

**Ploszajski Lynch
Consulting Ltd**



**Tonbridge and Malling Borough
Council**

***Indoor Sports Facilities
Strategy***

June 2025

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	ASSESSING SPORTS FACILITIES NEEDS	3
3	THE LOCAL CONTEXT	6
4	STRATEGIC INFLUENCES	12
5	SPORTS HALLS	19
6	SWIMMING POOLS	40
7	HEALTH AND FITNESS FACILITIES	53
8	SQUASH COURTS	65
9	INDOOR TENNIS	74
10	INDOOR BOWLS	82
11	GYMNASTICS FACILITIES	90
12	POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS	100
13	IMPEMENTATION AND REVIEW	103

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC) appointed Ploszajski Lynch Consulting Ltd. (PLC) to produce Sports Facilities, Playing Pitch and Open Spaces Strategies for the borough. The strategy covers:

- Indoor sports and active recreation facilities.
- Playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities.
- Informal/casual outdoor active recreational opportunities.

This document comprises the assessment of indoor sports and active recreation facilities needs.

1.2 The rationale for the strategy

1.2.1 Purpose

TMBC is currently in the process of preparing a new Local Plan, which will have a time horizon of 2042. To inform the Local Plan, complement existing evidence and to help address the expectations of national legislation and policy, the council has commissioned the preparation of a combined Open Space, Indoor and Outdoor Sport and Recreation Strategy. The purpose of this work is to provide the open space, playspace and recreation evidence to support the council's emerging Local Plan, as well as provide corporate direction on the future role of its assets and leisure provision. This should be considered in the context of anticipated future growth in the borough.

1.2.2 Objectives

The objectives of all three studies are as follows:

- To identify opportunities for enhancing and facilitating healthy lifestyles through multi-functionality of space, the built environment, the role, design and location of future open space, playspace and recreation provision.
- To identify any specific locational requirements for each typology, aligned to the council's emerging Local Plan and identify any strategic site opportunities.
- To review adopted local planning policy requirements, as included in the council's Managing Development and the Environment DPD.
- To make appropriate planning policy recommendations to reflect any updated open space, sport and recreation provision standards, to inform the Local Plan and assist the council in securing development outcomes.
- To undertake engagement with stakeholders including council officers, facility operators, Kent Sport, Fields in Trust and Sport England as appropriate throughout the preparation of the strategy.
- To undertake an audit of existing indoor and outdoor facilities provided by public, private, voluntary and education sectors.
- To identify within Tonbridge and the rest of the borough quantitative and qualitative deficits and surpluses, having regard to the accessibility and availability of individual facilities.

- To assess the need for existing and future facilities (both indoor and outdoor).
- To review current facility usage.
- To make recommendations to support the most efficient use and operation of TMBC sports facilities in response to user demand and ongoing budgetary pressures.

1.3 *The scope of the strategy*

The indoor sports facilities included in the Strategy are:

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

1.4 *The strategy methodology*

The methodology for the strategy followed the 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance' (2014) approach (ANOG), developed by Sport England. The process involved two parts and three stages as follows:

- **Part One** - Undertaking the assessment.
 - **Stage A:** Prepare and tailor the assessment.
 - **Stage B:** Gather information on supply and demand.
 - **Stage B:** Bring the information together.
- **Part Two - Stage C:** Applying the assessment.

1.5 *Strategy format*

This document comprises the strategy and is structured as follows:

- Assessing sports facilities needs in Tonbridge and Malling.
- The local context for facilities provision.
- Strategic influences on facilities provision.
- Sports halls.
- Swimming pools.
- Health and fitness facilities.
- Squash courts.
- Indoor tennis facilities.
- Indoor bowls facilities.
- Gymnastics facilities.
- Policies and recommendations.
- Implementing and reviewing the strategy.

2 ASSESSING SPORTS FACILITIES NEEDS IN TONBRIDGE AND MALLING

2.1 Introduction

This section explains the basis upon which the current sports facilities needs in Tonbridge and Malling have been identified, along with the approach for identifying the additional provision that will be needed as a result of population growth.

The methodology applied to assess the needs and opportunities for sports facilities follows Sport England's recommended approach, advocated in 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance' (2014). It also takes account of Sport England's 'Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance' (2020).

2.2 Preparing and tailoring the approach

TMBC convened a project steering group led by officers from leisure, planning policy and administrative and property services and involving advice from Sport England and the relevant governing bodies of sport to devise:

- The vision and objectives of the review of sports facilities in the borough.
- The scope of the exercise, including the types of facilities to include, the geographical scope and the overall timeframe for the assessment.
- The local and wider strategic context.
- The project management arrangements for the strategy.

A project brief was produced, approved and signed-off to complete Stage A of the process.

2.3 Assessing sports facilities supply

The assessment of sports facilities supply at Stage B of the strategy involved four main elements:

- **Quantity:** Establishing what facilities there are in the borough, with details of their dimensions, technical information like playing surfaces and floodlighting. This included consideration of facilities not currently in use, those not available to the community and significant provision in neighbouring areas that serves some needs of Tonbridge and Malling residents and visitors.
- **Quality:** Auditing the quality of facilities. This involved assessing each facility in terms of its condition (its age, appeal, fabric and ancillary provision like changing and car parking - factors that will influence its attractiveness to users) and fitness for purpose (its technical specifications and ability to accommodate an appropriate standard of play).
- **Accessibility:** Determining spatial distribution of provision in the borough by GIS mapping of each facility type, including catchment analysis appropriate to the scale and role of each facility.
- **Availability:** Identifying how much each facility is used, whether there is any existing spare capacity and if there is any scope to increase capacity. This involved consideration of programming and usage data, opening times and pricing levels, which was secured through consultation with facility providers and operators.

The information was collated and analysed in a facilities supply report, which was evaluated and approved by the project steering group.

2.4 Assessing sports facilities demand

The assessment of sports facilities demand at Stage B of the strategy involved five main elements:

- **Local population profile:** Establishing the local demography, including the size, age profile, affluence/deprivation, health indices and growth projections.
- **Sports participation:** Identifying local sports participation characteristics, through analysing the results of Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey, local facilities usage figures and a survey of local clubs to establish membership patterns and trends.
- **Unmet, displaced and future demand:** In addition to current expressed demand, an analysis of unmet (demand which exists but cannot currently be satisfied), displaced (demand from within the borough that is satisfied elsewhere) and future demand (based on projected population and participation increases) was undertaken.
- **Sport England's Facilities Planning Model:** TMBC also commissioned an assessment using the Sport England Facilities Planning Model (FPM) spatial modelling tool. The FPM study is a quantitative, accessibility and spatial assessment of the supply, demand and access to sports halls and swimming pools in the borough. It included three modelling 'runs'
 - A baseline assessment of provision in 2023.
 - A forward assessment of demand for sports halls and swimming pools and their distribution, based on the projected changes in population including residential development between 2023 and 2041.
 - An assessment of a modelled change in supply in meeting the demand for sports halls and swimming pools and their distribution up to 2041, based upon meeting an annual housing requirement of 839 dwellings per year (based upon the December 2023 NPPF standard methodology).
- **Local participation priorities:** Establishing any local priorities for the use of sports facilities, such as those relating to corporate health and well-being policies.
- **Sport-specific priorities:** Determining through consultation with the governing bodies of sport and a local sports clubs survey, whether there are any sport-specific priorities for Tonbridge and Malling.

The information was collated and analysed in a facilities demand report, for evaluation and approval by the project steering group.

2.5 Assessing the balance between sports facilities supply and demand

To complete Stage B of the process, the supply and demand information was brought together for each type of facility to establish:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough facilities with sufficient capacity to meet needs?
- **Quality:** Are the facilities fit for purpose for the users?
- **Accessibility:** Are the facilities in the right physical location for the users?
- **Availability:** Are the facilities available for those who want to use them?

The information has been collated and analysed in a Stage B report.

2.6 Applying the assessment - Developing the strategy

The results of the assessment will be applied to produce a Sports Facilities Strategy for the borough, which will include:

- **Options for provision:** The options for meeting current and future facilities needs were identified under Sport England's recommended headings of 'Protect', 'Provide' and 'Enhance'.
- **Policy recommendations:** Arranged under the headings of 'Protect', 'Provide' and 'Enhance', planning policy recommendations were developed to ensure that the implementation of the strategy will be supported by the provisions of the Local Plan.
- **Strategy implementation:** An action plan which identifies the ways in which the strategy can be implemented, subject to human and financial resource availability, but a wide range of stakeholders from the public, voluntary and commercial sectors.

2.7 Sources of information

Information was gathered throughout the process from a wide range of consultees including:

- **Sport England:** Guidance on the assessment methodology.
- **Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council:** Consultation with officers from planning policy and leisure.
- **TM Active:** Data from the leisure trust contracted to run the key council-owned facilities.
- **Other local sports facilities providers:** Consultation with organisations such as local sports clubs and commercial health and fitness operators on usage levels and spare capacity.
- **Neighbouring local authorities:** Information on their sports facilities assessments and the impact of any cross-border issues was obtained from Maidstone Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Gravesham Borough Council and Medway Council.
- **Active Kent and Medway:** Information on local and wider strategic priorities.
- **Governing bodies of sport:** Information on local and wider strategic priorities and local supply and demand information.
- **Sports clubs:** Information on sports facilities provision and use, current and future needs and opinions on quality, which was submitted via an on-line survey.
- **Schools:** Information on sports facilities provision and use, plus attitudes towards community use, which was submitted via an on-line survey.
- **Town and parish councils:** Information on sports facilities provision and use, current and future needs and opinions on quality, which was submitted via an on-line survey.

2.8 Summary

Assessing sports facilities needs in Tonbridge and Malling using the approach advocated by Sport England in its 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance' and 'Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance' has ensured that the exercise is both robust and evidence-based and as a result complies with the provisions of the Government's national planning policy framework.

3 THE LOCAL CONTEXT FOR FACILITIES PROVISION

3.1 Introduction

This section outlines the context within which sports facilities provision has been considered in Tonbridge and Malling.

3.2 Background

3.2.1 Location

Tonbridge and Malling borough is in north-west Kent. It occupies approximately 93 square miles covering an area from the North Downs at Burham and Snodland in the north to Tonbridge in the south. The River Medway meanders north-east through the borough towards the Medway Gap. The borough shares boundaries with Maidstone Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Gravesham Borough Council and Medway Council.

3.2.2 Settlement pattern

The main urban areas of the borough comprise Tonbridge, the Medway Gap (Aylesford, Ditton, Larkfield and Leybourne), Kings Hill, Snodland and the part of Walderslade that lies within the borough. As defined at the time of preparing the strategy, there were five Rural Service Centres at Borough Green, East Peckham, Hadlow, Hildenborough and West Malling and a range of other smaller rural settlements. Based on the 2021 census, the population of Tonbridge and Malling comprised approximately 65% within urban areas whilst the rural population comprised around 35%.

3.2.3 Landscape

Nearly three quarters of the Borough lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt where, other than a very limited range of uses, there is a strong presumption against development unless justified by very special circumstances for sites not otherwise allocated in the Local Plan. Much of the remaining part of the Borough is covered by the defined Strategic Gap which seeks to assist in separating Maidstone and the Medway Towns from settlements in the north of the borough, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, areas liable to flood and sites of nature conservation interest. These designations constrain the location and extent of potential built development.

3.2.4 Transport links

The borough has a number of important roads passing through it. There are three motorways, the M2, M20 and the M26, four major west-east roads (A20, A21, A25 and A26) and three other north-south roads (the A227, A228 and A229). Two mainline rail routes provide links with London and the Kent coast.

3.3 Demography

3.3.1 Current population

The 2021 census data for Tonbridge and Malling indicates 132,200 residents. This represents an increase of 11,400 people (9.4% growth) since the 2011 Census figure of 120,800.

3.3.2 Age structure

Analysis of the 2021 census data shows that Tonbridge and Malling has a relatively youthful age profile compared with both Kent and England. The average age of residents of the borough is 42.4 years, compared with a national average of 43.1 years.

Age	Tonbridge and Malling No.	Tonbridge and Malling %	Kent %	England %
0-15	24,854	18.8%	17.8%	18.4%
16-65	81,964	62.0%	61.8%	63.2%
65+	25,382	19.2%	20.4%	18.4%
Total	132,200	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

3.3.3 Sub-areas

To assist with analysing provision at a more local level and in particular to assess the differential spatial impact on supply and demand for sports facilities arising from housing growth the borough has been divided into two sub-areas. These have been selected on the basis that they comprise discrete areas within which the resident population will typically look to access sports facilities locally. The sub-area ward populations are based upon ONS 2021 small-area estimates and are as follows:

Sub-area	Wards	Ward Population 2021	Sub-area Population 2021
Tonbridge and surrounds	Hildenborough	5,925	56,018
	Judd	6,517	
	Vauxhall	9,249	
	Cage Green and Angel	9,390	
	Higham	6,527	
	Trench	5,822	
	Bourne	5,763	
	East and West Peckham, Mereworth and Wateringbury	6,818	
The Mallings and surrounds	Pilgrims with Igtham	6,042	76,182
	Borough Green and Platt	5,975	
	East Malling, West Malling and Offham	8,641	
	Kings Hill	8,045	
	Aylesford South and Ditton	9,135	
	Birling, Leybourne and Ryarsh	6,162	
	Larkfield	9,262	
	Aylesford North and North Downs	8,512	
	Snodland West and Holborough Lakes	5,685	
	Snodland East and Ham Hill	5,665	
	Walderslade	3,056	

3.3.4 Population growth

The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 152,859 by 2041, an increase of 20,659 (or 15.6%). Comparison of the 2021 census data with the 2018 sub-national population projections for 2041 shows that the percentage of people aged under 65 will fall from 80.8% to 75.9%, with proportionate population increase amongst those aged over 65.

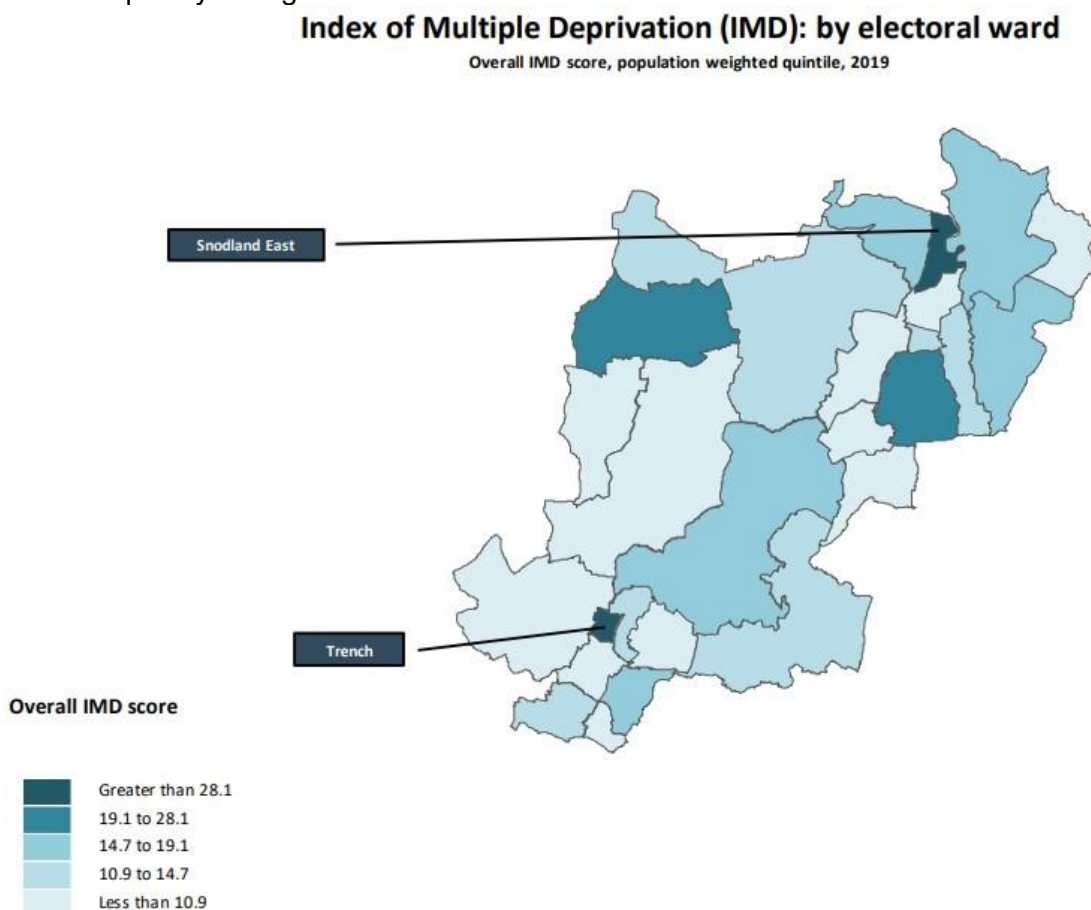
Age	Population 2021	% 2021	Population 2041	% 2041
0-15	24,854	18.8%	28,419	18.6%
16-65	81,964	62.0%	87,658	57.3%
65+	25,382	19.2%	36,782	24.1%
Total	132,200	100.0%	152,859	100.0%

3.3.5 Housing needs

The location of population growth will be determined to a large extent by housing development allocations. Objectively assessed housing need amounts 839 dwellings per year (15,941 dwellings by 2041). The precise location of development will be determined by the Local Plan, but at an average of 2.3 people per dwelling this would amount to a population increase of approximately 36,664, which is significantly more than the ONS projection of 20,659 up to 2041.

3.3.6 Deprivation

The English Indices of Deprivation (2019) show that the borough is ranked 236 out of 317 local authority areas in England on a range of deprivation issues. Although no areas of Tonbridge and Malling are ranked as amongst the 10% most deprived in the country, the borough has experienced the largest increase in deprivation relative to other areas of Kent in the period since 2015. 9.6% of children in the borough (2,539 people) live in absolute low income families, whilst a further 13.1% of children (3,469) live in relative low income families. Variations in deprivation by ward in 2019 are shown in the map below, although some ward boundaries have subsequently changed:



3.3.7 Ethnicity

According to the 2021 census, the population in Tonbridge and Malling is predominantly white (93.3%), with non-white minorities representing the remaining 6.7% of the population, well below the England average of 14.6%.

3.3.8 Health

Local health indices recorded in Public Health England's '*Health Profile for Tonbridge and Malling*' (2019) show that in general the health of people in the borough is around the average for England as a whole, although:

- Life expectancy is 5.1 years lower for men and 5.6 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of the borough than in the least deprived areas.
- The prevalence of obese children aged 10-11 years is 17.4%, compared with 20.0% in the south-east region and 23.4% nationally.
- 63.3% of the adult population of the borough is classified as overweight or obese, compared with 62.7% in the south-east region and 63.8% nationally.

3.4 Sport and physical activity

3.4.1 Participation rates

Sport England's '*Active Lives*' survey measures physical activity rates amongst people aged 16 and over at district, county, regional and national levels. The definitions used in the survey are as follows:

- **Sport and physical activity:** This includes at least 10-minutes of moderate or higher intensity sports activities, walking and cycling for leisure or travel, fitness and dance.
- **Active:** The 'Active' population is defined as those doing at least 150 minutes of the above activities per week.
- **Fairly active:** The 'Fairly active' population is defined as those doing between 30 and 149 minutes of the above activities per week.
- **Inactive:** The 'Inactive' population is defined as those doing 30 minutes or less of the above activities per week.

The proportion of the adult (16+) population who are active for at least 150 minutes per week in Tonbridge and Malling between 2015 and 2022 is tabulated below and shows that whilst rates have fluctuated over the survey periods, there is a slight downward trend, primarily due to the effects of the covid pandemic:

Nov '15 - Nov '16	May '16 - May '17	Nov '16- Nov '17	May '17- May '18	Nov '17- Nov '18	May '18- May '19	Nov '18-Nov '19	May '19- May '20	Nov '19-Nov '20	May '20- May '21	Nov '20-Nov '21	Nov '21-Nov '22	% Change
66.3%	66.9%	66.8%	67.4%	68.8%	69.5%	69.4%	66.0%	66.0%	66.6%	65.1%	64.2%	-2.5%

In comparative terms, the most recent activity levels are above the county and national figures, but below the regional average:

Area	Active	Fairly active	Inactive
Tonbridge and Malling	64.2%	13.1%	22.7%
Kent	63.5%	12.2%	24.2%
South-east England	66.5%	11.4%	22.1%
England	63.1%	11.1%	25.8%

3.4.2 Demographic variations

The 'Active Lives' survey national level data identifies that there are significant demographic variations in participation rates:

- **Gender:** Men's participation rates are higher at 65% than women's at 61%.
- **Socio-economic groups:** Those in routine/semi-routine jobs and those who are long-term unemployed or have never worked have lower participation rates (54%) than those in professional/managerial roles (72%).
- **Age:** Activity levels decrease with age, from 70% in the 16 - 34 age group, to 66% on the 35 - 54 age group, 61% for 55 - 74 year olds to 40% for those aged 75 and over.
- **Disability and long-term health conditions:** Activity is less common for disabled people or those with a long -term health condition (47%) than those without (68%).
- **Ethnicity:** Participation rates are lower for minority ethnic groups than for the White population and are lowest for those of Asian heritage (54%).

3.4.3 Sports club membership

The 'Active Lives' survey also records rates of sports club membership amongst people aged 16 and over and who participated at least twice in the previous 28 days. The figures below show that rates are higher in Tonbridge and Malling than for all the wider geographical comparators:

Tonbridge and Malling	Kent	South-East	England
44.5%	38.3%	41.9%	40.2%

3.5 The local sports facilities supply network

Sports facilities provision in Tonbridge and Malling comprises a mixed economy involving the public, voluntary and commercial sectors. The key providers are as follows:

- **Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council:** The council owns the borough's public leisure centres at The Angel Centre in Tonbridge, Tonbridge Swimming Pool, and Larkfield Leisure Centre. The facilities are managed by TM Active, a charitable trust.
- **Schools:** Schools are significant sports facilities providers in the borough, although not all provision is fully community accessible. The most significant of these is Tonbridge School.
- **Sports clubs:** Voluntary sector sports clubs provide and run a range of mostly smaller facilities for example Snodland Community Centre.
- **Commercial providers:** The commercial sector provides a range of health and fitness facilities. The largest of these is the David Lloyd Club in Kings Hill.

3.6 *The implications for sports facilities provision*

The implications of the local context for sports facilities provision in Tonbridge and Malling are as follows:

- **Transport links:** The transport links, both internally and externally to the borough make sports facilities accessible to a wide catchment area, creating the potential for significant imported and exported demand.
- **An ageing population:** Whilst the borough has comparatively youthful age profile at present, demographic change by 2041 will see a significant increase in the proportion of people aged over 65. Since sport and physical activity rates typically decline with age, the market for local sports facilities will evolve accordingly.
- **Population growth:** The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast an increase of 20,659 people by 2041 or 15.6%. If housing targets are met, population growth could be as high as 36,664 people, a 27.7% increase. This will increase demand for facilities for sport and physical activity.
- **Overall sports participation rates:** Local participation rates in sport and physical activity have fallen over the past five years (based upon Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey) but are still above the respective national and county figures.
- **Facilities supply:** Sports facilities are provided by a range of owners and operators from the public, education and commercial sectors, which highlights the need for and benefits of a strategic approach to co-ordinating provision.

4 STRATEGIC INFLUENCES ON FACILITIES PROVISION

4.1 Introduction

As a prelude to the assessment of supply and demand for facilities in Tonbridge and Malling, this section reviews the relevant policies and priorities of the council and its strategic partners, to establish:

- The key relevant policies and local strategic outcomes.
- The extent to which these are convergent or divergent in respect of sport and physical activity.

4.2 Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Corporate Strategy

4.2.1 Corporate vision

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

4.2.2 Corporate values and priorities

To achieve this vision the Strategy sets out four priorities:

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

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

4.3 Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Development Plan

TMBC's adopted local development plan is currently made up of the following documents which, will be replaced by the new Local Plan once adopted.

- Core Strategy.
- Development Land Allocations DPD.
- Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan.
- Managing Development and the Environment DPD.
- Local Plan Policies Map illustrating the policies and proposals contained in the Development Plan.
- Saved Policies from the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan.
- Adopted Development Plan Documents that make up Kent Minerals and Waste Planning Policy.

The Core Strategy vision and policies will be updated in preparing the new Local Plan, this will be informed by this evidence and good practice approaches. This will guide the delivery of future growth and infrastructure in the borough.

4.4 Active Kent and Medway

Active Kent and Medway is the county sports partnership, one of a network of 43 active partnerships across the country. It works with sports clubs and organisations and a range of partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors to increase participation in sport and physical activity. Its strategy '*Move Together*' (2023) covers the period 2023-27. It seeks to achieve the following.

