). The Council should adopt a policy of providing and facilitating access to additional routes catering for informal walking, cycling and riding looking particularly at the Green Wedge sites across the district.
 - The two green corridors identified in this study should be formally proposed as green corridors (Pysons Road and Vere Road) and two others should be considered to be proposed as green corridors St Peters Walk and Nash Road disused railway line).
 - In the future green corridors can contribute to the Cycling Strategy and Pedestrian Strategy and they should be intrinsic to the promotion of cycling and walking in the District.

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- Formal designation of Green Corridors in Thanet through the development of recreational routes. Such route-ways could tie into a Walking for Health agenda and also to developing a healthier workforce, for example, school students, TDC staff and other local business staff could be encouraged to walk to work using these route-ways
- Planners, Transport officers and Leisure Officers need to work together with communities and community organisations, other agencies, and land owners to designate appropriate green corridors within the towns and the countryside.

Outdoor Sports Facilities

Definition:-

“Participation in outdoor sports such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics, or countryside and water sports”

- 3.58 Outdoor sports facilities, for the purposes of the assessment have been sub-divided in to the following facilities:
- **Playing Pitches** – provision for Football, Cricket, Rugby and Hockey have been assessed using the prescribed methodology detailed within *“Toward a Level Playing Field”*. The assessment methodology is provided in more detail within the appendices to this report.
 - **Bowls and Croquet Greens** have been assessed separately as discrete sports facilities. Where they are present in parks, bowling greens have formed part of the overall quality score for the facility
 - **Tennis Courts**, as with Bowls Greens have been assessed as discrete sports facilities and where they are present in parks, have contributed to the overall score for the park/open space
 - **Golf Courses** have been assessed on the basis of access and opportunities to play
 - **Athletics and Rounders** have not been assessed as part of this study owing to tracks and pitches not being readily identifiable at the time of the site auditing. However, one site has been identified for Athletics at Jakey Bakers
- 3.59 Other more informal facilities have been included within the other listed typologies. For example, a number of Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) were identified. Given their intended use, these have been included as part of the assessment of play areas and provision for young people. The various types of outdoor sports facilities are considered in brief below.

Playing Pitches

- 3.60 Playing pitches in Thanet District are provided through a number of different providers, specifically:
- **Thanet District Council:** The main provider of playing pitches courts and greens on public open spaces within the District. The majority of these pitches are within informal recreational land and are only defined as playing pitches during the time at which they are booked for formal sporting fixtures. The rest of the time these pitches are used as informal recreational space, and are available for use by any member of the public, including informal sports use, dog walking and formal event bookings.
 - **Education Sites:** School playing fields are provided primarily for physical education and the enjoyment of young people attending school and College. These pitches are not always available to the local community to access on a formal and informal basis. The local management of schools has meant that some schools make their facilities available to the local community and others do not. This can result in significant playing pitch resources within local communities not being available for the local community to use.
 - **Private/Voluntary Sports Clubs:** These are generally voluntary organisations, which lease or own their own ground and are the focus of that particular sport(s) within the local community. These private/voluntary clubs generally have open access policies and often link with key partners within

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the local community to offer coaching and development to the local community. Included in this category are the pitches owned by the Council but leased on a long term basis to local clubs for exclusive use.

- **Parish Councils:** The Parish Council provide local facilities for playing pitches, which are mainly leased, from TDC with the exception of Minster. The majority of these pitches are within informal recreational land and are only defined as playing pitches during the time at which they are booked for formal sporting fixtures. The rest of the time these pitches are used as informal recreational space, and are available for use by any member of the public, including informal sports use, dog walking and formal event bookings.

Quantity: Playing Pitches

- 3.61 The audit of pitches identified that there are **34** playing pitch sites available for community use and **95** playing pitches (Football, Cricket, Rugby Union, Full size artificial turf pitch (hockey)) within the boundary. This pitch supply is made up of the following:

Table 3.10 – Playing Pitch Provision in Thanet District offering Community Use

Pitch Provider	Number of Sites	Number of Pitches
Thanet District Council	14	45
Education sites	13	36
Parish Council	2	3
Kent County Football Association	1	1
Kent County Council	1	1
Private/Voluntary Sports Clubs	3	9
TOTAL PROVISION IDENTIFIED	34	95

- 3.62 There are pitches within local schools, which are not available to the local community for formal or informal use. However, it must be assumed that all local authority pitches are available to the local community to access on a formal and informal basis either through a formal hire agreement or through the sports clubs offering sports participation opportunities to the local community.
- 3.63 The following table identifies the sites, which do not have community (secured) use of their sports pitches.

Table 3.11 - Playing Pitches without secured community use in Thanet District Council

Pitch Provider	Number of Sites	Number of Pitches
Thanet District Council	0	0
Education sites	16	31
Private Schools	2	18
TOTAL PROVISION AVAILABLE	18	49

- 3.64 The distribution of sites and pitches in Table 3.9 are shown on the Maps contained within the appendices of this report. These detail the following:
- Map 5a shows the distribution of all identified Playing Pitch Sites across the District with community use.
 - Map 5b identifies playing pitch sites by ownership
 - Map 5c shows pitches by community use
 - Map 5d shows pitches by quality ratings

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Quality: Playing Pitches

- 3.65 Quality Inspections have been undertaken via a site visit and completion of a non-technical visual inspection. The pitch visit proforma provided as part of the Sport England Electronic Toolkit has been used. This will allow comparison with pitch quality findings in future years with other local authorities who have completed local assessments. The key qualitative aspects of provision include:
- Pitch Slope
 - Pitch Evenness
 - Grass Cover
 - Condition of equipment
 - Presence of ancillary facilities
 - Presence of common problems
 - Proximity to transport network
 - Presence of training facilities
- 3.66 Inspections were undertaken on all TDC owned sites. Site inspections included Parish Councils, Warten Road (KCC), St Lukes (KCFA), Broadstairs Cricket Club, Margate Cricket Club and Westgate Cricket Club. A total of 38 pitches across 23 pitch sites, encompassing: The majority of which were TDC sites.
- 22 Football Pitches
 - 13 Cricket Pitches
 - 3 Rugby Pitches
- 3.67 All pitches were rated using the Sport England scoring matrix, which provides a numerical score for each pitch. The maximum score for any one pitch is 100%. The key findings of the non-technical visual inspections showed that:
- **Quality of all pitches** ranged greatly with ratings varying from **56%** ("Average") through to **92%** ("Excellent"). The average rating (mean) was **78%** (Good).
 - **Football pitches** rated varied greatly, with **56%** being the lowest score and **82%** being the highest. The average (mean) was **77%** ("Average"-"Good").
 - **Cricket pitches** rated varied from a score of **66%** through to **92%**. The average (mean) pitch score was **78%** ("Good").
 - **Rugby Union Pitches** rated varied from a score of **84%** through to **87%**. The average score was **85%** ("Good").
 - **Hockey pitches (Synthetic Turf Pitches)** were not rated in the same way. However, the only identified facilities used for Hockey (and other training for other sports) were visited and comments made regarding general condition, size, floodlighting and refurbishment needs. Comments are made within the Hockey assessment section of this report.
- 3.68 These ratings provide a comprehensive guide to the varying quality across the District, but need to be treated with caution for the following reasons:
- The inspections were non-technical, based on a visual assessment only
 - The inspections were undertaken in the summer months when pitches (winter sports) have been rested and re-seeded, giving a better impression
 - The inspections are a snapshot view of provision – scores are recorded based on what is seen on site at one particular visit
 - The presence of changing room facilities also boosts the score for a pitch. Although a significant number of the senior football pitches scored were rated as "Good" this was largely due to the existence of changing rooms, which took the scores for many pitches from an average rating to good. The presence of changing rooms adds 15% to a pitch score.
- 3.69 Ancillary facilities (changing rooms, car parking, toilets, and access to the site) were also rated at all facilities visited. The Sport England scoring matrix was used to score each pitch site out of 100%. The results include:

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- The scores for ancillary facilities ranged from 29% through to 83%. The average score for all sites was 58% (which equates to a rating of “Average Facilities”)
- Ancillary facilities serving cricket and rugby union pitches were rated the highest, with average scores of cricket 63% (“Good Facilities”) and Rugby 63% (“Good Facilities”).
- Ancillary facilities serving football pitches were rated slightly lower than the others, with scores ranging from 29% through to 73%. The average for ancillary facilities serving all football pitches was 61% (“Good Facilities”).

Consultation with Schools - Self-ratings of School Facilities

3.70 11 schools provided comments about the quality of their pitches.

3.71 The key findings included:

- 9% of schools rated their pitches as “poor” or “very poor”
- 55% of schools rated their pitches as “average”
- 36% of schools rated their pitches as “good” or “very good”

Consultation with Sports Clubs – Ratings of facilities used

3.72 A consultation exercise was undertaken with all identified sports pitch clubs within the Thanet District Council boundary. The initial response rate to the survey was poor and was subsequently boosted through telephone surveys and contact through League Secretaries undertaken by Strategic Leisure Limited. 16 clubs responded commented on 23 facilities initially from a total of 93 clubs. The responding clubs rated facilities they used as follows:

- 4% of respondents rated pitches as “very good”
- 22% rated pitches “good”
- 57% rated pitches as “average”
- 17 %rated pitches as “poor” or “very poor”

3.73 The results show that nearly three quarters of clubs rate facilities between “average and good”.

Accessibility: Playing Pitches

3.74 Access to pitch provision is influenced by a number of factors and needs to be viewed differently to access factors for more general open space provision. The following factors need to be considered:

- The need for ancillary facilities, such as changing rooms and car parking to ensure that some league standards are met
- The level of fees and charges for use of the facility – playing pitches have been assessed from the perspective of being formal sports facilities
- The demand “unit” is different to that of other types of open space. A team may not necessarily comprise of residents from the same locality.

Audit of Current Demand

3.75 It is important to consider the “spread” and distribution of facilities to ensure that access for local teams is in theory equitable. It is also important to consider the nature and ownership of provision that is available as this can influence access.

3.76 The following numbers of clubs and teams have been identified as playing regular fixtures throughout the relevant season.

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Table 3.12 – Numbers of Clubs & Teams

Sport	Number of clubs	Number of teams
Football	78	167
Cricket	22	67
Rugby Union	1	15
Hockey	2	10
Total	103	259

Sport by Sport Assessment – Key Findings

- 3.77 The findings of the assessment of playing pitch provision undertaken are considered on a sport-by-sport basis, in relation to Football, Cricket, Rugby Union and Hockey
- 3.78 **Numbers of teams.** The study research has identified **78 football** clubs generating **167 teams**. The number of teams generated by each club varies significantly, from single team clubs to those with in excess of seventeen teams. These teams are detailed by the number within each identified “type” of team in table 3.13 below.

Table 3.13 – Football Teams in Thanet District Council area

Team Type	Number of teams
Mini Soccer (Under 7 – Under 10)	43
Junior Football - Boys (Under 11 – Under 16)	46
Junior Football – Girls (Under 11 – Under 16)	0
Senior Football – Men’s (Over 16)	77
Senior Football – Women’s (Over 16)	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF TEAMS	167

- 3.79 **Number of pitches.** The study research has identified **68** football pitches with secured public use, which are included in the assessment calculation.

Table 3.14 – Pitches with secured public use in the Thanet District Council area

Pitch Type	Number of pitches
Mini Soccer Pitch	19
Junior Football Pitch	15
Senior Football Pitch	34
TOTAL NUMBER OF PITCHES IN SECURED PUBLIC USE	68

Key Assessment Findings: District Wide

- 3.80 The assessment of football District wide has revealed a number of key findings relating to supply and demand. These are reported below.
- 3.81 **Pitch Ownership** – The audit has identified that Thanet District Council is not the main provider of football pitches providing only 41% of all football pitches. Other pitches are indirectly provided by the Council through long term leasing to Parishes (these pitches have been categorised as Parish/TDC KCFA and KCC and through various schools.
- 3.82 **Temporal Demand for Games.** The assessment reveals that there are approximately **83** matches per week and that most games are played on a Sunday (**87%** of all games). Sunday is the peak time for Junior Football (**96%** of demand) and for Senior Football (**78%** of demand). The peak time for Mini Soccer is on a Saturday (**72%** of demand).

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- 3.83 **Mini Football** - The quantitative assessment has revealed that there is a sufficient supply of **mini soccer pitches** to meet peak demand on a Saturday.
- 3.84 **Junior Football** – The quantitative assessment has revealed that there is insufficient supply of **junior football pitch** provision to meet peak demand on a Sunday of –7 pitches. This is currently overcome by playing in some instances three games in a day.
- 3.85 **Senior Football** – The quantitative assessment has revealed that there is a small theoretical **surplus of 4 pitches** to meet peak demand in senior football on a Sunday. The surplus in senior pitch provision, if re-designated, as junior pitches will still not be sufficient to meet the identified deficiencies.
- 3.86 **Latent Demand** – The sports club questionnaire asked for clubs to raise issues about unmet demand. Although there is no clear indication of the number of potential teams who would play if there were more facilities, a number of clubs and teams currently have to access pitches outside of the District or their local area for their home games. Where identified, these teams have been included within the demand audit of the assessment.
- 3.87 **Future Demand** – Future demand for playing pitches is difficult to ascertain as there are many factors, which can contribute to a change in the demand for playing pitches, including the success of local teams, sports development initiatives and the quality/accessibility of local facilities and nature/scope of local leagues. Team Generation rates (TGR's) can be used as a guide, as can the consultation findings.
- 3.88 **Team Generation rates** are based on the number of teams identified earlier. Thanet District Team Generation rates are contained in the table below. They show the number of people required to produce one football team. The lower the right hand figures in each ratio, the higher the participation rate is for the District.

Table 3.15 – Team Generation Rates for Football in Thanet District

Football Team Type	Age- Group Population	Current Population	Current number of teams	Team Generation Rate
Mini-Soccer (U7-U10)	6-9 year olds	6460	43	1:150
Junior Football: Boys	10-15 year olds	5252	46	1:114
Junior Football: Girls	10-15 year olds	4952	0	0
Senior Football: Men	16-45 year olds	21465	77	1:279
Senior Football: Women	16-45 year olds	22803	1	1:22803
Total				1:365

Population figures are estimated based on published figures.

- 3.89 Comparisons with TGR's elsewhere are listed in the table below and can be used as comparisons with Thanet District. Observations about generation rates in Thanet District can be made. These include:
- A high number of junior teams
 - Low generation rates for Girls and Women's teams, in line with other areas of the country.

Table 3.16 - TGR Comparisons

Area	Team Generation Rate
Dover	1:361
Maidstone	1:167
Tonbridge and Malling	1:202

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Area	Team Generation Rate
Hastings	1:183
Thurrock	1:141
Thanet	1:365

3.90 **Future population projections** available are based on recent projections published by Kent County Council. These have been used to identify likely increases in the number of teams demanding pitches in future years. Table 3.17 identifies possible increases or reductions in demand as a result of projected population growth utilising current population as the baseline figure.

Table 3.17 – Future Demand

Football Team Type	Current Population	2011 Population	Number of Additional Teams	2021 Population	Number of Additional teams
Mini Soccer	6460	6044	-3	5726	-5
Junior Boys	5252	5220	0	5109	-1
Junior Girls	4952	4580	0	4316	0
Senior Men	21465	22301	+3	21605	+1
Senior Women	22803	21972	0	19595	0

3.91 Based on the population increases above, and on the assumption that current TGR's remain static, there will be additional demand for senior men pitches less demand for mini pitches.

3.92 **Consultation** undertaken with football clubs needs to be considered as many identify changes to their membership, which will impact on supply and demand for pitches. The key findings revealed that:

- 38% of football clubs expected their membership to rise in the coming years. Estimates based on numbers provided by the clubs would suggest that this increase may equate to in excess of 9 mini and junior teams.
- 62% of clubs expected their membership to remain static. No clubs expected a decline in their membership numbers.
- 81% of the football clubs responding to the survey rated the facilities they use as "average".
- Common key issues raised by clubs relate to poor grounds maintenance, poor quality changing facilities. Additionally Junior teams have queried why "After booking pitches for use do they then have them cancelled if the Adult League suddenly require them"
- Consultation with local league representatives reveal that membership trends mirror those evident nationally. League representatives report that adult leagues are at best static in terms of numbers of teams, and in some cases have experienced a recent decline. Junior football leagues are generally experiencing growth.
- The Council needs to be aware that Hugin Vikings are currently trying to negotiate a 10-year lease with KCC the local educational authority. For the continued use of the Warten Road Playing Fields. The Warten Road Playing field facility would be an ideal facility for Football Foundation Funding Bid.

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- 3.93 **Impact of Quality on capacity.** It is important to assess the impact of quality of pitches on capacity. If pitches are particularly poor then they may not be able to accommodate the number of games required to meet demand. This could increase any deficiency recorded or reduce surpluses. The results of the quality inspections can be used to show how quality might affect capacity. Table 3.18 identifies assumptions that could be made on capacity.

Table 3.18 – Theoretical Carrying Capacity

Rating of Pitch	Carrying Capacity	Multiplication Factor
Excellent / Good	Three matches per week	1.5
Average	Two matches per week	1.0
Below average	One match per week	0.5
Poor	One match per fortnight	0.25

- 3.94 Using the results of the non-technical visual assessments, the following analysis can be used to determine the impact of quality on pitch supply.