- Connecting communities - 'Making it easier for people to be active locally and using sport and physical activity's unique ability to make places better to live in and bring people together, particularly where inequalities are greatest' (page 8).
- Health and wellbeing - 'Creating partnerships that enable everyone to benefit from an active lifestyle' (page 9).
- Children and young people - 'Enabling children and young people to enjoy being active and creating the right foundations for a long, active and healthy life' (page 10).
- Supporting sport - 'Supporting local organisations to better understand their community and to deliver activities that are appropriate to people's needs and motivations' (page 11).
- Active environments - 'Creating and protecting places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active' (page 12).

4.5 Kent Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The current Kent Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018 - 2021, published by Kent County Council, has the vision 'to improve health and wellbeing outcomes, deliver better coordinated quality care, improve the public's experience of integrated health and social care services and ensure that the individual is involved and at the heart of everything we do' (page 5).

The outcomes include 'effective prevention of ill health by people taking greater responsibility for their health and wellbeing' (page 5). The Strategy states that 'shaping the physical environment of the community so that it can better promote healthier lifestyles is central to... councils' regulatory health improvement role. The new National Planning Policy Framework highlights the role of the planning system in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. This includes measures aimed at reducing health inequalities, improving access to healthy food and reducing obesity, encouraging physical activity, improving mental health and wellbeing, and improving air quality to reduce the incidence of respiratory diseases' (page 19).

4.6 The Government's Planning Policies

4.6.1 Introduction

In July 2023, the Government published an update to the 'National Planning Policy Framework' setting out its economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. Taken together, these policies articulate the Government's vision of sustainable development, which should be interpreted and applied locally to meet local aspirations.

4.6.2 Sustainable development

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' and there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.6.3 Promoting healthy and safe communities

'Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

- 'Promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other - for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages.
- Are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion - for example through the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high-quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
- Enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs - for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

4.6.4 Sport and leisure facilities

To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

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

4.6.5 Planning Practice Guidance

The Government also issues '*Planning Practice Guidance*' and the following is of particular relevance:

- **Open space, sport and recreation provision:** 'Open space should be taken into account in planning for new development and considering proposals that may affect

existing open space. It can provide health and recreation benefits to people living and working nearby’.

- ‘Authorities and developers may refer to Sport England’s guidance on how to assess the need for sports and recreation facilities. Local planning authorities are required to consult Sport England in certain cases where development affects the use of land as playing fields. Where there is no requirement to consult, local planning authorities are advised to consult Sport England in cases where development might lead to loss of, or loss of use for sport, of any major sports facility, the creation of a site for one or more playing pitches, artificial lighting of a major outdoor sports facility or a residential development of 300 dwellings or more’.
- **Healthy and safe communities:** ‘Local planning authorities should ensure that health and wellbeing, and health infrastructure are considered in local and neighbourhood plans and in planning decision making. Development proposals should support strong, vibrant and healthy communities and help create healthy living environments which should, where possible, include making physical activity easy to do. Opportunities for healthy lifestyles must be considered (e.g. planning for an environment that supports people of all ages in making healthy choices, helps to promote active travel and physical activity and promotes high quality open spaces and opportunities for play, sport and recreation)’.

The built and natural environment have key roles in supporting and enabling, health, wellbeing, and physical activity. The Tonbridge and Malling Sports Facilities Strategy addresses the extent to which existing sports facilities and the programmes that they deliver, provide accessible and appropriate opportunities to be active and proposes recommendations where necessary.

4.7 The Government’s Sports Strategy

4.7.1 Introduction

The Government’s sports strategy ‘Get Active - A Strategy for the Future of Sport and Physical Activity’ (2023) contains three main priorities, outlined below.

4.7.2 Driving participation and addressing inactivity

- ‘Ensuring everyone is focused on increasing physical activity, meaning fewer inactive children, and narrowing the gap on inactivity where groups are not being reached, with visible progress across the country by 2030’.
- ‘Setting the future direction for facilities and spaces where people can be active by delivering multi-million pound investment into grassroots facilities and setting a clear strategic ambition for the future. This will mean facilities that reflect the needs of local communities, supported by hundreds of millions of pounds of government and local authority investment’.

4.7.3 Strengthening the integrity of sport

- ‘Help the sector to be welcoming to all, by promoting women’s and disability sport, championing diversity across the sector and holding the sector to account for investing in these groups. This will mean groups feel the benefit of public and private investment, that we see meaningful progress by 2030, and that cultural issues which put people off sport are relentlessly tackled’.
- ‘Improve how issues and concerns are dealt with in the sector, starting by launching a call for evidence around sport integrity issues. This will increase confidence in sport so

that everyone knows that their welfare is at the heart of the sport system, whatever sport they play’.

4.7.4 Making sport more sustainable

- ‘Supporting the sector to access additional, alternative forms of investment to help it continue to grow and thrive, and by highlighting best practice, good governance mechanisms, and opportunities offered by technology and innovation. This will allow sport to thrive for future generations and support the continuation of our sporting institutions’.
- ‘Working towards a more environmentally sustainable sector that delivers on the government’s net-zero ambitions. We will do this by championing the role that sport can play in sustainability, and bringing together government departments, the sport sector and subject matter experts to share information and provide support’.

4.8 Sport England Strategy

4.8.1 Vision

Sport England’s strategy ‘Uniting the Movement’ (2021) contains a vision for ‘a nation of more equal, inclusive and connected communities. A country where people live happier, healthier and more fulfilled lives’.

4.8.2 Context

The strategy concludes that ‘there are deep-rooted inequalities in sport and physical activity, which mean there are people who feel excluded from being active because the right options and opportunities are not there:

- Disabled people and people with a long-term health condition are twice as likely to be physically inactive than those without a disability or health condition.
- People from a lower socioeconomic group (NS-SEC 6-8) are more likely to be inactive than people in higher social groups.
- Women are less active than men and this gender gap starts with girls being less active from a very young age.
- People from Asian and black backgrounds are far more likely to be physically inactive than people who are white’.

4.8.3 Advocating movement, sport and physical activity

Proposed actions include:

- ‘Continue to build, establish and grow partnerships and a common purpose across both the government and our sector to join up policies, strategies and approaches’.
- ‘Continue to develop and deliver behavioural change campaigns, building on the success of ‘*This Girl Can*’, ‘*We Are Undefeatable*’ and ‘*Join the Movement*’, to put movement, sport and physical activity at the forefront of national conversations’.
- ‘Keep building evidence that shows the links between the issues we all care about as a nation and the value of movement, sport and physical activity as part of the solution’.

- ‘Grow the extent to which we communicate, both to people and organisations, the power of getting active to help strengthen public consensus around the importance of being physically active’.

4.8.4 Five key issues

These are identified as:

- **Recover and reinvent:** ‘Recovering from the biggest crisis in a generation and reinventing as a vibrant, relevant and sustainable network of organisations providing sport and physical activity opportunities that meet the needs of different people’.
- **Connecting communities:** Focusing on sport and physical activity’s ability to make better places to live and bring people together.
- **Positive experiences for children and young people:** Unrelenting focus on positive experiences for all children and young people as the foundations for a long and healthy life.
- **Connection with health and wellbeing:** Strengthening the connections between sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing, so more people can feel the benefits of, and advocate for, an active life.
- **Active environments:** Creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.

4.8.5 Active Environments

The key proposals for facilities are contained in the ‘Active Environments’ theme. This identifies three types of provision:

- **Dedicated sport and physical activity facilities:** ‘Dedicated sport and leisure facilities like leisure centres need to be co-created, well designed, supported and maintained to benefit the local community and their users’.
- **Other community spaces:** ‘Not usually designed exclusively for exercise, and certainly not for specific sports, these places are a vital resource for many and the activity they host provides a useful income to the venue. They may never be perfect competition or training spaces, but they attract people who might never go to a sports club, leisure centre or private gym. The development of community spaces like these is important to people who are regularly or newly active’.
- **The wider built environment:** ‘These places and spaces influence how much we move. Good design can help to increase activity levels by encouraging walking and cycling. This means connecting dedicated sport and activity facilities and community spaces, by making it easy for people to walk and cycle, by better design and by using the built and natural environments around us’.

4.8.6 Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance

In May 2019 Sport England supplemented its guidance on the production of sports facilities strategies by publishing ‘*Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance*’. The approach advocated the following:

- Developing an understanding of the wider local strategic outcomes of the strategy area.
- Using a cross-sector approach to identify local community needs and priorities.
- Establishing the contribution that sport and physical activity can make.
- Securing stakeholder ‘buy-in’ to the shared local outcomes.

The aim is to ensure that the development of sports and leisure facilities is not just an end in itself but is fully integrated into the strategic objectives of a range of key stakeholders in any given area. For example, rationale for the design, siting and operation of a new swimming pool in addition to the obvious benefits for sport and physical activity, should include the role it can play in delivering objectives relating to health inequalities, economic regeneration, tourism and socio-economic deprivation.

The Tonbridge and Malling Sports Facilities Strategy addresses the extent to which existing sports facilities and the programmes that they deliver address Sport England's new strategic priorities and in particular the emphasis on non-specialist community spaces or informal facilities.

4.9 The implications for shared strategic outcomes

4.9.1 Policy convergence

The review of strategic influences on sports facilities provision in Tonbridge and Malling identifies policy convergence on the following issues:

- **Active, healthy communities:** There is strong policy support for the creation of active, healthy communities, including the provision of affordable accessible facilities with appropriate activity programmes.
- **Active design:** Ensuring that the community provision creates opportunities for active travel and an attractive range of co-located facilities is embedded in local and wider policies.
- **Protect and retain:** Local and national planning policy is supportive of protecting and retaining sports facilities for which there is an assessed need.
- **Integration with health and social care:** Closer links with the health and social care system, to ensure that there is better integration between the needs of low participant groups and the sport and physical activity opportunities provided is a strong theme.
- **Low participant groups:** There is universal recognition of which groups have lower engagement with sport and physical activity and a shared policy commitment to address this.

4.9.2 Shared strategic outcomes

Based upon the shared policy influences, the shared strategic outcomes that provide the underpinning rationale for providing sports facilities in Tonbridge and Malling are as follows:

- To promote active, healthy communities in the borough, local stakeholders will support the provision of sustainable community sport and leisure facilities and the spaces and infrastructure that individuals, clubs, schools and individuals can access and use to take part.
- The network of sports facilities and supporting community infrastructure will be reviewed to ensure that the quantity, quality, accessibility and availability is appropriate to the needs of existing and prospective users.
- Closer links will be developed with the health and social care system, including the co-location of health and sports facilities where feasible and appropriate, to ensure that there is better integration between the needs of low participant groups and the sport and physical activity opportunities provided.

5 SPORTS HALLS

5.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of sports halls in Tonbridge and Malling. For the purposes of this analysis, sports halls are defined as indoor halls with multi-sport markings and minimum dimensions equivalent to three badminton courts (27m x 18m x 6.1m). The specific needs of gymnastics are assessed separately elsewhere in the Strategy but are included for completeness in the overall evaluation of sports hall needs. In addition to a borough wide examination of provision, Section 5.19 looks specifically at the Angel Centre in Tonbridge.

5.2 Quantity

5.2.1 Sports halls with community use

The location and dimensions of sports halls with community use in Tonbridge and Malling are below:

Site	Address	Dimensions	Built	Sub-Area
Angel Centre	Angel Lane, Tonbridge TN9 1SF	32m x 26m	1982	Tonbridge
Aylesford School	Teapot Lane, Aylesford ME20 7JU	33m x 18m	2007	Mallings
David Lloyd (Kings Hill)	King's Hill Avenue, West Malling ME19 4UA	34.5m x 20m	2005	Mallings
Homesdale School	Malling Road, Snodland ME6 5HS	33m x 18m	2006	Mallings
Hugh Christie School	White Cottage, Road, Tonbridge TN10 4PU	33m x 18m	2006	Tonbridge
Judd School	Brook Street, Tonbridge TN9 2PN	33m x 18m	2003	Tonbridge
Larkfield Leisure Centre	New Hythe Lane, Aylesford ME20 6RH	34.5m x 27m	1991	Mallings
Leigh Academy	Brook Street, Tonbridge TN9 2PH	34.5m x 20m	2000	Tonbridge
Malling School	Beech Road, West Malling ME19 6DH	33m x 18m	2007	Mallings
Sackville School	Tonbridge Road, Hildenborough TN11 9HN	34.5m x 20m	1994	Tonbridge
Tonbridge Grammar Sch.	Deakin Leas, Tonbridge TN9 2JR	34.5m x 20m	2009	Tonbridge
Tonbridge School	London Road, Tonbridge TN10 3AD	32m x 26m	2008	Tonbridge
Weald of Kent School	Tudeley Lane, Tonbridge TN9 2JP	34.5m x 20m	2016	Tonbridge
Wrotham School	Borough Green Road, Wrotham TN15 7RD	33m x 18m	2020	Mallings

Taken together these and other smaller facilities in the borough collectively provide a total of 81 badminton courts.

5.2.2 Sports halls without community use

There are no sports halls without community use in Tonbridge and Malling.

5.2.3 Sub-area analysis

The distribution of sports halls with community use by sub-area in Tonbridge and Malling is below:

Sub-area	Sub-area population 2021	No. sports halls	Sports halls per capita
Tonbridge and surrounds	56,018	8	1: 7,002
Mallings and surrounds	76,182	6	1: 12,697
TONBRIDGE & MALLING	132,200	14	1: 9,443

5.3 Quality

5.3.1 The criteria assessed

The quality of sports halls with community access was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The evaluation criteria were as follows:

- **Playing area:** The overall condition, playing surface, clear span roof height, lighting, spectator provision, equipment and fitness for purpose.
- **Changing facilities:** The capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- **Disability access:** The extent of full disabled access to the facility, including the provision of level access/ramps, dedicated changing, toilets and car parking.
- **Maintenance and cleanliness:** The standard of maintenance and cleanliness.
- **General access:** Including car parking, signposting, external lighting and proximity to public transport.

5.3.2 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to 'very good' (highlighted in green below), 4 to 'good' (also highlighted in green below), 3 to 'average' (highlighted in yellow below), 2 to 'poor' and 1 to 'very poor'. The ratings for the sports halls in Tonbridge and Malling are shown in the table below.

Facility	Playing area	Changing	Disability Access	Maintenance	General access
Angel Centre	5	4	3	3	3
Aylesford School	5	5	4	4	4
David Lloyd (Kings Hill)	5	5	4	5	5
Hugh Christie School	4	4	4	4	4
Judd School	4	3	3	5	3
Larkfield Leisure Centre	4	4	4	5	5
Leigh Academy Tonbridge	4	4	4	5	4
Malling School	5	5	5	5	4
Sackville School	4	4	5	5	4
Tonbridge Grammar Sch.	4	4	4	4	4
Tonbridge School	5	4	4	5	5
Weald of Kent School	5	5	5	5	5
Wrotham School	5	5	4	5	4

5.4 Accessibility

Based on Sport England research, the 'effective catchment' for sports halls (defined as the time/distance travelled and the prevailing mode of transport used by up to 90% of facility users) is 20 minutes driving time. The whole population of the borough lives within 20-minutes' drive time of at least one community accessible sports hall.

Tonbridge and Malling - Sports Halls 20 Minutes Drive



5.5 Availability

The table below identifies the opening hours, price and booking arrangements, secured access via a formal Community Use Agreement (if applicable), used capacity in the peak periods and whether there is a secure of staffed access/reception.

Facility	Opening hours and basis of use	Price and booking arrangements	Peak period usage levels	Secured access
Angel Centre	Sun-Fri 8am - 9pm Sat 8am - 6pm Casual use/block bookings	Half hall £66 per hour priority card, £80.50 casual users. Badminton court priority card £13.50 casual hire, £12.90 concessions £6.70 Bookings in person, on-line or by phone.	47%	Yes
Aylesford School	Mon-Fri 6pm - 10pm Sat-Sun 9am - 10pm Block bookings	Whole hall £39 per hour. Bookings on-line.	76%	No
David Lloyd (Kings Hill)	Mon-Fri 6am - 11pm Sat-Sun 7am - 10pm Members only	Basic Membership £94.50 per month	63%	Yes
Homesdale School	Mon-Fri 6pm - 10.30pm Sat-Sun 9am - 10pm Block bookings	Whole hall £39 per hour.	75%	No
Hugh Christie School	Mon-Fri 6pm - 10pm Sat-Sun 9am - 10pm Block bookings	Whole hall £39 per hour. Bookings on-line.	75%	No
Judd School	Mon-Fri 6pm - 10pm Sat-Sun 9am - 10pm Block bookings	Whole hall £55 per hour.	52%	No
Larkfield Leisure Centre	Sun-Fri 8am - 9pm Sat 8am - 6pm Casual use/block bookings	Half hall £66 per hour priority card, £80.50 casual users. Badminton court priority card £13.50 casual hire, £12.90 concessions £6.70 Bookings in person, on-line or by phone	81%	Yes
Leigh Academy Tonbridge	Mon-Fri 5.30pm - 9.30pm Sat-Sun 8am - 10.30pm Casual use/block bookings	Whole hall £46 per hour. Badminton court £12.50 per hour Bookings on-line.	44%	No
Malling School	Mon-Fri 6pm - 10pm Sat-Sun 9am - 10pm Block bookings	Whole hall £39 per hour. Bookings on-line.	56%	No
Sackville School	Mon-Fri 6pm - 10pm Sat-Sun 9am - 9pm Block bookings	Whole hall £40 per hour.	17%	No
Tonbridge Grammar School	Mon-Fri 4pm - 9pm Block bookings	Whole hall £50 per hour.	42%	No
Tonbridge School	Mon-Fri 6am - 9pm Sat 8am - 9pm Sun 9am - 7.30pm Members only	Membership £69 per month Bookings on-line.	46%	No
Weald of Kent Grammar School	Mon-Fri 5.30pm - 10pm Sat 8.30am - 4.30pm Block bookings	Whole hall £75 per hour.	60%	No
Wrotham School	Sat-Sun 9am - 7pm Block bookings	Whole hall £50 per hour.	100%	No

5.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- Per capita levels of sports hall provision vary substantially between the two sub-areas of the borough, with levels in the Tonbridge sub-area being double those in the Malling sub-area.
- Eleven of the 14 sports halls with community use in the borough do not have secured community access, so in theory public usage could be rescinded at any time.
- The quality of sports halls in the borough is generally good, although the Angel Centre is in need of refurbishment. This is being addressed as part of a project to relocate and re-provide the sports hall at the Angel Sports Centre.
- The entire population within 20 minutes driving time of a sports hall.
- Pricing is broadly consistent between the local sports halls, although access to the David Lloyd (Kings Hill) and Tonbridge School sports halls is dependent on relatively high membership fees.
- Sport England recognises a measure of 'comfortable capacity', where a sports hall is regarded as effectively fully utilised when peak usage levels reach 80%. This reflects the fact that changeover periods between bookings, particularly those that involve removing and/or installing equipment, will reduce the usage time available. Only two sports halls in Tonbridge and Malling (Larkfield Leisure Centre and Wrotham School) are used to above 'comfortable capacity'.

5.7 Current demand for sports halls

5.7.1 Expressed demand

Actual expressed community use demand for sports halls in Tonbridge and Malling is as follows:

Facility	Peak hours available	Peak hours utilised	% Peak utilisation
Angel Centre	46	21	47%
Aylesford School	36.5	28	76%
David Lloyd (Kings Hill)	46	29	63%
Homesdale School	34	25.5	75%
Hugh Christie School	34	25.5	75%
Judd School	34	18	52%
Larkfield Leisure Centre	46	37	81%
Leigh Academy Tonbridge	36.5	16	44%
Malling School	34	19	56%
Sackville School	29	5	17%
Tonbridge Grammar Sch.	34	14	42%
Tonbridge School	34	16	46%
Weald of Kent School	34	20	60%
Wrotham School	14	14	100%
TOTALS	492	288.5	58%

5.7.2 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to users of sports halls from within the strategy area which takes place outside of the area. The following sports halls with community accessibility are located in adjacent local authority areas, close enough to the borough boundary to provide potential usage opportunities for Tonbridge and Malling residents.

Facility	Address	Distance from Tonbridge and Malling
Maidstone Grammar School	Barton Road, Maidstone ME15 7BT	2 miles
Maidstone Grammar Sch. for Girls	Buckland Road, Maidstone ME16 0TJ	2 miles
Maidstone Leisure Centre	Mote Park, Maidstone ME15 8NQ	3 miles
St Augustine Academy	Boughton Lane, Maidstone ME15 9QL	3 miles
The Maplesden Noakes School	Buckland Road, Maidstone ME16 0TJ	2 miles
Maidstone YMCA	Melrose Close, Maidstone ME15 6BD	2 miles
Knole Academy	Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks TN13 3LE	3 miles
Sevenoaks Leisure Centre	Buckhurst Lane, Sevenoaks TN13 1LW	3 miles
Sennocke Centre	High Street, Sevenoaks TN13 1HU	3 miles
Sir Joseph Williamson's School	Maidstone Road, Rochester ME1 3EL	1 mile
Strood Sports Centre	Watling Road, Strood ME2 3JQ	2 miles
Putlands Sports Centre	Mascalls Court Road, Tunbridge Wells TN12 6NZ	3 miles
Tunbridge Wells Sports Centre	St. Johns Road, Tunbridge Wells TN4 9TX	2 miles
Lordswood Leisure Centre	North Dane Way, Chatham ME5 8YE	1 mile
Chatham Grammar School for Girls	Rainham Road, Chatham ME5 7EH	1 mile

5.7.3 Unmet demand

There is no evidence of unmet demand for sports halls in Tonbridge and Malling at present. Average peak time usage is 51%, well below the 'comfortable capacity' figure of 80%, although two sites Larkfield Leisure Centre (at 81%) and Wrotham School (at 100%) are used to above 'comfortable capacity' and sites in the Mallings sub-area generally have high utilisation rates.

5.8 Assessments of need in neighbouring areas

The table below summarises strategic assessments of sports hall needs in neighbouring areas.

Local Authority	Facilities assessment	Implications for Tonbridge and Malling
Maidstone Borough Council	The 'Maidstone Sports Facilities Strategy' (2019) states that 'there are nine community-accessible sports halls in Maidstone, plus one other facility without public access. There is no current spare peak-time sports hall capacity in the borough. Additional demand by 2031 will amount to the equivalent of 1.6 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access. Seven of the nine sports halls in the borough are on school sites, with limited midweek daytime access and only four halls offer regular weekend availability. None of the school facilities has secured community use'.	There is no spare capacity to serve demand from Tonbridge and Malling.

Local Authority	Facilities assessment	Implications for Tonbridge and Malling
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	The <i>Tunbridge Wells Borough Indoor/Built Sports Facilities Needs Assessment 2017-2033</i> (2018) concludes that there is sufficient capacity to meet current needs, but that demand equivalent to one additional sports hall will need to be accommodated by 2033.	Tunbridge Wells Leisure Centre is close enough to serve demand from Tonbridge and Malling and has some spare capacity to do this.
Sevenoaks District Council	The <i>'Sevenoaks Sports Facilities Strategy 2016-2025'</i> (2017) identifies that 'current and future need for sports hall provision can be accommodated in the district, given the slight over supply of badminton courts. In addition, there is significant capacity in all halls except Edenbridge Leisure Centre, so more use could be accommodated'.	Three facilities in the district have catchments that overlap Tonbridge and Malling, so there is potential to accommodate some demand from the borough using spare capacity.
Gravesham Borough Council	The <i>'Gravesham Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2026'</i> (2016) identified an action to 'improve access to facilities during the daytime given the current reliance on educational facilities for indoor activity'.	There is no spare capacity to meet demand from Tonbridge and Malling.
Medway Council	The <i>'Medway Sports Facilities Strategy and Action Plan'</i> (2017) concludes that 'FPM supply and demand analysis identifies a small surplus of 4.29 badminton courts in the area'.	There are two facilities close enough to serve demand from Tonbridge and Malling and has some spare capacity to do this..

5.9 Sport-specific priorities

Analysis of sport-specific strategies and consultation with the governing bodies of sport produced a range of priorities in relation to local sports hall provision:

Sport	Facilities priorities	Local implications
Badminton	<p>Badminton England's <i>'National Facilities Strategy 2012 - 2016'</i> (2012) is the most recent assessment of the requirements of facilities used for badminton:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hall should have a sprung floor as a minimum. • The lighting must be suitable (no lights above the courts and no natural light). • There should be appropriate space around the court for safety. • The walls must be the right colour (green or blue). • The ceiling must be the appropriate height (6.7m). • Priority areas are identified for 'Community Badminton Networks'. 	Tonbridge and Malling is not identified as a priority area for Community Badminton Networks.
Basketball	<p>Basketball England's <i>'Growing Basketball Together 2018 - 2024'</i> (2018) contains a facilities objectives to 'develop, support and sustain a high-quality infrastructure network that inspires the next generation and meets the needs and demands of the game for the future'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Enhance the playing experience through an appropriate network of innovative and inspirational facilities and playing environments that not only meet the needs and demands of the game but inspire growth within the sport'. • 'Pilot new and alternative pricing and booking models for indoor facilities to improve access and affordability for clubs and individuals supporting both formal and informal play'. 	Tonbridge and Malling is not identified as a priority area.