Table 3.19 – Football Pitches – Quality and carrying capacity

Rating of Pitch	No. of pitches	Quality Factor	Score / No. of pitches
Excellent / Good	15	1.5	22.5
Average	2	1.0	2
Below average	0	0.5	0
Poor	0	0.25	0
TOTAL PITCHES	17		24.5

- 3.95 **Impact of quality** – The analysis in the above figures identifies that when quality of pitches is taken into account the following findings are apparent:
- The quality rating for football pitches in theory impacts positively on the theoretical capacity of provision. When quality is factored into the supply, the current pitch supply is increased slightly, on the basis that a number of pitches can in theory accommodate three games a week. (The assessment calculation works on an assumption of two games per week).
 - The audit also revealed that the majority of pitches used by local clubs are served by changing rooms. The best changing rooms are at Jackey Bakers with others changing rooms being described by clubs as poor in need of refurbishment.
- 3.96 **Planned pitch developments** – A number of clubs consulted expressed an aspiration to improve the facilities they access. However, Ursuline College has identified that they are seeking to lease 19 acres of agricultural land to convert into playing fields in close proximity to the College. Also from discussion with Kent Sports Development Unit it has been identified that Building School for the Future will bring an increase in playing pitches available for community use on school sites. In addition there is a development at Dane Park in partnership with Margate AFC, which will bring about a minimum increase in 1 junior and 1 mini pitch. The proposed development at Jackey Bakers may involve a loss of 1 senior pitch. There may also be a loss of 1 senior pitch at Tivoli Park if Margate FC's plans for development affect this pitch.
- 3.97 **Pitches with no community use.** The audit has revealed a total of **29** football pitches (**11 senior, 10 junior and 8 mini pitches**) across the District that does not currently accommodate community use. If these pitches were brought into play then:
- The surplus in senior pitches would in theory increase to **15 pitches**
 - The deficiency in junior football pitches would in theory be irradiated and there would be a surplus of **3 pitches**

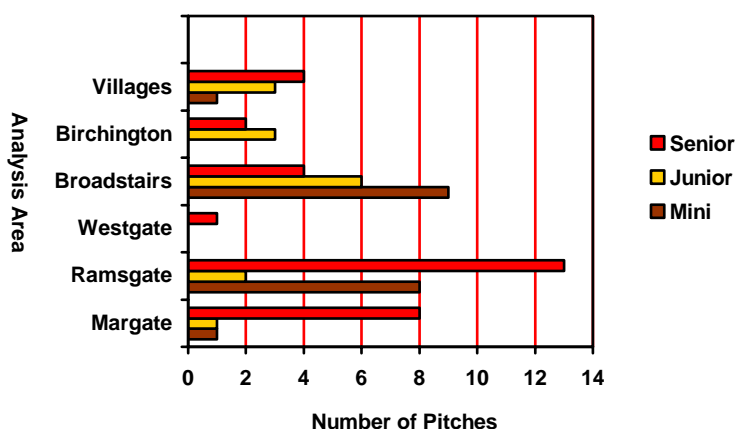
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- 3.98 The figures above need to be treated with caution, and are only “theoretical”. In most cases pitches and ancillary facilities will not be of a required standard to accommodate community use. School sites, which make up the majority of those pitches identified, are heavily used for school sport and PE and do not have required changing accommodation.

Key Assessment Findings: Area Analysis Areas

- 3.99 **Football – Area Analysis.** An assessment of football supply and demand has also been undertaken on an area basis using the 6 areas shown in the Maps Margate, Ramsgate, Westgate, Broadstairs, Birchington and Villages. This assessment highlights variances in quantity and quality.
- 3.100 Distribution of pitches varies across the District, as illustrated in Table 3.20 below:

Table 3.20 – Quantity of football pitches by Area (Community Use pitches only)



- 3.101 Area Analysis: Quantity. Table 3.21 shows that some areas of the District have greater pitch supply than others. The Ramsgate area has more senior pitches. Whilst Broadstairs Area has more junior and mini pitches. Westgate has no mini or junior pitches. The assessment modelling applied on a local level has identified the following findings:

Table 3.21 – Surplus / Deficiency in Pitch Provision – Area Analysis

Pitch	District Wide	Margate	Ramsgate	Westgate	Broadstairs	Birchington	Villages
Mini Soccer	+5	-1	0	0	+7	0	-1
Junior Football	-7	-2	-7	0	+2	0	0
Senior Football	+5	-1	-4	0	+4	+2	+4

- 3.102 The area analysis identifies deficiencies in pitch provision across a number of the analysis areas. There is a deficiency of 7 junior pitches in Ramsgate and a deficiency of 2 junior pitches in the Margate area. There is a deficiency of 4 senior pitches in Ramsgate Area and 1 in Margate. Surpluses of senior football pitches are in the Villages, Birchington and Broadstairs.

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Football Summary

- 3.103 **Summary of key findings for football** - Based on the District wide assessment undertaken the following key issues relate to football supply and demand in Thanet District Council:
- There are significant quantitative deficiencies in junior football pitch provision, which can be rectified by the supply increase from Margate AFC, the possible provision of community playing pitch facilities at Ursuline College, and community use agreements with other non community playing pitches currently unavailable at school sites.
 - Clubs anticipate an increase in the number of players over the next few years. This needs to be considered alongside current TGR's and future population projections, which suggest that the senior number of teams will increase, and junior boys and girls teams will decline.
 - Pitch quality is generally perceived to be "Average" – "Good". This is reflected in both the scores from the quality assessments and the ratings placed on facilities by clubs.
 - Ancillary facilities on the whole are of an average standard and there is significant scope for improvement. However, all Council owned pitches are served by changing facilities.
 - There are a number of "spare" pitches (those currently not used by the community) that can potentially be brought into play, although it needs to be acknowledged that these pitches often have an alternative primary purpose (in the case of school pitches, Physical Education and school sport).
 - Common key issues raised by clubs relate to poor grounds maintenance, poor quality changing facilities. Additionally junior teams have queried why "After booking pitches for use do they then have them cancelled if the Adult League suddenly require them".
 - Summer football pitches 3 in total are provided at Jakey Bakers these facilities should continue to be provided.

Cricket Assessment

- 3.104 **Numbers of teams.** The study research has identified **22** clubs playing cricket on a regular basis and a number of clubs playing ad hoc fixtures. These clubs generate **67** teams. These teams are detailed by the number within each identified "type" of team in Table 3.22 below.

Table 3.22 – Cricket Teams in Thanet District Council area

Team Type	Number of teams
Junior Boys Cricket (11-17 year olds)	26
Junior Girls Cricket (11-17 year olds)	0
Senior Men's Cricket (18-55 year olds)	41
Senior Women's Cricket (18-55 year olds)	0
TOTAL NUMBER OF CRICKET TEAMS	67

Number of pitches. The study research has identified **19** pitches with secured community use, which are included in the assessment calculation.

Table 3.23 – Pitches with secured public use in the Thanet District Council area

Pitch Type	Number of Pitches
Cricket Pitch*	19
TOTAL NUMBER OF CRICKET PITCHES	19

*No differentiation has been made between Junior and Senior pitches. Unlike football, pitches are not separate designated pitch areas. Junior fixtures make use of the same pitch (often a smaller area on the pitch) as senior teams. Also no differentiation made between size of wickets – each pitch can only accommodate one game at a time.

Key Assessment Findings: District Wide

- 3.105 The assessment of cricket District wide has revealed a number of key findings:

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- 3.106 **Pitch Ownership.** The majority of pitches used by local clubs are managed through the Council (10 pitches). The other pitches are provided on private club sites, Education sites and Parish Council.
- 3.107 **Temporal Demand for Games.** The assessment reveals that there are approximately 33 games a week during the season. Of these games, the peak demand for cricket is midweek for junior games 100% and 46% on Sunday for senior games.
- 3.108 **Surplus / Deficiencies.** There is a theoretical surplus of cricket pitch provision to meet peak demand during the week of + 2 pitches.
- 3.109 **Latent Demand.** Clubs were asked to identify issues associated with the ability of facilities to accommodate teams demanding pitches. Clubs through the consultation undertaken raised no issues. The audit did reveal 2 teams playing cricket on an ad-hoc basis, generating a demand for a pitch periodically throughout the playing season. This demand must be taken into account, and has been built into the assessment calculations. As such it is prudent to have a surplus of provision to ensure that this type of demand is not stifled.
- 3.110 **Future demand.** Future demand for playing pitches is difficult to ascertain as there are many factors, which can contribute to a change in the demand for playing pitches, including the success of local teams, sports development initiatives and the quality/accessibility of local facilities and nature/scope of local leagues. For the purposes of the assessment, future demand has been assessed through the use of Team Generation Rates and population projections and through Club Consultation.
- 3.111 **Team Generation rates** are based on the number of teams identified earlier. These figures show how many people within the given population are required to generate a team.

Table 3.24 – Team Generation Rates for Cricket in Thanet District Council

Cricket Team Type	Age- Group Population	Current Population	Current number of teams	Team Generation Rate
Junior Boys Cricket	11-17 year olds	5952	26	1:229
Junior Girls Cricket	11-17 year olds	5603	0	0
Senior Cricket: Men	18-55 year olds	27775	41	1:677
Senior Cricket: Women	18-55 year olds	29854	0	0

- 3.112 **Future population projections** available are based on 2001 census population statistics and can be used, together with the calculated TGR's to estimate future demand, and subsequent pitch supply requirements. Population projections and TGR's have been used to identify likely changes to demand over the next 16 years utilising 2001 census data as the baseline population data and GLA population projections for 2011 and 2021.

Table 3.25 – Future Population Projections

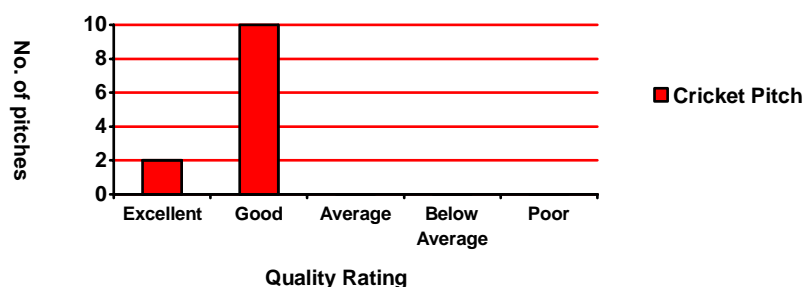
Cricket Team Type	Population	2011 Population	Number of Additional Teams	2021 Population	Number of Additional teams
Junior Boys Cricket	5952	6013	0	5813	-1
Junior Girls Cricket	5603	5305	0	4915	0
Senior Cricket: Men	27775	29254	+2	28866	+2

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Cricket Team Type	Population	2011 Population	Number of Additional Teams	2021 Population	Number of Additional teams
Senior Cricket: Women	29854	29409	0	27175	0

- 3.113 Based on the population increases above, and on the assumption that current TGR's remain static, there will be an additional demand for 2 pitches in 2011 and 2021.
- 3.114 **Consultation** undertaken with cricket clubs needs to be considered, specifically in relation to their estimations about membership growth. Consultation findings were limited but of the clubs providing an indication about future growth/decline, all predicted an increase in membership. Youth cricket is expanding in Thanet especially at Broadstairs and Margate who hope to increase between 10% and 20% each year. Nelson Cricket Club is currently setting up a Youth Section. The biggest need for cricket has been identified as improving indoor facilities for under 11's to play.
- 3.115 **Pitch Quality & Ancillary Facilities** A number of key findings have emerged with regard to the quality of cricket provision. Visual Inspections and key ratings of 12 pitches with community use have been undertaken. The key findings are shown in Table 3.26 below:

Table 3.26 – Summary of Quantity and Quality



- 3.116 **Impact of Quality on capacity.** It is important to assess the impact of quality of pitches on capacity. If pitches are particularly poor then they may not be able to accommodate the number of games required to meet demand. If pitches are of a high standard then they may be able to accommodate more matches. By factoring quality into the assessment, a truer picture of the adequacy of pitch provision can be gained. The results of the quality inspections can be used to show how quality might affect capacity on the basis of the assumptions detailed in Table 3.27:

Table 3.27 – Carrying Capacity

Rating of Pitch	Carrying Capacity	Multiplication Factor
Excellent / Good	Three matches per week	1.5
Average	Two matches per week	1.0
Below average	One match per week	0.5
Poor	One match per fortnight	0.25

- 3.117 In the case of cricket, 12 pitches in use were rated". By using the results of the quality audit and above multiplication factors, the following assessment on carrying capacity for Cricket is shown in Table 3.28:

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Table 3.28 Cricket Pitches – Quality and carrying capacity

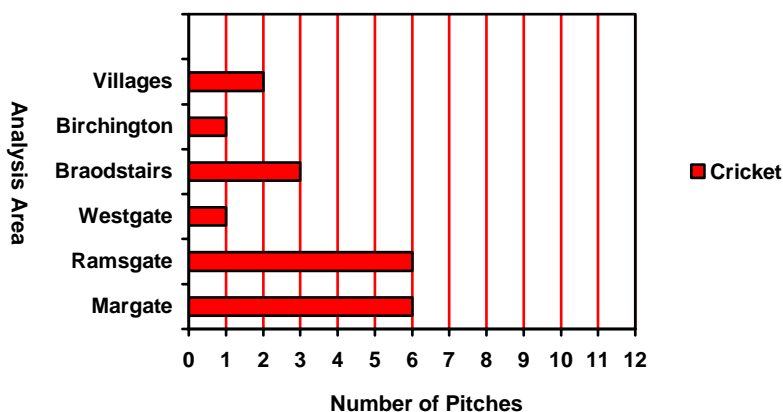
Rating of Pitch	No. of pitches	Quality Factor	Capacity. of pitches
Excellent / Good	12	1.5	18
Average	0	1.0	0
Below average	0	0.5	0
Poor	0	0.25	0
TOTAL PITCHES	12		18

- 3.118 The above analysis provides an indication of the impact of quality on the results of the quantitative assessment. When factoring in assumptions on quality and the impact on carrying capacity of pitches, the analysis shows that given the generally high quality of pitches, although there are only 12 pitches assessed this can be deemed to be the equivalent of 18. This would appear to re-emphasise the quantitative assessment results that indicate that there is sufficient pitch provision.
- 3.119 **Planned Pitch Developments** – The development proposed at Jackey Bakers will result in the loss of 1 cricket pitch.
- 3.120 **Pitches with no community use.** A total of 8 pitches within the District have been identified which do not currently have secured community use. All of these are located on school sites. As with football pitches identified, there are quality issues relating to the pitches and availability of changing provision.

Key Assessment Findings: Local Area Analysis

- 3.121 **Cricket – Area Analysis.** An assessment of cricket supply and demand has also been undertaken on an area basis using the 6 areas Margate, Ramsgate, Westgate, Broadstairs, Birchington and Villages. The assessment has identified a number of key findings in relation to quantity and quality.
- 3.122 Distribution of pitches varies across the District, as illustrated in the graph below.

Table 3.29 – Quantity of cricket pitches by Area (Community Use pitches only)



- 3.123 **Area Analysis: Quantity.** Table 3.30 shows that some areas of the District have a greater number of pitches than others, with provision ranging from 1 pitch in the Westgate and Birchington area, 2 in the Villages area, 3 in Broadstairs and 6 in the Ramsgate and Margate areas. Population and local demand need to be considered to assess whether provision is adequate to meet local needs. The assessment modelling applied on a local level has identified the following findings for each of the local areas:

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Table 3.30 – Surplus / Deficiency in Pitch Provision – Area Analysis

Pitch	District Wide	Margate	Ramsgate	Westgate	Broadstairs	Birchington	Villages
Cricket Pitch	+2	-2	+1	-1	-1	0	0

- 3.124 The area analysis identifies some theoretical area deficiencies, despite a surplus in pitch provision across the whole of the District. The assessment has identified deficiencies in provision in the Margate, Westgate, and Broadstairs Area. This deficit is not for weekend games but for provision of mid week colts games. Provision is only just adequate in the Ramsgate area and Birchington and the Villages are currently sufficient catered for.
- 3.125 The clubs identify that the quality of ancillary facilities serving cricket pitches is generally average at best. Over half of the sites are served by facilities, which have been rated as “average”. The main issues identified relate to poor grounds maintenance at council facilities that raises safety issues especially for Youth play. However, the site inspections of community use facilities has given good to excellent ratings.

Cricket Summary

- 3.126 **Summary of key findings for cricket** – The key issues relating to supply and demand of cricket can be summarised as:
- Thanet District Council manages most of the cricket pitches identified for community use.
 - Current demand is met by the available pitch supply. Demand is split throughout the week.
 - The loss of the cricket pitch at Jakey Bakers could be compensated by the upgrading of the artificial cricket pitch at Hartsdown Park.
 - Quality is generally good with most pitches rated above average. However, the majority of pitches are on public open space sites and could be susceptible to vandalism and unofficial use, which can impact negatively on quality
 - Future growth is not estimated to be significant based on the use of TGR's, population projections and consultation findings. In fact population projections indicate a decline by one junior team and an increase in two senior teams by 2021.

Rugby Union Assessment

- 3.127 **Numbers of clubs and teams.** The study research has identified **1 club** based in the District generating **15 teams**. The teams are detailed by the number within each identified “type” of team in Table 3.31.

Table 3.31 – Rugby Union Teams in the Thanet District Council area

Team Type	Number of Teams
Mini Rugby Mixed (8-12 year olds)	1
Junior Ruby - Boys (13-17 year olds)	5
Junior Rugby - Girls (16-17 year olds)	2
Senior Rugby - Men (18-45 year olds)	6
Senior Rugby - Women (18-45 year olds)	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF RUGBY UNION TEAMS	15

- 3.128 **Number of pitches.** The study research has identified **9 pitches** available for community use, which are included in the assessment calculation.

Table 3.32 – Pitches with secured public use in the Thanet District Council area

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Pitch Type	Number of pitches
Rugby Union (Full-size)	9
TOTAL NUMBER OF PITCHES IN SECURED PUBLIC USE	9

Key Assessment Findings: District Wide

- 3.129 The assessment and analysis of supply and demand has revealed the following key findings that are reported below.
- 3.130 **Pitch Ownership.** 3 Rugby pitches are provided and maintained by Thanet District Council. 6 other pitches are available on school sites.
- 3.131 **Temporal Demand for Games.** The assessment reveals that peak demand for pitch use is on a Saturday with all senior fixtures on this day.
- 3.132 **Identified Surplus / Deficiencies.** The results show that there is theoretically sufficient pitch provision to meet current demand at its peak.
- 3.133 **Latent Demand.** Consultation with the local club reveals that no teams are denied of the opportunity to play matches due to a lack of pitches.
- 3.134 **Future Demand.** Future demand for playing pitches is difficult to ascertain as there are many factors, which can contribute to a change in the demand for playing pitches, including the success of local teams, sports development initiatives and the quality/accessibility of local facilities and nature/scope of local leagues. For the purposes of the assessment, future demand has been assessed through the use of Team Generation Rates and population projections and through Club Consultation.

Table 3.33 – Team Generation Rates for Rugby Union in Thanet District Council

Rugby Team Type	Age- Group Population	Current Population	Current number of teams	Team Generation Rate
Mini-Rugby – Mixed	8-12 year olds	8427	1	1:8427
Junior Rugby - Boys	13-17 year olds	4169	5	1:834
Junior Rugby - Girls	16-17 year olds	3921	2	1:1961
Senior Rugby - Men	18-45 year olds	19874	6	1:3312
Senior Rugby - Women	18-45 year olds	21310	1	1:21310

- 3.135 Based on the current TGR's and future population projections, an estimate of future demand can be made. The estimated demand for 2009 and 2014 are illustrated below.

Table 3.34 – Future Population Projections

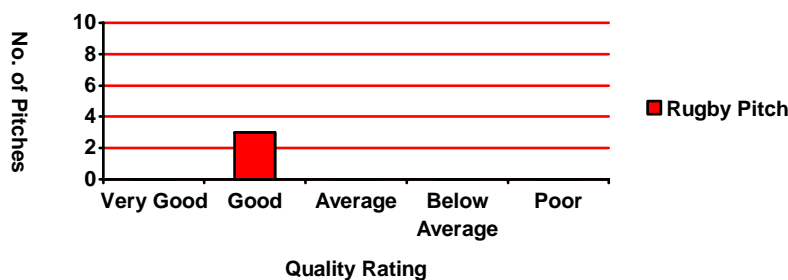
Rugby Team Type	Population	2011 Population	Number of Additional Teams	2021 Population	Number of Additional teams
Mini-Rugby	8427	7953	0	7649	0
Junior Boys	4169	4259	+4	4083	0
Junior Girls	3921	3772	0	3454	0

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Rugby Team Type	Population	2011 Population	Number of Additional Teams	2021 Population	Number of Additional teams
Senior Men	19874	20631	0	20036	0
Senior Women	21310	20480	0	18266	0

- 3.136 Based on population projections and the assumption that TGR's will remain static, there is not likely to be any increased demand for pitches over the next 16 years.
- 3.137 **Pitch Quality & Ancillary Facilities** A number of key findings have emerged with regard to the quality of rugby provision. Visual Inspections and key ratings at 1 site, St Peters Recreation Ground with, 3 pitches with community use have been undertaken. All pitches were rated as “good”.

Table 3.35 - Summary of Quality and Quantity – Rugby Union Pitches



- 3.138 **Impact of Quality on capacity.** It is important to assess the impact of quality of pitches on capacity. If pitches are particularly poor then they may not be able to accommodate the number of games required to meet demand. This could increase any deficiency recorded or reduce surpluses. The results of the quality inspections can be used to show how quality might affect capacity. Table 3.36 identifies assumptions that could be made on capacity.

Table 3.36 – Carrying Capacity

Rating of Pitch	Carrying Capacity	Multiplication Factor
Excellent / Good	Three matches per week	1.5
Average	Two matches per week	1.0
Below average	One match per week	0.5
Poor	One match per fortnight	0.25

- 3.139 In the case of rugby, all 3 pitches in use were rated as “Good”. By using the results of the quality audit and above multiplication factors, the following assessment on carrying capacity for Rugby are shown in Table 3.37:

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Table 3.37 - Rugby Pitches – Quality and carrying capacity

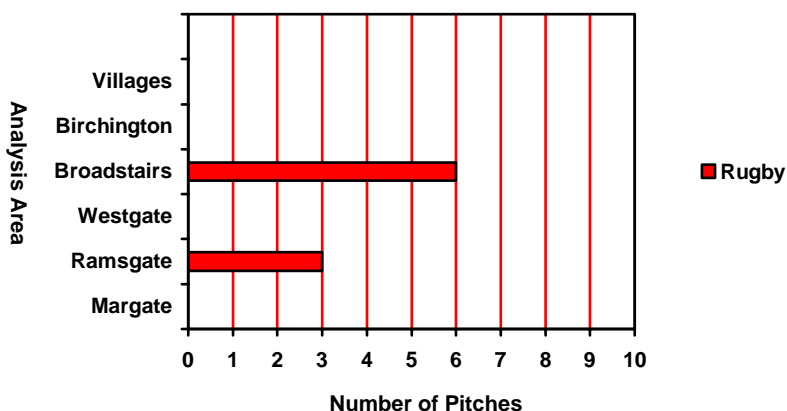
Rating of Pitch	No. of pitches	Quality Factor	Score / No. of pitches
Excellent / Good	3	1.5	4.5
Average	0	1.0	0
Below average	0	0.5	0
Poor	0	0.25	0
TOTAL PITCHES	3		4.5

- 3.140 On this basis if it is assumed that all pitches can be used for three matches per week, the carrying capacity of rugby pitches is likely to be the equivalent of 4.5 pitches. This, in theory, increases the capacity of available supply.
- 3.141 **Planned Pitch developments** – The assessment has not revealed any known rugby union pitch developments.
- 3.142 **Pitches with no community use.** The assessment has revealed that there are 7 additional rugby union pitches, which are not currently available to the community. These are all located on school sites. If these pitches were to be brought into play, then there would be an increase in the theoretical surplus of pitch provision.

Key Assessment Findings: Local Area Analysis

- 3.143 **Rugby – Area Analysis.** An assessment of rugby supply and demand has also been undertaken on an area basis using the 6 areas Margate, Ramsgate, Westgate, Broadstairs, Birchington and Villages. The assessment has identified a number of key findings in relation to quantity and quality.
- 3.144 The distribution of pitches across the District is shown in Table 3.38 below. Only pitches with community use have been identified and shown

Table 3.38 – Quantity of rugby pitches by Area (Community Use pitches only)



- 3.145 **Area Analysis: Quality.** The quality ratings for all pitches in the Broadstairs area are good.
- 3.146 **Area Analysis: Ancillary / Changing Room facilities.** The ratings for pitch ancillary and changing facilities are good.

Rugby Summary

- 3.147 **Key findings for Rugby Union** – The assessment has identified a number of key issues relating to the demand for and supply of rugby union pitches. These are:

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- Current and future demand is adequately serviced by the current pitch supply. There is scope for some growth to be accommodated.
- The quality of pitches is good.
- The quality of ancillary facilities is good.
- There is a need for car parking to service the rugby club at St Peters Recreation Ground.
- There is a possibility that the rugby club at St Peters may be interested in maintaining and booking the use of the rugby pitches at this site. This requires further investigation.

Hockey Assessment: District Wide Results

- 3.148 **Numbers of clubs and teams.** The study research has identified 2 Hockey club generating 10 teams. These teams are detailed by the number within each identified “type” of team in Table 3.39

Table 3.39 – Hockey Teams in the Thanet District Council area

Team Type	Number of Teams
Junior Hockey – Boys (11-16 year olds)	0
Junior Hockey – Girls (11-16 year olds)	0
Senior Hockey – Men (16-45 year olds)	6
Senior Hockey – women (16-45 year olds)	4
TOTAL NUMBER OF HOCKEY TEAMS	10

- 3.149 **Number of pitches.** The study research has identified 2 full size Synthetic Turf pitches used for fixtures, which is included in the assessment calculation. These pitches are located at Jackey Bakers Recreation Ground and The Corporation of St Lawrence College.

Table 3.40 – Pitches with secured public use in the Thanet District Council area

Pitch Type	Number of pitches
Synthetic Turf Pitches (Full Size)	2
TOTAL NUMBER OF PITCHES IN SECURED PUBLIC USE	2

Key Assessment Findings: District Wide

- 3.150 The assessment of hockey District wide has identified a number of key findings, which are reported below.
- 3.151 **Pitch Ownership.** Jacky Bakers is in the ownership of TDC, whilst St Lawrence College is private
- 3.152 **Temporal demand for games.** The assessment reveals that there are approximately 5 games per week during the season. Of these games, the peak demand for hockey is on a Saturday with 100% of the games played at this time.
- 3.153 **Surplus/deficiencies.** There is a theoretical surplus of STP provision to meet peak demand for hockey (equivalent to 1 match slots). This surplus is based on the assumption that the STP's is accessible for hockey at the required times. The surplus relates to a District wide availability of 1 match slots on a Saturday (peak use) on the basis of there being 3 match slots at peak time (1 pitches x 3 slots = 3 games capacity). Consideration needs to be given to the other potential usage of STP's during the week particularly for football or Hockey training.
- 3.154 **Latent Demand.** Clubs were asked to identify issues associated with the ability of facilities to accommodate teams demanding pitches. No comments were received.
- 3.155 **Future Demand.** Future demand for playing pitches is difficult to ascertain, as there are many factors, which can contribute to a change in demand, such as the success of sports development programmes.

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- 3.156 **Team Generation Rates.** These are based on the number of teams identified earlier. These figures show how many people within the given population are required to generate a team.

Table 3.41 – Team Generation Rates for Hockey in the Thanet District Council

Hockey Team Type	Age- Group Population	Current Population	Current number of teams	Team Generation Rate
Junior Hockey: Boys	11-15 year olds	4360	0	0
Junior Hockey: Girls	11-15 year olds	4111	0	0
Senior Hockey: Men	16-45 year olds	21465	6	1:3577
Senior Hockey: Women	16-45 year olds	22803	4	1:5701

Population figures are estimated based on published figures.

- 3.157 Based on the current TGR's and future population projections, an estimate of future demand can be made. The estimated demand for 2011 and 2021 are illustrated below.

Table 3.42 – Population Projections

Hockey Team Type	Population	Population 2011	Teams Additional	Population 2021	teams Additional
Junior Boys Hockey	4360	4343	0	4244	0
Junior Girls Hockey	4111	3813	0	3588	0
Senior Men Hockey	21465	22301	0	21605	0
Senior Women Hockey	22803	21972	0	19595	-1

Team numbers rounded to next complete figure

- 3.158 Based on the population increases above, and on the assumption that current TGR's remain static, there will be no additional demand for pitches. If sports development were to focus on junior hockey development this would have an impact on future pitch requirements.
- 3.159 **Pitch Quality & Ancillary Facilities.** Visual Inspections and key ratings have not been applied to Synthetic Pitches in the same way as natural turf pitches for other sports. No teams playing league hockey were identified as using grass pitches.
- 3.160 **Impact of Quality on capacity.** It is important to assess the impact of quality of pitches on capacity. If pitches are particularly poor then they may not be able to accommodate the number of games required to meet demand, or to the standard of league hockey requirements. In the case of hockey, supply was found to be more than adequate to meet current demand, however the following needs to be considered:
- The quality of pitches impacts upon the standard of league hockey that can be accommodated
 - Additionally lighting levels can have an impact. As well as implications for match play, there are also limiting factors on the use of these facilities for training.
- 3.161 **Planned Pitch developments –** The assessment has revealed plans for an additional STP 60 x 40. This if the raising of funding is successful will be provided in Minster. Minster Match are currently seeking

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additional funding but have the majority of funding in place for a Football Foundation bid. However discussions should be held with KCC to identify any future STP development that may occur through Building Schools for the Future.

- 3.162 **Pitches with no community use.** The assessment has identified no other STP's (full size) in the District.

Key Findings: Local Area Analysis

- 3.163 No detailed analysis has been undertaken on a local area basis, given the existence of only two clubs, which are both based within the Ramsgate Area, where the two STP's are located.

Hockey Summary

- 3.164 **Key Findings for Hockey** – The assessment has only identified one key issue relating to the demand for and supply of Hockey facilities. This is at Jackey Bakers: where the infill sand has compacted. This will bring about health and safety issues for use if not addressed as soon as possible.

Synthetic Pitches – Training Facilities

- 3.165 The assessment methodology relating to natural turf pitches focuses on demand for facilities to play competitive matches for example, local league fixtures. It is also important to consider the demand for, and supply of facilities for training, and in particularly synthetic turf pitches.
- 3.166 Access to training facilities was a common key issues cited by local clubs. The audit undertaken has revealed only one synthetic turf pitch which is currently used this is the facility at Jackey Bakers. The additional turf pitch at Minster will help with additional training facilities.
- 3.167 The audit has also revealed a very limited number of Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGA's) within the District being 3 in total, 2 on TDC sites and 1 at Upton School.
- 3.168 The **Key findings** in relation to Synthetic Pitches and MUGA's are:
- Access to training facilities was cited as a common issue for clubs, particularly in relation to football and hockey.

Provision in Neighbouring Authorities

- 3.169 Consultation has been undertaken with representatives from local authorities neighbouring Thanet District Council. This consultation focussed on the identification of any issues arising from known "import and export" of demand, for instance, are there any issues resulting from teams originating from one area playing in another. The consultation also sought to identify any other issues, such as significant deficiencies in pitch provision or the level of fees and charges levied which might result in displaced demand. In some cases teams may travel outside of their "home" area in order to access better quality or cheaper facilities.
- 3.170 The key findings from the consultation include:
- There is general consensus that there is little "import or export" of demand, with most teams playing within the District from which they originate.
 - The majority of surrounding authorities have already undertaken an assessment of playing pitches, or are in the process of reviewing a local strategy
 - For those authorities with an assessment and strategy in place, there are mixed findings in relation to recorded surpluses and deficiencies.

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- Most surrounding authorities reported deficiencies in the quality of facilities, and the need to ensure that the type of provision provided changes to match changing demand trends, for example, increases in mini and junior football.

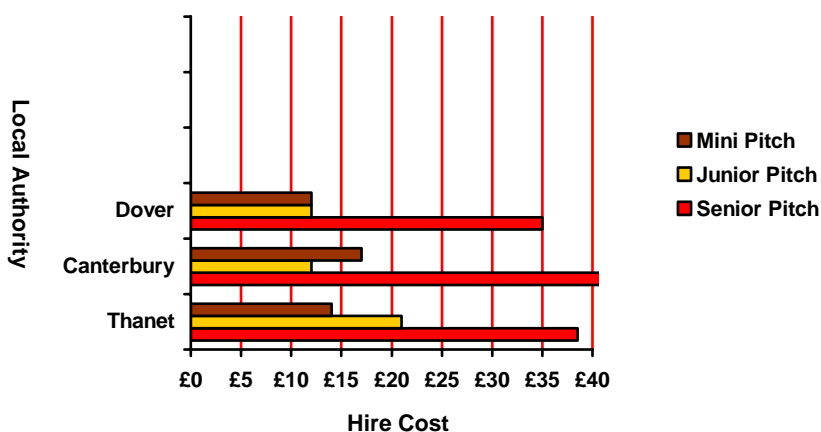
3.171 On the basis of the consultation undertaken, there does not appear to be any major issues for Thanet District Council as result of pitch quantity and quality in neighbouring authorities.

Hire Fees and Charges - Comparison

3.172 In addition to an assessment of quantity and quality it is important to consider other aspects of playing pitch provision. **Access** to facilities can be inhibited by a number of factors. These include the geographical positioning of facilities, location of key housing sites and the impact of public transport. **Cost can also be a critical factor.** The assessment of playing pitch provision in Thanet has included a comparison of hire fees and charges for playing pitches. A comparison, predominantly of football pitch hire charges (many authorities only provide football pitches) has been undertaken to determine how the cost of hire in Thanet performs against that of neighbouring authorities. A comparison of charges has been undertaken with those neighbouring authorities for whom pitch hire fees and charges were available.

3.173 The results of the comparison exercise are shown in Table 3.43.

Table 3.43 – Comparison of Football pitch hire charges (Local Authority)



Hire charges are per match

3.174 The following key findings can be drawn from the pricing comparison:

- Of the authorities compared, prices for hire (per match) of senior football pitches appear to vary between £35 and £43 across the comparator authorities. For Junior pitches Thanet charges the highest at £21 compared to £12 at Dover and Canterbury. Bearing in mind also that Thanet Leisure Force will charge Junior Clubs at adult hire charges whenever possible.

Tennis Assessment

3.175 **Demand - Clubs.** The audit has revealed that there are 2 Tennis Clubs / organisations operating within the District. Details are provided in Table 3.44:

SECTION III – AUDIT OF LOCAL PROVISION

Table 3.44 – Tennis Clubs in Thanet District Council

Club	Details
Broadstairs and St Peters Lawn Tennis Club	Current members = 196 Play league tennis. Yes Membership is open to all. Yes Membership is Static
Margate Tennis Club	Current members = 130 Play league competitions yes Membership is open to all-yes Membership is increasing/

3.176 The 2 “clubs” identified are ratified by the Lawn Tennis Association.

3.177 **Demand – Individual.** The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) works on the basis of 2% of the population participating in tennis on a regular basis. This figure is used as a basis for their facility planning prioritisation on a national and regional level. An assessment of court provision in Thanet has been undertaken using this participation level as a framework, which sets broad standards for outdoor court provision with, and without floodlighting. The results of this are shown in Figure 3.3. These standards are;

- A requirement for 1 outdoor court per 45 players
- A requirement for 1 outdoor floodlit court per 65 players

3.178 **Supply.** The audit of current community tennis court provision has revealed that there are 49 courts currently available for community use. Supply is detailed in Table 3.45

Table 3.45 – Tennis Courts in Thanet District Council – with Community Use

Type of court	No. of courts
Macadam	35
Macadam – with floodlights	14
Artificial Grass	0
Artificial Grass – with floodlights	0
Acrylic	0
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMUNITY USE TENNIS COURTS	49

* Not exclusively used for tennis

Key Assessment Findings: District Wide

3.179 On the basis of this, the following assessment results are presented:

3.180 **CACI Demand Modelling.** A CACI analysis identifies the likely propensity to participate in certain sports and leisure activities, based on key demographic and socio-economic characteristics. The analysis for Thanet suggests that the propensity to participate in Tennis within the District is likely to be higher than the national average. The analysis suggests that 1.4% of the adult population are likely to play tennis on a regular basis. Fig 3.4 shows the tennis court requirements for Thanet based on the 1.4% propensity to participate. This identifies a surplus of 10 courts but a deficiency of 13 floodlit courts. From consultation undertaken during this study it appears that the CACI figure of 1.4% is more realistic. The condition of some of the tennis courts such as Dane Park and Warre Recreation Ground confirm that these courts are not being used as tennis courts and have not been for sometime.