Sport	Facilities assessment	Local implications
Gymnastics	<p>British Gymnastics' <i>'Facility Strategy 2017 - 2021'</i> (2017) identifies a range of gymnastics facilities options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standalone dedicated facilities - Achievable for most clubs. Can provide for participation and competition. • Multi-venue dedicated facilities - For large club-based organisations looking to further expand opportunities. • Dedicated facility as part of a multi-sport venue - Most likely to be local authority-based projects. • Non-dedicated space as part of leisure centre - Ideal for club delivery and mass participation activities. • Satellite venues - Opportunities for clubs to scale up their programmes and increase activity options. • Non-dedicated spaces in leisure centres - Ideal for introductory level, mass participation programmes. 	All of the options within the facilities hierarchy are relevant to gymnastics delivery in Tonbridge and Malling.
Judo	<p>British Judo's <i>'Strategic Plan 2017 - 2021'</i> (2017) has an objective to increase participation to 50,000 members by 2021. There are no facilities objectives.</p>	No specific implications.
Netball	<p>England Netball's <i>'Adventure Strategy 2021 - 2031'</i> (2021). A Game for Life: This 'destination' has the following targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 50% increase in the women playing netball across all life stages. • A year-on-year increase in the diversity of the netball playing population, with an ambition to reflect the diversity of the nation. • A countrywide accessible offer for men and boys. • 90% of all schools delivering a quality netball experience. • A clear and connected offer of choice for every community, with world class experiences in clubs and leagues at the heart of community netball. • A place to play within easy travel of every household. 	Netball is a well-developed sport in Tonbridge and Malling and is seeking additional indoor and outdoor court space.
Table tennis	<p>Table Tennis England's <i>'Facilities Strategy 2015 - 2025'</i> (2015) identifies that table tennis takes place in a variety of settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal club-led environments - Consisting of dedicated table tennis facilities (equipped for and predominantly used by table tennis), school halls, community halls, church halls, multisport clubs and leisure centres. • Informal social environments - Including bars, workplaces, parks, sport-specific clubs and community spaces. <p>To support sustainable clubs, the priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a minimum of one accessible, high quality dedicated multi-table facility in every active county. • Support current clubs to ensure long-term security of use of their facilities and to develop facilities or access multisport and multi-use environments. <p>To support the social recreational game, the priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the implementation of free-to-use outdoor tables, prioritising centres of population. • Establish a network of social table tennis venues. 	Tonbridge and Malling is not identified as a priority area.

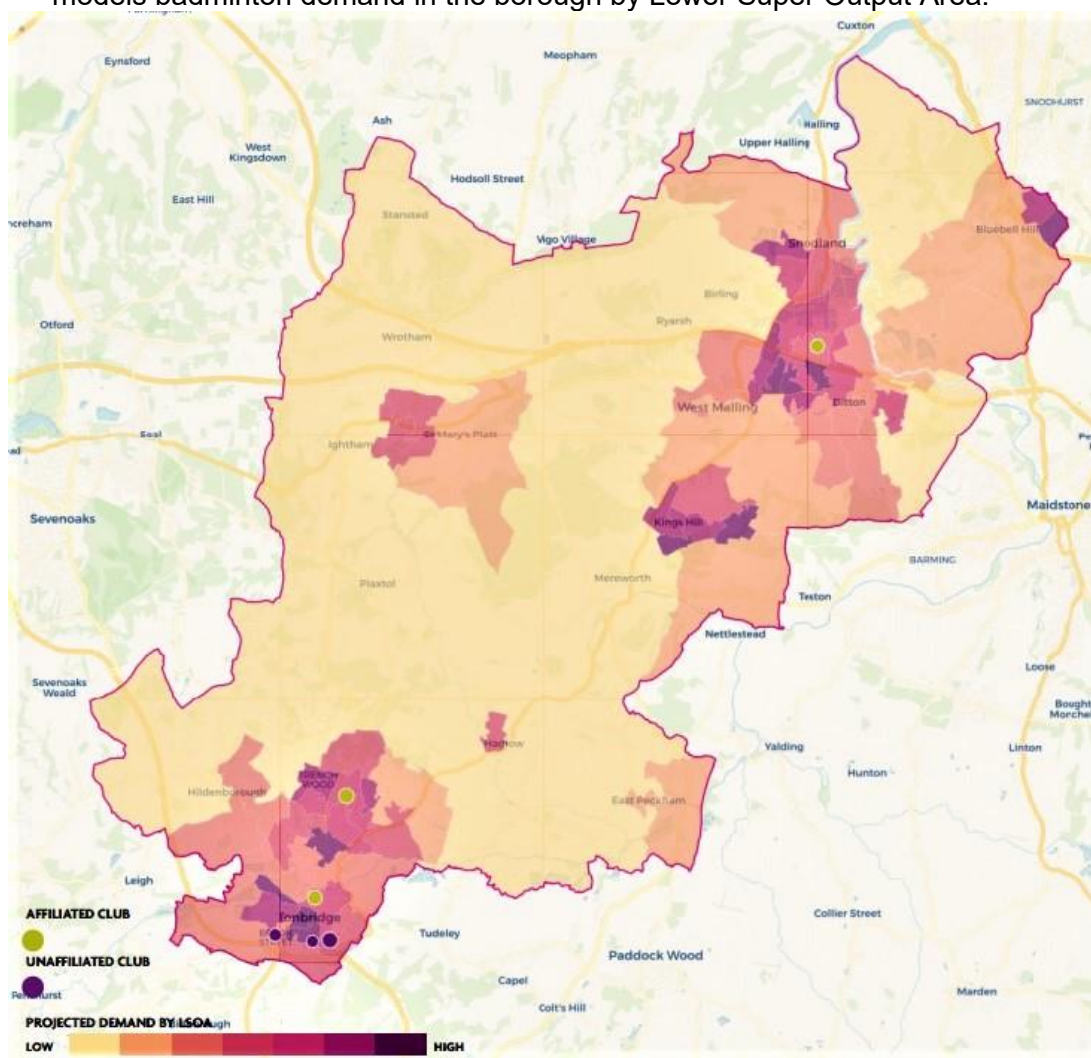
Sport	Facilities assessment	Local implications
Volleyball	Volleyball England's 'Facilities Strategy' (2009) is the most recent assessment of needs. The strategy identifies that a court size of 18m x 9m x 7.5m is required for National League standard play and below. It also states that 'the minimum width of standard sports halls should be raised to 20m from the current 18m, to allow two practice courts in a single hall'.	Tonbridge and Malling is not identified as a priority area.

5.10 Governing body of sport consultations

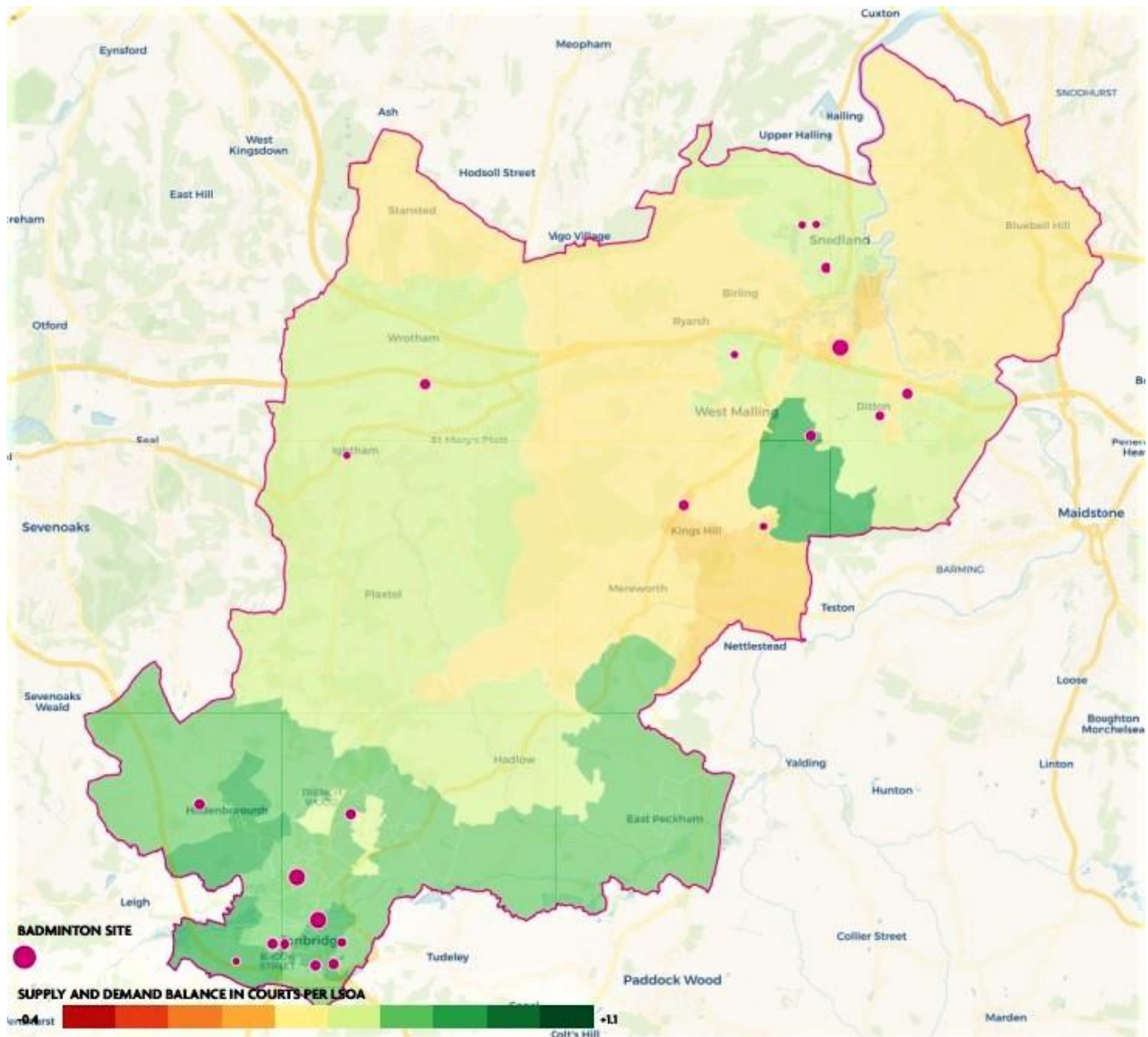
5.10.1 Badminton England

Consultation with Badminton England's Facilities Manager identified the following issues:

- **Overview:** 'The area is in need of a badminton centre which can serve the local community and be dedicated to badminton. We are due to release our strategy where we can look to support establishing these across the county'.
- **Angel Centre:** 'The Angel Centre is important for badminton with one of our larger clubs (Angel Badminton Club) playing out of the venue'.
- **Current demand:** There are currently six badminton clubs in the borough. The map below models badminton demand in the borough by Lower Super Output Area:



- **Current supply:** Local sports halls provide the equivalent of 73 badminton courts.
- **Current supply demand balance:** 'There is a current collective spare capacity of 3.4 badminton courts to meet existing badminton needs in the borough'. The map below shows that the geographical location of greatest unmet need is in the Kings Hill area.



- **Future shortfall:** 'There is a future collective spare capacity of 2.5 badminton courts to meet badminton needs in the borough in 2030'.

5.10.3 Basketball England

Consultation with Basketball England's Facilities Manager identified the following issues:

- **Local demand:** This is as follows.

Club	Home venue	Members	Teams
B'Ballin	Hayesbrook Academy	17	2
East Grinstead Basketball Club	Sackville School	19	1
Maidstone Warriors Basketball Club	Aylesford School	29	2
TOTALS	-	65	5

- **Supply-demand balance:** Based on local sports hall provision, there is no unmet demand for basketball in Tonbridge and Malling either currently or anticipated in 2041.

5.10.3 England Netball

Consultation with England Netball's Facilities Development Manager identified the following:

- 'Most netball in Tonbridge and Malling is currently played on outdoor courts, with the exception of some Walking Netball at the Angel Centre'.
- 'Mallings and Maidstone Netball League, which currently has five outdoor courts in Aylesford has secured planning consent to provide three indoor courts and three outdoor courts at its current site. This will provide additional indoor capacity to accommodate extra netball programmes in the borough, without impacting on existing sports halls availability'.

5.10.4 Table Tennis England

Consultation with Table Tennis England's Area Manager (South-East) identified the following:

- 'Almost all the table tennis club fraternity are non-asset owning and are renters of leisure facilities or school/village halls. This means that suitable Table Tennis provision is very limited and subject to rental increases, or other booked events leading to cancellation'.
- 'There are no specialist table tennis facilities in the borough, but no club locally has reported problems with access to sports halls. There are no registered 'Premier' table tennis clubs in the borough'.
- 'There is a currently a focus on increasing youth participation especially at primary age and this area has been earmarked for one of the pilot projects. We are currently searching for suitable venues that can accommodate junior league participation for 6-8 weeks'.

5.11 Future demand for sports halls

5.11.1 Population growth

Two scenarios are considered:

- The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 152,859 by 2041, an increase of 20,659 (or 15.6%).
- Objectively assessed Local Housing Need (LHN) amounts 839 dwellings per year (15,941 dwellings by 2041). The precise location of development has yet to be determined, but at an average of 2.3 people per dwelling this would amount to a population increase of approximately 36,664 to 168,864 or 27.7%.

5.11.2 Participation rates

One factor in considering future sports participation rates is to track historical trends, as a guide to possible future developments. The most recent covid-affected figures have been excluded as anomalous.

- **National trends:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey records adult (16+) weekly participation rates for each sport at national level. The results for those sports that use sports halls are tabulated below. Badminton, Basketball and Tennis have also experienced statistically significant decreases, whilst only martial arts has achieved a statistically significant increase:

Sport	Nov 2015- Nov 2016	May 2016- May 2017	Nov 2016- Nov 2017	May 2017- May 2018	Nov 2017- Nov 2018	May 2018- May 2019	Nov 2018- Nov 2019	May 2019- May 2020	% Change
Badminton	2.1%	2.1%	2.0%	1.9%	1.8%	1.8%	1.7%	1.6%	-0.5%
Basketball	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	-0.1%
Gymnastics	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	-0.1%
Judo	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Martial Arts	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%	+0.2%
Netball	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	-0.1%
Table Tennis	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%	0.9%	-0.1%
Tennis	2.0%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	1.7%	1.7%	1.6%	1.6%	-0.4%
Volleyball	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	-0.1%

- **Local trends:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey recorded the proportion of the adult (16+) population who are active for at least 150 minutes per week in Tonbridge and Malling between 2015 and the present. The results are tabulated below and show that whilst rates have fluctuated over the survey periods, there is a downward trend between 2015 and 2022:

Nov '15 - Nov '16	May '16 - May '17	Nov '16- Nov '17	May '17- May '18	Nov '17- Nov '18	May '18- May '19	Nov '18-Nov '19	May '19- May '20	Nov '19-Nov '20	May '20- May '21	Nov '20-Nov '21	Nov '21-Nov '22	% Change
66.3%	66.9%	66.8%	67.4%	68.8%	69.5%	69.4%	66.0%	66.0%	66.6%	65.1%	64.2%	-2.5%

5.11.3 Future projections

Sport England has developed the Sport Facility Calculator (SFC), to help to quantify how much additional demand for key community facilities like sports halls, will be generated by population increases. The SFC uses Sport England survey data on who uses facilities and applies this to the population profile of the local area. This builds up a profile of usage, which can be then applied to estimate how much demand any given population would generate. This demand is then converted into the quantity of facilities needed and expressed as badminton courts to define sports hall needs.

For the purposes of projecting future demand in Tonbridge and Malling current participation rates have been assumed since there have been no statistically significant increases since 2015, either locally in the borough or collectively for the sports that use sports halls. Two population scenarios are considered:

- The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 152,859 by 2041, an increase of 20,659 (or 15.6%). Based upon this, the SFC calculates additional demand equivalent to 5.87 badminton courts, which equates to the equivalent of 1.47 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access.

- A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population of 168,864 by 2041, an increase of 36,664 or 27.7%. Based upon this, the SFC calculates additional demand equivalent to 10.42 badminton courts, which equates to the equivalent to 2.61 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access.

5.12 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- There is significant spare capacity in sports halls in Tonbridge and Malling at present, with average peak utilisation rates of 51%, well below the 80% 'comfortable capacity' figure. However, Larkfield Leisure Centre (81%) and Wrotham School (100%) are currently used to above 'comfortable capacity' and sites in the Mallings sub-area generally have high utilisation rates.
- Future housing growth in the borough is likely to occur mostly outside the Green Belt, given the relative lack of planning constraints in the Mallings sub-area. Used capacity at the six existing sports halls in the north of the borough averages 75% which is already close to the 80% 'comfortable capacity' figure. This means that the additional future demand as projected by Sport England's Sport Facility Calculator will need to be accommodated by spare capacity at facilities within 20-minutes driving time in the south of the borough and/or in neighbouring areas. The feasibility of this was modelled using Sport England's Facilities Planning Model, the findings of which are set out below. Please note that the location of future growth has not been confirmed at this time. This will be progressed through the council's new Local Plan. Further modelling will therefore take place to understand future requirements, should the council's objectively assessed housing need figure change.

5.13 Facilities Planning Model Assessment

5.13.1 Introduction

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

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

5.13.2 Key findings

- **Quantity:** The total supply of sports halls in 2023 and 2041 is the equivalent of 81.0 badminton courts, of which 60.7 are available for community use in the weekly peak period. The unavailable courts represent 25% of the total supply.
- **Quality:** Of the six sports halls opened before 2000, the three public leisure centres have been modernised. Nine sports halls opened between 2000 and 2009 and none has been modernised.

- **Used peak capacity:** Current and future demand for Sports Halls in Tonbridge and Malling can be accommodated by the available capacity of the Borough's sports halls. Current demand is equivalent to 51% of capacity, demand in 2041 is equivalent to 62% of capacity and reduced provision at the Angel Centre by 2041 would still leave 63% capacity. This is well below Sport England's 'comfortable capacity' figure of 80%, which suggests that there is some spare capacity to accommodate additional demand. This is consistent with the findings of the Sports Facilities Calculator set out in 5.11.3.
- **Location of demand:** The geographical areas with the highest demand in the borough are south and north-east Tonbridge.
- **Satisfied demand:** In 2023 and 2041 there is sufficient capacity within a suitable travel time to meet 96% of the Borough's demand for sports halls. Of the satisfied demand, 84% is met within Tonbridge and Malling, with the remainder exported to neighbouring areas.
- **Unmet demand:** Unmet demand for sports halls is calculated at 4% of all demand in 2023 and 2041. This equates to 1.5 badminton courts in 2023 and 2.0 badminton courts in 2041. The two locations where most unmet demand can be met are Blue Bell Hill, at Junction 3 of the M2 and Aylesford, at Junction 6 of the M20. However, the small volume of demand is insufficient to consider providing new sports halls and will also include unmet demand from the neighbouring local authorities.
- **Displaced demand:** The FPM calculates that Tonbridge and Malling is a net importer of sports hall demand. In 2023 the Borough imported 1,635 more visits in the weekly peak period than it exported. 39% of imported visits come from Maidstone, 33% from Tunbridge Wells, 15% from Sevenoaks, 8% from Medway and 5% from Gravesham.

5.13.3 Conclusions

The conclusions from the FPM runs are as follows:

- 'The headline strategic overview is that Tonbridge and Malling's supply of sports halls can meet the current and future demand for sports halls. Population and demand for sports halls both increase significantly to 2041'.
- 'However, the distribution of demand and the hours that sports halls are available for community use, especially in the areas of highest demand, mean that some sports halls are uncomfortably full at peak times'.
- 'Replacement of the Angel Centre with a new four-badminton court sized sports hall in the immediate vicinity is supported by the FPM findings, ostensibly because it improves the quality of the public leisure centre offer in the area of highest demand'.
- 'The scale of nearly all the sports halls in the Borough provides for all sports hall sports at the community participation level and most are also suitable for club development. The educational sector is the dominant provider'.
- 'There is scope to increase the availability for community use at educational sites. This is not required Borough-wide but at sites in areas of high demand, notably in Tonbridge. This will achieve a better balance between supply and demand'.
- 'The stock is ageing and there is an increasing need for modernisation in order to improve the quality of the offer'.

5.14 The balance between sports hall supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between sports hall supply and demand in Tonbridge and Malling:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough facilities with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the facilities fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the facilities in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the facilities available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

5.15 Quantity

5.15.1 Current needs

Current sports halls in Tonbridge and Malling are assessed collectively to be operating at well within 'comfortable capacity', based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used peak capacity:** Average peak utilisation rates for sports halls in Tonbridge and Malling are 51%, well below Sport England's 'comfortable capacity' figure of 80%, although used capacity at the six existing sports halls in the north of the borough averages 75%.
- **Supply-demand balance:** Sport England's Facilities Planning Model concludes that Tonbridge and Malling's supply of sports halls can meet the current and future demand for sports halls. This assessment is predicated on retaining or replacing the capacity provided by the Angel Centre in the Tonbridge sub-area.
- **Location of unmet demand:** The distribution of demand and the hours that sports halls are available for community use, especially in the areas of highest demand, mean that some sports halls are uncomfortably full at peak times. There is scope to increase the availability for community use at educational sites in areas of high demand, notably in Tonbridge.

5.15.2 Future needs

The quantity of sports halls required to meet future needs has been assessed as follows:

- **Population increases:** Two population scenarios are considered:
 - The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 152,859 by 2041, an increase of 20,659 (or 15.6%). Based upon this, the SFC calculates demand for an additional 5.87 badminton courts, which is equivalent to 1.47 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access.
 - A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population of 168,864 by 2041, an increase of 36,664 or 27.7%. Based upon this, the SFC calculates demand for an additional 10.42 badminton courts, which is equivalent to 2.61 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access.
- **Participation trends:** Based on national and local sports participation trends, for the purposes of forecasting future demand the likeliest scenario is for participation rates to remain at their current levels.
- **Additional needs:**
 - Based upon a population increase of 20,659 people (or 15.6%) in the borough by 2041 and sports participation rates remaining at current levels, Sport England's Sport Facility Calculator projects demand for an additional 5.87 badminton courts, which is

equivalent to 1.47 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access. This can be accommodated by spare capacity in existing facilities within 20-minute's drivetime.

- Based upon a population increase of 36,664 people or (27.7%) in the borough by 2041 and sports participation rates remaining at current levels, Sport England's Sport Facility Calculator projects demand for an additional 10.42 badminton courts (equivalent to 2.61 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access). This can be accommodated by spare capacity in existing facilities within 20-minute's drivetime .

5.16 Quality

5.16.1 Current quality

The most critical issue with regards to sports hall in Tonbridge and Malling is the future of the Angel Centre and its role in town centre regeneration. This is considered in section 5.19. The position at other facilities should be kept under review.

5.16.2 Future quality

By 2041, the Angel Centre and Larkfield Leisure Centre will both be in need of refurbishment.

5.17 Accessibility

5.17.1 Current accessibility

The whole of the borough is within 20 minutes driving time of at least one sports hall, although per capita levels of sports hall provision vary substantially between the two sub-areas of the borough, with levels in the Tonbridge sub-area being double those in the Malling sub-area.

5.17.2 Future accessibility

To ensure that there is adequate accessibility to sports halls in the future, the existing network of facilities should be maintained.

5.18 Availability

5.18.1 Current availability

Eleven of the 14 sports halls in the borough with community access do not have secured use.

5.18.2 Future availability

Ensuring that formal Community Use Agreements are in place at all education facilities in the borough would help to secure public access at evenings, weekends and in school holidays in the future.

5.19 The Angel Centre

5.19.1 Introduction

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council is currently considering options for the reprovision of facilities currently provided at the Angel Centre in Tonbridge. This is in the wider context of

regeneration proposals for the town centre. The facility is run by the council's appointed leisure contractor TMAActive under a contract/lease that runs until October 2033. The facility was built in 1982, has a sub-optimal layout and requires major refurbishment, in particular:

- The boilers need replacing.
- The centre is not watertight.
- The drains are in poor condition.
- The Medway Hall floor is in poor condition.