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Table 3.46 – Tennis Courts: Comparison with LTA standards of provision

Population	1.4% of total Population	Court Requirement	Court Requirement floodlit	Actual no. of courts	Actual no. of courts - floodlit	Tennis Court Deficiency	Floodlit Tennis Court Deficiency
126,702	1774	39	27	49	14	+10	-13

- 3.181 **Court Ownership and Management.** The assessment has revealed that TDC is the main provider and owner of all the courts identified with community use, but leases courts to Margate and Broadstairs Lawn Tennis Club and to the Parish Councils.
- 3.182 In addition to the arrangements summarised above, other tennis courts are available through schools but not through formal community use agreements, for example, Chatham House Grammar School Ramsgate, Dane Court Grammar School 7 latex macadam tennis courts, Hartsdown Technology College 4 tennis courts, King Ethelbert, Corporation of St Lawrence College and the new Marlowe Academy. In addition to this there are 7 grass courts at St Peters Recreation Ground leased to Broadstairs Tennis Club who should be maintaining them, but they have been left to go wild and lie idle.
- 3.183 **Future Demand.** Future demand for tennis is difficult to estimate. Based on the population projections and the CACI results, there is likely to be a small increase in demand as population increases. However, as most tennis participation is facilitated via local clubs and organisations (who “manage” court usage), the views of clubs relating to future membership levels need to be considered.
- 3.184 **Quality.** Quality has been assessed through site visits and the completion of a non-technical visual assessment which has considered a number of quality criteria including:
- The condition of nets, posts and fencing
 - Condition of the playing surface
 - Presence of floodlighting
 - Presence and suitability of ancillary facilities such as a pavilion
- 3.185 Consideration has been given to the “setting” of courts, particularly those in public open space environments. As with the assessment of pitch facilities, each facility scores a potential of 100%. The results of the quality assessments are illustrated in Table 3.47

Table 3.47



- 3.186 The results of the non-technical visual assessment need to be considered alongside user’s views. The club consultation reveals a consensus that the club facilities were of a very good quality, especially as courts 1-3 at Broadstairs are to be resurfaced in August 2005.

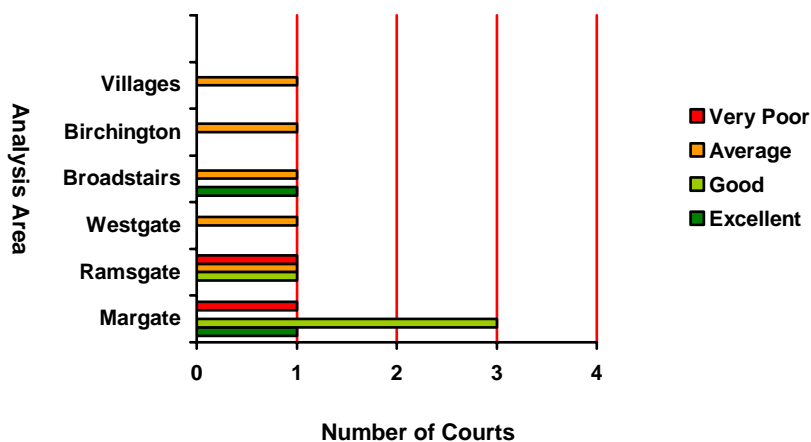
SECTION III – AUDIT OF LOCAL PROVISION

- 3.187 **Access.** Access has been assessed through a review of membership policies and fees, mapping the location of courts and through consultation with local clubs. Findings in relation to access are:
- A variance in fees and charges for membership of the two clubs. Examples include Adult Membership fees ranging from £160 at Broadstairs to £133 for senior membership at Margate. The mapping shows that there is an uneven geographical distribution of courts. Margate 18 courts, Ramsgate 12 courts, Westgate 4 courts Broadstairs 11 courts, Birchington 2 courts and the Villages 2 courts.
- 3.188 **Planned developments.** The assessment has identified the following planned developments for tennis court provision. Court re-surfacing was about to take place at St Peters Recreation Ground at the time of the audit. It is also understood that Broadstairs LTC have approached the LTA to convert three of the unused grassed pitches into hard courts at St Peters.
- 3.189 **Courts with no community use.** A small number of courts that do not currently have any community use have been identified. These are located on school sites. Bringing these courts into play would increase the supply for community use.

Key Assessment Findings: Local Area Analysis

- 3.190 **Quality.** The quality of rated courts across the various analysis areas is shown on Table 3.48

Table 3.48 – Court Quality Ratings by Area



- 3.191 Table 3.48 shows that tennis courts across the District are average. The very poor court facilities have been identified as Dane Park and Warre Recreation Ground. The two excellent facilities one in Margate and Broadstairs are the two club facilities.

Tennis Summary

- 3.192 **Summary of key findings for Tennis.** A number of key findings have emerged which are summarised as:
- When measured against the LTA standards of provision, there is a deficiency in court provision. This deficiency is particularly pronounced in relation to floodlit tennis courts.
 - When measured against the more local standard of propensity to participate, there is a surplus of court provision but still a deficiency in floodlit tennis courts.
 - Quality is generally average across the District. The main qualitative deficiencies relate to the general maintenance of the courts and fencing, in particular weeds on and surrounding the courts. Warre Recreation Ground courts and Dane Park courts are in the worst condition.

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- The current management arrangements of courts appear to be having mixed results in terms of growth and development of the sport.
- Management of the Council courts needs to be reviewed, in particular with regards to maintenance. Quality facilities are more likely to attract new users and if courts are not maintained, the life expectancy of the courts reduces.
- There are no dedicated facilities for mini-tennis at any of the current courts.

Bowling Green Assessment

3.193 **Demand – Clubs.** The audit has identified 13 clubs who make use of lawn bowls greens. Details are provided in Table 3.49:

Table 3.49 – Bowls Clubs in Thanet District Council

Club	Details
Broadstairs and St Peters Bowls Club	Current Membership = 100 Membership is increasing Open to all. Yes
Cliftonville Men's Bowls Club	Current Membership = 27 Membership is decreasing Open to all. Yes
Margate Ladies Bowling Club	Current Membership = 19 Membership is static Open to all. : - Yes
Ramsgate Esplanade Bowls Club	Current Membership = 70 Membership is increasing Open to all. : Yes
Thanet Bowls Club	Current Membership = 91 Membership is increasing Open to all. Yes
Walpole Bay Bowls Club	Current Membership = 40 Membership is increasing Open to all. Yes
Westbrook Men's Bowls Club	Current Membership = 57 Membership is increasing Open to all. Yes
Birchington Bowls Club	Current Membership = 76 Membership is not known Open to all. Yes
Dane Park Bowling Club	Current Membership = 62 Membership is not known Open to all. Yes
Minster Bowls Club	Current Membership = 60 Membership Open to all.

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- 3.194 **Demand – Individual.** The General Household Survey (GHS) provides a guide to participation in Bowls and together with the CACI analysis undertaken can provide an indication of demand on a local level. The GHS (2002) indicates that 2% of the adult population participate in Lawn Bowls. The CACI analysis indicates that the propensity to participate in Bowls within the Thanet District Council is likely to be significantly lower with 1.1% of the adult population likely to participate.
- 3.195 On the basis of this, there is a need for current supply to accommodate 1,403 bowls participants on a regular basis. The Kent County Bowls Association Year Books identify only 703 members of bowls clubs across Thanet. And these are identified in the table above by individual club membership.
- 3.196 **Supply.** The audit of bowls green provision has revealed that there are **15 greens** currently available for community use. Supply is detailed in Table 3.50.

Table 3.50 – Bowls Greens in Thanet District Council – with Community Use

Type of Green	No. of Greens
Natural Turf –	15
Natural Turf – with floodlights	0
Artificial Turf -	0
Artificial Turf - with floodlights	0
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMUNITY USE BOWLS GREENS	15

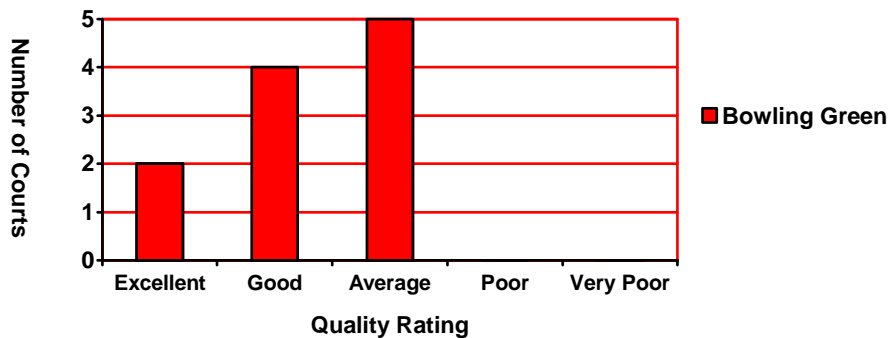
Key Assessment Findings: District Wide

- 3.197 **Green Ownership and Management.** The assessment has revealed that TDC is the main provider of Greens. 1 club is privately owned, another is owned by Minster Parish Council the remainder are owned by TDC. Of these 3 clubs hold leases, this includes all maintenance including greens. A further three clubs (4 greens) hold full repairing leases on pavilions and manage the sites with the Council subsidising ground maintenance costs on the bowling greens. There is 1 other club, Westbrook who are operated via Thanet Leisure Force.
- 3.198 **Future Demand.** Future demand for Bowls is difficult to estimate. Based on the population projections and the CACI results, theoretically there is likely to be a small increase in demand as population increases, particularly in relation to increases in the over 50's population, an age-group with high participation rates in Bowls. However, as most Bowls participation is facilitated via local clubs and organisations (who "manage" green usage), the views of clubs relating to future membership levels need to be considered.
- 3.199 **Consultation.** Of the 8 clubs (62%) responding to the consultation exercise, 1 expected a decrease in their membership, 4 expected membership to rise and 3 identified that membership would remain static. In addition 1 club explained that the large number of bowling greens in Thanet is due to the past popularity in bowls, when Thanet was a holiday destination. Geographically, a number of the greens are focused around the Cliftonville area, which offered the largest area of hotel and guest house accommodation in Thanet, for example, St Georges the largest venue with 4 greens was surrounded by hotels, including 3 Butlins hotels, but now only 1 hotel remains, The Walpole Bay.
- 3.200 **Quality.** Quality has been assessed through site visits and the completion of a non-technical visual assessment which has considered a number of quality criteria including:
- Condition of the playing surface
 - Presence of floodlighting
 - Presence and suitability of ancillary facilities such as a pavilion, seating etc...

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3.201 Consideration has been given to the “setting” of greens, particularly those in public open space environments. As with the assessment of pitch facilities, each facility scores a potential of 100%. The results of the quality assessments are illustrated in Table 3.51.

Table 3.51 – Summary of Quality: Bowling Greens



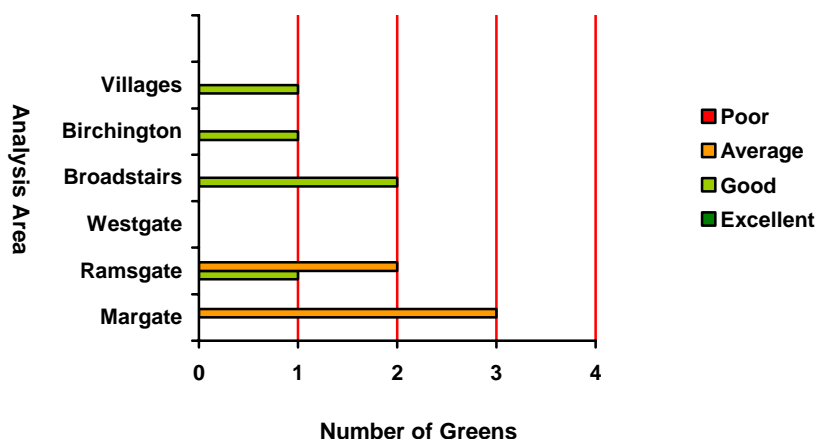
3.202 The results of the non-technical visual assessment need to be considered alongside user’s views. The club consultation in relation to ratings of facilities used, broadly matches those of the assessment. 2 out of the five clubs rated their facility as good. 2 rated their facility as poor, these clubs played at St Georges Lawns Margate. Comments were made that there has been some improvement during the 2005 season. Other comments made following consultation included “the encouragement of more clubs to become mixed”, and provision of additional funding to maintain bowling greens.

3.203 **Planned developments.** The assessment has identified that the Private Bowls facility Margate Bowls Club located in Northdown Avenue have submitted a planning application for housing development on this site.

Key Assessment Findings: Local Area Analysis

3.204 **Quality.** The quality of rated greens across the various analysis areas is shown on Table 3.52.

Table 3.52 – Bowls Quality Ratings by Area



3.205 Table 3.52 shows that bowling greens across the District vary between good and average. The greens in Broadstairs and the green in Minster come out as good. There are no bowling greens in Westgate.

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Bowls Summary

3.206 **Summary of key findings for Bowls.** A number of key findings have emerged which are summarised as:

- TDC appears to have insufficient revenue funds for the fine turf maintenance required at the number of bowls venues provided and there are few skilled staff remaining with Bowling Green expertise.
- Some clubs working in partnership with the Council have embraced grounds maintenance successfully when they have taken over responsibility for the bowls facilities they use.
- Membership of bowls clubs has significantly declined over the past 10 years.
- There is a suggestion that current demand at St Georges Lawns is only sufficient to justify two of the four greens.
- A planning application has been submitted by Margate Bowls Club for housing redevelopment on its site. This gives the Council an opportunity to negotiate with Margate Bowls Club on using one or two of the St Georges Lawns greens. This in turn would bring much needed investment into St Georges Lawns.
- The Council in partnership with Bowls Clubs and organisations may have an opportunity to create a Centre of Excellence /performance at St Georges Lawns. Centres of excellence/performance may be based at clubs able or willing to upgrade their facilities. A Centre of Excellence would need to include a minimum of two greens, logically allied to an indoor playing facility and contain ample meeting, administrative, changing, and dining and car parking facilities.
- Clubs should be encouraged to operate independently of the Council and offered leases to maintain the facilities and greens.
- In some instances it may not be financially viable for a club to take on a lease in this instance the council will need to consider if it wished to subsidise bowls greens in the future or move the club to another facility either seeking development for housing and using the proceeds to increase quality in other bowls facilities elsewhere or keeping the redundant bowls facilities and green amenity space.

Other Outdoor Sports

3.207 A number of other sports rely on the provision of outdoor facilities. These are considered in brief within the following section.

Athletics

3.208 There is a currently 1 athletics club in TDC Thanet Roadrunners Athletics Club. They are a road running and junior athletics club their home venue is the Charles Dickens School in Broadstairs, which has a grass school track. The club currently have in the region of 225 members and anticipate this would increase dramatically if there were a synthetic athletics track within Thanet.

3.209 The Athletics Facilities Strategy for the UK (2002-2006) sets provision standards for synthetic athletics facilities, which can be used as a framework for assessing need on a local level. The broad standards indicate that there should be one eight-lane track in each county and a six-lane track with floodlighting per 250,000 people living within 30 minutes drive time. There is no such athletics facility in Thanet. The nearest Athletic facilities are Canterbury and Ashford.

3.210 Following development of the Ashford and Canterbury athletic tracks the clubs from these areas estimated that their memberships doubled.

3.211 The Kent Single Sports Deficiency Report 2004 states the following:

‘Following the priority, of a need for a polymeric track in Maidstone, there are substantial populations in East Kent coastal districts with no access to a track closer than Ashford. The minimum requirement to provide reasonable access and allow athletics to develop would be a track in the Thanet Coastal Town and in Dover.’ Ramsgate is identified as an area of suitable need.

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- 3.212 Development of a 6 lane synthetic athletics track managed by the Marlowe Academy is due to take place at Jackey Bakers and should be available for community use in the future.

Croquet

- 3.213 There is 1 croquet club, Ramsgate Croquet Club, Westcliffe Royal Esplanade, Ramsgate. The club was formed in 1982 and originally shared facilities at the Montefiore Sports Ground with a local bowls club. The club moved to its present facilities in 1987. In 1999 the club entered into a 21 year lease with Thanet District Council and undertook to fully maintain the croquet lawns, grounds and the decoration of the pavilion.
- 3.214 The club have spent money on providing three more lawns making four lawns in total.
- 3.215 Ramsgate Croquet Club provides a sporting and recreational facility for the residents of Thanet and beyond. The club hosts five croquet association tournaments per year, open days for charity functions and in 2004 eighteen taster afternoon and evening events for local groups.
- 3.216 The club has concerns with the pavilion a grade ii listed building and part of an award winning listed scheme for the Western Seafront by Sir John Burnet. The pavilion is in need of refurbishment. The club is willing to assist the Council as Landlords in finding a way to meet these costly repairs.

Pitch and Putt

- 3.217 There are 6 Pitch and Putt greens in TDC. These are:

Name	Facilities
<i>St Mildreds Game Centre</i>	18 holes (Seasonal use only)
Westbrook Games Centre	18 holes (open all year
Queens Promenade	(Seasonal)
Hodges Games Centre	Crazy golf/putting facility operated privately for TDC
Hydrophone Pitch & Putt	18 holes Open from April to mid November
Hartsdown Park	18 hole pitch & putt

- 3.218 These facilities are historically provided for the use of tourist to Thanet as well as the local residents. They were also provided before golf became as popular as it has. Golfers prefer to use the full amenities of a golf course in this day and age.
- 3.219 The Council needs to ask itself should it be providing all these Pitch and Putt facilities itself or should it lease or sell them to the private sector. If the private sector is not interested in these facilities then the Council should consider returning some of these facilities, for example Hartsdown to amenity park land and Westbrook as the site currently has no security fencing.

Golf

- 3.220 There are a number of golf courses located across the district providing a range of opportunities for local residents to play golf. The focus of the audit has been on "access" given that in the case of private facilities, supply is often developed to meet a known demand and all sites are of high quality.

Quantity: Golf Courses

- 3.221 There are 5 golf courses within the district. .

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Table 3.53 – Thanet District: Golf Courses

Area	Population	Number of Courses	Total Number of Holes
Margate	40,386	0	0
Ramsgate	39,639	2	45
Westgate	6,594	1	18
Broadstairs	24,370	1	18
Birchington	9,827	0	0
Villages	5,886	1	9
TOTALS	126,702	5	90

Quality: Golf

- 3.222 Site visits have been undertaken to the golf courses across the District. Quality has not been formally rated using a scored proforma. All facilities visited are of a high standard.