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

5.19.2 Current usage

The sports hall at the Angel Centre is currently used to 47% of capacity in the peak period. The facility accommodates a varied programme of use:

- The hall is the only sports hall in Tonbridge that is available on a 'pay-and-play' basis, including some organised sessions for Badminton, Short Tennis, Short Mat Bowls, Table Tennis, Volleyball, Walking Football and Walking Netball.
- TMAActive runs courses for gymnastics, trampolining and badminton as well as junior holiday courses.
- The programme at the Angel Centre includes other health and social programmes including a GP referrals scheme, community health activities, a dementia café and Special Educational Needs activities.
- A number of sports clubs are based at the facility including:

Club	Usage
Angel Centre Badminton Club	The Club plays its league matches at the Angel Centre, with a club night at Judd School.
Ice Blackbelt Schools	Ice Blackbelt Schools hold martial arts sessions at the Angel Centre on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.
Karate Club	Sessions operate on Monday evenings.
Rugby Tots at the Angel Centre	Rugby Tots runs weekly play sessions for 2 - 7 years olds' on Saturday mornings at the Angel Centre.
Sevenoaks Trampoline Club	The Club holds sessions at the Angel Centre on Tuesday evenings.
Synergy Martial Arts Club	Synergy offers taekwondo and kick boxing sessions for children from 3 years to adults on Wednesday and Sunday evenings at the Angel Centre.
Tonbridge Volleyball Club	The Club plays in the National and Kent Leagues.

The six-badminton court-sized sports hall provides some booking flexibility, allowing two sets of activities to be accommodated simultaneously in some instances.

5.19.3 Stakeholder consultation

Consultation with TMAActive has identified a number of usage trends at the Centre:

- The use of more free weights in gyms is growing in popularity, along with spinning and group exercise classes.

- Demand for badminton is falling and there is limited demand for basketball.

Respondents to the sports clubs' survey made the following observations in relation to the Angel Centre:

- **Synergy Martial Arts Club:** 'Unfortunately, due to the state of limbo surrounding the Angel Centre site, no investment has really been made to upgrade the facilities. When regular users like myself (22yrs) are trying to run a club out of these facilities, increasing the costs and not offering an improved service is very frustrating especially post Covid where the leisure industry has suffered anyway. Using the local leisure centre is always the preferred choice but nothing is really done to support or promote our club within the facility. Something needs to be done and soon before clubs look for alternative venues to house their clubs'.
- **Tonbridge Volleyball Club:** 'There has been an explosion in the demand for junior volleyball. We have a junior waiting list of over 30 (of up to two years) and there is also demand from adult beginners. We have invested significantly in coaching courses - with the help of KCC Bursaries - but having available, qualified coaches is still our constraining factor. Once we can resolve this, we would require more court time at the Angel Centre'.

5.19.4 Facilities Planning Model assessment

Sport England's Facilities Planning Model generated the following findings in relation to the Angel Centre, which helped to inform the decision on the location and scale of sports hall provision:

- 'Replacement of the Angel Centre with a new four-badminton court sized sports hall in the immediate vicinity is supported by the FPM findings, ostensibly because it improves the quality of the public leisure centre offer in the area of highest demand'.
- 'The new Angel Centre is modelled to be 100% full at peak times by 2041. Therefore, should the scale of New Angel Centre be increased from a four-court hall to a six-court hall, to accommodate more demand and reduce utilisation to a comfortable level? This is not supported for three reasons:
 - There are seven other sports halls sites in the Tonbridge area with scope to increase access for community use, therefore, making better use of what already exists.
 - Increasing the scale of New Angel Centre will increase its attractiveness because it can then support multiple sports use at the same time. However, if the other sites nearby are not modernised, the New Angel Centre will remain comparatively more attractive, and its used capacity is likely to remain at 100%.
 - The Borough already has a six-badminton court hall at Larkfield Leisure Centre (modernised in 2017) which can accommodate multiple sports use and provides an events centre. Albeit this centre is in Malling's sub-area and not the Tonbridge sub-area but is in an area of high demand that has significant residential development'.

5.19.5 Meeting the needs served by the Angel Centre

At a meeting of the council's Cabinet in December 2023, consideration was given to the future of the Angel Centre building. Due regard was given to the operational, building fabric and climate change considerations, together with the views expressed by the Leisure Trust and the council's Scrutiny Select Committee. The financial implications and advantages and disadvantages of both refurbishment and new facility options were also considered.

Members recognised that, due to the age, design and changing nature of leisure provision, the Angel Centre was no longer fit for purpose without significant investment in both plant and equipment. In addition, substantial investment would be required to reduce the carbon footprint of the building to achieve the council's carbon neutral aspirations for its leisure facilities.

It was resolved that the Angel Centre be demolished, and replacement leisure facilities be provided in Tonbridge. It was subsequently confirmed at the April 2024 Cabinet meeting, that the location of the replacement facility would be the adjacent Sovereign Way Mid car park.

5.20 Contribution to shared strategic outcomes

Based upon the assessment above, the extent to which sports halls provision in Tonbridge and Malling contribute to the shared strategic outcomes is as follows:

- Sports halls are flexible indoor facilities that can accommodate a range of sports and physical activities that are likely to appeal to existing and potential participants.
- The high utilisation rates at existing sports halls preclude the introduction of opportunities to accommodate additional need and demand from current non-participants.
- The lack of access to school sports halls does not make best use of available facility resources to deliver wider programmes of community activity.

5.21 The options for securing additional sports hall capacity

The options for securing sports hall capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

5.21.1 Protect

Local/Neighbourhood Plan policies for the protection of sports halls will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing sports halls for which existing and/or future demand has been identified, including any without current community access, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

5.21.2 Provide

No additional facilities are required to meet projected increases in demand from population growth. This demand can be absorbed in existing facilities within 20-minute's drivetime. However, it will be important to ensure that sports hall capacity in Tonbridge is maintained by providing a new four-badminton court sized sports hall as part of the new Angel Centre.

5.21.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing sports hall capacity by:

- Encouraging schools to extend the availability of their facilities to external users. Based upon the FPM assessment, the key schools to approach in this regard are High Christie School, the Holmesdale School, Weald of Kent Grammar School and Wrotham School.
- Supporting schools to improve their management of community use arrangements, to improve community access to sports halls.
- Securing formal Community Use Agreements at existing and proposed future facilities on school sites, to enhance community accessibility.

5.22 Action Plan

5.22.1 Introduction

The tables below set out the action plan for sports halls to guide the implementation of the Assessment. Cost estimates reflect Sport England's 'Facility Costs - Third Quarter of 2024' (2024).

5.22.2 Key strategic actions

Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Protection of existing sports halls	Consider including a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing sports halls.	TMBC	Sport England/ Active Kent and Medway	Planning Policy	High
Community access to sports halls	Pursue formal Community Use agreements at all existing and any future proposed sports halls on education sites.	TMBC	Secondary academies and schools	Funding for improvements to allow out of hours access.	High
Funding for future sports hall needs	Ensure that provision is made to secure developer contributions towards new and improved facilities.	TMBC	Sport England/ Active Kent and Medway	Planning Development Management	High

5.22.3 Site-specific actions

Site	Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Angel Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to maintain sports hall provision. Current facilities are not fit for purpose. 	Re-provide a 4-badminton court sports hall in Tonbridge	TMBC	TM Active	TBC	High
Aylesford School	No formal Community Use Agreement.	Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement	Aylesford School	TMBC	-	Medium
David Lloyd (Kings Hill)	No current issues.	No action required.	David Lloyd Leisure	-	-	-
Homesdale School	No formal Community Use Agreement.	Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement	Homesdale School	TMBC	-	High
Hugh Christie School	No formal Community Use Agreement.	Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement	Hugh Christie School	TMBC	-	High
Judd School	No formal Community Use Agreement.	Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement	Judd School	TMBC	-	Medium
Larkfield Leisure Centre	No current issues.	No action required.	TMBC	TM Active	-	-

Site	Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Leigh Academy Tonbridge	No formal Community Use Agreement.	Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement	Leigh Academy	TMBC	-	Medium
Malling School	No formal Community Use Agreement.	Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement	Malling School	TMBC	-	Medium
Sackville School	No formal Community Use Agreement.	Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement	Sackville School	TMBC	-	Medium
Tonbridge Gram. School	No formal Community Use Agreement.	Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement	Tonbridge Gram. School	TMBC	-	Medium
Tonbridge School	No formal Community Use Agreement.	Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement	Tonbridge School	TMBC	-	Medium
Weald of Kent Gram. School	No formal Community Use Agreement.	Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement	Weald of Kent Gram. School	TMBC	-	High
Wrotham School	No formal Community Use Agreement.	Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement	Wrotham School	TMBC	-	High

6 SWIMMING POOLS

6.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of swimming pools in Tonbridge and Malling. For the purposes of this assessment, swimming pools are defined as indoor facilities with minimum pool length of 20 metres, although smaller teaching and diving pools are included in the assessment where they are integral to a facility with a main pool.

6.2 Quantity

6.2.1 Indoor swimming pools with community use

The swimming pools with community use in Tonbridge and Malling are as follows:

Facility	Address	Dimensions	Year built	Sub-area
David Lloyd (Kings Hill)	King's Hill Avenue, West Malling ME19 4UA	25m x 10m	2005	Mallings
Larkfield Leisure Centre	New Hythe Lane, Aylesford ME20 6RH	25m x 15m 25m x 14m 10m x 7.5m	1992	Mallings
Nizel's Golf and Country Club	Nizel's Lane, Hildenborough TN11 8NU	25m x 10m	2000	Tonbridge
Tonbridge School	London Road, Tonbridge TN10 3AD	25m x 12.5m	2008	Tonbridge
Tonbridge Swimming Pool	The Slade, Tonbridge TN9 1HR	25m x 13m 13m x 7m	1996	Tonbridge

6.2.2 Smaller indoor swimming pools with community use

The smaller swimming pools with community use in Tonbridge and Malling are as follows:

Facility	Address	Dimensions	Year built	Sub-area
Carrotty Wood Adventure Centre	Higham Lane, Tonbridge TN11 9QX	17.5m x 7.5m	1997	Tonbridge
Reynolds Retreat	Quarry Hill Road, Borough Green TN15 8RQ	16m x 8m	2014	Mallings
Spirit Health Club	London Road, Wrotham Heath TN15 7RS	15m x 10m	1984	Mallings

6.2.3 Swimming pools with no community use

There are no swimming pools that do not have community use.

6.2.4 Sub-area analysis

The distribution of full-sized swimming pools with community use by sub-area in Tonbridge and Malling is as overleaf:

Sub-area	Sub-area population 2021	No. pool sites	Pools per capita	Pool space per 1,000 people
Tonbridge and surrounds	56,018	3	1: 18,673	17.47sq.m
Mallings and surrounds	76,182	2	1: 38,091	13.78sq.m
TONBRIDGE & MALLING	132,200	5	1: 26,440	15.34sq.m

6.3 Quality

6.3.1 The criteria assessed

The quality of swimming pools was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were evaluated were as follows:

- **Pool area(s):** The overall condition, lighting, aquatic activities provided for, temperature, spectator provision and fitness for purpose.
- **Changing facilities:** Capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- **Disability access:** Provision for disabled access throughout the facility.
- **Maintenance and cleanliness:** The quality of maintenance and cleanliness standards.
- **General access:** Car parking, lighting, signposting and proximity to public transport.

6.3.2 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to 'very good' (highlighted in green below), 4 to 'good' (also highlighted in green below), 3 to 'average' (highlighted in yellow below), 2 to 'poor' and 1 to 'very poor'.

Facility	Pool area	Changing	Disability Access	Maintenance	General access
David Lloyd (Kings Hill)	5	5	4	5	5
Larkfield Leisure Centre	5	4	4	5	5
Nizel's Golf and Country Club	5	4	3	5	3
Tonbridge School	5	4	4	5	5
Tonbridge Swimming Pool	4	4	3	4	5

6.4 Accessibility

Based on Sport England research, the 'effective catchment' for indoor swimming pools (the time/distance travelled by up to 90% of facility users and the prevailing mode of transport used) is 20 minutes' drive time. As shown by the whole population is within 20-minutes' drive time of a pool.

Tonbridge and Malling - Swimming Pools 20 Minutes Drive



6.5 Availability

The table below identifies the opening hours, usage arrangements, pricing and used capacity in the peak periods.

Facility	Opening hours and basis of use	Pricing	Peak usage	Secured access
David Lloyd (Kings Hill)	Mon-Fri 6am - 11pm Sat-Sun 7am - 10pm Members only	Basic Membership £94.50 per month	48%	Yes
Larkfield Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri 6.30am - 10pm Sat-Sun 6.30am - 8pm Casual use/clubs/schools/ swimming lessons	Priority Card: Adult £6.80 Concession £5.50 Casual User: Adult £9.70 Concession £7.20	55%	Yes
Nizel's Golf and Country Club	Mon-Fri 6.30am - 10pm Sat-Sun 7am - 9pm Members only	Basic Membership £94.50 per month	19%	Yes
Tonbridge School	Mon-Fri 6am - 9pm Sat 8am - 9pm Sun 9am - 7.30pm Members only	Membership £69 per month Bookings on-line.	75%	Yes
Tonbridge Swimming Pool	Mon-Fri 6.30am - 10pm Sat-Sun 6.30am - 8pm Casual use/clubs/schools/ swimming lessons	Priority Card: Adult £6.80 Concession £5.50 Casual User: Adult £9.70 Concession £7.20	64%	Yes

6.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are five community accessible facilities with swimming pools in Tonbridge and Malling, all of which have secured community use.
- All aspects of the quality of all facilities are 'average' or better.
- The whole population of the borough is within 20-minutes' drive time of a pool. However, not all pool facilities cater for all users. Swimming clubs are only able to access public provision and Tonbridge School due to the lower cost of access and flexibility provided by these operators to accommodate competitive swimming but not county level galas.
- Sport England recognises a measure of 'comfortable capacity', where a swimming pool is regarded as effectively fully utilised when peak usage levels reach 70%. Tonbridge School pool is currently used to just above the 'comfortable capacity' figure but the collective figure for the borough is 53%.

6.7 Current demand for swimming pools

6.7.1 Expressed demand

Expressed demand for swimming pools in Tonbridge and Malling is as follows:

Facility	% Peak utilisation
David Lloyd (Kings Hill)	48%
Larkfield Leisure Centre	55%
Nizel's Golf and Country Club	19%
Tonbridge School	75%
Tonbridge Swimming Pool	64%

6.7.2 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to swimming from within the strategy area which takes place outside of the area. The following community-accessible pool in neighbouring areas is close enough to the borough boundary to provide usage opportunities for Tonbridge and Malling residents.

Facility	Address	Distance from Tonbridge and Malling
Lockmeadow Health Club	Barker Road, Maidstone ME16 8LW	2 miles
Maidstone Leisure Centre	Mote Park, Maidstone ME15 8NQ	3 miles
Sevenoaks Leisure Centre	Buckhurst Lane, Sevenoaks TN13 1LW	3 miles
Sennocke Centre	High Street, Sevenoaks TN13 1HU	3 miles
Sir Joseph Williamson's School	Maidstone Road, Rochester ME1 3EL	1 mile
Strood Sports Centre	Watling Road, Strood ME2 3JQ	2 miles
Tunbridge Wells Sports Centre	St. Johns Road, Tunbridge Wells TN4 9TX	2 miles
Village Gym (Maidstone)	Forstal Road, Maidstone ME14 3AQ	1 mile

6.7.3 Unmet demand

Tonbridge Swimming Club uses Tonbridge Swimming Pool and made the following comments:

- 'We are desperately short of pool time to train and teach - constantly turning potential members away. The pool we use is unsuitable for us to host competitions (other than our own internal galas) due to limited space, no electronic timing equipment etc. which is required for basic competitions'.
- 'We also hire the pool at Tonbridge School for four hours per week, along with several pools outside of the borough, at Tunbridge Wells Sports Centre for two hours per week, Radnor House School (Sevenoaks) for three hours per week and Wally Hall School (Sevenoaks) for six hours per week.
- 'We are granted pool hire when TMAActive can allow it but almost entirely at times too late for most of the children (e.g. ending at 10pm)'.
- 'It does seem there is shortage of pool space and even though we serve the community with young and old, able bodied and Para swimmers needing to swim, we simply cannot get pool time to suit'.

Larkfield Swimming Club trains at Larkfield Leisure Centre on four evenings per week but has to use the pool at Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School in Maidstone for its Sunday evening training session.

6.8 Assessments of need in neighbouring areas

The table below summarises strategic assessments of swimming pool needs in neighbouring areas.

Local Authority	Facilities priorities	Implications for Tonbridge and Malling
Maidstone Borough Council	The 'Maidstone Sports Facilities Strategy' (2019) states that 'there are nine swimming pools at five sites with community use in Maidstone which comply with the minimum dimensions, plus four smaller pools. Four of the five swimming pool sites in	There is no spare capacity to serve demand from Tonbridge and Malling.

Local Authority	Facilities priorities	Implications for Tonbridge and Malling
	Maidstone are used to above 'comfortable capacity' at peak times. Additional demand by 2031 will amount to the equivalent of one 25m x 4-lane pool with full community access'.	
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	The <i>Tunbridge Wells Borough Indoor/Built Sports Facilities Needs Assessment 2017-2033</i> (2018) concludes that there is sufficient capacity to meet current needs, but that demand equivalent to one 25m x 4-lane pool will need to be accommodated by 2033.	Tunbridge Wells Leisure Centre has potential spare capacity to accommodate some demand from Tonbridge and Malling.
Sevenoaks District Council	The <i>Sevenoaks Sports Facilities Strategy 2016-2025</i> (2017) identifies that 'there is a current oversupply of community accessible water space in the district of around 649.7sq.m. However, this includes a significant proportion currently only available for sports clubs/community associations rather than general pay-and-play. Taking account of future demand, the over-supply reduces to 459.5sq.m. Much of the supply is at sites without a formal community use agreement in place. There is significant unused capacity in all pools in the district, except White Oak Leisure Centre'.	Three facilities in the district have catchments that overlap Tonbridge and Malling, so there is potential to accommodate some demand from the borough using spare capacity.
Gravesham Borough Council	The <i>Gravesham Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2026</i> (2016) identified 'a shortfall in supply which is the equivalent of a six-lane 25m pool'.	There is no spare capacity to meet demand from Tonbridge and Malling.
Medway Council	The <i>Medway Sports Facilities Strategy and Action Plan</i> (2017) concludes that 'a significant shortfall of 544sq.m of water space identified. This is equivalent to an area of approximately 11 x 25m lanes of swimming pool water. Need will increase further with the expected 20% growth in population in the next 20 years'.	There is no spare capacity to meet demand from Tonbridge and Malling.

6.9 Sport-specific priorities

Facilities priorities	Implications for Tonbridge and Malling
Swim England's <i>'Towards a Nation Swimming: A Strategic Plan for Swimming in England 2017 - 2021'</i> (2017) includes a commitment to 'working with providers to create a swimming environment that is more inclusive and exceeds the expectations of swimmers'.	No specific local facilities priorities in Tonbridge and Malling.

Consultation with Swim England's Facilities Officer identified the following issues:

- 'The Borough as a whole shows its water provision to be adequate at this current time with a significant surplus of 1,284m² accessible to the public equating to four 6-lane 25m pools'.
- 'Two of the pools are lidos (David Lloyd and Tonbridge Swimming Pool) and therefore are subject to seasonal operating. During periods where these pools might be closed the surplus across the borough reduces to 824m²'.
- 'One site (the 15m pool at Spirit Health Club in Wrotham) is approaching and two sites are within 10-years, of the critical lifecycle point (38 years), with no refurbishment undertaken. The most significant being Tonbridge Swimming Pool which provides 416m² of water space in the borough'.

- 'A number of sites have undergone refurbishment work between 2003 and 2005 and therefore although originally built in the 1990's the lifespans have been extended'.
- 'There is a mixture of Local Authority, Education and Commercial facilities with differing access policies including pay-and-play, membership and club or other organised group use, therefore pricing and usage capacity should be considered when assessing how accessible the water space is for the community'.

Swim England made the following recommendations:

- 'Future water provision should look to have open public access, ensuring water space remains accessible to local population'.
- 'With the borough showing a surplus of water space no immediate action is recommended to provide additional facilities' but any strategic review should consider provision beyond 10 years and the impact of a growing population and aging facility stock.
- 'The facility mix in the future needs to consider the versatility of its water space with options for moveable floors/booms offering greater flexibility in programming'.
- 'Condition surveys are recommended to be carried out/updated on the identified sites within 10-years of the critical life point to assess the need for future investment in refurbishment works or new facilities'.

6.10 Future demand for swimming pools

6.10.1 Population growth

6.10.2 Participation rates

One factor in considering future sports participation rates is to track historical trends, as a guide to possible future developments. The most recent covid-affected figures have been excluded as anomalous.

- **National trends:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for swimming at national level since 2015:

Nov 2015- Nov 2016	May 2016- May 2017	Nov 2016- Nov 2017	May 2017- May 2018	Nov 2017- Nov 2018	May 2018- May 2019	Nov 2018- Nov 2019	May 2019- May 2020	% Change
11.0%	10.8%	10.2%	10.0%	10.5%	10.4%	9.3%	8.9%	-2.1%

- **Local trends:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey recorded the proportion of the adult (16+) population who are active for at least 150 minutes per week in Tonbridge and Malling between 2015 and the present. The results are tabulated below and show that whilst rates have fluctuated over the survey periods, there is a downward trend between 2015 and 2022:

Nov '15 - Nov '16	May '16 - May '17	Nov '16- Nov '17	May '17- May '18	Nov '17- Nov '18	May '18- May '19	Nov '18-Nov '19	May '19- May '20	Nov '19-Nov '20	May '20- May '21	Nov '20-Nov '21	Nov '21-Nov '22	% Change
66.3%	66.9%	66.8%	67.4%	68.8%	69.5%	69.4%	66.0%	66.0%	66.6%	65.1%	64.2%	-2.5%

6.10.3 Future projections

Sport England has developed the Sport Facility Calculator (SFC), to help to quantify how much additional demand for key community facilities like swimming pools, will be generated by population increases. The SFC uses Sport England survey data on who uses facilities and applies this to the population profile of the local area. This builds up a profile of usage, which can be then applied to estimate how much demand any given population would generate. For the purposes of projecting future demand in Tonbridge and Malling current participation rates have been assumed since there have been no statistically significant increases since 2015, either locally in the borough or for swimming. Two population scenarios are considered:

- The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 152,859 by 2041, an increase of 20,659 (or 15.6%). Based upon this, the SFC calculates demand for an additional 226.47sq.m of water space, which is equivalent to 4.26 of a 25m pool lane or 1.07 four-lane 25m pools with full community access.
- A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population of 168,864 by 2041, an increase of 36,664 or 27.7%. Based upon this, the SFC calculates demand for an additional 401.92sq.m of water space, which is equivalent to 7.57 25m pool lanes or 1.89 four-lane 25m pools with full community access.

6.11 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Sport England recognises a measure of ‘comfortable capacity’, where a swimming pool is regarded as effectively fully utilised when peak usage levels reach 70%. Tonbridge School pool is currently used to just above the ‘comfortable capacity’ figure but the collective figure for the borough is 53%.
- Notwithstanding this, Tonbridge Swimming Club stated that ‘it does seem there is shortage of pool space and even though we serve the community with young and old, able bodied and Para swimmers needing to swim, we simply cannot get pool time to suit’. In addition, Larkfield Swimming Club has to use a pool in Maidstone for some of its training needs.
- Sport England’s Sport Facility Calculator projects future demand for an additional swimming pool space equivalent to around one four-lane 25m pool based on the lower population projection and equivalent to around three four-lane 25m pools based on the higher population projection.

6.12 Facilities Planning Model Assessment

6.12.1 Introduction

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

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

6.12.2 Key findings

- **Quantity:** The total capacity of swimming pools in 2023 and 2041 is estimated as 16,501 visits in the weekly peak period. The pools at the two leisure centres cater for all types of swimming activities and collectively provide 64% of the Borough's available swimming pool capacity in the weekly peak period.
- **Quality:** No new swimming pools have been built in the Borough in the last 15 years. Only two of the five swimming pool sites have been modernised, and the most recent refurbishment was of Nizel's Golf and Country Club in 2005. Therefore, the stock of swimming pools is ageing.
- **Used peak capacity:** In 2023 the overall estimated used capacity of swimming pools in the weekly peak period is 53%. In 2041 this is projected to rise to 64% due to the increase in demand arising from 27% population growth. Only the Tonbridge School pool is used to above comfortable capacity in 2023 (at 75%), but by 2041 the Tonbridge School pool will be at 100% capacity in the peak periods and Tonbridge Swimming Pool at 83% capacity.
- **Expressed demand:** Demand for swimming pools is greatest in the Tonbridge area, where Tonbridge Swimming Pool and Tonbridge School Centre are located.
- **Satisfied demand:** A very high proportion of Tonbridge and Malling's demand is met, at 94% in 2023 and 93% in 2041. The proportion decreases because of the large increase in total demand. The number of visits met in the weekly peak period increases from 8,497 in 2023 to 10,400 in 2041.
- **Unmet demand:** Unmet demand is 6% of demand in 2023, and 7% in 2041, increasing from 93 sqm to 119 sqm of water due to greater demand. Nearly all the unmet demand is demand that is located too far from a facility and is not due to a lack of swimming pool capacity. The location where most unmet demand can be met is Blue Bell Hill, at 113 sqm of water in 2041. This is at Junction 3 of the M2 and will include demand from Medway and Maidstone, as well as from Tonbridge and Malling. It is an insufficient total to consider provision of a swimming pool at this location.
- **Displaced demand:** Tonbridge and Malling is a small net importer of swimming demand. In 2023, 24% of Tonbridge and Malling's satisfied demand is met at swimming pools in neighbouring local authority areas, principally Maidstone, but imported demand amounts to 27% of the total. 38% of imported visits come from Tunbridge Wells, 27% from Maidstone, 16% from Sevenoaks, 14% from Medway and 5% from Gravesham.
- In 2041 exported demand is 23% of the Borough's met demand and imported demand will be 23%.

6.12.3 Conclusions

The conclusions from the FPM runs are as follows:

- 'The headline strategic finding is that the current and future demand for swimming pools can be met by the available supply. While Tonbridge and Malling has a small number of sites, it has an extensive supply in terms of water space. The population and demand for swimming pools both increase significantly to 2041'.
- 'There is no requirement to increase the swimming pool provision to meet the projected future demand'.
- 'A very high level of the Borough's demand for swimming pools can be met in 2023 and 2041. Unmet demand is low and almost all is demand that is located too far from a facility. Most pools have spare capacity at peak times, but the distribution of demand means that the Tonbridge School pool is uncomfortably full at peak times. There is scope to increase

the hours for community use at Tonbridge School and reduce the used capacity of the pool at peak times’.

- ‘The stock is ageing and while two of the five sites have been modernised, there is an increasing need for modernisation at the others. Neither pool in Tonbridge has been modernised and demand for swimming is highest in Tonbridge both currently and in the future. The quality of the swimming offer will decrease as the pool sites age’.

6.13 The balance between swimming pool supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between swimming pool supply and demand in Tonbridge and Malling:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough facilities with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the facilities fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the facilities in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the facilities available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

6.14 Quantity

6.14.1 Current needs

Current swimming pools in Tonbridge and Malling are assessed to be operating with spare capacity based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used peak capacity:** In 2023 the overall estimated used capacity of swimming pools in the weekly peak period is 53%. In 2041 this is 64% due to the increase in demand arising from 27% population growth. Only the Tonbridge School pool is used to above ‘comfortable capacity’ in 2023 (at 75%).
- **Unmet demand:** Tonbridge Swimming Club stated that ‘it does seem there is shortage of pool space and even though we serve the community with young and old, able bodied and Para swimmers needing to swim, we simply cannot get pool time to suit’. Larkfield Swimming Club trains at Larkfield Leisure Centre on four evenings per week but has to use the pool at Sir Joseph Williamson’s Mathematical School in Maidstone for its Sunday evening training session.

6.14.2 Future needs

Additional pool space will be required to meet future needs.

- **Population increases:** Two scenarios are considered:
 - The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 152,859 by 2041, an increase of 20,659 (or 15.6%).
 - A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population of 168,864 by 2041, an increase of 36,664 (or 27.7%).
- **Participation trends:** Based on national and local sports participation trends, for the purposes of forecasting future demand the likeliest scenario is for participation rates to remain at their current levels.

- **Additional needs:** Future population growth will bring additional demand for access to water space. This is calculated to be the equivalent of between 1.07 and 1.89 additional 25m pools. The lower figure can be accommodated by using spare capacity in existing facilities. The higher figure can be met by developing additional peak time spare capacity in existing facilities in Tonbridge through programming changes and extending community use periods at Tonbridge School.

6.15 Quality

6.15.1 Current quality

All aspects of the quality of most facilities are 'average' or better. However, no new swimming pools have been built in the Borough in the last 15 years. Only two of the five swimming pool sites have been modernised, and the most recent refurbishment was of Nizel's Golf and Country Club in 2005. Therefore, the stock of swimming pools is ageing.

6.15.2 Future quality

The Larkfield Leisure Centre and Tonbridge Swimming Pools were built in 1992 and 1996 respectively and it is likely that both will need major refurbishment or replacement before the end of the strategy period in 2041.

6.16 Accessibility

6.16.1 Current accessibility

All parts of the borough are within a 20-minute drivetime catchment of the nearest swimming pool.

6.16.2 Future accessibility

It has been assumed that the current accessibility of pools will remain for the duration of the strategy period to 2041.

6.17 Availability

6.17.1 Current availability

Current availability is good, with the two leisure centre pools available for casual swimming on a non-membership basis, as well as club and schools hire and swimming lessons. There is some unmet demand for use by swimming clubs.

6.17.2 Future availability

It has been assumed that the current availability of pools will remain for the duration of the strategy period to 2041.

6.18 Contribution to shared strategic outcomes

Based upon the assessment above, the extent to which swimming pools provision in Tonbridge and Malling contributes to the shared strategic outcomes is as follows:

- Swimming is an activity that appeals to a broad cross-section of the community, both residents and visitors to the borough.
- The utilisation rates at existing swimming pools have some capacity to accommodate additional need and demand from current non-participants.

6.19 The options for securing additional swimming pool capacity

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

6.19.1 Protect

Local Plan policies for the protection of swimming pools through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities for which existing and/or future demand has been identified, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

6.19.2 Provide

Larkfield Leisure Centre and Tonbridge Swimming Pools were built in 1992 and 1996 respectively and it is likely that both will need major refurbishment or replacement before the end of the strategy period in 2041.

6.19.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing swimming pool capacity by:

- Encouraging Tonbridge School to extend the peak period availability of its facilities to external users.
- Examining whether programming changes could accommodate more users in particular club swimmers at Tonbridge and Larkfield pools managed by TM Active.

6.20 Action Plan

6.20.1 Introduction

The tables below set out the action plan for swimming pools to guide the implementation of the Assessment.

6.20.2 Key strategic actions

Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Protection of existing swimming pools	Consider including a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing swimming pools.	Sport England Active Kent and Medway	Planning policy team	-	High
Funding for future swimming pool needs	Ensure that provision is made to secure developer contributions towards improved facilities.	Sport England, Active Kent and Medway Developers	Planning development management team	-	High

6.20.3 Site-specific actions

Site	Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
David Lloyd (Kings Hill)	No current issues.	No action required.	-	-	-	-
Larkfield Leisure Centre	No current issues.	No action required.	TMBC	-	-	-
Nizel's Golf and Country Club	No current issues.	No action required.	-	-	-	-
Tonbridge School	Limited community access	Discuss the possibility of extending community use	TMBC	Tonbridge School	-	Medium
Tonbridge Swimming Pool	Possibility of changing programming to include extra users	Review programme to accommodate extra demand	TMBC TM Active	-	-	High

7 HEALTH AND FITNESS

7.1 Introduction

This section examines health and fitness facilities in Tonbridge and Malling. Health and fitness facilities are defined as dedicated community accessible facilities with a range of exercise equipment.

7.2 Quantity

7.2.1 Health and fitness facilities with community use

The location and number of equipment stations at health and fitness facilities with community use in Tonbridge and Malling is as follows. All facilities have secured community access:

Site	Address	Stations	Sub-area
Angel Centre	Angel Lane, Tonbridge TN9 1SF	84	Tonbridge
David Lloyd (Kings Hill)	King's Hill Avenue, West Malling ME19 4UA	120	Mallings
Evolution Strength and Fitness	Mills Road, Aylesford ME20 7NA	35	Mallings
Hilden Health and Fitness Club	Rings Hill, Hilden TN11 8LX	40	Tonbridge
Infinity Fitness UK*	Kings Hill Avenue, West Malling ME19 4AR	39*	Mallings
K-Sports	Station Road, Aylesford ME20 2AU	30	Mallings
Larkfield Leisure Centre	New Hythe Lane, Aylesford ME20 6RH	75	Mallings
Nizel's Golf and Country Club	Nizel's Lane, Hildenborough TN11 8NU	72	Tonbridge
Puregym Tonbridge**	Avebury Avenue, Tonbridge TN9 1TF	220**	Tonbridge
Reynolds Retreat	Quarry Hill Road, Borough Green TN15 8RQ	50	Mallings
Snap Fitness (Tonbridge)	Morley Road, Tonbridge TN9 1RD	150	Tonbridge
Snodland Community Centre	Cemetery Road, Snodland ME6 5BF	14	Mallings
Spirit Health Club	London Road, Wrotham Heath TN15 7RS	23	Mallings
Tonbridge School	London Road, Tonbridge TN10 3AD	55	Tonbridge
TOTAL	-	1,007	-

* Currently closed for refurbishment.

** Closed since June 2021 following a flood.

7.2.2 Health and fitness facilities without community use

The location and number of equipment stations at smaller school-based health and fitness facilities with no community use in Tonbridge and Malling is as follows.

Site	Address	Stations	Sub-area
Hadlow College	Tonbridge Road, Hadlow TN11 0AL	8	Tonbridge
Hugh Christie School	White Cottage, Road, Tonbridge TN10 4PU	6	Tonbridge
Judd School	Brook Street, Tonbridge TN9 2PNn	13	Tonbridge
The Homesdale School	Malling Road, Snodland ME6 5HS	8	Mallings
The Malling School	Beech Road, West Malling ME19 6DH	20	Mallings
TOTAL	-	55	-

7.2.3 Sub-area analysis

The distribution of fitness facilities by sub-area in Tonbridge and Malling is as follows.

Sub-area	Sub-area population 2021	No. stations	Stations per capita
Tonbridge and surrounds	56,018	621	1: 90
Mallings and surrounds	76,182	386	1: 197
TONBRIDGE & MALLING	132,200	1,007	1: 131

7.3 Quality

7.3.1 The criteria assessed

The quality of health and fitness facilities was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were evaluated were as follows:

- **Fitness facilities:** The overall condition, mix of cardio-vascular and resistance equipment, lighting and ambience.
- **Changing facilities:** Capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- **Disability access:** Provision of disability-specific equipment and disabled access throughout.
- **General access:** Car parking, lighting, signposting and proximity to public transport.

7.3.2 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to 'very good', 4 to 'good', 3 to 'average', 2 to 'poor' and 1 to 'very poor'.

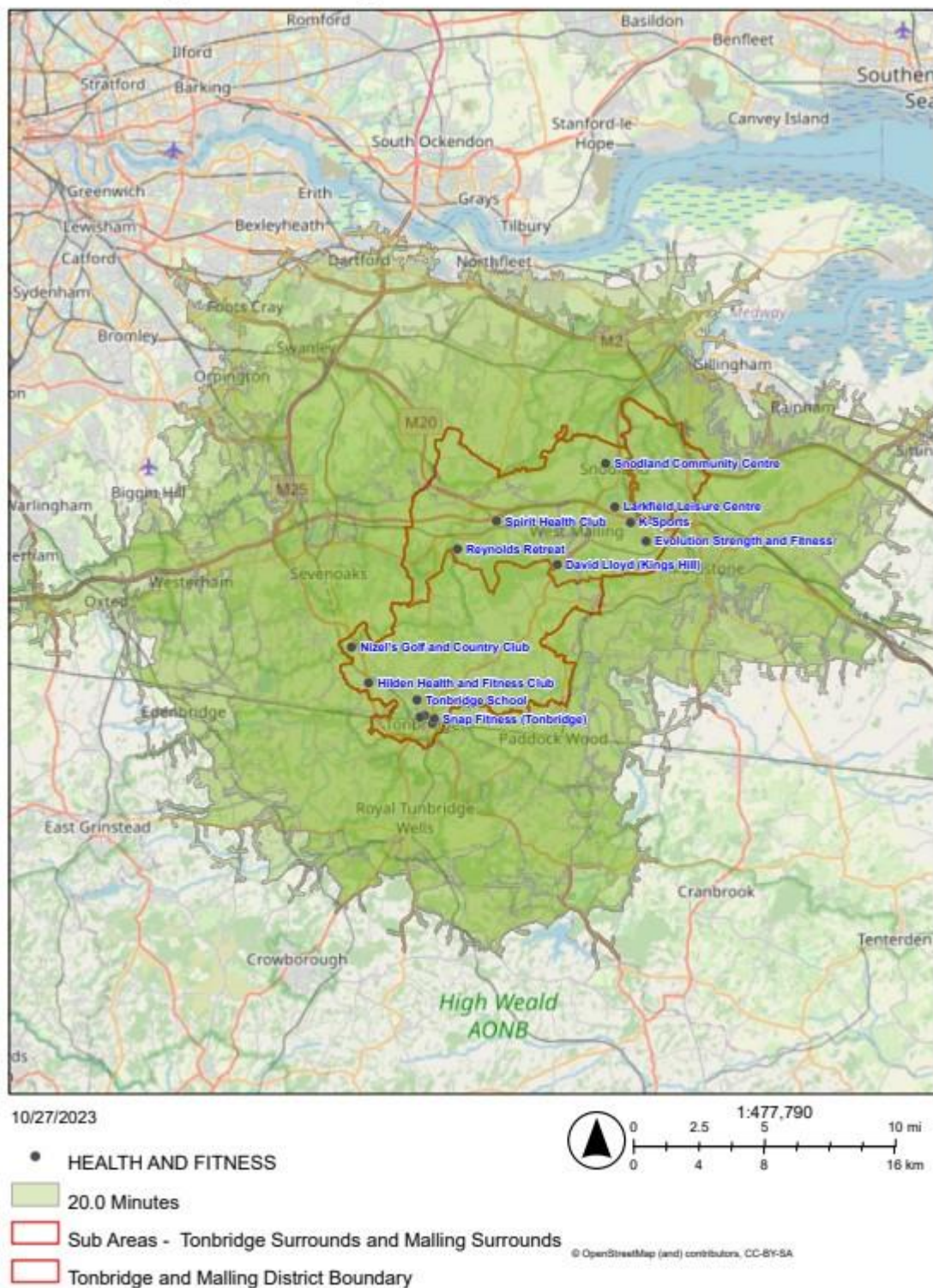
Facility	Fitness facilities	Changing	Disability Access	General access
Angel Centre	4	3	3	4
David Lloyd (Kings Hill)	5	5	4	5
Evolution Strength and Fitness	3	3	3	3
Hilden Health and Fitness Club	4	5	1	4
Infinity Fitness UK*	-	-	-	-
K-Sports	3	2	1	3
Larkfield Leisure Centre	4	4	4	4
Nizel's Golf and Country Club	5	5	3	5
Puregym Tonbridge*	-	-	-	-
Reynolds Retreat	5	5	4	4
Snap Fitness (Tonbridge)	4	4	4	4
Snodland Community Centre	3	4	4	5
Spirit Health Club	3	3	2	3
Tonbridge School	4	3	3	4

* Currently closed for refurbishment - no assessment undertaken

7.4 Accessibility

Based on Sport England research, the 'effective catchment' for health and fitness facilities is 20 minutes driving time. The map overleaf shows that almost the whole population of the borough is within 20-minutes' drivetime of at least one health and fitness facility.

Tonbridge and Malling - Health & Fitness 20 Minutes Drive



7.5 Availability

The table below identifies the opening hours, usage arrangements and pricing (shown as monthly direct debit costs to facilitate comparison).

Facility	Opening hours and basis of use	Pricing
Angel Centre	Mon-Thurs 6.30am - 9.30pm Fri 6.30am - 9pm Sat-Sun 8am - 7pm Membership and 'pay-and-play'	Health & Fitness Membership from £38 a month Priority Card: Gym Session Adult £12.50 Concession £8.50 Casual User: Gym Session Adult £15.40 Concession £10.20
David Lloyd (Kings Hill)	Mon-Fri 6am - 11pm Sat-Sun 7am - 10pm Members only	Basic Membership £94.50 per month
Evolution Strength and Fitness	Mon-Fri 6am - 10pm Sat 8am - 8pm Members only	Peak membership £37 per month Off-peak membership £29 per month
Hilden Health and Fitness Club	Mon-Thurs 6.30am - 8.30pm Fri 6.30am - 8pm Sat 8am - 8pm Sun 8am - 7pm Members only	Peak membership £39.99 per month Off-peak membership £29.99 per month
Infinity Fitness UK	Mon-Thurs 6am - 10pm Fri 6am - 9pm Sat-Sun 8am - 8pm Membership and 'pay-and-play'	Gym membership £28.99 per month Gym & classes membership £34.99 per month Casual use gym: £7.50 per session Casual use classes: £8 per session
K-Sports	Mon-Fri 7am - 10pm Sat-Sun 8am - 4pm Members only	Membership £29.99 per month Concessions membership £24.99 per month
Larkfield Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri 6.30am - 10.30pm Sat 6.30am - 7pm Sun 6.30am - 8pm Membership and 'pay-and-play'	Health & Fitness Membership from £38 a month Priority Card: Gym Session Adult £12.50 Concession £8.50 Casual User: Gym Session Adult £15.40 Concession £10.20
Nizel's Golf and Country Club	Mon-Fri 6.30am - 10pm Sat-Sun 7am - 9pm Members only	Membership £78.50 per month
Puregym Tonbridge	Currently closed. 24 hours 7 days per week. Members only	Membership from £26.99 per month
Reynolds Retreat	Mon-Thurs 6am - 10pm Fri 6am - 9pm Sat-Sun 8am - 6pm Members only	Membership from £159 per month
Snap Fitness (Tonbridge)	24 hours 7 days per week. Membership and 'pay-and-play'	Membership £39.99 per month Day pass £7.20
Snodland Community Centre	Mon, Weds and Fri 9am - 11am and 5pm - 8pm Membership and 'pay-and-play'	-
Spirit Health Club	Mon-Fri 6.30am - 10pm Sat-Sun 7am - 10pm Members only	Peak membership £55 per month Off-peak membership £50 per month

Facility	Opening hours and basis of use	Pricing
Tonbridge School	Mon-Fri 6am - 9pm Sat 8am - 9pm Sun 9am - 7.30pm Members only	Membership £69 per month Bookings on-line.

7.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are 14 publicly accessible health and fitness facilities currently available in Tonbridge and Malling, including two facilities that are currently closed for refurbishment, collectively comprising 1,007 equipment stations. All have secured community access.
- Levels of provision per capita vary widely across the borough, with the Tonbridge sub-area having more than double the rate of equipment stations per 1,000 people than the Mallings sub-area.
- The quality of facilities is generally 'good', although disability access is problematic at three sites.
- The whole population of the borough is within 20-minutes' drivetime of at least one health and fitness facility.
- Four facilities offer 'pay-and-play' public access, but many of the remaining facilities offer a 'day pass' arrangement, allowing short-term access on a non-membership basis.
- Membership charges vary between £27 and £159 per month, although there are discounted introductory offers at many facilities. There are varying approaches to membership terms with some operators insisting on minimum term contracts whilst others allow month by month membership with the ability to cancel at any time.

7.7 Current demand for health and fitness facilities

7.7.1 Expressed demand

The 2019 'State of the UK Fitness Industry' report' (the most recent available and undertaken before the covid-19 pandemic) reveals that the UK health and fitness industry is continuing to grow (for the first time in 2018 the number of clubs exceeded 7,000) with more members and a greater market value than ever before. Over the twelve-month period to the end of March 2019, there were increases of: -

- 2.9% in the number of fitness facilities.
- 4.7% in the number of members.
- 4.2% in overall market value.

For the first time ever, health and fitness members exceeded 10 million. 1 in 7 people in the UK is a member of a gym, an all-time penetration rate high of 15.4%. The low-cost market with its large membership numbers, online joining, long opening hours and low prices has continued to expand rapidly. The private low-cost sector now accounts for 12% of the total number of private clubs, 13% of the private market value and 32% of the private sector membership.

- Pure Gym and GLL remain the UK's leading private and public operators (by number of gyms and members). In 2018, Pure Gym became the first operator to reach 200 clubs and has been joined by GLL (with 203 gyms).
- Local fitness facility operators all indicated that there was an overall growth in the market (although no actual figures were given due to commercial sensitivity) although it is highly

competitive and gyms are having to work hard to maintain their share of the market. Members are now more sophisticated and willing to switch between clubs. Operators are having to develop a wider range of fitness products including individual, health-related programmes and app-based fitness regimes and to vary and update their classes on a regular basis to keep up to date with changing fashions.

7.7.2 Spare capacity

Consultations with local health and fitness facility operators revealed that there is some spare capacity at peak periods. All but the smallest operators emphasise 'no waiting' as a selling point to prospective members. Peak time spare capacity is assessed to be around 10% or the equivalent of 100 equipment stations.

7.7.3 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to use of health and fitness facilities from within the strategy area which takes place outside of the area. The following facilities are located in adjacent areas, close enough to the borough boundary to provide usage opportunities for residents of the borough.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Distance from Tonbridge and Malling</i>
Bob Prowse Health Club	Armstrong Road, Maidstone ME15 6AZ	2 miles
Lockmeadow Health Club	Barker Road, Maidstone ME16 8LW	2 miles
Feel Good Health Club	Ashford Road, Maidstone ME17 1RE	3 miles
Freedom Leisure Maidstone	St. Peter's Street, Maidstone ME16 0SX	3 miles
LivingWell Health Club	Bearsted Road, Maidstone ME14 5AA	2 miles
Maidstone Leisure Centre	Mote Park, Maidstone ME15 8NQ	2 miles
Marriott Leisure Club	Ashford Road, Maidstone ME17 4NQ	3 miles
Snap Fitness	High Street, Maidstone ME14 1JH	3 miles
truGym Maidstone	The Broadway, Maidstone ME16 8PS	3 miles
Village Gym (Maidstone)	Forstal Road, Maidstone ME14 3AQ	2 miles
Welcome Gym	London Road, Maidstone ME16 0DT	2 miles
Maidstone YMCA	Melrose Close, Maidstone ME15 6BD	2 miles
Puregym (Sevenoaks)	Otford Road, Sevenoaks TN14 5EG	3 miles
Sevenoaks Leisure Centre	Buckhurst Lane, Sevenoaks TN13 1LW	3 miles
Sennocke Centre	High Street, Sevenoaks TN13 1HU	3 miles
Putlands Sports Centre	Mascalls Court Road, Tunbridge Wells TN12 6NZ	4 miles
Tunbridge Wells Sports Centre	St. Johns Road, Tunbridge Wells TN4 9TX	2 miles
Lordswood Leisure Centre	North Dane Way, Chatham ME5 8YE	1 mile
Puregym (Tunbridge Wells)	Royal Victoria Place, Tunbridge Wells TN1 2SW	2 miles
Nuffield Health (Tunbridge Wells)	Knights Way, Tunbridge Wells TN2 3UW	2 miles
Sir Joseph Williamson's School	Maidstone Road, Rochester ME1 3EL	1 mile
Strood Sports Centre	Watling Road, Strood ME2 3JQ	2 miles
Village Gym (Maidstone)	Forstal Road, Maidstone ME14 3AQ	1 mile

7.7.3 Unmet demand

UK Active has devised a model that provides guidance on the supply of health and fitness stations against the current anticipated demand. The model uses national data from fitness facility operators, with the most recent local data for health and fitness participation from the 'Active Lives' survey. The model anticipates a need for 712 fitness stations, which compares with actual supply of 1,007 stations, indicating notional spare capacity of 295 stations, although 259 stations are currently unavailable in facilities that are undergoing refurbishment.

Element	Value	Number
Tonbridge and Malling adult population	-	107,346
% health and fitness participants	5.95%	6,387
Average visits per week	2.4	15,329
No. visits at peak period	65%	9,964
Capacity in one hour of peak time	28	356
No. stations required at peak time	-	712

7.8 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in Tonbridge and Malling, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. Health and fitness facilities have a particular role to play in this, given the breadth of appeal to all age groups.

7.9 Assessments of need in neighbouring areas

The table below summarises strategic assessments of health and fitness facilities needs in neighbouring areas.

Local Authority	Facilities priorities	Implications for Tonbridge and Malling
Maidstone Borough Council	The 'Maidstone Sports Facilities Strategy' (2019) states that 'current health and fitness facilities in Maidstone are assessed to be at operating at close to full capacity. there will be demand for 1,303 stations by 2037, an increase of 230 over the existing figure'.	There is no spare capacity to serve demand from Tonbridge and Malling.
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	The <i>Tunbridge Wells Borough Indoor/Built Sports Facilities Needs Assessment 2017-2033</i> (2018) concludes that there is sufficient capacity to meet current needs, but that demand equivalent to 111 fitness equipment stations will need to be accommodated by 2033.	There is some spare capacity that could meet demand from Tonbridge and Malling.
Sevenoaks District Council	The 'Sevenoaks Sports Facilities Strategy 2016-2025' (2017) identifies that 'there is a current under-supply of 157 stations. Based on current provision of 204 pay and play community accessible fitness stations, this means there would be an under-supply of 219 stations by 2035'.	There is no spare capacity at to meet demand from Tonbridge and Malling.
Gravesham Borough Council	The 'Gravesham Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2026' (2016) identified an action to 'improve access to facilities during the daytime given the current reliance on educational facilities for indoor activity'.	There is no spare capacity at to meet demand from Tonbridge and Malling.