Access: Golf

- 3.223 Access to opportunities to play golf has been the focus of the assessment undertaken. Telephone consultation with Golf Clubs has revealed the following in relation to membership / usage arrangements:
- the clubs were private
 - The cost of the joining fee and membership fee may prohibit some residents of Thanet participating
 - Clubs do allow visitors as well as members
- 3.224 Despite there being 5 Golf Courses within the district, none of these are public. Consultation reveals that the cost of participation, although varying significantly, is generally high and would present a barrier to participation for some Thanet residents.
- 3.225 The ratio of golf courses (5) to the population of Thanet (126,702) is equal to one course per 25,340 people. The ratio of golf courses (84) to the population of Kent (1,329,718) is equal to one course per 15,830 people.
- 3.226 The development of an additional golf course in Thanet would bring the ratio of golf courses nearer to the Kent ratio of golf courses to population. The neighbouring districts of Dover and Canterbury all have private golf facilities easily accessible to Thanet Residents and Visitors.

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Recommendation: Golf

3.227 The following recommendation is made:

GO1

Ensure that casual pay and play opportunities are maintained and further developed, through regular liaison and communication with the local clubs.

Consider the development of an additional 18 hole golf course in Thanet.

Developing and Applying Standards: Outdoor Sports Facilities

- 3.228 **Playing Pitches - Quantity:** The recommended standards are based on the results of the assessment, consideration of likely future demand and the number of pitches required to meet such needs. A significant amount of provision is located on amenity greenspace which serves wider needs than just sport, for example dog walking. A surplus of pitches does not therefore indicate that land can be sold for development, but rather that there may be potential for it to be used for alternative formal sport e.g. other pitch type/size, or alternative open space provision e.g. informal open space. The space itself is then not 'lost', and can be readily re-designated for formal use as and when appropriate.
- 3.229 PPG17 advocates that Councils move away from the NPFA standard and establish standards based on local need. It advocates the use of Sport England's 'Towards a Level Playing Field' methodology when assessing provision for playing pitches.
- 3.230 The recommended standards for playing pitches are based on the results of the playing pitch assessment and consideration of likely future demand, given that there is currently an overall deficit in provision across the District for junior football provision.

Table 3.54 - Quantity Standards

Recommended Provision standard (based on Sport England methodology, Towards a Level Playing Field)
Senior Football Pitches: Recommended requirement for 30 pitches, based on the current population of senior football playing age (2005).
Junior Football Pitches: Recommended requirement for 22 pitches, based on the current population of junior football playing age (2005)
Mini Soccer Pitches: Recommended requirement for 19 pitches, based on the current population of mini soccer playing age (2005)
Cricket Pitches: Recommended requirement for 19 pitches, based on the current population of cricket playing age (2005)
Rugby Pitches: Recommended requirement for 9 pitches, based on the current population of rugby playing age (2005)
It is important to note that provision standards do not reflect the needs of teams to play locally and this needs careful consideration when planning future provision.
Quality All pitch and ancillary provision should be of a "good" standard All multi-pitch sites should be served by changing facilities

- 3.231 On the basis of the above table, there is a need for an additional 7 junior football pitches, given that there is a surplus of 4 senior pitches across the district, there is potential to re-designate these as junior to assist in reducing the identified deficit in provision. If this option is adopted, the priority areas where this should occur should be those areas which currently have an overall surplus of pitch provision. .

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- 3.232 The above amount of provision is based on current population data (2005). Given that population projections (KCC) show an overall increase in population to 2021, there is unlikely to be additional demand for formal playing pitch provision. This is based on the detailed Team Generation Rates (TGRs) developed as part of the Playing Pitch Strategy.
- 3.233 **Playing Pitches – Quality:** Quality varied across the district, but on the whole was rated good to excellent. The results of the quality audits undertaken should be treated with caution; a pitch scores highly if it is served by changing room provision, regardless of the quality of the pitch.
- 3.234 **Access:** The assessment has not revealed significant issues relating to access. Hire fees and charges do not appear high especially in the Parishes and should not present a barrier to teams and clubs.
- 3.235 **Application of the Provision Standard:** Quantitative provision standards have been set based on the “playing population”. This allows provision levels to fluctuate in accordance with the changes in the age group populations that could in theory play the sport, rather than the general population.
- 3.236 **Qualitative deficiencies:** Based on a standard that all provision should be rated as “good” or above, there are a number of deficiencies (as scored using the playing pitch non-technical visual assessment form
- 3.237 **Bowling Greens:** Quantity appears to be sufficient to meet formal bowling needs and cater for casual play. There is a mix of public and private provision. **The recommended standard is to reduce the current supply of greens through consultation with bowls clubs to enable fewer quality facilities to be sustainable.** This needs to be monitored on an annual basis. All greens should be of a “good” quality. On the basis of the audit undertaken, there are qualitative deficiencies at some sites with regard to ancillary facilities and pavilions.
- 3.238 **Tennis Courts:** Tennis Courts are provided through schools, private clubs and within parks. The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) works on the basis of 2% of the population participating in tennis on a regular basis. This figure is used as a basis for their facility planning prioritisation on a national and regional level. An assessment of court provision in Thanet has been undertaken using the CACI participation level as a framework as this was considered to be more relevant locally, which sets broad standards for outdoor court provision with, and without floodlighting. These standards are:
- A requirement for 1 outdoor court per 45 players
 - A requirement for 1 outdoor floodlit court per 65 players
- 3.239 It is recommended that the current provision of **49 courts provision be rationalised, to provide fewer, but better quality sites.** The Council should aim for all provision to be rated as “good”. The audit identified a substantial amount of quality tennis facilities throughout the district, but some facilities need to be improved. Key reasons for some lower quality scores are lack of floodlighting, fencing and weeds and mould on hard courts. The recommended option is to reduce the number of courts, but improve the quality of the provision. **Specifically, it is recommended that 27 of the 39 courts are provided with floodlighting.** Those tennis courts surplus to requirement should be considered for alternative uses, for example MUGAS.
- 3.240 **Golf:** No quantitative standards are proposed on the basis that all of the provision is privately provided, and supplied in reaction to market forces. Quality is also high at most facilities across the district. The critical issue for golf provision in the District is accessibility, and the need to ensure that casual pay and play opportunities continue to be offered at the private clubs. Consideration should be given to an additional golf course in the District.

Planning Standards

- 3.241 Given the generally close balance between the supply and demand of pitches and outdoor sports facilities in Thanet District Council, local minimum standards of provision have been calculated on the

SECTION III – AUDIT OF LOCAL PROVISION

basis of dividing the number of existing facilities by the resident population of the district. This produces the following standards for outdoor sports facilities:

- **Playing Pitches**

Table 3.55 Recommended Standards for Playing Pitches

Pitch Type	Towards a Level Playing Field (hectares)	Number of Pitches	Area of Pitches (hectares)	Area per 1,000 people
Senior Football	1.40	30	42	0.33ha
Junior Football	1.05	22	23.1	0.18ha
Mini Soccer	0.30	19	5.7	0.05ha
Cricket	1.60	19	30.4	0.24ha
Rugby	1.20	9	10.8	0.08ha
Synthetic Turf Pitch	0.9	1	0.9	0.007ha
TOTAL PROVISION AVAILABLE		100	112.90	0.87ha

- a) **Playing Pitches:** A minimum standard of provision of 0.87 hectares of playing pitches per 1,000 people should formally be adopted by Thanet District Council.

Recommendations Outdoor Sports and Playing Pitches

3.242 The following recommendations have been identified from the assessment of key outdoor sports in the District. There are a number of solutions that need to be considered in relation to findings and issues identified. These can broadly be described as:

- Dual-use facilities and greater use of school pitches
- Enhancing carrying capacity through improving the quality of facilities
- Management options, including consideration to leasing
- Grounds Maintenance Issues
- Improvements of ancillary facilities

3.243 The following recommendations are made with consideration to the above policy options and provide a framework for prioritisation of resources.

General

G1

Develop and maintain a club directory which should be published on the TDC web site. Ensure that key information, including contacts and team information is available.

G2

Update the supply and demand information collated on an annual basis. A full playing pitch assessment should be repeated every 3-5 years.

G3

Review the Grounds Maintenance Contract covering all outdoor facilities in order to improve quality and improve facilities life expectancy.

G4

Develop regular consultation with pitch users to establish trend data in relation to satisfaction, ratings of quality and common pitch issues.

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G5

Ensure that partnerships developed to manage facilities, particularly for tennis, bowls and pitch and putt are effective through regular monitoring and reporting of usage. Mystery visits could also be programmed.

G6

Develop a set of criteria for use in decision making on sites which are suitable for long term leasing. These could include the following as a basis:

- Typically sites considered for leasing will currently be used by a single club
- Sites will not be leased unless there are other managed sites within the local area that can be used to accommodate new demand
- Sites will only be leased where they do not make a significant contribution to other typologies

Football

F1

Review the Grounds Maintenance contract to identify areas of improvements for pitch quality. It is important to balance the needs of pitch repairs and usage. There is also a need to consider drier summers when trying to establish grass on well drained sites.

F2

Work in partnership with local schools and other pitch providers to gain access to pitches in areas where there is deficiency in junior football. There are significant quantitative deficiencies in junior football pitch provision, which can be rectified by the supply increase from Margate AFC, the possible provision of community playing pitch facilities at Ursuline College, and community use agreements with other non community playing pitches currently unavailable at school sites.

F3.

The assessment suggests that the senior number of teams will increase, and junior boys and girls teams will decline in the future. The Council must maintain its current level of senior pitches but in the mean time could transfer surplus senior pitches to junior pitches.

F4.

The Council has to resolve the issue of junior being able to book pitches at junior rates and not have them cancelled when an adult team needs a pitch.

F5.

The Council should seek Football Foundation Funding at a number of sites in partnership with clubs, for example AFC Margate at Dane Park, Hugin Viking if they are successful in obtaining a lease at Warton Road and on improving ancillary facilities at Jackey Bakers. The proposed development at Jackey Bakers may involve a loss of 1 senior pitch. There may also be a loss of 1 senior pitch at Tivoli Park if Margate FC's plans for development affect this pitch.

F6.

The proposed development at Jackey Bakers may involve a loss of 1 senior pitch. There may also be a loss of 1 senior pitch at Tivoli Park if Margate FC's plans for development affect this pitch. The Council must ensure that any pitches lost are replaced elsewhere with the use of developer contributions. There are a number of sites where this could be achieved, for example take out of use Hartsdown Pitch and Putt and replace with a football pitch and other sites such as Palm Bay Recreation Ground could be utilised.

SECTION III – AUDIT OF LOCAL PROVISION

Cricket

C1

Maintain the current overall levels of cricket provision across the District.

C2

Use the findings of the quality ratings (for pitches and ancillary facilities) to prioritise resource allocations, including those allocated from developer contributions

C2

The proposed development at Jackey Bakers may result in the loss of one cricket pitch. This pitch must be replaced somewhere else. It is possible that the upgrading of the artificial pitch at Hartsdown Park may be an appropriate relocation.

Rugby

R1

Maintain the current level of rugby pitch provision within the District

R2

Consult with Thanet Wanderers in relation to the possibility of the club maintaining the pitches and undertaking the bookings at St Peter's Recreation Ground.

R2

Consider the future use of the unused grass courts at the Tennis Club at St Peters and decide if these would be better utilised as a car parking facility for the ever-growing rugby club.

Hockey

H1

Ensure prioritisation for hockey fixtures is maintained at Jackey Bakers.

H2

Investigate the issue relating to the infill sand compacting on the STP at Jackey Bakers

Tennis

T1

The Council should use the Propensity to participate 1.4% as the local standard for Tennis court requirements. This means there is a surplus of 10 tennis courts. It would be reasonable to consider turning these areas into multi use games areas providing clubs for additional training facilities for football etc.

T2

Review the management of the tennis courts in particular with regards to ground maintenance.

T3

Investigate the costs and restrictions of installing floodlighting at sites serving areas where there is a lack of floodlit courts. This could include working with local schools where provision is available to the local community and there are likely to be less planning restrictions

SECTION III – AUDIT OF LOCAL PROVISION

Bowls

B1

Support the planning application by Margate Bowls Club for development of housing on its site.

B2

Negotiate with Margate Bowls club investment of development funds at St Georges Lawns

B3

The Council in partnership with Margate Bowls Club, the Indoor Bowls Club and other clubs using St Georges Lawns should discuss the opportunity to create a Centre of Excellence/performance at St Georges Lawns. Centres of excellence/performance may be based at clubs able or willing to upgrade their facilities. A Centre of Excellence would need to include a minimum of two greens, logically allied to an indoor playing facility and contain ample meeting, administrative, changing, and dining and car parking facilities.

B4

The greens should be reduced by two through consultation with the bowls clubs. Or clubs should be encouraged to operate independently of the Council and offered leases to maintain the facilities and greens.

B5

In some instances it may not be financially viable for a club to take on a lease. In this instance the council will need to consider if it wishes to continue subsidising bowls greens in the future or alternatively move the club to another facility either seeking development for housing and using the proceeds to increase quality in other bowls facilities elsewhere or keeping the redundant bowls facilities and green as amenity space.

Athletics

A1

The Council must ensure development of the athletics facility at Jackey Bakers or the Marlowe Academy school site.

Croquet

CR1

The Council must work in partnership with Ramsgate Croquet Club to secure funding for the refurbishment or new build of the pavilion at the Ramsgate Croquet Club.

Pitch and Putt

P1

The Council must decide if it should continue to provide Pitch and Putt facilities itself or should it lease or sell them to the private sector.

P2

If the decision is to lease or sell to the private sector and the private sector is not interested in these facilities then the Council should consider returning some of these facilities to open space, for example Hartsdown and Westbrook to amenity parkland and or natural semi natural green space.

SECTION III – AUDIT OF LOCAL PROVISION

Indoor Sport Provision

Quantity: Indoor Sports Facilities

- 3.244 Currently, the facilities providing full community use within Thanet are owned by Thanet District Council and managed on behalf of the Council by Thanet Leisure Force Trust. These are the only facilities with guaranteed community use.
- 3.245 Provision of indoor sports facilities across the district falls within three categories namely:
- Public
 - Private
 - Educational Institutions/Schools
- 3.246 The local context for indoor sport facility provision in Thanet can be summarised as follows:
- Thanet District Council currently provides and operates three facilities in and around the District, through the management operator Thanet Leisureforce. One of these facilities is Hartsdown Leisure Centre (10 badminton court sports hall, 25m swimming pool with spectator area, learner pool). In addition on the same complex there is Fit Force a fitness facility with 45 fitness units. Other facilities include Ramsgate Swimming Pool (25 metre swimming pool and fitness suite with 15 fitness units).and Ramsgate Sports Centre a relatively new facility lottery funded and built in 1999 (6 court badminton sports hall, conference room, bistro, nursery, fitness room with 35 fitness units, health suite and dance studio.
 - Ramsgate Swimming Pool, Hartsdown and Fit Force facilities are in need of capital investment.
 - There is a very small health and fitness commercial sector market in and around Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs. Bannantynes is the only large operator to have set up a club in the District with the other commercial facilities mainly concentrating on the body builder providing loose weight facilities
 - There is recognition and desire to refurbish or replace Ramsgate Swimming Pool.
 - There is potential to provide a replacement Ramsgate town centre swimming pool, on the Ramsgate Sports Centre site.
 - Ramsgate Football Club is interested in the Ramsgate Swimming Pool site and Warre Recreation Ground. It is the clubs desire to locate to a new stadium so they have new facilities, allowing them to expand and overcome the access difficulties at their existing stadium.
 - There are two secondary schools currently with sports halls offering community use, Hartsdown Technology College mainly used for 5-a-side football and the Ramsgate School mainly used by the community for cricket approximately 75% of the time. The Upton Junior School, Broadstairs has a 25m x 10m swimming pool and offers school's use during tern time and some community organisations and club swimming use. The Charles Dickens School, Broadstairs also has a 20m x 7m swimming pool but does not actively promote swimming use to the community. The private school St Lawrence College, Ramsgate has an indoor swimming pool and 2 squash courts.
 - The new Marlowe Academy will have a new 4 court sports hall, which is planned for the first floor of the new school, and it is understood from discussions with Kent Sports Development unit that this facility will be open for community use. However, other discussions lead us to believe that this facility may be used as a performing arts facility. This site will also be provided with a full 400m athletic track funded from Thanet SRB funds and the New Opportunity Fund PE and School Sport.

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- Ursuline College have had discussions with Appeti Tennis Limited about a possible 2/3 court indoor tennis facility at the school site. Both Ursuline and King Ethelbert School are appealing to the Kent County Council for provision of at least a 4 court badminton hall each.
- Kent County Council is applying 'For Building Schools for the Future' funding and Thanet and other East Kent secondary schools will be considered as part of this process. If the 'Building Schools for the Future' bid is successful it is considered that a number of secondary schools currently without sports hall provision will be provided with this provision in the future.

Sports Halls

- 3.247 The facility audit found that there were four sports halls with over 3 badminton courts within the district catchment:
- Hartsdown Leisure Centre - 10 Courts
 - Ramsgate Sports Centre - 6 Courts
 - Hartsdown Technology College - 4 Courts
 - East Kent Sports Complex, Ramsgate – 4 courts
- 3.248 Leisureforce currently manage Hartsdown Leisure Centre and Ramsgate Sports Centre on behalf of Thanet District Council East Kent Sports Complex is managed by East Kent Sports Complex on the site of the current Ramsgate School (Marlowe Academy) and provides for indoor cricket (75% of use). Hartsdown Technology College is a Secondary School and is managed by the school mainly providing community use for five – a – side football.
- 3.249 There were no planned halls found in a search of current planning applications in the catchment. However, a number of schools have aspirations for Sports Halls – Ursuline, Westgate and King Ethelberts, Birchington. In addition Thanet Secondary Schools are in the first phase of Kent County Councils bid for 'Building Schools for the Future'. If this bid is successful it is considered that a number of schools may have new sports halls providing up to a further 16 badminton courts. This will be in addition to the new sports hall at the Marlowe Academy (which may or may not be open for community use).
- 3.250 In order to cater for the peak theoretical demand of 5421 visits per week 25 badminton courts were required in 2001.
- 3.251 When utilising 2021 projected population figures for Thanet 132,300 an increase of 5598 on the 2001 Census population figures and you utilise the provision standard identified in of 0.028m² of badminton space is required per head of population then the population increase of 5,598 will require one more badminton court in 2021 taking the total to 26 badminton courts required in 2021.
- 3.252 It can be seen that the existing provision of sports halls within Thanet provide 24 courts of badminton; if the new sports hall at the Marlowe Academy is included in the calculation of supply, this increases to 28 badminton courts. This is sufficient to meet the current and future demands for sports halls in Thanet. In the future with development at Secondary School sites through Building Schools for the Future there may be over demand and this could allow Hartsdown Leisure Centre to replace 2 or three of its badminton courts with indoor fitness facilities or even close its sports hall if the new school sports hall facilities at Ursuline and King Ethelberts come to fruition and offer community use.
- 3.253 The Council could use the subsidy from the Hartsdown Sports Hall to manage in partnership with the schools the community use of the Ursuline and King Ethelberts sports hall facilities. Saving on refurbishment costs at Hartsdown Leisure Centre.
- 3.254 It would not be sensible to consider the closure of Ramsgate Sports Centre as the facility has been part funded by the National Lottery. It is considered that a percentage of the National Lottery Funds would have to be repaid to the lottery if the facility was to close.