Local Authority	Facilities priorities	Implications for Tonbridge and Malling
Medway Council	The 'Medway Sports Facilities Strategy and Action Plan' (2017) concludes that 'Medway is well served by a range of health and fitness facilities, providing for a range of different budgets. Future population growth will increase the amount of health and fitness provision required in the longer term'.	There is some spare capacity that could meet demand from Tonbridge and Malling.

7.10 Future demand for health and fitness facilities

7.11.1 Population growth

Two scenarios are considered:

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

7.11.2 Participation rates

One factor in considering future sports participation rates is to track historical trends, as a guide to possible future developments. Recent covid-affected figures have been excluded as anomalous.

- National trends:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for fitness activities since 2016:

May 2016- May 2017	Nov 2016- Nov 2017	May 2017- May 2018	Nov 2017- Nov 2018	May 2018- May 2019	Nov 2018- Nov 2019	May 2019- May 2020	% Change
29.5%	29.7%	29.7%	30.0%	30.4%	30.8%	30.4%	+0.9%

- Local trends:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey recorded the proportion of the adult (16+) population who are active for at least 150 minutes per week in Tonbridge and Malling between 2015 and the present. The results are tabulated below and show that whilst rates have fluctuated over the survey periods, there is a downward trend between 2015 and 2022:

Nov '15 - Nov '16	May '16 - May '17	Nov '16 - Nov '17	May '17 - May '18	Nov '17 - Nov '18	May '18 - May '19	Nov '18 - Nov '19	May '19 - May '20	Nov '19 - Nov '20	May '20 - May '21	Nov '20 - Nov '21	Nov '21 - Nov '22	% Change
66.3%	66.9%	66.8%	67.4%	68.8%	69.5%	69.4%	66.0%	66.0%	66.6%	65.1%	64.2%	-2.5%

7.11.3 Future projections

Two scenarios are considered:

- ONS Projections:** The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 152,859 by 2041, an increase of 20,659 (or 15.6%). Based on current demand for 712 equipment stations there is effective spare capacity of 29.3% at local facilities in the peak period (equivalent to 295 stations). Population growth of 15.6% will create a demand for an additional 111 stations by 2041. Participation increases of 18%

will create demand for a further 128 stations by 2041, creating total additional demand for 239 stations.

Element	No. stations
Existing stations	1,007
Existing peak demand	712
Existing spare capacity	295
Population increase (15.6%)	111
Participation increase (18%)	128
No. stations required at peak time by 2041	951
Surplus(+)/deficit(-)	+56

- **Housing projections:** A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population 168,864 by 2041, an increase of 36,664 or 27.7%. Based on current demand for 767 equipment stations there is effective spare capacity of 29.3% at local facilities in the peak period (equivalent to 295 stations). Population growth of 27.7% will create a demand for an additional 209 stations by 2040. Participation increases of 18% will create demand for a further 128 stations by 2040, creating total additional demand for 357 stations.

Element	No. stations
Existing stations	1,007
Existing peak demand	712
Existing spare capacity	295
Population increase (27.6%)	209
Participation increase (18%)	128
No. stations required at peak time by 2041	1,049
Surplus(+)/deficit(-)	-42

7.11 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Demand for health and fitness facilities in Tonbridge and Malling equates to 712 equipment stations, based upon the UK Active market calculation.
- With 1,007 stations at facilities in Tonbridge and Malling, there is collective peak time spare capacity of 29.3%, or the equivalent of 295 stations.
- Based on the lower population projections, additional demand for 239 stations by 2041 can be accommodated by existing spare capacity.
- Based on the higher population projections, additional demand for 357 stations by 2041 will require the provision of an additional 42 equipment stations.

7.12 The balance between health and fitness supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between health and fitness facility supply and demand in Tonbridge and Malling:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough facilities with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?

- **Quality:** Are the facilities fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the facilities in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the facilities available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

7.13 Quantity

7.13.2 Current needs

Current health and fitness facilities in Tonbridge and Malling are assessed to be operating with spare capacity (excluding the current temporary closures), based upon the current peak capacity averaging 70% across all facilities.

7.13.2 Future needs

The quantity of health and fitness provision required to meet future needs arising from population growth has been assessed between 209 and 357 stations. Based on the lower population estimate, existing spare capacity will meet all needs to 2041 and based upon the higher population estimate, there will be a need for an additional 42 equipment stations.

7.14 Quality

7.15.1 Current quality

The quality of most facilities is at least 'standard', although the changing facilities at K-Sports and the disabled access at K-Sports, Hilden Health and Fitness and Spirit Health Club are all 'poor'.

7.15.2 Future quality

In a highly competitive market, commercial health and fitness providers place a premium on equipment innovation and facility quality, so it seems reasonable to assume that local provision will continue to be upgraded regularly.

7.15 Accessibility

7.16.1 Current accessibility

The whole population is within 20 minutes driving time of at least one health and fitness facility.

7.16.2 Future accessibility

Commercial health and fitness operators are likely to ensure that additional facilities are provided that are well-located in relation to new housing developments.

7.16 Availability

7.17.1 Current availability

Membership charges vary between £27 and £159 per month, although there are discounted introductory offers at many facilities. There are varying approaches to membership terms with some operators insisting on minimum term contracts whilst others allow month by month membership with the ability to cancel at any time.

7.17.2 Future availability

With a competitive local market, it seems unlikely that cost will be a barrier to accessibility in the future. However, less affluent residents may be discouraged by long-term contracts and the comparative paucity of 'pay-and-play' facilities.

7.17 Contribution to shared strategic outcomes

Based upon the assessment above, the extent to which health and fitness facility provision in Tonbridge and Malling contributes to the shared strategic outcomes is as follows:

- Health and fitness appeals to a broad cross-section of the community, both residents and visitors to the borough..
- TMAActive operates a highly successful Referral Programme and Phase IV Cardiac Rehabilitation Programme.

Through a combination of prescribed exercise and lifestyle and dietary advice the 12 week Referral Programme aims to assist individuals to take responsibility for their own wellbeing and improve their health.

7.18 The options for securing additional health and fitness capacity

The options for securing existing and additional health and fitness facility capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

7.18.1 Protect

Local Plan policies for the protection of existing health and fitness facilities through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities for which existing and/or future demand has been identified, including those with membership-only access, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

7.18.2 Provide

Ensuring that extra health and fitness capacity is achieved by encouraging the provision of health and fitness facilities by commercial leisure providers.

7.18.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing health and fitness capacity for people with disabilities.

7.19 Action Plan

The table below sets out the action plan for health and fitness facilities to guide the implementation of the Assessment. All actions are generic, rather than facility specific.

Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Protection of existing health and fitness facilities.	Consider including a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing health and fitness facilities.	TMBC	Sport England, Active Kent and Medway	Planning Policy team	High
Need for an additional 42 fitness stations by 2041.	Encourage commercial health and fitness provision.	TMBC	Commercial providers	Sport England Guidance	High
Poor disabled access at Hilden Health Club, K-Sports and Spirit Health Club.	Improve disabled access and encourage all sites to provide equipment that is suitable for disabled users.	All providers	TMBC	LABC (if used)	High
Funding for future health and fitness needs.	Ensure that provision is made to secure developer contributions towards and improved facilities.	TMBC	Sport England, Active Kent and Medway Developers	Planning Dev'tment M'tment team	High

8 SQUASH COURTS

8.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of squash courts in Tonbridge and Malling. Squash courts are defined as specialist courts for squash and racquetball, complying with regulation dimensions.

8.2 Quantity

8.2.1 Squash Courts with Community Use

The location and number of squash courts with community use in Tonbridge and Malling is as follows. All facilities have secured community access:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Courts</i>	<i>Year built/ refurbished</i>	<i>Sub-area</i>
Poult Wood Golf Club	Higham Lane, Tonbridge TN11 9QR	4	1974	Tonbridge
Tonbridge School	London Road, Tonbridge TN10 3AD	4	1975	Tonbridge

8.2.2 Squash courts where use was recently discontinued

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Courts</i>	<i>Year built/ refurbished</i>	<i>Sub-area</i>
K-Sports	Station Road, Aylesford ME20 2AU	2	1990	Mallings

8.2.3 Sub-area analysis

Squash courts with community use by sub-area in Tonbridge and Malling are as follows:

<i>Sub-area</i>	<i>Sub-area population 2021</i>	<i>No. courts</i>	<i>Courts per capita</i>
Tonbridge and surrounds	56,018	8	1: 7,002
Mallings and surrounds	76,182	0	-
TONBRIDGE & MALLING	132,200	8	1: 16,525

8.3 Quality

8.3.1 The criteria assessed

The quality of squash courts was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were assessed to give a single overall score for each squash facility were the court surface, changing provision, line markings, walls, disability and general access and fitness for purpose.

8.3.2 The basis of the ratings

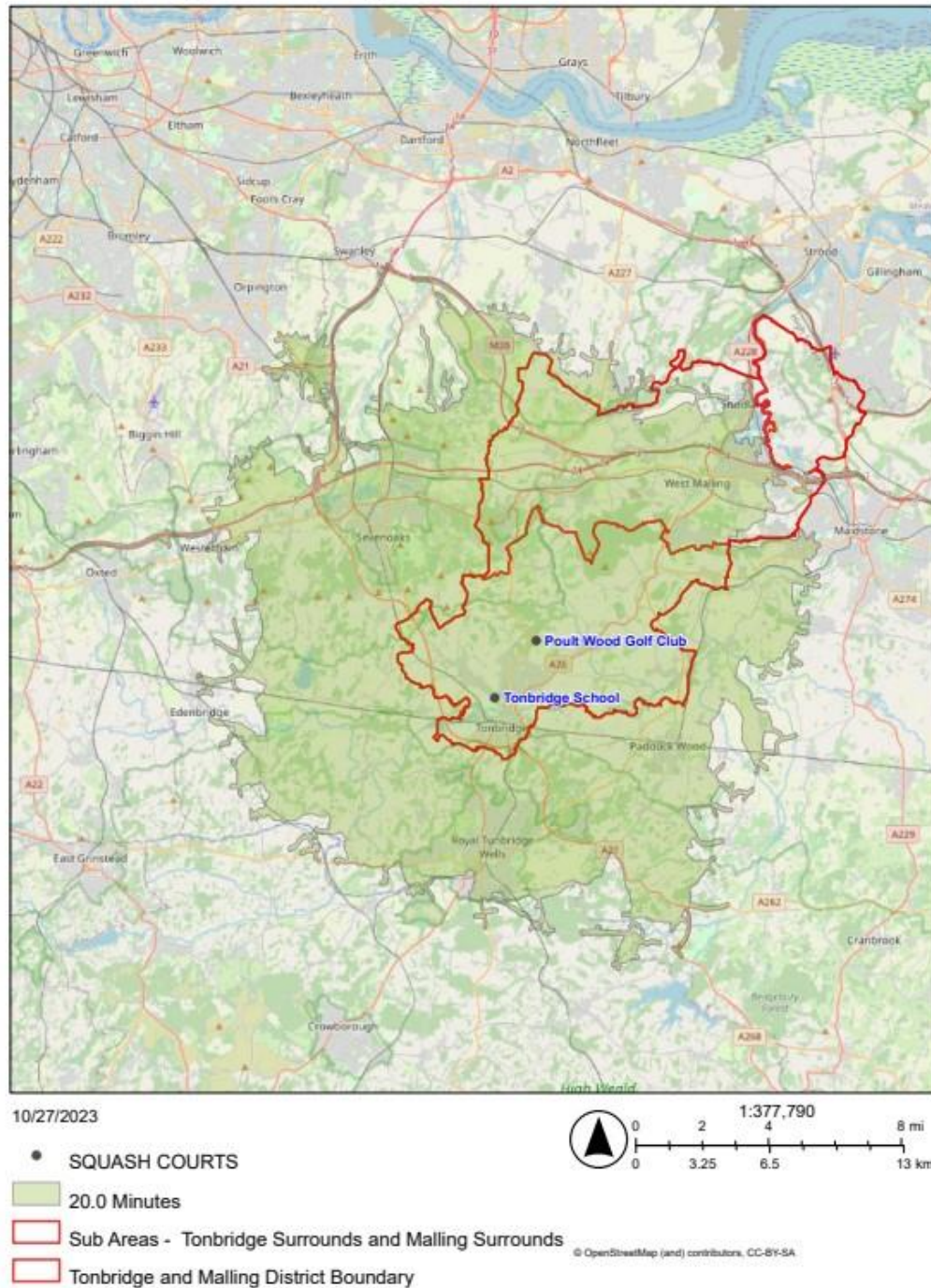
The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to 'very good', 4 to 'good' (highlighted in green below), 3 to 'average', 2 to 'poor' and 1 to 'very poor'. The ratings for the squash courts in Tonbridge and Malling are shown in the table below.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Courts</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Disability Access</i>	<i>General Access</i>
Poult Wood Golf Club	4	4	5	5
Tonbridge School	5	5	5	4

8.3.3 Accessibility

Based on Sport England research, the 'effective catchment' for squash courts is 20 minutes driving time. Most of the population is within 20-minutes' drive of a squash court, with the exception of a small area in the north-east, which is served by provision in Maidstone.

Tonbridge and Malling - Squash Courts 20 Minutes Drive



8.4 Availability

The table below identifies the opening hours, usage arrangements, pricing and used capacity in the peak period.

Facility	Opening hours and basis of use	Pricing	Peak usage
Poult Wood Golf Club	Mon-Sun 8am - 10pm 'Pay-and-play'	Adult court hire £9 - £10 per hour. Concessions £6 - £6.50 per hour Club membership £50 per annum for adults £15 per annum for juniors.	
Tonbridge School	Mon-Fri 8am - 1.30pm and 6pm - 10pm Sat 8am - 1.30pm and 3pm - 10pm Sun 8am - 4pm and 6pm - 10pm Club use only	Annual membership £130.	

8.5 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are two facilities with community use in Tonbridge and Malling, collectively containing eight squash courts. Both have secured community access.
- England Squash states that there should be one squash court per 10,000 people in England, based upon existing levels of provision. Current per capita levels of provision in Tonbridge and Malling are worse than the national average at one court per 16,525 people.
- The quality of both facilities is rated as 'good'.
- 'Pay-and-play' squash courts are available at both sites.
- Most of the population is within 20-minutes' drive of a squash court. Both facilities are in the Tonbridge sub-area, with no provision in the north of the borough.

8.6 Current demand for squash courts

8.7.1 Expressed demand

There are two squash clubs in the borough:

Facility	Facility	Membership
Poult Wood Squash and Racquetball Club	Poult Wood Golf Course	90
Tonbridge Squash Club	Tonbridge School	64
TOTAL	-	154

Peak period demand at Squash courts in Tonbridge and Malling has some spare capacity.

Facility	Peak usage
Poult Wood Golf Club	70%
Tonbridge School	60%

8.7.2 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to users of squash courts from within the strategy area which takes place outside of the area. The following facilities are located in adjacent local authority areas, close enough to the borough boundary to provide usage opportunities for Tonbridge and Malling residents.

Facility	Address	Distance from Tonbridge and Malling
Maidstone Squash Club	Union Street, Maidstone ME14 1EB	2 miles
Mote Squash Club	Mote Park, Maidstone ME15 7RN	3 miles
Tunbridge Wells Sports Centre	St. Johns Road, Tunbridge Wells TN4 9TX	2 miles
Tunbridge Wells Squash Club	London Road, Tunbridge Wells TN1 1DL	2 miles
Hartley Country Club	Culvey Close, Longfield DA3 8BS	3 miles
Sennocke Centre	High Street, Sevenoaks TN13 1HU	3 miles

8.7.3 Unmet demand

Unmet demand involves two components:

- Demand that cannot be met within a facility catchment due to excess demand for that facility.
- Demand that cannot be met because it is located outside the catchment of a facility.

Neither of the clubs in the borough has a waiting list. Use of the two courts at K-Sports was recently discontinued due to lack of demand.

8.7 Assessments of need in neighbouring areas

The table below summarises strategic assessments of squash court needs in neighbouring areas.

Local Authority	Facilities priorities	Implications for Tonbridge and Malling
Maidstone Borough Council	The 'Maidstone Sports Facilities Strategy' (2019) states that 'there are two facilities with community use in Maidstone, collectively containing six squash courts, plus one facility on a school site with two courts and no public access. There is sufficient spare capacity at existing courts to meet all additional demand to 2031'.	There is some spare capacity to serve demand from Tonbridge and Malling.
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	The 'Tunbridge Wells Borough Indoor/Built Sports Facilities Needs Assessment 2017-2033' (2018) does not include an assessment of squash court needs. There are 12 courts with community access, plus five on school sites with no public access.	There is some spare capacity to serve demand from Tonbridge and Malling.
Sevenoaks District Council	The 'Sevenoaks Sports Facilities Strategy 2016-2025' (2017) identifies that 'there is no need for additional squash court provision to meet current or future needs'.	There is some spare capacity to meet demand from Tonbridge and Malling.

Local Authority	Facilities priorities	Implications for Tonbridge and Malling
Gravesham Borough Council	The 'Gravesham Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2026' (2016) identified 'the supply of courts available is sufficient to meet current levels of demand'.	There is some spare capacity at to meet demand from Tonbridge and Malling.
Medway Council	The 'Medway Sports Facilities Strategy and Action Plan' (2017) concludes that 'the current level of provision is adequate to meet current needs. The provision of squash courts in the future should be made on a site-by-site basis with decisions likely to be driven by the financial viability of these specific spaces'.	There is some spare capacity at to meet demand from Tonbridge and Malling.

8.8 England Squash priorities

England Squash and Racquetball's 'Game Changer: Participation Strategy' (2015) contains the following material of relevance to squash court provision:

Facilities priorities	Implications for Tonbridge and Malling
England Squash and Racquetball's 'Game Changer: Participation Strategy' (2015) states that 'although we support the development of facilities, our resources cannot create a significant impact on the thousands of courts in the country. Our past efforts to support court development have been beneficial but limited'.	There is a limited role for the governing body in promoting squash court provision.

Consultation with the England Squash and Racquetball identified the following issues:

- 'Squash is a sport that has long been recognised as providing a great 'all around fitness workout' at all levels of play. It remains a very interesting option to casual players as well as committed club players. It is relatively simple for beginners to develop basic skills, instantly providing the opportunity for fun and a huge scope for progression. It provides an excellent workout in just 45 minutes. The sport of racquetball (now rebranded by World Squash as Squash57) has in the past few years increasingly been gaining ground as a go-to sport for women and older people'.
- 'That said the number of people playing squash has clearly declined since the extraordinary heyday of the 1980s and 1990s - when it was a self-advertising, 'new' sport and first recognised as a very social activity. But all sports have their peaks and troughs of success and, although now less popular, squash still has a very strong following. Nationally, English players and representative teams are still amongst the best in the world'.
- 'Squash courts are, obviously, the essential facility requirement to play squash. Each club has its own courts and programme to attract new adult and junior players. In addition, the public availability of squash courts is essential - whilst clubs can organise local trial opportunities (especially for juniors) the public facilities in Leisure Centres have always been a playing opportunity that helps build the initial interest of so many new players to our sports'.

8.9 Future demand for squash courts

8.9.1 Population growth

Two scenarios are considered:

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

8.9.2 Participation rates

One factor in considering future sports participation rates is to track historical trends, as a guide to possible future developments. Recent covid-affected figures have been excluded as anomalous.

- **National trends:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for squash since 2015:

Nov 2015- Nov 2016	Nov 2016- Nov 2017	Nov 2017- Nov 2018	Nov 2018- Nov 2019	Nov 2019- Nov 2020	Nov 2020- Nov 2021	Nov 2021- Nov 2022	% Change
1.0%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.4%	0.2%	0.6%	-0.4%

- **Local trends:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey recorded the proportion of the adult (16+) population who are active for at least 150 minutes per week in Tonbridge and Malling between 2015 and the present. The results are tabulated below and show that whilst rates have fluctuated over the survey periods, there is a downward trend between 2015 and 2022:

Nov '15 - Nov '16	May '16 - May '17	Nov '16- Nov '17	May '17- May '18	Nov '17- Nov '18	May '18- May '19	Nov '18-Nov '19	May '19- May '20	Nov '19-Nov '20	May '20- May '21	Nov '20-Nov '21	Nov '21-Nov '22	% Change
66.3%	66.9%	66.8%	67.4%	68.8%	69.5%	69.4%	66.0%	66.0%	66.6%	65.1%	64.2%	-2.5%

8.9.3 Future projections

National squash participation rates have been falling in recent years and set alongside reductions in general activity rates in Tonbridge and Malling over the same period, it would therefore be reasonable to assume that demand for squash will at best remain static until 2041. Based on current demand, there is effective spare capacity of 35% at local facilities in the peak period. An increase of 20,659 (or 15.6%) in the Tonbridge and Malling population by 2041 will increase demand for squash court capacity by a similar amount. Alternatively, an increase of 36,664 (or 27.7%) in the Tonbridge and Malling population by 2041 will increase demand for squash court capacity by a similar amount. In both cases, this can also be accommodated by existing spare capacity.

8.10 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Squash participation rates in Tonbridge and Malling are projected to remain static until 2041.

- An increase 20,659 (or 15.6%) in the Tonbridge and Malling population by 2041 will increase demand for squash court capacity by a similar amount. Alternatively, an increase of 36,664 (or 27.7%) in the Tonbridge and Malling population by 2041 will increase demand for squash court capacity by a similar amount.

8.11 *The balance between squash court supply and demand*

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between squash court supply and demand in Tonbridge and Malling:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough courts with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the courts fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the courts in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the courts available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

8.12 *Quantity*

8.14.1 *Current needs*

Current squash courts in Tonbridge and Malling are collectively assessed to be at operating with substantial spare capacity, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used peak capacity:** The courts in the borough are currently used to 65% capacity in the peak period.
- **Unmet demand:** There is no evidence of any unmet demand.
- **Changes in supply:** There are no known planned changes to supply.

8.14.2 *Future needs*

Spare capacity at the existing courts will be able to accommodate all additional future demand.

8.13 *Quality*

8.14.1 *Current quality*

The quality of all facilities is rated as 'good'.

8.14.2 *Future quality*

Assuming that existing providers continue to invest in maintaining and improving their facilities and that this process can be assisted with funding from developer contributions in the future, it seems reasonable to assume that local provision will continue to be upgraded regularly.

8.14 *Accessibility*

8.15.1 *Current accessibility*

The whole population is within 20 minutes driving time of the nearest squash court.

8.15.2 Future accessibility

Since the current facilities are geographically relatively well-located to serve boroughwide needs, they will continue to serve future needs.

8.15 Availability

8.16.1 Current availability

Pay-and-play' squash courts are available at one site.

8.16.2 Future availability

It is reasonable to assume that similar usage arrangements will be offered in the future.

8.16 Contribution to shared strategic outcomes

Based upon the assessment above, the extent to which squash court provision in Tonbridge and Malling contributes to the shared strategic outcomes is as follows:

- Squash is a specialist activity that appeals to a limited cross-section of the community and as such it is unlikely to engage many new or lapsed participants.
- Some local courts have been re-purposed on a temporary or permanent basis to accommodate other sports and this flexibility allows a wider range of activities to be programmed using the space available.

8.17 The options for securing additional squash court capacity

The options for securing existing squash court capacity to meet current and future needs are:

8.18.1 Protect

Local Plan policies for the protection of existing squash courts through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities for which existing and/or future demand has been identified, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

8.18.2 Provide

Future demand relating to population growth will not require the provision of additional squash courts.

8.18.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing squash courts by ensuring that the courts and ancillary facilities receive regular maintenance and improvements.

8.18 Action Plan

The table below sets out the action plan for squash courts to guide the implementation of the Assessment.

Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Protection of existing squash courts.	Consider including a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing squash courts.	Sport England Active Kent and Medway	Planning policy team	-	High
Existing spare capacity can meet future demand by 2041.	Include a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing squash courts.	Sport England Active Kent and Medway	Planning policy team	-	High
Maintaining existing squash courts	Encourage providers to maintain existing courts to sustain and improve current quality and improve access wherever possible.	Court providers	-	Dependent on the scale of provision.	High

9 INDOOR TENNIS COURTS

9.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of indoor tennis courts in Tonbridge and Malling. Indoor tennis courts are defined as indoor facilities with appropriate playing surface, line markings, nets and court dimensions for tennis.

9.2 Quantity

9.2.1 Indoor tennis courts with community use

There is one specialist indoor tennis facility in Tonbridge and Malling:

Site	Address	Courts	Surface	Sub-Area
David Lloyd (Kings Hill)	King's Hill Avenue, West Malling ME19 4UA	5	Acrylic	Mallings

9.2.2 Indoor tennis courts in neighbouring areas

The following facilities are located in adjacent local authority areas, close enough to the borough boundary to provide usage opportunities for some Tonbridge and Malling residents.

Facility	Address	Distance from Tonbridge and Malling
Avenue Tennis Centre	Featherby Riad, Gillingham ME8 6AN	4 miles
Bailey Tennis Centre	High Street, Sevenoaks TN13 1HU	3 miles
Legend Sports	Thong Lane, Gravesend DA12 4AF	4 miles
Maidstone Tennis Academy*	St. Peter's Street, Maidstone ME16 0SX	2 miles
Tunbridge Wells Sports Centre	St. John's Road, Tunbridge Wells TN4 9TX	2 miles

* Seasonal covered courts via an air dome

9.3 Quality

9.3.1 The criteria assessed for indoor courts

The criteria that were assessed were as follows:

- **The court:** The overall condition, playing surface, clear span roof height, lighting, spectator provision, equipment and fitness for purpose.
- **Changing facilities:** The capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- **Disability access:** The extent of full disabled access to the facility, including the provision of access ramps, dedicated changing, toilets and car parking.
- **General access:** Car parking, signposting, external lighting and proximity to public transport.

9.3.2 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to 'very good', 4 to 'good', 3 to 'average', 2 to 'poor' and 1 to 'very poor'.

9.3.3 Indoor court assessment

The ratings for the indoor tennis courts are shown in the table below.

Facility	Courts	Changing	Disability Access	General access
David Lloyd (Kings Hill)	5	5	4	5

9.4 Accessibility

Based on LTA research, the 'effective catchment' for indoor tennis courts is 30 minutes driving time. The whole population is within 30-minutes' drive time of an indoor tennis court.

Tonbridge and Malling - Indoor Tennis 30 Minutes Drive



9.5 Availability

The courts at David Lloyd (Kings Hill) are available on the following basis:

Facility	Opening hours use	Pricing	Peak usage
David Lloyd (Kings Hill)	Mon-Fri 6am - 11pm Sat-Sun 7am - 10pm Members only	Off-peak Membership £94.50 per month. Racket sports only with club platinum membership	75%

9.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are five indoor tennis courts at David Lloyd King's Hill.
- Four specialist facilities in neighbouring areas provide some usage opportunities for Tonbridge and Malling residents.
- The quality of the indoor courts at David Lloyd King's Hill is 'good'.
- The whole of the population of the borough is within 30-minutes' drive time of an indoor tennis court either in the borough or in a neighbouring area.
- The courts at David Lloyd (Kings Hill) are available on a membership basis only and the fee levels may exclude some potential users.

9.7 Current demand for indoor tennis courts

9.7.1 Expressed demand

Peak period demand at David Lloyd King's Hill is around 75% utilisation.

9.7.2 Displaced demand

The following facilities in adjacent areas are close enough to the borough boundary to provide usage opportunities for some Tonbridge and Malling residents.

Facility	Address	Distance from Tonbridge & Malling
Avenue Tennis Centre	Featherby Riad, Gillingham ME8 6AN	4 miles
Bailey Tennis Centre	Sevenoaks School, High Street, Sevenoaks TN13 1HU	3 miles
Legend Sports	Thong Lane, Gravesend DA12 4AF	6 miles
Tunbridge Wells SC	St. John's Road, Tunbridge Wells TN4 9TX	3 miles

9.7.3 Unmet demand

There is no evidence of any unmet demand in the borough.

9.8 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in Tonbridge and Malling, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. As an activity appealing to both genders and most age groups, tennis is likely to have some appeal to new and lapsed sports participants.

9.9 Assessments of need in neighbouring areas

The table below summarises strategic assessments of indoor tennis needs in neighbouring areas.

Local Authority	Facilities priorities	Implications for Tonbridge and Malling
Maidstone Borough Council	The 'Maidstone Sports Facilities Strategy' (2019) states that 'there are four seasonally covered indoor tennis courts with community use in Maidstone. There is sufficient spare capacity at existing indoor courts to cater for all additional demand to 2031'.	There is some spare capacity to serve demand from Tonbridge and Malling.
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	The <i>Tunbridge Wells Borough Indoor/Built Sports Facilities Needs Assessment 2017-2033</i> (2018) concludes that there is sufficient capacity to meet current needs and that additional demand by 2033 can be accommodated by current spare capacity.	There is some spare capacity to meet demand from Tonbridge and Malling.
Sevenoaks District Council	The 'Sevenoaks Sports Facilities Strategy 2016-2025' (2017) identifies that current and future need for indoor tennis can be accommodated by the existing facility in the district.	There is some spare capacity to meet demand from Tonbridge and Malling.
Gravesham Borough Council	The 'Gravesham Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2026' (2016) does not address indoor tennis needs, but there are two existing facilities in the borough.	There is some spare capacity to meet demand from Tonbridge and Malling.
Medway Council	The 'Medway Sports Facilities Strategy and Action Plan' (2017) concludes that 'Avenue Tennis is a private provision that meets indoor needs. If demand increases, it is likely that they will build more indoor courts'.	There is some spare capacity to meet demand from Tonbridge and Malling.

9.10 Lawn Tennis Association priorities

The Lawn Tennis Association's strategic plan 2019 - 2023 'Tennis for Britain' (2019) contains the following priorities:

Facilities priorities	Implications for Tonbridge and Malling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visibility: Broaden relevance and increase visibility of tennis all year round to build engagement and participation with fans and players. • Innovation: Innovate in the delivery of tennis to widen its appeal. • Investment: Support community facilities and schools to increase the opportunities to play. • Accessibility: Make the customer journey to playing tennis easier and more accessible for anyone. • Engagement: Engage and collaborate with everyone involved in delivering tennis in Britain, particularly coaches and volunteers, to attract and maintain more people in the game. • Performance: Create a pathway for British champions that nurtures a diverse team of players, people and leaders. • Leadership: Lead tennis in Britain to the highest standard so it is a safe, welcoming, well-run sport. 	Some opportunities to improve local facilities, linked to tennis participation programmes.

Consultation with the Lawn Tennis Association identified the following issues:

- To establish target locations for future community indoor tennis centres, the LTA modelled data from existing successful indoor tennis centres. This helped to identify the demographic type, volume and catchment size of a successful indoor facility. This modelling was applied across the country to establish the areas of potential demand.
- The key metrics established are that a target location must demonstrate a minimum threshold population of 70,000 within a 20-minute drive time. Of this population, at least 12,500 must identify as having an interest in playing tennis. The drive time extends to 30 minutes for rural areas.
- This approach has enabled the LTA to identify 72 target locations for new indoor tennis venues in England. Neither Tonbridge and Malling or any adjoining local authority areas are identified as a priority targets for additional indoor tennis provision.

9.11 Future demand for indoor tennis courts

9.11.1 Population growth

Two scenarios are considered:

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

9.11.2 Participation rates

- **National trends:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for tennis at national level since 2015:

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	% Change
2.0%	1.9%	1.7%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	2.0%	0.0%

- **Local trends:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey recorded the proportion of the adult (16+) population who are active for at least 150 minutes per week in Tonbridge and Malling between 2015 and the present. The results are tabulated below and show that whilst rates have fluctuated over the survey periods, there is a downward trend between 2015 and 2022:

Nov '15 - Nov '16	May '16 - May '17	Nov '16- Nov '17	May '17- May '18	Nov '17- Nov '18	May '18- May '19	Nov '18-Nov '19	May '19- May '20	Nov '19-Nov '20	May '20- May '21	Nov '20-Nov '21	Nov '21-Nov '22	% Change
66.3%	66.9%	66.8%	67.4%	68.8%	69.5%	69.4%	66.0%	66.0%	66.6%	65.1%	64.2%	-2.5%

9.11.3 Future projections

National tennis participation rates have been static in recent years with general activity rates in Tonbridge and Malling falling over the same period, it would therefore be reasonable to assume that demand for tennis will remain static until 2041. An increase of 20,659 (or 15.6%) in the Tonbridge and Malling population by 2041 will increase demand for indoor tennis capacity by a similar amount. Alternatively, an increase of 36,664 (or 27.7%) in the Tonbridge and Malling population by 2041 will increase demand for indoor tennis capacity by a similar amount. In both cases, this can be accommodated by existing spare capacity.

9.12 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Tennis participation rates in the borough are projected to remain static until 2041.
- Population growth of in Tonbridge and Malling by 2041 will increase demand for indoor tennis court capacity by a similar amount.

9.13 The balance between indoor tennis court supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between indoor tennis court supply and demand in Tonbridge and Malling:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough courts with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the courts fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the courts in the right location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the courts available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

9.14 Quantity

9.14.1 Current needs

Current indoor tennis court needs in Tonbridge and Malling are met in part by the courts at David Lloyd (Kings Hill) and in part by the provision at accessible facilities in neighbouring areas, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used capacity:** Peak usage rates are 75% at David Lloyd (Kings Hill) indicating some limited spare capacity.
- **Satisfied demand:** There is no evidence of unmet demand in the borough.

9.14.2 Future needs

Spare capacity at the existing David Lloyd (Kings Hill) and indoor tennis courts in neighbouring areas will be able to accommodate all additional future demand.

9.15 Quality

9.15.1 Current quality

The quality of the indoor courts at David Lloyd (Kings Hill) is 'good'.

9.15.2 Future quality

It seems reasonable to assume that courts at David Lloyd (Kings Hill) and accessible facilities in neighbouring areas will continue to be maintained to a high standard.

9.16 Accessibility

9.16.1 Current accessibility

The whole population of the borough is within 30-minutes' drive time of an indoor tennis court either in the borough or in a neighbouring area.

9.16.2 Future accessibility

Future accessibility is likely to remain the same.

9.17 Availability

9.17.1 Current availability

The courts at David Lloyd (Kings Hill) are available on a membership basis only and the fee levels will exclude some potential users.

9.17.2 Future availability

Future availability is likely to reflect the current arrangements.

9.18 Contribution to shared strategic outcomes

Based upon the assessment above, the extent to which indoor tennis court provision in Tonbridge and Malling contributes to the shared strategic outcomes is as follows:

- Indoor tennis is a specialist activity that appeals to a limited cross-section of the community and as such it is unlikely to engage many new or lapsed participants.
- The courts at David Lloyd (Kings Hill) are available on a membership basis only and the fee levels will exclude some potential users.

9.19 The options for securing additional indoor tennis court capacity

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

9.19.1 Protect

Policies for the protection of existing tennis courts through the Local Plan will be key to securing local provision. Planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities for which existing and/or future demand has been identified, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

9.19.2 Enhance

Enhancing existing indoor tennis courts by ensuring that the courts and ancillary facilities receive regular maintenance and improvements.

9.20 Action Plan

The table below sets out the action plan for indoor tennis courts to guide the implementation of the Assessment.

Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Protection of indoor tennis courts.	Consider including a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing indoor tennis courts.	Sport England Active Kent and Medway	Planning policy team	-	High
Existing spare capacity can meet future demand by 2041.	Include a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing indoor tennis courts.	Sport England Active Kent and Medway	Planning policy team	-	High
Maintaining existing indoor tennis courts	Encourage providers to maintain existing courts to sustain and improve current quality and improve access wherever possible.	Court providers	-	Dependent on the scale of provision.	High

10 INDOOR BOWLS FACILITIES

10.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of indoor bowls facilities in Tonbridge and Malling. Indoor bowls halls are defined specialist indoor facilities with appropriate playing surface and rink dimensions for bowls.

10.2 Quantity

There is one indoor bowls facility in Tonbridge and Malling:

Facility	Address	Rinks	Sub-area
Angel (Tonbridge) Indoor Bowls Club	Avenue Du Puy, Tonbridge TN9 1QH	6	Tonbridge

10.3 Quality

The quality of the indoor bowls hall was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit. The criteria that were assessed were as follows:

- **The green:** The overall condition, lighting, spectator provision, equipment storage and fitness for purpose.
- **Changing facilities:** The capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- **Disability access:** The extent of full disabled access to the facility, including the provision of access ramps, dedicated changing, toilets and car parking.
- **General access:** Car parking, signposting, external lighting and proximity to public transport.

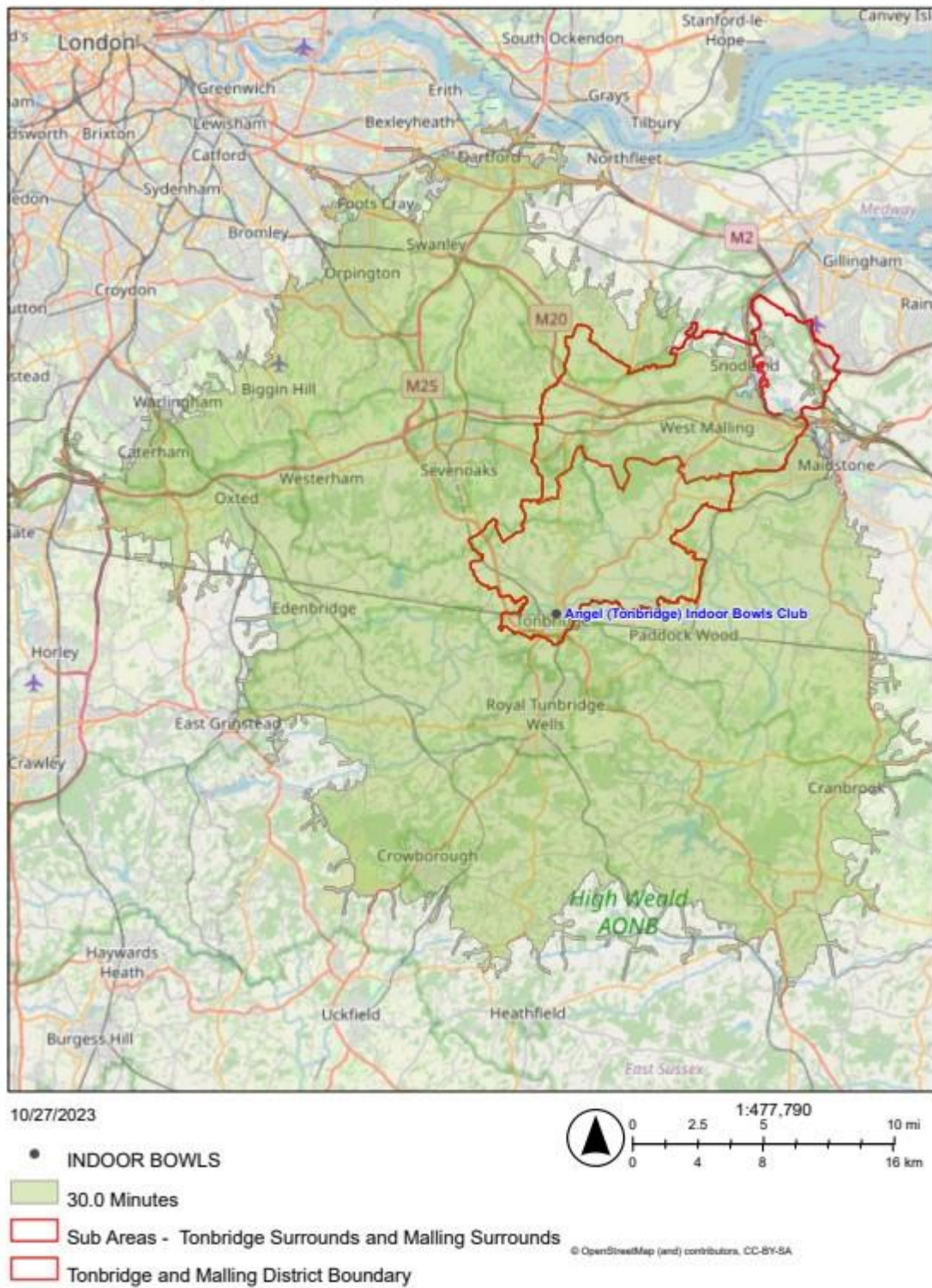
The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to 'very good', 4 to 'good', 3 to 'average', 2 to 'poor' and 1 to 'very poor'. The ratings for the indoor bowls facility in Tonbridge and Malling are shown in the table below.

Facility	Green	Changing	Disability Access	General access
Angel Tonbridge IBC	5	4	5	5

10.4 Accessibility

Based on Sport England research, the 'effective catchment' for indoor bowls facilities (defined as the time/distance travelled and the prevailing mode of transport used by up to 90% of facility users) is 30 minutes driving time. The whole population of the borough is within 30-minutes' drive time of the indoor bowls green in the borough, with the exception of a small area in the north-east that is served by facilities in Maidstone.

Tonbridge and Malling - Indoor Bowls 30 Minutes Drive



10.5 Availability

The table below shows the basis of use of indoor bowls facilities in Tonbridge and Malling.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Opening hours and basis of use</i>	<i>Pricing</i>	<i>Peak use</i>
Angel (Tonbridge) IBC	Mon-Fri 9am - 11pm Sat-Sun 9am - 8pm	Adult annual membership £95 Junior annual membership £20 Rink fees £4.50 per game	80%

10.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There is one indoor bowls facility in Tonbridge and Malling, comprising six rinks. Peak time used capacity is high at 80%.
- The quality of the facility is generally 'good'.
- The whole population is within 30-minutes' drive of an indoor bowls facility.

10.7 Current demand for bowls facilities

10.7.1 Expressed demand

Sport England's 'Indoor Bowls Guidance Note' (2005) stipulates that full capacity for an indoor bowls facility is reached at 80 - 100 members per rink. The respective membership figures at the facility in Tonbridge and Malling, compared with the facility capacities is tabulated below:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Capacity</i>	<i>2023 Membership</i>	<i>% Used Capacity</i>
Angel (Tonbridge) IBC	480 - 600	550	92% - 115%

10.7.2 Displaced demand

The following facilities are located in adjacent local authority areas, close enough to the borough boundary to provide usage opportunities for Tonbridge and Malling residents.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Distance from Tonbridge and Malling</i>
Mote Park (Maidstone) IBC	Willow Way, Maidstone ME15 7RN	2 miles
Prince Arthur Road IBC	Prince Arthur Road, Gillingham ME7 1UR	3 miles
Royal Tunbridge Wells IBC	High Woods Lane, Tunbridge Wells TN2 4TU	3 miles
Sevenoaks IBC	Hollybush Close, Sevenoaks TN13 3UX	2 miles
White Oak IBC	Garrold's Close, Swanley BR8 7BF	6 miles

10.7.3 Unmet demand

There is no evidence of any unmet demand in the borough.

10.8 Assessments of need in neighbouring areas

The table below summarises strategic assessments of indoor bowls needs in neighbouring areas.

Local Authority	Facilities priorities	Implications for Tonbridge and Malling
Maidstone Borough Council	The 'Maidstone Sports Facilities Strategy' (2019) states that 'there is one 8-rink indoor bowls hall in Maidstone. There is sufficient spare capacity at the existing indoor facility to cater for all additional demand to 2031'.	There is some spare capacity to serve demand from Tonbridge and Malling.
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	The <i>Tunbridge Wells Borough Indoor/Built Sports Facilities Needs Assessment 2017-2033</i> (2018) concludes that there is sufficient capacity to meet current needs and that additional demand equivalent to one extra rink will be created by 2033.	There is some spare capacity to serve demand from Tonbridge and Malling.
Sevenoaks District Council	The 'Sevenoaks Sports Facilities Strategy 2016-2025' (2017) identifies that 'currently there would appear to be sufficient indoor bowls provision, to meet demand'.	There is some spare capacity to serve demand from Tonbridge and Malling.
Gravesham Borough Council	The 'Gravesham Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2026' (2016) identified that 'there is no indoor bowls facility within Gravesham. There are, however, 10 indoor facilities supplying 75 rinks within 20 minutes' drive time of Gravesham'.	There is no capacity to meet demand from Tonbridge and Malling.
Medway Council	The 'Medway Sports Facilities Strategy and Action Plan' (2017) concludes that 'current provision across the borough is meeting existing needs. There is no requirement to provide additional bowls provision in the borough, assuming the long-term trend for declining participation continues'.	There is some spare capacity to serve demand from Tonbridge and Malling.

10.9 Bowls England priorities

Consultation with Bowls England and the local clubs identified the following issues:

- 'We have one club in Tonbridge and Malling, with five other sites being located broadly within the now acceptable travel time of 30 Minutes, it is vital that the Club in the Tonbridge and Malling local authority area continues to operate and enable the local population to enjoy our wonderful sport'.
- 'Our Sport is popular with the older members of the population and with the projections for the 60+ population to increase between 2023 and 2041, we consider that this will enable our sport to grow to the benefit of the indoor club'.
- As a guide demand is calculated as one rink per 14,000-17,000 of total population. A six-rink green, therefore, is required for a population of 85,000-100,000.

10.10 Future demand for bowls

10.10.1 Population growth

Two scenarios are considered:

- The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 152,859 by 2041, an increase of 20,659 (or 15.6%).

- A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population of 168,864 by 2041, an increase of 36,664 (or 27.7%).

10.10.2 Participation rates

- **National bowls trends:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for bowls at national level since 2015:

Nov 2015- Nov 2016	May 2016- May 2017	Nov 2016- Nov 2017	May 2017- May 2018	Nov 2017- Nov 2018	May 2018- May 2019	Nov 2018- Nov 2019	May 2019- May 2020	% Change
0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%	-0.3%

- **Local general trends:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey recorded the proportion of the adult (16+) population who are active for at least 150 minutes per week in Tonbridge and Malling between 2015 and the present. The results are tabulated below and show that whilst rates have fluctuated over the survey periods, there is a downward trend between 2015 and 2022:

Nov '15 - Nov '16	May '16 - May '17	Nov '16- Nov '17	May '17- May '18	Nov '17- Nov '18	May '18- May '19	Nov '18-Nov '19	May '19- May '20	Nov '19-Nov '20	May '20- May '21	Nov '20-Nov '21	Nov '21-Nov '22	% Change
66.3%	66.9%	66.8%	67.4%	68.8%	69.5%	69.4%	66.0%	66.0%	66.6%	65.1%	64.2%	-2.5%

10.10.3 Future projections

Sport England has developed the Sport Facility Calculator (SFC), to help to quantify how much additional demand for key community facilities like indoor bowls halls, will be generated by population increases. The SFC uses Sport England survey data on who uses facilities and applies this to the population profile of the local area. This builds up a profile of usage, which can be then applied to estimate how much demand any given population would generate. This demand is then converted into the quantity of facilities needed and expressed as rinks to define indoor bowls needs.

Two population scenarios are considered:

- The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 152,859 by 2041, an increase of 20,659 (or 15.6%). On this basis, there would be additional demand equivalent to 0.33 indoor bowls rinks or 0.06 of a six-rink indoor bowls facility.
- A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population of 168,864 by 2041, an increase of 36,664 (or 27.7%). On this basis, there would be additional demand equivalent to 0.59 indoor bowls rinks or 0.10 of a six-rink indoor bowls facility.
- This increase in demand is for a small fraction of a six-rink facility and is not sufficient to justify additional provision.

10.11 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Expressed demand for indoor bowls in Tonbridge and Malling has fallen in recent years, reflecting a downward trend nationally.
- Peak utilisation rates at the indoor bowls facility in the borough are 80% meaning that there is limited spare capacity to accommodate additional demand.

- Population growth of 15.6% in Tonbridge and Malling by 2041 based on the lower population estimate will increase demand for indoor bowls facility capacity by a similar amount, whilst an increased population of 27.7% based on the higher estimate will increase demand for indoor bowls facility capacity by a similar amount.

10.12 The balance between indoor bowls supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between indoor bowls supply and demand in Tonbridge and Malling:

- **Quantity:** Does the facility have sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Is the facility fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Is the facility in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Is the facility available for those who want to use it now and in the future?

10.13 Quantity

10.13.1 Current needs

The indoor bowls facility serving Tonbridge and Malling is assessed to be operating with limited spare capacity, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used capacity:** The peak usage capacity at the facility at 80% of capacity.
- **Satisfied demand:** There is no evidence of unmet demand in the borough.

10.13.2 Future needs

Spare capacity at the existing indoor facility should be able to accommodate all additional future demand.

10.14 Quality

10.14.1 Current quality

The quality of all aspects of the facility is at least 'good'.

10.14.2 Future quality

There will need to be continued investment in maintaining and improving the existing facility.

10.15 Accessibility

10.15.1 Current accessibility

The whole population is within 30-minutes' drive of an indoor bowls facility in the borough and/or in a neighbouring area.

10.15.2 Future accessibility

The facility will be accessible to meet the needs of the increased population by 2041.

10.16 Availability

10.16.1 Current availability

The facility is accessed by members only, but the membership rates are set at levels that are unlikely to exclude any potential users on cost grounds.

10.16.2 Future availability

It is reasonable to assume that similar arrangements for use will be offered in the future.

10.17 Contribution to shared strategic outcomes

Based upon the assessment above, the extent to which indoor bowls provision in Tonbridge and Malling contributes to the shared strategic outcomes is as follows:

- Bowls appeals to the older age groups, which creates opportunities to get older people more physically active.
- The geographical coverage of facilities in the borough and its neighbouring areas optimises accessibility.