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Health and Fitness

- 3.255 Between 1996 and 2001 there was a 25% increase in the total number of health and fitness clubs in the UK and the value of the private health and fitness club market increased by 113% to reach £1.67 billion. The competition municipal facilities face in the health and fitness market remains strong despite recent media reports of many struggling private health and fitness providers.
- 3.256 Health and fitness continues to be an expanding market though predictions of future trends are difficult, particularly beyond 5 years. For the purpose of our analysis we have drawn upon a number of surveys and reports to attempt to assess the level of future market trends. The key findings are as follows:
- Online Leisure Survey (2000) estimated that that by 2005 the number of members of health and fitness facilities will have increased by 47% to 3.5million. This figure is supported by many of the leading operators in health and fitness, for example LA Fitness, Topnotch and Esporta. The increase supports the Mintel (1999) study of health and fitness.
 - Topline findings from the Fitness Industry Association's State of the Industry Report 2001 Update show that total membership of private and public health and fitness facilities is up by 21% and the number of clubs open is up by 6% on the year 2000.
- 3.257 The estimated health and fitness penetration rates show an increase from 3.2% in 1999 to 4.9% in 2001 and are predicted to rise to 8% by 2003. This information supports findings from the UK Millennium Health Club Report (2001).
- 3.258 Predictions after four years are rare and very inaccurate. Research from sources such as the Mintel Health and Fitness Report (1999) and the Online Leisure Survey (2000) has indicated that up to a 50% rise in the demand for health and fitness is possible by the year 2005. However, a conservative assumption is that there will be a 25% increase in demand by 2005.
- 3.259 The propensity to participate British Market Research Bureau(BMRB) identifies that 16.8% of residents over 16 years of age participate in Health Club and Gym activities this is above the BMRB national rate of 13.7%

Existing Facilities

- 3.260 Supply/capacity/demand is measured using stations (pieces of equipment) rather than membership or floor area, because it is the most accurate and accessible type of measurement. Membership numbers are commercially sensitive and are problematic to establish. The official number of members for a club can also be different to the actual number, for example, membership numbers can be inflated to imply the club is more successful and larger than perhaps it might be. Floor area is also difficult to assess. It is not a commonly known piece of information and the floor area can include circulation space and corridors, changing facilities, other facilities, etc. Therefore, it is difficult to attain this information in the first place and once located it is often unclear as to what the floor area actually covers.
- 3.261 A station is defined as a piece of equipment – cardio vascular and resistance. equipment such as free weights, stretch mats and abs cradles are not included. Their exclusion is due to the life span, range of and type of such 'equipment'.
- 3.262 Altogether the existing facilities in Thanet provide 289 stations.
- 3.263 This is a very small number for a District Council the size of Thanet and the largest facility has just 98 stations (Bannantynes)
- 3.264 There were no planned health and fitness facilities found in a search of current planning applications.

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- 3.265 The need for health and fitness is estimated at the following:
- Core Catchment (Thanet DC): 2001 462 stations
 - Estimated Catchment (Thanet DC): 2021 493 stations
- 3.266 Unlike the previous demand models, market trends are important to consider. As detailed in paragraph 5.32, a conservative estimate of the increase in demand for health and fitness by 2005 is 25%.
- 3.267 It can be seen that the existing supply of health and fitness in Thanet is insufficient size to cater for all the current demand from Thanet DC residents.
- 3.268 The only facilities to provide community use are the public facilities. Education facilities may provide some community use but this is not guaranteed use. Schools could stop community use provision at any time if there is not a community use agreement in place. Map 11 indicates the location of community use sports facilities.

Swimming Pools

- 3.269 The Amateur Swimming Association state in their recently published "National Facilities Strategy for Swimming" (2003), swimming remains one of the nation's most popular physical activities with over 15% of adults and 50% of young people taking part on a regular basis. This statistic is supported by Mintel report published in April 2002 on leisure centres and swimming pools, which found that swimming pools continue to be the most popular facility used by consumers that visit leisure centres although there is evidence that its popularity is waning slightly. The propensity to participate in swimming as researched by the British Market Research Bureau (2003) identifies the propensity to participate in swimming activities is 11.8% compared to the national average 10.7%.
- 3.270 The Government has also recently acknowledged the importance of providing good quality facilities for swimming and through the Select Committee report "Testing the Waters: The Sport of Swimming" (2002) it has been recognised that swimming pools are one of the most complex and expensive leisure buildings to build, operate and maintain and there is a need for extensive investment in the refurbishment of existing swimming pools.
- 3.271 The facility audit found that there are two public swimming pools within the catchment.
- Hartsdown Leisure Centre and Ramsgate Swimming Pool
 - There were no planned pools found in a search of current planning applications in the catchment of Thanet.
 - There are other swimming pools in the area but they do not allow complete community use, these are Upton Junior Community School, Broadstairs, The Charles Dickens School, Broadstairs, Bannatynes Fitness Centre, membership only and the private school St Lawrence.
 - In order to cater for the peak demand the water area required using the 2001 Census figures is equivalent to 432m²
- 3.272 The existing Hartsdown Sports and Leisure Centre pool has a water area of 396.5m² and Ramsgate Swimming Pool a water area of 396.5m². This gives a total water area of 793m². It can be seen that the existing public pools in Thanet are of sufficient size to cater for the current demand from Thanet District Council Residents. In addition there are a number of school swimming pools that could provide club and community activities in partnership with Thanet District Council, for example, Upton Junior School, Broadstairs and The Charles Dickens School, Broadstairs discussions would need to be held with the schools and Sports Development to open these facilities to community and club use.

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- 3.273 The theoretical demand of 432m² identifies that if one of the two pools was to be closed there would not be sufficient water space for Thanet residents each pool provides the same water space of 396.5m². If one pool closed there would be deficit of 35.5m² of water space for current residents. In addition it has to be noted that many people cannot or will not travel distances to use sports facilities. The market research carried out by Leisureforce identifies that 47.4% travel less than two miles to existing facilities, 37.8% between 2 and 4 miles and 7.5% between 4 and 6 miles with 7.3% over six miles.
- 3.274 It must be understood that the theoretical demand is based upon 2001 (126,702) Census data. The population of Thanet is expected to rise in the future to 132,300 in 2021. Taking the population figures in 2021 this means an increase in population of 5598. Utilising the provision standard for swimming pools in Section 8 of 0.0063 m² of water space required per head of population this means a further 35.27m² of water space will be required in 2021. It is also Government policy to increase participation in physical activity by 2020 and the Thanet Community Plan states an objective for an increase in exercise and recreational activities by 5% by April 2005. This will have an affect on the sq m of water space required and this will mean that the theoretical demand will rise from 432m².
- 3.275 The CACI propensity to participate for swimming in Thanet shows above average propensity to participate in swimming by residents. This should be noted as well as the fact that Thanet is a coastal town and learn to swim programmes should be a major requirement for any sports strategy in Thanet.
- 3.276 It is clear from the demographics and population make up of young and older people and with the transport and mobility problems in rural areas that it is best to continue to provide two swimming pools one in Ramsgate and one in Margate. Broadstairs could be catered for by opening the Upton Junior School for more community use.

Development of Indoor Provision Standards

- 3.277 In accordance with the Government Guidance in PPG17, local authorities are encouraged to set locally determined provision standards. Paragraph 7 of PPG17, states that local standards should include:
- A quantitative component (how much new provision may be needed)
 - A qualitative component (against which to measure the need for enhancement of existing facilities)
 - An accessibility component (including distance thresholds and consideration of the cost of using a facility).

Quantitative Component

- 3.278 The Companion Guide to PPG17 – Accessing Needs and Opportunities – advises that a quantity standard should be a combination of a unit of provision and a population, e.g. Y ha/1000 population. In this instance Thanet could use the number of 3 court sports halls per 1,000 population, sq. m of swimming pool space per 1,000 population and number of health and fitness units of equipment per 1,000 population.

Suggested Quantitative Standards – Swimming Pools, Sports Halls and Badminton Courts

Suggested Quantitative Standards – Swimming Pools

Current Water space in Thanet (Demand analysis does not demand any more water space).	=	793sqm
2001 population Thanet	=	126,702
Standard for swimming pool water space	=	0.0063sq m per person.

Suggested Quantitative Standards – Sports Halls

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Number of population required before new Three Court Facility is required

Number of three court sports halls in Thanet	=	4
2001 population Thanet	=	126,702
Standard for three court sports halls hall	=	31,675 population per 3 court sports hall

Standard of sq. m space for playing badminton per person Thanet

Size of four-court sports hall (Sport England Guidance)	=	594 sq. m
Divide by 4 (badminton Courts)	=	148.5sq m per badminton Court

Thanet current supply = 24 badminton courts

Total current sq. m (Demand analysis shows no further requirement)	=	3564sq m
Total population	=	126,702

Standard for Thanet is = 0.028 sq. m of Badminton court Space Per person

Accessibility

- 3.279 PPG17 makes it clear that facilities should be located where they will be accessible on foot, by bicycle or by public transport.
- 3.280 The Guidance suggests that instead of setting distance thresholds, it may be better to promote measures designed to improve accessibility, such as better public transport or cycling routes. The distance of a 20minute drive time for rural populations has been used and 20minute walking time for urban populations has been used. This meets the requirements of the CPA travel indicator.
- 3.281 In devising transport plans for the future there is a need to consider leisure facilities being placed on public transport routes.

Qualitative Standards

- 3.282 It is advised that all future sports and leisure facilities are built to Sport England Guidelines and that any Sports and Leisure Management Facility Contracts in the future state a requirement that the Management must obtain and maintain Quest (Sport England's Sport and Leisure facility quality award) and or TAES (Towards and Excellent Service) as a minimum quality standard.

Indoor Sports Facilities Recommendations

- SR1** It is important the Council establishes the likely levels of internal funding available for any facility development, given that external funding is unlikely to be attained.
- SR2** Seek to use Supplementary Planning Guidance in the future to meet sport and recreation facility needs of the community through Section 106 funding and developers contributions.
- SR3** Adopt the suggested minimum standards for sports and swimming facilities identified in Section 8:

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- Standard for swimming pool water space = 0.0049sq m per person.
- Standard for three court sports halls = 14,172 population per 3 court sports hall and 0.042 sq. m of badminton court space per person.

SR4 Consider rebuild of Ramsgate Swimming Pool.

SR5 If decision is taken to rebuild Ramsgate Swimming Pool:

Option 1 – Rebuild on existing site

Option 2 - Consider relocating Ramsgate Swimming Pool to the Ramsgate Sports Centre site. The existing pool must remain open until a new pool is built. This is to satisfy existing demand and ensure demand continues through the rebuild stages. Once participants are lost it is harder to get them to participate in the future. The new swimming pool facility must include a 25m pool and a teaching pool.

Option 3 – Consider an alternative site for a new swimming pool for example, Marlowe Academy/Jackey Bakers

SR6 Option 1. – Consider refurbishing Hartsdown Sports and Leisure Centre and consider moving the Fit Force facility into Hartsdown Sports and Leisure Centre. Consider the sale of the existing Fit Force Facility for housing and the capital receipt used to develop a new fitness facility inside Hartsdown Sports and Leisure Centre.

Option 2 - If schools increase the number of sports halls in the Margate area and open these for community use then less badminton courts would be required at Hartsdown Sports and Leisure Centre. In this instance and in the interest of sustainability consider demolishing the sports hall saving on refurbishment costs but build a fitness facility alongside the swimming pool.

Consider using the subsidy from the existing sports hall to partnership manage the new school sports halls for community use. Discussions must be held with Kent Sports Development Unit and Education Department on future community use of school sports halls in the Margate area.

SR7 Ensure that the Conditions of Grant requires any provider of TDC indoor sport and leisure facilities to obtain and maintain a suitable quality assurance standard (e.g. Quest Sport England's Quality award for sports and leisure centres) as a minimum standard.

SR8 To encourage participation and achieve outcomes to lower cancer and coronary heart disease rates and improve well being ensure that any future community facilities built in regeneration and rural areas are designed and built to accommodate indoor sports such as badminton, gymnastics, dance, aerobics, fitness training etc. and a separate area that can be utilised as a crèche facility or an area providing parking for a mobile crèche facility.

SR9 In partnership with Kent County Council seek to agree with schools and the County, management agreements on opening sports halls and swimming facilities to be programmed for community and club use and ensure sink funds are in place.

SR10 Ensure through Thanet Transport Plans and Strategies that all Leisure Facilities are included on public transport routes and cycle paths.

SR11 Ensure that all new builds and refurbishment of facilities meet Sport England and National Governing Body Guidelines.

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Amenity Greenspace

Definition

3.283 Open space which provides opportunities for informal activities close to residential areas and improves the visual appearance of residential or other areas. The two sub typologies for the overall typology of Informal Open Space are:

- (i) Informal Recreational Open Space
- (ii) Visual Amenity Greenspace

Quantity: Informal Recreational Open Space and Visual Amenity Greenspace

3.284 The audit undertaken illustrates that there are **149 informal recreational open space and visual amenity greenspace sites** within Thanet District. Map 6a illustrates the location of these facilities across the District. The key statistics relating to the number of Informal Greenspaces are detailed in Table 3.56.

Table 3.56 – Thanet Quantity of Informal Open Space and Visual Amenity Greenspace

Area	Population	Number of Sites Identified	Total Hectareage	HA per 1000 population
Margate	40,386	44	16.31	0.40
Ramsgate	39,639	53	14.67	0.37
Westgate	6,594	5	3.02	0.46
Broadstairs	24,370	27	15.59	0.64
Birchington	9,827	19	15.41	1.57
Villages	5,886	1	0.29	0.05
TOTALS	126,702	149	65.29	0.51

3.285 The provision of **informal recreational open space and visual amenity greenspace sites** as identified by TDC officers indicates that there are **65.29 hectares in total across the District**. This equates to **0.51ha** per 1000 population.

3.286 It is important to note that PPG 17 is very much about setting local standards of provision that in this case are specific to Thanet. The only national standard for the level of informal open space provided is 0.5 hectares per 1000 population. This is based on the current U.K average of all applicable local authorities' provision standards as highlighted in the Government's 'Rethinking Open Space Report' (2001).

3.287 It is also important to note that open spaces such as football pitches have been classified under the outdoor sports typology as their primary purpose. However, in a number of instances pitches will fulfill the role of informal open space in areas where there are a limited number of sites. (Where a pitch is the only open space available, and because it is not used as a pitch 100% of the time, it is likely that the area will also be used as informal open space, for example, dog walking, kickabouts, etc)

3.288 A number of key findings can be made in relation to the quantity of **informal recreational open space and visual amenity greenspace site** provision across the District. These include:

- A variance in the quantity of provision across the District in relation to both the number of sites and number of hectares.
- A large amount of the existing provision is located along the cliff tops and coastal area within Thanet
- The Villages only have a small amount of informal/visual open space in Acol, however they do have recreation grounds which are used for informal recreation open space.
- The current level of provision across the district for **informal recreational open space and visual amenity greenspace sites** is 0.51 hectares per 1000 population

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Quality: Informal Recreational Open Space and Visual Amenity Greenspace Sites

- 3.289 There is no national quality standard or local quality standard for informal green space. Therefore, site audits have been based on a combination of a number of national greenspace quality standards.
- 3.290 Quality inspections have been undertaken via site visits and completion of a scored proforma for 128 sites identified as informal green space. The quality assessment proforma is based on a number of key criteria encompassing the quality aspects of Green Flag, Tidy Britain and ILAM Parks Management good practice. The assessment considered the physical, social and aesthetic qualities of each individual area, but focussed on key criteria relating to access, and basic provision such as bins, signage, seats and maintenance such as grass cutting and cleanliness. As a base level of provision, it has been assumed that all sites should have a sign, bin, clear pathway and appropriate seating provision. Key findings are illustrated in Table 3.57, and in Map 6b.

Table 3.57 – Thanet: Summary of Quality Assessment Findings

Area	No of Sites Audited	Quality Range	Average Quality Score
Margate		30.86% - 66.67%	49.37
Ramsgate		18.79% - 68.57%	50.54
Westgate		41.00% - 58.95%	50.27
Broadstairs		28.57% - 56.67%	40.21
Birchington		18.51% - 67.88%	50.87
Villages		0	0
TOTALS	128		48.25%

- 3.291 One key comment can be made in relation to the quality audit results, specifically:
- A District average quality score of 48.25% which equates to 'Good'. 49 sites were found to be below the District average.
 - Many sites lacked bins and benches, and this is reflected in the low quality scores.

NB. It is important to note that sites have been assessed against the identified criteria for this provision, because bins and benches have the potential to help keep a site tidy, and facilitate its use by a wider range of users. This type of 'outdoor furniture', together with appropriate signage, is recommended for sites providing for public access, whether they are formal or informal. The lack of such provision is reflected in the level of quality score awarded to a site, for this reason.

Accessibility: Informal Recreational Open Space and Visual Amenity Greenspace Sites

- 3.292 Accessibility has been assessed using a variety of techniques including mapping exercises and consultation. The key findings show that:
- 26.82% of the respondents to the door to door survey stated that they used the **informal recreational open space and visual amenity greenspace sites** near to their home on a daily basis, and that walking is their most common form of travel to access such space.
 - As with other typologies, site audits revealed a general lack of suitable provision for those with a disability.
 - 8.02% of the respondents never make use of the **informal recreational open space and visual amenity greenspace sites** near their home
 - 79.86% of the respondents walk for up to 10 minutes to access the **informal recreational open space and visual amenity greenspace sites** near their home.

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- The average travel time to **informal recreational open space and visual amenity greenspace sites** near to people's home is 8 minutes; this equates to a travel distance (walking) of 0.82 kilometres (Map 6c).
- **Informal Recreational Open Space** is generally "Good" in quality across the district. Residents generally make conscious use of provision especially the cliff tops and coastal spaces. There was a noted lack of signage, benches or bins on many of the sites within this typology.

3.293 Given that there is a significant amount of open space, and parks provision across the district, the 'good' quality of **informal recreational open space** must be maintained. **Informal recreational open space** is located close to residential areas, and therefore is used, particularly by older people, who may not be able to travel to other types of provision. It is therefore important that amenity space is of as good a quality as is possible.

Quality – Open Space

- 64.67% of door to door respondents considered that the quality of **informal recreational open space and visual amenity greenspace sites** near to their homes was above average.
- 86.72% of respondents considered that the **informal recreational open space and visual amenity greenspace sites** in their areas met the needs of their families for outdoor recreation

Districtwide Issues

- There is recognition amongst key TDC staff that the long term sustainability of improvements is an issue and that revenue funding is a problem when dealing with developers and therefore the Section 106 process needs to be improved to ensure delivery of developer contributions
- There is a need for greater understanding, marketing and development of circular routes for people to use.
- There needs to be a Thanet Biodiversity Plan that will translate the Kent Biodiversity Plan to a local level and identify locally distinctive sites and features. There is a need to recognise that wildlife and valuable sites are not just in designated areas.
- It is also recognised that **informal recreational open space and visual amenity greenspace sites** in urban areas are valuable, and need to remain, but also need to link to the coastal areas and other parks by using green corridors, cycle routes and walking routes.
- There is recognition amongst key TDC staff that the long term sustainability of improvements is an issue and that revenue funding is a problem.

Quantity – Informal Open Space

- 86.92% of respondents believe there is enough **informal recreational open space and visual amenity greenspace sites** in their local area.
- A high proportion of respondents generally wished to see more facilities for teenagers and young people, and improvements to toilets and car parking.
- There is general agreement that there is a lot of informal open space within Thanet and much is already publicly accessible especially along the coast.
- The general feeling is that there is enough informal open space within the district and what the district needs to achieve is a balance between the quality of both urban and coastal sites.
- Consideration should be given to transferring surplus informal and visual amenity to natural and semi natural greenspace. This should be carried out in consultation with local residents.

Accessibility – Informal Open Space

- 47.72% of respondents stated that they can access informal open space within 5 minutes walking time
- 66.56% of respondents stated they preferred the informal cliff tops to formal parks
- The main reason given for not using open spaces is the perception of safety and vandalism..

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Developing and Applying Standards: Informal Open Space

- 3.294 **Quantity:** Current provision of informal open space consists of **149** sites totalling **65.29ha**. This equates to a **current provision level of 0.51ha per 1000 population, which is more than the national recommended standard (0.5ha per 1000 population) by 0.01 ha per 1000 population**. The **future recommended standard is a minimum of 0.05ha per 1000 population**. This is made on the basis that the informal open spaces need to be maintained in Thanet and any surplus is transferred to other typologies.
- 3.295 Local residents (86.92% of respondents to the door to door survey) believe there is enough informal open space in their local area.
- 3.296 **Quality:** The average quality score for all informal sites is 48.25% which equates to 'good' facilities.
- 3.297 **Access:** The consultation has revealed that the majority of residents walk to **informal recreational open space and visual amenity greenspace sites**, which, given their purpose is to be expected. Based on the average (mean) travel time stated, an average distance travelled to access **informal recreational open space and visual amenity greenspace sites** 0.82 kilometres has been calculated, on the basis of the consultation undertaken (see Table 4.3). Walking time only – not drive

Recommended Provision standard

All dwellings be within 0.82 kilometres of a good quality informal greenspace
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- 3.298 **Application of the provision standard:** Map 6c shows the current provision of informal greenspace with a theoretical catchment area of 0.82 kilometres. It is important to recognise the importance of visual amenity open space; this should occur even in those areas where there is no publicly accessible informal open space, or where there is limited informal open space; informal open space/visual amenity open space may be a hedgerow, or verge, rather than a large piece of land.

Recommended Provision Standard

All Thanet District Council and Town and Parish managed / maintained sites should maintain quality scores of "good".
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(The audits identify slight variances in signage benches and bins, these should be addressed)

- 3.299 **Application of the standard:** Application of the standard shows that there are deficiencies in quality at some sites.

Recommendations: Informal Open Space

- 3.300 The following recommendations are made in relation to informal open space:
- The Council should adopt a policy of providing "Good" sites rather than "Average" or "Poor". The sites scoring "average" or below in the quality assessments are contained in Appendix 4, Open Space Quality Ratings.
 - Prioritise improvements to quality in the areas where quality is below the District average
 - Consider the opportunity, where there is substantial provision, for change of use from **informal recreational open space**, to other types of open space. For example, children and young peoples provision.
 - The provision of signage, bins and seating (where appropriate) is seen as key to improving the quality of current provision. There is a need to develop a rolling programme of renewal and improvements.

SECTION III – AUDIT OF LOCAL PROVISION

Provision for Children and Young People

3.301 The definition of provision for Children and Young People is:

Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, multi-use games areas, wheeled play areas and teenage play-zones.

3.302 Under the Children's Act, Local Authorities have a responsibility to provide appropriate provision for children and young people, to support their development, and deliver on the identified key outcomes of the Act. This includes addressing community safety needs, by providing safe and secure facilities for children and young people.

3.303 Provision for Children and Young People consists of equipped play areas and specialist provision for young people, including wheeled play areas, Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) and Teen Shelters. The provision of facilities for children and young people is important in facilitating opportunities for physical activity and the development of movement and social skills. Local authorities also have a duty to provide for the well-being of their communities; provision of play provision addresses community safety issues, and provides opportunities for diversionary activities. Provision for children's play is sub-divided into categories in line with the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) play area categories. These include Local Equipped Areas of Play (LEAP) and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAP); definitions of these types of play area are shown below, as set out in the NPFA guidance. A number of play areas do not fall into either the category of a LEAP or a NEAP; these are identified as 'unclassified' in this study. Three main types of youth provision have been identified, specifically for wheeled play facilities such as skateboarding and BMX biking, ball courts, multi-use games areas (MUGA) and teen shelters.

Definition of LEAPS and NEAPS (NPFA)

	LEAP	NEAP
Age Group	4-8 years	Older Children
Walking time from home	5 min	10 min
Location	Adjacent to a well used pathway and on a flat site that is well drained	Adjacent to a well used pathway and on a flat site that is well drained
Minimum activity zone	400m ²	1,000m ² divided into 2 parts; at least 465m ² of hard surface area and equipped play space area
No. and type of play equipment	At least 5 types of play equipment where at least 2 are individual items rather than part of a combination. Impact absorbing surface beneath/around play equipment	At least 8 types of play equipment to allow developmental play amongst younger children and moderate/adventurous play for older children
Buffer zone	10m depth including planting feature	30m depth including planting and other physical features

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	LEAP	NEAP
Age Group	4-8 years	Older Children
Fencing	1m high fencing with two pedestrian gates and barriers to limit speed of child entering/leaving the facility	1m high fencing with two pedestrian gates and barriers to limit speed of child entering or leaving the facility
Furniture	Seating and a litter bin	Seating and litter bins at each access point. Secure Bicycle parking facilities.
Signs and notices	Area solely used for children and that adults are not allowed unless accompanied by children, and name and tel. no. of facility manager	Area solely used for children and that adults are not allowed unless accompanied by children, and name and tel. no. of facility manager.

Quantity: Provision for Children & Young People

- 3.304 The audit undertaken has revealed that there are 33 Play areas in the District. Two more play areas have been identified at Manston. One is believed to be in the ownership of the Ministry of Defence and the second in the ownership of a developer. Both these sites are within 200 metres of each other. One is fenced and the other is not. These two sites have not been included in this audit. The distribution of play areas, and quantity per Town and Parish is summarised in Table 3.58 below:

Table 3.58 – Thanet: Current Provision for Children & Young People

Area	Population	Unclassified Play Areas	LEAPS	NEAPS (including Youth Provision)	TOTAL
Margate	40,386	2	4	3	9
Ramsgate	39,639	3	7	1	11
Westgate	6,594	0	1	0	1
Broadstairs	24,370	0	3	1	4
Birchington	9,827	0	3	0	3
Villages	5,886	2	3	0	5
TOTALS	126,702	7	21	5	33

Quality: Provision for Children & Young People

- 3.305 Quality inspections have been undertaken via site visits and completion of a scored proforma. Visits have been undertaken to sites with equipment and play features. The quality assessment proforma for play areas has been based on the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) "Play Value Assessment" and looks at a variety of criteria (as set out below) including the overall appearance of the site, the ambience and the type of equipment by age range.

- Balancing
- Climbing
- Crawling
- Gliding
- Group Swinging
- Jumping
- Rotating
- Sliding
- Rocking
- Agility Bridges

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- Single Swinging
- Viewing Platform
- Ball Play
- Wheeled Play

3.306 A copy of the proforma is contained within Appendix 4 to this report. In summary the following criteria have been used to rate quality and value of local play facilities. It is important to note that play provision is not simply providing equipment. It is also about the environment that equipment is situated in. The proforma considers elements that best practice play areas have been found to promote. These include diversity in textures, and use of landscaping. In supporting the generation of a sense of place it considers whether the play area is designed to reflect some local significance.

3.307 Site scores not only consider the condition of the equipment but also consider the play value of the entire designated play area. This includes consideration of the different types of activity that the play area allows including:

- **Overall site features** including access gates, whether the area is pollution and noise free, presence of shade, access for the disabled, appropriate signage, locally related features and seating
- **Ambience** including layout, visual appeal, the level of litter or graffiti
- **Equipment for Toddlers, Juniors and Teenagers** has been assessed as discrete elements within the overall play value assessment

3.308 The assessment proforma allows compilation of a total numerical score to reflect the “value” and importance of a local play area. The score can be rated against a value line that reflects the overall quality of the site and also the age range the equipment is designed for. The value lines are outlined below:

Site Overall Value

Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent
<20	20-28	29-35	36-47	>47

Overall Ambience

Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent
<4	4-5	6-7	8-10	>10

Toddler Play

Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent
<10	10-13	14-17	18-22	>22

Junior Play

Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent
<13	13-25	26-31	32-40	>40

Teenage Play

Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent
<10	10-14	15-19	20-26	>27

3.309 A summary of the main findings in relation to quality is provided in the Table 3.59 below, and in Map 7b:

Table 3.59 – Thanet: Summary of Quality Assessment Findings

Area	Overall Site Quality				
	No of Sites Audited	Score Range (out of 69)	Score Range	Ambience Score Range (out of 14)	Ambience Score Range
Margate	9	16 - 41	Poor - Good	3 – 12	Poor - Excellent
Ramsgate	11	20 - 44	Below Average - Good	5 – 12	Below Average - Excellent

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Area	Overall Site Quality				
	No of Sites Audited	Score Range (out of 69)	Score Range	Ambience Score Range (out of 14)	Ambience Score Range
Westgate	1	14	Poor	6	Average
Broadstairs	4	18 - 32	Poor - Average	4 - 7	Below Average - Average
Birchington	3	21 - 37	Below Average - Good	7 - 12	Average - Excellent
Villages	5	21 - 41	Below Average - Good	5 - 11	Below Average - Excellent
TOTALS	32	14 - 44	Poor - Good	4 - 12	Below Average - Excellent

Table 3.60 - Play Area by Age Type Rating

Area	Rating Range					
	Toddlers Play (out of 34)		Junior Play (out of 59)		Teenage Play (out of 40)	
	Score Range	Range	Score Range	Range	Score Range	Range
Margate	0 - 13	Poor – Below Average	0 - 18	Poor – Below Average	0 - 6	Poor
Ramsgate	0 - 8	Poor	5 - 14	Poor – Below Average	0 - 17	Poor – Average
Westgate	10	Below Average	16	Below Average	0	Poor
Broadstairs	5 - 10	Poor	8 - 15	Poor – Below Average	0	Poor
Birchington	8 - 12	Poor – Below Average	8 - 13	Poor – Below Average	0	Poor
Villages	2 - 7	Poor	9 - 21	Poor – Below Average	6	Poor

3.310 Table 3.39 above shows the broad range in the quality of play provision across the district in terms of general appearance and also by age range of equipment. Quality of play provision is affected by a number of factors such as graffiti, vandalism, inadequate signage, dog proof fences and general repair. It is also affected by range of equipment, textures and whether the equipment stimulates creativity.

3.311 Against the quality value line the district's overall average quality of play provision is 'Below Average'. In percentage terms, the average quality of all play areas for the Thanet is 26.12%.

Accessibility: Provision for Children and Young People

3.312 Access to play provision is influenced by a number of key factors. These include:

- Geographical location and proximity to key residential areas
- The appropriateness of facilities provided and target user group

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- External factors such as a perception of personal, or children's safety (this can be influenced by location)
- 3.313 Currently the Council makes use of the catchment areas defined by the National Playing Fields Association for each category of play area (i.e. LEAP or NEAP). These catchments have long been established and tested and provide usable areas for planning purposes. PPG 17 allows the Council to set local standards for catchments.
- 3.314 Only 8.3% of the respondents to the door to door survey identified visiting a children's play area on a weekly basis and 3.87% had visited in the previous four weeks. (It should be noted that these responses did not include children visiting/using play areas on their own, so the actual level of use is much higher than the response rate recorded by the door to door survey).
- 3.315 42.50% of respondents to the door to door survey stated that they could walk to an equipped play area (LEAP) in less than 5 minutes from home. A further 38.75% stated they could walk to an equipped play area in 10 minutes (LEAP or NEAP, depending on location).
- 3.316 The average travel time for all respondents to access provision for young people is 8.12 minutes which equates to a walking distance from home of 0.87 kilometres. (This distance reflects teenagers walking, or parents walking with/pushing children in pushchairs to play provision).
- 3.317 A mapping exercise has been undertaken to illustrate geographical proximity to play areas. This is illustrated in Map 7c.

Key Consultation Findings

- 3.318 The consultation has revealed a number of varying opinions about the current quantity and quality, and whether play facilities in place at present are adequate. Key findings from public consultation and stakeholder interviews include:
- TDC has invested substantial funding in its playgrounds including some areas for wheeled play. Play area equipment is improving in quality across Thanet.
 - There is a need to fence play areas the majority of the District Council's play areas are not fenced.
 - TDC needs to consult with young people; there is a known requirement for a facility for off road quad and motorbikes.
 - There is provision for wheeled play and teen shelters are also provided at most play sites.
 - The door to door survey revealed that of those expressing a view, the majority perceived there to be too few play facilities across the district.
 - There is a perception that more facilities were needed for young people, across the district, in both rural and the urban area.
 - Play areas need to cater for children with disabilities
 - Parish Councils identified concerns about the number of play areas they have and the resources available to them to maintain this provision
 - Children need to be able to access quality local play facilities in a safe environment; given that play in the rural areas is predominantly provided by the Parish Councils, appropriate support is needed through TDC, to ensure a consistent approach to play value, safety and quality is delivered.
 - The audit and consultation revealed that there is potential to provide more facilities for teenagers and young people in Thanet, but particularly in the Villages

Developing and Applying Standards: Provision for Children and Young people

- 3.319 **Quantity:** Currently there are 33 play areas across the district, providing equipped play, ball play, wheeled play and teenage shelters. The current level of provision equates to 0.2 ha per 1000 population (based on 0-15 age group population of district 25,200). This is well below the national recommended standard of 0.8 ha per 1000 population. The future recommended standard for play provision in the District is 0.7 ha per 1000

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population (0-15 age group). The developed standards are based on consultation and these are not comparable to NPFA Standards against population.

- 3.320 **Quality:** The average quality of play areas across the District is 26.12% which equates to a 'Below Average' rating. However, if the play areas in the urban areas were fenced this core would rise.
- 3.321 **Access:** The consultation undertaken suggests that most users walk to access local provision. Given the role and purpose of play areas, there is a need for facility provision close to home. The National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) set a number of standards of provision for catchment areas to different categories of play area, and these were originally used in Thanet to inform planning policies. Standards of provision have been based on local consultation, with a comparison shown against the NPFA standards. Based on the consultation results, the average walking distance equates to 0.87 kilometres.

Recommended Provision standard
All dwellings be within 0.87 kilometres of a good quality equipped play area (LEAP)

- 3.322 **Application of the provision standard:** Map 7c shows the current provision of facilities for children and young people with a theoretical catchment area of 0.87 kilometres.

Recommendations: Provision for Children and Young People

- 3.323 The following recommendations are made in relation to provision for children and young people:
- Set a standard of 0.7ha of play space per 1,000 population of children and young peoples age.
 - Aim to provide **Good** quality sites as a minimum. A 'Good' site is one which provides appropriate infrastructure to facilitate usage e.g. signage, seating and bins, is clean, safe, welcoming, and attractive, and, in relation to this typology, provides the appropriate play facilities, play value and environment for the age group at which it is targeted..
 - Undertake minor maintenance improvements to sites such as providing fencing and gates around play areas, the treating of benches & bins, increased provision of bins, tidying of entrances etc
 - Remove evidence of vandalism quickly (within 48 hours)
 - Introduce signage on all sites with site details and contact numbers
 - Improve provision for Young People especially Teenagers and Toddlers through a more diverse range of design
 - Develop a wheeled play facility for quad bikes and off road motor bikes for young people
 - Develop equipment that caters for children and young people with disabilities
 - Involve young people in the design and choice of provision
 - Continue to work with Friends Groups and Residents' Groups to ensure that refurbishment of play areas or provision of new play areas is in keeping with the communities' needs and desires.
 - Given that play in the rural areas is predominantly provided by the Town and Parish Councils, appropriate support is needed through TDC, to ensure a consistent approach to play value, safety and quality.

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Allotments

- 3.324 Allotments are a key type of provision within the overall portfolio of open space, sport and recreation facilities. From the consultation undertaken, the value of allotments is significant, providing facilities for physical activity in addition to the promotion of healthy eating and educational value. The provision of allotments is a statutory function for local authorities under legislation, including the 1950 Allotment Act.
- 3.325 The need for allotments is likely to increase as a result of a number of factors, including:
- The recent Health White Paper which emphasised the benefits of physical activity and healthy eating.
 - Growth in the interest in organic produce and farming as a result of product placement in supermarkets and media coverage about food production.
 - Rising housing densities nationally and locally and the consequential reduction in the size of many gardens.
- 3.326 Allotments like other open space can provide a number of wider community benefits and hit a number of sustainability targets as well as the primary use of growing produce. These include
- Recycling - Allotment holders can be encouraged to recycle and offer the potential for community composting sites.
 - Transport - Home grown food means there is less transport (less road and air miles) and less packaging.
 - Employment and training - New skills and opportunities whether promotional, managerial or related to cultivation.
 - Education - Links with schools, special needs and adult learning. Close contact with wildlife can lead to a lifelong interest. Links with Further Education either through horticulture or building such as sheds.
 - Leisure - Promoting local tourism - arts, crafts and volunteering.
 - Creative arts industries – vegetable designs etc.
 - Sustainable neighbourhoods - revitalising allotments and neighbourhoods.
 - Community Development - co-operation across ethnic, age and other groups. Allotment societies often play a wider role in community schemes, becoming involved with local schools as well as programmes for the disabled.
 - Health - Increased consumption of fresh foods and more exercise and relief from stress, and therapy for those with mental health problems.
 - Providing opportunity for social inclusion and cohesion.
 - Creating opportunities for people to participate in recreation.
 - Heritage - Allotments can be an important genetic resource for the conservation of rare species.
 - Greenspace and Biodiversity – Allotments provide areas of green space in built up areas and are used by wildlife.

Quantity: Allotments

- 3.327 The audit undertaken has revealed that there are 15 allotment sites in current use. 12 of these are in Thanet Council ownership, 1 is owned by All Saints Church, Birchington. 1 is owned by Broadstairs Town Council and there is one other privately owned allotment in Broadstairs.
- 3.328 The number of allotments required is a reflection of the levels of demand for this type of provision.

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Table 3.61 –Thanet: Current Allotment Provision

Area	Population	Number of Sites	Area Hectares	Ha per 1000 population
Margate	40,386	4	10.07	0.25
Ramsgate	39,639	4	7.67	0.19
Westgate	6,594	1	1.64	0.25
Broadstairs	24,370	4	3.84	0.16
Birchington	9,827	2	1.24	0.13
Villages	5,886	0	0	0
TOTALS	126,702	15	24.46	0.19

- 3.329 Research has revealed that there are approximately 24.46 hectares of allotments across the District. There are no allotments in the villages. The allotment site at Manston has not been considered within this study.
- 3.330 In 1969 the Thorpe report recommended a standard of provision of 0.2 hectares per 1000 population.
- 3.331 Across the District there is provision of 0.19 hectares per 1,000 population.

Quality: Allotments

- 3.332 Quality inspections have been undertaken via site visits and completion of a scored proforma. The quality assessment has been based on a non-technical visual assessment completed to rate the quality of a number of key criteria. The proforma built on a previous audit undertaken, the findings of the Government Select Committee report into best practice in allotment provision, and the Local Government Association's "A New Future for Allotments" publication (2000). A copy of the site visit proforma is included in Appendix 4.
- 3.333 Allotments were assessed and the scores measured against the quality value line for allotments. The results are illustrated in Map 8b.

Quality Line – Allotments

0% - 19%	20% - 39%	40% - 59%	60% - 79%	80% +
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

- 3.334 Key criteria affecting "quality" include;
- The presence of water supply
 - Whether the site is served by toilets
 - Secure fencing around the site
 - Signage to identify management, usage arrangements, special events and the availability of plots
 - The presence of facilities such as composting bins, a shop and car parking.
- 3.335 A detailed summary of the allotment audit results is contained within the appendices. The table below provides a summary of the key findings from the quality assessments:

Area	Number of Sites Audited	Lowest Quality	Highest Quality	Average Quality	Average Quality Range
Margate	4	0%	68%	35.75%	Poor
Ramsgate	4	33%	68%	47.55%	Average
Westgate	1	53%	53%	53%	Average
Broadstairs	4	20%	48%	34%	Poor

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Area	Number of Sites Audited	Lowest Quality	Highest Quality	Average Quality	Average Quality Range
Birchington	2	48%	68%	58%	Average
Villages	0	0	0	0	-
Totals	15	0%	68%	42.60%	Average

Accessibility: Allotments

- 3.336 A number of key considerations have been made in assessing access to allotments. These have included; the cost of renting an allotment, physical access, particularly for those with a disability; marketing and promotion of sites; location of facilities; range of services provided; availability of plots. The audit undertaken has revealed the following:
- 3.337 **Fees and Charges** The cost of hire does not vary significantly across the District.
- 3.338 **Physical Access** to sites and services. Although a detailed access audit was not undertaken, each site visited was rated for current and potential disability access. Key considerations included the quality of roads and pathways into and within sites, and the presence of specialist disabled facilities (such as raised bed allotments and disabled toilets). The audit revealed that access to allotment sites across the district is poor for disabled gardeners.
- 3.339 **Marketing and promotion** of sites and services is also a key consideration in relation to access. It is important that local residents are aware of facilities and services available, and demand could be stifled if awareness of allotments is low.
- 3.340 **Range of services provided** is a particularly important consideration in widening access to allotments from a broader cross section of the local population to those traditionally likely to comprise the majority of allotment gardeners. Facilities such as car parking, toilets and other amenities need to be considered if allotments are to generate usage from families, local schools and other organisations. The audit revealed that toilet provision is rare and that parking facilities are also lacking at most of the sites.
- 3.341 **Accessibility.** Many people walk to allotments, given their location, and the lack of parking available for allotment holders. Allotment holders are able to walk if they do not have to carry tools and equipment for use; the issues of vandalism and security are therefore important to address, given that tools and equipment are stored on site.

Summary of Consultation and Key Findings

- 3.342 Consultation has revealed a number of varying opinions about the current quantity, and quality of allotments, and whether current facilities in place at present are adequate. A summary of these opinions are reported below:
- 3.343 The **Allotment consultation** revealed that:
- Vandalism is a common issue.
 - Secure fencing was regarded as a key priority at a number of allotments.
 - The 'value' of allotments, particularly for education and health purposes is not being achieved
 - Many allotment holders regard improvement of on site facilities as the key priority for the future
 - Tivoli Allotments are currently being used by neighbouring residents as extensions to their gardens.
 - There is concern over the redevelopment of specific part of the Manston Road site. Part of the proceeds from the sale of this site must be devoted to upgrading other existing allotments across the District.

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Developing and Applying Standards: Allotments

- 3.344 **Quantity:** There are 24.46 ha of allotments across the District (not including Manston Road) which equates to a **current level of provision of 0.19 ha per 1000 head of population**. This is slightly below the nationally recommended standard by 0.02ha per 1000 population. The **future standard for provision of allotments is recommended as 1.9 ha per 1000 population**.
- 3.345 **Quality:** The average quality score for allotments is 42.60% which equates to “average” facilities. **Access:** Based on the consultation results, the average walking distance equates to 1.82 kilometres. We are proposing a rural distance and an urban distance for allotments as the Villages have no allotments.

Recommended Provision Standard
All dwellings should within urban areas be within 1.06 kilometres of a good quality allotment. All dwellings within a rural area be within 1.83 kilometres driving distance of an allotment

Recommendations: Allotments

- 3.346 The following recommendations are made in relation to allotment provision:
- A programme of facility development including toilet, and improvements to the supply of water provision where needed needs to be established and prioritised. Facilities for users/potential users with a disability need to be further developed
 - There is potential for the development of a number of partnerships to increase the value and accessibility of allotments that should be progressed. These include partnerships with allotment and gardeners societies, schools (where sites are close enough) and the development of health-related projects.
 - Develop proactive marketing of the allotments with allotment holders and societies to help raise the profile of the sites and the benefits allotments can bring.
 - Produce an Allotment Strategy for the District

Cemeteries & Churchyards

- 3.347 The definition of cemeteries and churchyards:

Areas where the primary function is a Cemetery, Churchyard; this typology may also include other burial grounds which can also provide opportunity for quiet contemplation and often for walking and wildlife conservation

- 3.348 Cemeteries, churchyards in use for burials, disused church yards and other burial grounds can provide a valuable contribution to the portfolio of open space provision within an area. For many, churchyards can provide a place for quiet contemplation in addition to their primary purpose as a “final” resting place, particularly in busy urban areas. Often churchyards have wildlife conservation and biodiversity value. In the context of this study, it is important to acknowledge that churchyards are not created with the intention of providing informal or passive recreation opportunities. Churchyards only exist where there is a church and as such, standards of provision need to focus on quality, rather than quantity. The vast majority of Churchyards fall outside the responsibility of the District Council

Quantity: Cemeteries and Churchyards

- 3.349 The audit undertaken has identified 13 cemeteries. These are shown in Map 9a. The distribution of these across the District is illustrated in Table 3.62:

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Table 3.62 - Cemeteries

Area	Population	Number of Sites
Margate	40,386	3
Ramsgate	39,639	5
Westgate	6,594	0
Broadstairs	24,370	1
Birchington	9,827	1
Villages	5,886	5
TOTALS	126,702	15

3.357 No quantity standards are to be set for cemeteries. The PPG 17 Annex states:

“Every individual cemetery has a finite capacity and therefore there is a steady need for more of them. Indeed many areas may face a shortage of burial grounds.”

3.350 The need for graves for all religious faiths can be calculated from the estimated population coupled to the average number of deaths, which provides a calculation that can be converted into a quantitative population based provision standard if required.

Quality: Cemeteries and Churchyards

3.351 The annex to PPG 17 Annex clearly states:

“Many historic churchyards and cemeteries provide important places for quiet contemplation, especially in busy urban areas and often support biodiversity and interesting geological features. As such many can be viewed as amenity green spaces. Unfortunately many are also in a poor and run down condition and therefore it may be desirable to enhance their quality.”

3.352 Quality inspections have been undertaken via site visits and completion of a scored proforma for the 15 cemeteries. The proforma used to assess quality of a sample of the provision was broadly based on the scoring system for other accessible types of open space. The key criteria used, given the intended value of this type of provision included:

- Main entrance safety, cleanliness, and natural presence
- Signage
- Quality of roads and pathways
- Provision of bins and seats

3.353 The key findings of the quality assessments undertaken are provided in Table 3.63 below:

Table 3.63 - Thanet Council: Summary of Quality Assessment Findings

Area	Provision Details	Quality Range
Margate	40,386	20.48% - 85.43%
Ramsgate	39,639	41.69% - 78.02%
Westgate	6,594	0
Broadstairs	24,370	92.92%
Birchington	9,827	66.30%
Villages	5,886	44..34% - 63.01%
TOTALS	126,702	58.33%

3.354 The results of the quality assessments can be summarised as:

- An average quality score across the district of **58.33%** ('Good')
- The general maintenance was found to be good with sites being kept clean and tidy

SECTION III – AUDIT OF LOCAL PROVISION

Accessibility: Cemeteries and Churchyards

- 3.355 Accessibility to cemeteries and churchyards is difficult to assess. In regard to their overall contribution to open space, given their primary purpose and factors affecting location and provision levels, the assessment has not included a focus on distribution, location or distance thresholds. People make use of this type of provision for a variety of reasons. In terms of physical access, a number of sites had poor access for those with mobility difficulties or visiting in a wheel chair.
- 3.356 The definitive standards in relation to the quality of cemeteries is increasingly being recognised as that set by the Green Flag Award.
- 3.357 The door to door household survey undertaken in relation to cemeteries within the District identified:
- In relation to cemeteries within the District, only 3.2% (16 people) of the people surveyed had occasionally visited cemeteries.
 - The respondents' average travel time when walking was 12.35 minutes which equates to a travelling distance of 1.32 kilometres.

Summary of Key Findings

- 3.358 The following comments are made in relation to cemeteries and disused churchyards on the basis of the sites audited and consultation undertaken:
- Churchyards and cemeteries are potentially under-utilised areas of open space; there is potential for them to be enjoyed as informal open space by more local people, if, for example, there was improved provision of car parking, and lighting, to make them easier to access, and be perceived as being safer areas, particularly in the evenings. It must be noted that the Local Authority is not responsible for the up keep of most cemeteries so it may be hard to improve the condition unless this is carried out in partnership with Churches and the Church Commissioners.
 - Quality varies across the sites inspected, with the main deficiencies relating to lack of accessibility to toilets, lighting and car parking.
 - There is currently no space for woodland burials; the new community woodlands will provide space for woodland burials.

Developing and Applying Standards: Cemeteries / Churchyards

- 3.359 **Quantity:** There are numerous churchyards, cemeteries and burial grounds across Thanet. This provision is sometimes dependent upon the presence and location of a church. As a result, no quantitative provision standards have been set. Additionally, the residents' consultation suggests that this type of provision is not well used.
- 3.360 **Quality:** The average quality score for all assessed sites is 58.33% which equates to "Good" facilities.

Recommendations: Churchyards/Cemeteries

- 3.361 It is recommended that a quality standard be adopted based on the quality assessment results as an initial basis. The Council should in the near future develop management plans for the cemeteries and proactively promote them and consider submitting them for the Green Flag Award.

SECTION III – AUDIT OF LOCAL PROVISION

Generic Recommendations

- 3.362 A number of recommendations are made in relation to all sites, the audit and the assessment undertaken. These are concerned with the use of information gathered and the further development of the study in future years:
- Audit greenspaces on a regular basis (every three - five years) and publish findings. This will allow trend data to be collated and improvements to be tracked. It is important that findings are published to enable stakeholders to track progress.
 - Develop a central record of all open space to include the findings of the assessment undertaken. Currently many sections of the Council hold information regarding open space. Often this information is not consistent (sites listed by different names etc). The central record should include access to GIS mapping.
 - Continue to develop marketing information produced about the availability of parks and open space facilities available, key activities accommodated and access arrangements. The Council should seek to work with key partners such as the local PCT, in future marketing, to ensure that greenspace fulfils a valuable role in meeting wider social objectives (e.g. health improvement).
 - Develop an access standard regarding physical access for existing and potential users with a disability
 - Review maintenance standards for greenspace, and agree with local people e.g. Friends Groups any changes. Report on performance annually.
 - For both formal and informal (Semi natural sites) ensure that all sites are safe, attractive and welcoming to visitors.
 - Develop and fund a programme of signage installation, for example, appropriate way markers, information boards and interpretative panels, as well as additional entrance signage to those sites not yet improved.
 - Continue to work towards the reduction of the effects of crime and anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces.
 - Accessibility – the issue of accessibility, particularly for young people needs to be addressed in partnership with, for example, transport providers.
 - Accessibility for older people - wherever possible issues of time and cost need to be addressed to facilitate access to activities and provision across the district. In addition, it is important that all facilities across the district comply with the requirements of the DDA; even informal open spaces should provide some means of access to at least part of the site, to enable use by those with a disability.

Quality

- 3.363 It is envisaged that the site audits undertaken can be built upon and used as a benchmark against which to measure the condition of the sites now and the progressive improvements in quality in coming years. The assessment can be broken down into a detailed matrix covering all elements of the infrastructure.
- 3.364 Providers of greenspace and indoor and outdoor sports facilities should aspire to provide 'good quality facilities'. Thanet District Council therefore needs to allocate adequate resources to improve those open spaces and indoor facilities that fall below that standard to ensure equality of access for residents within the district boundaries. As a bare minimum every site that the public use and that is owned by the District Council should have signage; if the public use it for recreation it should have a bench and a bin, be clean and be well maintained as a minimum standard of provision.

SECTION III – AUDIT OF LOCAL PROVISION

Accessibility

- 3.365 Sustainable methods of transport such as walking and cycling are actively encouraged within PPG17, especially for any new open space provision or where existing spaces are being improved. Improvements to open space access made by providers should ensure that accessibility by environmentally friendly transport modes is encouraged.
- 3.366 The consultation undertaken with local residents through the door to door survey confirms that they are generally happy with the type of provision and amount of open spaces in their local area and that the time taken to travel to them is acceptable. Residents do however have concerns about personal safety e.g. fear of walking out alone in unlit spaces, which is more of a social issue than a physical access issue.
- 3.367 Facilities need to be compliant with the recommended Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) accessibility guidance; whilst this may not be completely achievable for an outdoor site, there should at minimum be the means provided for individuals to access the site, or parts of the site, and be able to park a vehicle.
- 3.368 The door to door consultation has provided specific accessibility information that has enabled accessibility standards and distance thresholds to be established for each open space typology as defined by the PPG17 Guidance. Respondents to the Door to Door Survey were asked about the time it took them to walk to facilities; this has been used as a guide in establishing accessibility standards; given that levels of car ownership are not 100%, it is important to establish how far local residents would have to walk to provision, if that were their only means of transport. In practice, people tend to access indoor and outdoor sports facilities by car.
- 3.369 Setting distance thresholds for each type of open space for all areas is not easy to achieve as many factors will influence travel times. The figures are based on generic average travel times. However these standards, as PPG17 recommends, provide guidance that help to identify gaps in provision and meet the local needs as identified through the sample door to door survey of local residents in Thanet.
- 3.370 The recommended standards of provision are based on the above mode of travel to provision; it is important to note that it is the access to sports facilities, indoor and outdoor, which are based on drive times, as opposed to walking times; this is the means of travel most generally used to access this type of formal provision, given that participants have equipment and kit to carry. It is important to note that drive times are calculated on the basis of time; in an urban environment, the facilities may be closer, but it is likely to take longer to access them by car, given the traffic levels in the town. In a rural area, facilities may be further away, but it is likely to take less time to travel further. Walking times have been calculated as the same in rural and urban areas; the types of provision to which people walk are more local facilities e.g. parks, play areas, and they should be provided within the same walking distances of residential areas, irrespective of whether the setting is rural or urban.