10.18 The options for securing additional indoor bowls capacity

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

10.18.1 Protect

Local Plan policies for the protection of existing indoor bowls facilities will be key to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities for which existing and/or future demand has been identified, unless the loss of a facility can be justified by sustained reductions in demand or would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

10.18.2 Provide

All additional demand can be accommodated by current spare capacity.

10.18.3 Enhance

Enhancing the existing indoor bowls facility by ensuring that the green and ancillary facilities receive regular maintenance and improvements will be important.

10.19 Action Plan

The table overleaf sets out the action plan for indoor bowls facilities to guide the implementation of the Assessment.

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Protection of existing indoor bowls facilities.	Consider including a policy in the Local Plan to protect all indoor bowls facilities.	Sport England Active Kent and Medway	Planning policy team	-	High
Existing spare capacity can meet future demand by 2041.	Maintain existing facility to sustain and improve current quality.	Angel (Tonbridge) IBC	-	-	High
Maintaining the existing indoor bowls facility.	Maintain existing facility to sustain and improve current quality.	Angel (Tonbridge) IBC	-	-	High

11 GYMNASTICS FACILITIES

11.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of gymnastics facilities in Tonbridge and Malling. Specialist gymnastics facilities are defined as permanently rigged, built facilities that cater for the needs of gymnastics and trampolining. Non-specialist facilities comprise sports halls and smaller halls that accommodate gymnastics and trampolining on a regular basis, involving the temporary installation of equipment. These needs have therefore also been reflected in the section assessing general sports hall provision.

11.2 Quantity

11.2.1 Purpose-built facilities

The following purpose-built facility in Tonbridge and Malling is used by Weald gymnastics squads and can be used by the community on a 'pay-and-play' basis:

Club	Location	Sub-area
Weald Gymnastics Centre	Unit 6a, Sovereign Way, Tonbridge TN9 1RS	Tonbridge

11.2.2 Non-specialist facilities

Local clubs also use the following non-specialist facilities:

Club	Facility	Location	Sub-area
ASG Community Gymnastics Club	Tonbridge Grammar School sports hall	Deakin Leas, Tonbridge TN9 2JR	Tonbridge
Dharma Gym for All	Larkfield Leisure Centre sports hall	New Hythe Lane, Aylesford ME20 6RH	Mallings
Extension Gymnastics	The Angel Centre sports hall	Angel Lane, Tonbridge TN9 1SF	Tonbridge
Galaxy Stars Trampoline Club	Larkfield Leisure Centre sports hall	New Hythe Lane, Aylesford ME20 6RH	Mallings
Kings Hill Gymnastics Academy	Kings Hill Community Centre	Gibson Drive, Kings Hill ME19 4LG	Mallings
Tigers Acro	Weald of Kent Grammar School	Tudeley Lane, Tonbridge TN9 2JP	Tonbridge

11.2.3 Sub-area analysis

The distribution of specialist and non-specialist gymnastics facilities by sub-area in Tonbridge and Malling is as follows:

Sub-area	Sub-area population 2021	No. facilities	Facilities per capita
Tonbridge and surrounds	56,018	4	1: 14,005
Mallings and surrounds	76,182	3	1: 25,394
TONBRIDGE & MALLING	132,200	7	1: 18,886

11.3 Quality

The quality of facilities used by gymnastics clubs was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all sites. The criteria that were assessed were as follows:

- **The hall:** The quality of the activity space, including lighting and storage facilities.
- **The equipment:** The quality of the equipment, matted areas and foam-filled pits.
- **Changing facilities:** The capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- **Disability access:** The extent of full disabled access to the facility, including the provision of access ramps, dedicated changing, toilets and car parking.
- **General access:** Parking, signage and proximity to public transport.

The criteria were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to 'very good', 4 to 'good', 3 to 'average', 2 to 'poor' and 1 to 'very poor'.

Facility	Hall	Equipment	Changing	Disability access	General access
Weald Gymnastics Centre	5	5	5	5	5
Kings Hill Community Centre	4	4	4	5	5
Larkfield Leisure Centre sports hall	4	4	5	4	5
The Angel Centre sports hall	5	4	4	3	3
Tonbridge Grammar School sports hall	4	4	4	4	4
Weald of Kent Grammar School	5	5	5	5	5

11.4 Accessibility

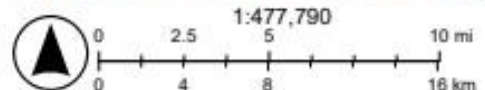
The 'effective catchment' for gymnastics facilities is 20 minutes driving time. The whole population of the borough is either within the catchment of a specialist facility, or a non-specialist facility that provides gymnastics.

Tonbridge and Malling - Gymnastics Centres 20 Mins Drive



10/27/2023

- GYMNASTICS
- 20.0 Minutes
- Sub Areas - Tonbridge Surrounds and Malling Surrounds
- Tonbridge and Malling District Boundary



© OpenStreetMap (and) contributors, CC-BY-SA

11.5 Availability

11.5.1 Purpose-built facilities

Facility	Opening hours and basis of use	Peak use	Secured access
Weald Gymnastics Centre	Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 4pm - 9pm Weds 5pm - 9pm Sat 8.30am - 5.30pm Members only	80%	Yes

11.5.2 Non-specialist facilities

The table below identifies the opening hours and gymnastics usage of the non-specialist facilities:

Facility	Usage time for gymnastics	Secured access
Kings Hill Community Centre	Mon - Fri 6pm - 9pm	Yes
Larkfield Leisure Centre sports hall	Mon 2pm - 3pm and 5pm - 9pm Tues 2pm - 8.30pm Weds 4pm - 6.15pm Thurs 1.30pm - 2.15pm and 4pm - 8pm Fri 10.30am - 11.30am and 4pm - 7.30pm Sat 8.30am - 1.30pm Sun 10sm - 11am	Yes
The Angel Centre sports hall	Mon 1pm - 1.45pm and 4pm - 7pm Tues 1pm - 1.45pm and 4pm - 7pm Weds 1pm - 1.45pm and 4pm - 6.15pm Thurs 1pm - 1.45pm and 4pm - 6.30pm Fri 1pm - 1.45pm and 4pm - 6.30pm Sat 8.30am - 12pm	Yes
Tonbridge Grammar School sports hall	Tues 4pm - 6pm Thurs 4pm - 6pm	Yes
Weald of Kent Grammar School	Thurs 5pm - 8pm Sat 9am - 11.15pm	Yes

11.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There is one specialist gymnastics facility in Tonbridge and Malling, plus five non-specialist halls.
- The quality of most aspects of all facilities used is rated as at least 'good'.
- The whole population of the borough is within 20 minutes' drive of at least one facility that accommodates gymnastics.

11.7 Current demand for Gymnastics

11.7.1 Expressed demand

There are seven gymnastics clubs in Tonbridge and Malling:

Facility	Facility	Membership
Weald of Kent Gymnastics Club	Weald Gymnastics Centre	638
Tigers Acrobatic Gymnastics	Weald of Kent Grammar School	912
Dharma Gym for All	Larkfield Leisure Centre	125
Galaxy Stars Trampoline Club	Larkfield Leisure Centre	13
Extension Gymnastics	The Angel Centre	54
Kings Hill Gymnastics Academy	Kings Hill Community Centre	32
ASG Community Gymnastics Club	Tonbridge Grammar School	81
TOTAL	-	1,855

11.7.2 Displaced demand

The following facilities are located in adjacent local authority areas, close enough to the borough boundary to provide usage opportunities for Tonbridge and Malling residents.

Facility	Address	Distance
Tigers Acrobatic Gymnastics	Chapman Way, Tunbridge Wells TN2 3EF	4 miles
Pegasus Gymnastics	Farleigh Hill, Maidstone ME15 6RG	2 miles
Lightning School of Gymnastics	London Rd, Riverhead, Sevenoaks TN13 2DN	3 miles

11.7.3 Unmet demand

Unmet demand involves two components:

- Demand that cannot be met within a facility catchment due to excess demand for that facility.
- Demand that cannot be met because it is located outside the catchment of a facility.

There is some evidence of unmet demand for gymnastics in Tonbridge and Malling, with all clubs operating waiting lists.

11.8 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in Tonbridge and Malling, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. Gymnastics appeals to young people in particular and from that perspective it offers one option in the campaign against childhood obesity.

11.9 Assessments of need in neighbouring areas

The table below summarises strategic assessments of gymnastics needs in neighbouring areas.

Local Authority	Facilities priorities	Implications for Tonbridge and Malling
Maidstone Borough Council	The 'Maidstone Sports Facilities Strategy' (2019) does not include an assessment of gymnastics needs.	No assessment available.
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	The <i>Tunbridge Wells Borough Indoor/Built Sports Facilities Needs Assessment 2017-2033</i> (2018) does not include an assessment of specialist gymnastics facilities needs.	No assessment available.
Sevenoaks District Council	The 'Sevenoaks Sports Facilities Strategy 2016-2025' (2017) identifies that 'there is limited provision of access to facilities within the Sevenoaks District area with all clubs having waiting lists restricting access to gymnastic activities due to the lack of time within both dedicated and non-dedicated facilities'.	There is no spare capacity to meet demand from Tonbridge and Malling.
Gravesham Borough Council	The 'Gravesham Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2026' (2016) does not include an assessment of gymnastics needs.	No assessment available.
Medway Council	The 'Medway Sports Facilities Strategy and Action Plan' (2017) concludes that 'there are two dedicated gymnastics centres in Medway. There are significant waiting lists at all gymnastics and trampolining clubs in Medway, highlighting this demand. Additional dedicated gymnastics facilities would help to meet some of this unmet latent demand'.	There is no spare capacity to meet demand from Tonbridge and Malling.

11.10 British Gymnastics priorities

11.10.1 Strategy

Facilities priorities	Implications for Tonbridge and Malling
<p>British Gymnastics' 'Facility Strategy 2017 - 2021' (2017) identifies facilities options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standalone dedicated facilities - Achievable for most clubs. Can provide for participation and competition. • Multi-venue dedicated facilities - For large club-based organisations looking to further expand opportunities. • Dedicated facility as part of a multi-sport venue - Most likely to be local authority-based projects. • Non-dedicated space as part of leisure centre - Ideal for club delivery and mass participation activities. • Satellite venues - Opportunities for clubs to scale up their programmes and increase activity options. • Non-dedicated spaces in leisure centres - Ideal for introductory level, mass participation programmes. 	There is one specialist facility in the borough.

11.10.2 Consultation with British Gymnastics

Consultation with British Gymnastics' Facilities Development Partner identified that:

- 'There is a large demand for more gymnastics opportunities and clubs all report large waiting lists. The total number of people estimated to be on waiting lists for gymnastics in

2020 was 1 million, with a further 1.9 million interested in the sport but not on a waiting list'.

- The sport is experiencing a strong recovery post covid with member numbers tracking 5% under 2019.
- 'A key part of British Gymnastics' strategy to increase participation is to support clubs moving into their own dedicated facility, offering more time and space for classes'.
- 'The main issue for gymnastics development is having access to sufficient dedicated space to enable clubs to grow and extend their programmes. The other key factor is the availability of coaches qualified at the right level'.
- 'The facility development team is available to support, develop and guide clubs, leisure providers and other partners to help achieve their facility requirements. Eligible British Gymnastics clubs are able to apply for Club Capital, a social investment impact loan. The £10m Club Capital fund offers unsecured loans of between £25,000 to £250,000 (up to £750,000 in exceptional circumstances) to enable clubs to move into new, or expand or safeguard existing, dedicated gymnastics facilities. Most loans will be over 4 years at an interest rate of 4%'.
- 'Recent developments for dedicated gymnastic provision include modular buildings and use of former retail units in town centres'.
- 'Weald of Kent GC operates from dedicated facilities, ensuring the long-term sustainability of this site is a priority'.
- 'Dharma Gym for All has indicated that it would like to develop a dedicated facility project'.

11.11 Future demand for Gymnastics

11.11.1 Population growth

Two scenarios are considered:

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

11.11.2 Participation rates

- **National trends:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for gymnastics at national level since 2015:

Nov 2015- Nov 2016	May 2016- May 2017	Nov 2016- Nov 2017	May 2017- May 2018	Nov 2017- Nov 2018	May 2018- May 2019	Nov 2018- Nov 2019	May 2019- May 2020	% Change
0.6%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	-0.1%

- Figures supplied by British Gymnastics suggest that participation in gymnastics is increasing, contrary to the 'Active Lives' figures which are for adults only. British Gymnastics membership reached 390,500 in 2017 and increased by about 12% in the period 2013-17.

- **Local trends:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey recorded the proportion of the adult (16+) population who are active for at least 150 minutes per week in Tonbridge and Malling between 2015 and the present. The results are tabulated below and show that whilst rates have fluctuated over the survey periods, there is a downward trend between 2015 and 2022:

Nov '15 - Nov '16	May '16 - May '17	Nov '16- Nov '17	May '17- May '18	Nov '17- Nov '18	May '18- May '19	Nov '18-Nov '19	May '19- May '20	Nov '19-Nov '20	May '20- May '21	Nov '20-Nov '21	Nov '21-Nov '22	% Change
66.3%	66.9%	66.8%	67.4%	68.8%	69.5%	69.4%	66.0%	66.0%	66.6%	65.1%	64.2%	-2.5%

11.11.3 Future projections

- An increase of 20,659 (or 15.6%) in the Tonbridge and Malling population by 2041 will increase demand for gymnastics facilities capacity by a similar amount. Alternatively, an increase of 36,664 (or 27.7%) in the Tonbridge and Malling population by 2041 will increase demand for gymnastics facilities capacity by a similar amount. In both cases, this will require additional facilities provision.

11.12 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Expressed demand for gymnastics in Tonbridge and Malling is increasing but can be accommodated by current facilities supply at present.
- An increase of 20,659 (or 15.6%) in the Tonbridge and Malling population by 2041 will increase demand for gymnastics facilities capacity by a similar amount. Alternatively, an increase of 36,664 (or 27.7%) in the Tonbridge and Malling population by 2041 will increase demand for gymnastics facilities capacity by a similar amount. In both cases, this will require additional facilities provision.

11.13 The balance between gymnastics facilities supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between gymnastics facilities supply and demand in Tonbridge and Malling:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough facilities with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the facilities fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the facilities in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the facilities available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

11.14 Quantity

11.14.1 Current needs

Current gymnastics facilities in Tonbridge and Malling are assessed to be at operating at full capacity.

11.14.2 Future needs

There will be insufficient capacity to accommodate additional future demand, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Demand increases:** An increase of 20,659 (or 15.6%) in the Tonbridge and Malling population by 2041 will increase demand for gymnastics facilities capacity by a similar amount. Alternatively, an increase of 36,664 (or 27.7%) in the Tonbridge and Malling population by 2041 will increase demand for gymnastics facilities capacity by a similar amount. In both cases, this will require additional facilities provision.
- **Participation trends:** Expressed demand for gymnastics in Tonbridge and Malling is increasing and this is likely to continue until 2041, offset slightly by the falling number of people aged under 18.

11.15 Quality

11.15.1 Current quality

All aspects of the facilities used for gymnastics in Tonbridge and Malling are rated as at least 'good' quality.

11.15.2 Future quality

It is assumed that local providers will continue to invest in maintaining and improving their facilities, so if this process can be assisted with funding from developer contributions in the future, it seems reasonable to assume that local provision will continue to be upgraded regularly.

11.16 Accessibility

11.16.1 Current accessibility

The whole population of the borough is within 20 minutes' drive of at least one facility that accommodates gymnastics.

11.16.2 Future accessibility

The current geographical spread of facilities will meet the needs of the increased population by 2041.

11.17 Availability

11.17.1 Current availability

All local clubs have membership fees that are set at reasonable rates.

11.17.2 Future availability

It is reasonable to assume that similar membership arrangements will be offered in the future. If an additional capacity is provided, the additional capacity will improve availability.

11.18 Contribution to shared strategic outcomes

Based upon the assessment above, the extent to which gymnastics facilities provision in Tonbridge and Malling contributes to the shared strategic outcomes is as follows:

- Gymnastics is most popular with younger people and early involvement in sport and physical activity can create positive early years experiences.
- Specialist facility provision is concentrated in the central part of the borough, creating an accessibility deficiency in the north and south.

11.19 The options for securing additional gymnastics facilities

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

11.19.1 Protect

Local Plan policies for the protection of existing facilities used for gymnastics through the Local Plan will be key to securing local provision, by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities for which existing and/or future demand has been identified, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

11.19.2 Provide

There is a need to provide additional facilities capacity for gymnastics in Tonbridge and Malling by 2041. This could be met through additional specialist facilities provision, extra sports hall capacity or a combination of the two.

11.19.3 Enhance

Ensuring that existing facilities used for gymnastics receive regular maintenance and improvements will be key to maintaining capacity.

11.20 Action Plan

The table below sets out the action plan for gymnastics facilities to guide the implementation of the Assessment.

Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Protection of existing specialist gymnastics facility.	Consider including a policy in the Local Plan to protect the existing specialist gymnastics facility.	Sport England Active Kent and Medway	Planning policy team	-	High
Additional gymnastics facilities capacity required to meet future needs.	Examine the feasibility of developing additional capacity through new or extended provision in the Mallings sub-area.	TMBC	Local clubs British Gymnastics	Costings unknown	High

12 POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 Introduction

This section contains policies and recommendations for the protection, enhancement and provision of sports facilities in Tonbridge and Malling.

12.2 Policy context

The recommendations made in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which stipulates that existing sports facilities should not be built upon unless:

- An assessment has taken place which has clearly shown the facility to be surplus to requirements, or;
- The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality, in a suitable location, or;
- The development is for alternative sport and recreation provision, the needs for which clearly outweighs the loss.

12.3 Protect

12.3.1 Recommendation 1: Safeguarding existing provision

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

12.3.2 Recommendation 2: Community access to education sports facilities

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

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

12.4 Enhance

12.4.1 Recommendation 3: Capacity improvements

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

12.4.2 Recommendation 4: Developer contributions (enhancements)

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

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

12.5 Provide

12.5.1 Recommendation 6: New sports facilities

The Tonbridge and Malling SFS considers two population growth scenarios:

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

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

Facility type	Current Needs	Future needs (lower)	Future needs (higher)
Sports halls	All needs met subject to re-provision of the Angel Sports Centre sports hall	All needs met subject to re-provision of the Angel Sports Centre sports hall	All needs met subject to re-provision of the Angel Sports Centre sports hall
Swimming pools	All needs met with some programming and opening times refinements	All needs met by current spare capacity	All needs met by current spare capacity
Health and fitness	All needs met	All needs met by current spare capacity	42 extra fitness stations

Facility type	Current Needs	Future needs (lower)	Future needs (higher)
Squash courts	All needs met	Additional needs met by current spare capacity	Additional needs met by current spare capacity
Indoor tennis courts	All needs met	Additional needs met by current spare capacity	Additional needs met by current spare capacity
Indoor bowls	All needs met	Additional needs met by current spare capacity	Additional needs met by current spare capacity
Gymnastics facilities	Additional capacity needed	New provision in the Mallings sub-area or extension to the existing specialist facility	New provision or extension to the existing specialist facility

12.5.2 Recommendation 7: Developer contributions (new provision)

Some of the additional demand arising from that will arise from future housing development in Tonbridge and Malling can be accommodated through the provision of new sports facilities. It is therefore recommended that:

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

13 IMPLEMENTING AND REVIEWING THE STRATEGY

13.1 Introduction

This section identifies the applications of the Tonbridge and Malling Sports Facilities Strategy (SFS) and the mechanisms for reviewing it to ensure that it remains robust and up-to-date.

13.2 Assessment implementation

The success of the SFS will be determined by how it is used. While the use of the SFS should be led by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, its application and delivery will also be the responsibility of the other key local stakeholders including:

- **Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council:** The council provides the borough's leisure centres at The Angel Centre in Tonbridge, Tonbridge Swimming Pool and Larkfield Leisure Centre. The facilities are managed by TM Active, a charitable trust.
- **Schools:** Schools are significant sports facilities providers in the borough, although not all provision is fully community accessible. The most significant of these is Tonbridge School.
- **Sports clubs:** Voluntary sector sports clubs provide and run a range of mostly smaller facilities for example Snodland Community Centre.
- **Commercial providers:** The commercial sector provides a range of health and fitness facilities. The largest of these is the David Lloyd Club in Kings Hill.

13.3 Assessment applications

The SFS has a number of applications:

13.3.1 Sports development planning

The SFS can be applied to help:

- Highlight, justify and make the case for sports development activities with particular sports, groups and clubs by area of the borough, Tonbridge and the Mallings.
- Identify current and future trends and changes in the demand for individual sports and the facility requirements arising.
- Inform the work, strategies and plans of sporting organisations and operators active in the borough.
- Advocate the need to work with secondary education establishments to secure community use of their site(s).
- Develop and/or enhance secondary schools and academy sports facilities where they have spare capacity and/or space to expand and are well located to meet demand.
- An understanding of supply and demand to assist in temporary relocations due to major facility refurbishments.

13.3.2 Planning policy

The SFS can be applied to help:

- Inform new Local Plan policies and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- The implementation of local planning policies to meet the needs of the community in line with the NPPF.

13.3.3 Planning applications

The SFS can be applied to help:

- Inform the development of planning applications which affect existing and/or proposed new sports facilities provision.
- Inform pre-application discussions to ensure any subsequent planning applications maximise their benefit to sport and are developed in line with national and local planning policy.
- Sports clubs and other organisations demonstrate the strategic need for development proposals thereby potentially adding support to their application(s) and saving them resources in developing such evidence.
- Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to assess planning applications affecting existing and/or proposed new sports facilities provision in line with national and local planning policies.
- Sport England and other parties respond to relevant planning application consultations.

The SFS can also be applied to help Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to meet other relevant requirements of the NPPF including:

- Taking account of and supporting local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.
- Delivering the social, recreational, cultural facilities and services the community needs.
- Planning positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives, principles and policies of the framework.
- Working with public health leads and health organisations to understand and take account of the health status and needs of the local population, including expected future changes, and any information about relevant barriers to improving health and well-being.

13.3.4 Planning Obligations

The SFS can be applied to help:

- Advocate the need for sports facilities provision to be taken into account when the local authority is developing and/or reviewing its approach to s106 or anything which replaces these mechanisms.
- Provide prioritised infrastructure requirements for sports facilities provision including deliverable sport, area and site-specific projects with costings (where known).

13.3.5 Funding bids

The SFS can be applied to help:

- Provide the evidence base and strategic need to support funding bids by a range of parties to a variety of potential funding sources.

- Inform potential bidders of the likely strategic need for their project.

13.3.6 Facility and asset management

The SFS can be applied to help:

- Ensure a strategic approach is taken to the provision and management of sports facilities.
- Inform the current management, strategies and plans of sports facility providers e.g. local authorities (within the strategy area and neighbouring areas), leisure trusts and educational establishments, including TMBC and TM Active as the primary operator of publicly accessible indoor sports facility provision in the borough, which require investment over the lifetime of the forthcoming Local Plan.
- Help inform how sites are managed and maintained, the lessons learnt and good practice.
- Highlight the potential of asset transfers and ensure any proposed are beneficial to all parties.
- Provide additional protection for particular sites over and above planning policy, for example through deeds of dedication.
- Resolve issues around security of tenure.

13.3.7 Public health

The SFS can be applied to help:

- Understand how the community currently participates in sport, the need for sports facilities and how this may evolve.
- Raise awareness of and tackle any barriers to people maintaining and increasing their participation.
- Highlight and address any inequalities of access to provision within the strategy area.
- Provide evidence to help support wider health and well-being initiatives.

13.3.8 Co-ordinating resources and investment

The SFS can be applied to help:

- Raise awareness of the current resources and investment (revenue and capital) going into the management, maintenance and improvement of sports facilities provision.
- Co-ordinate the current and any future resources and investment to ensure the maximum benefit to sport and that value for money is secured.

Ensure the current and any future resources and investment are complimentary and do not result in their inefficient use.

13.3.9 Capital programmes

The SFS can be applied to help:

- Provide the evidence base to justify the protection and investment in sports facilities provision.
- Influence the development and implementation of relevant capital programmes (e.g. school refurbishment and new build programmes).

13.4 Monitoring delivery

A process should be put in place to ensure regular monitoring of how the recommendations and action plan are being delivered. This monitoring should be led by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and supported by all members of, and reported back to, the steering group. Understanding and learning lessons from how the SFS has been applied should also form a key component of monitoring its delivery. The material to review should include changes in:

13.5 Keeping the Assessment robust and up-to-date

Along with ensuring that the SFS is used and applied, a process should be put in place to keep it robust and up to date. This will expand the life of the SFS providing people with the confidence to continue to both use it and attach significant value and weight to its key findings and issues, along with its recommendations and actions. Sport England advocates that the SFS should be reviewed on an annual basis from the date it is formally signed off by the steering group. This will help to maintain the momentum and commitment built up when developing the SFS. Taking into account the time to develop the SFS this should also help to ensure that the original supply and demand information is no more than two years old without being reviewed.

The annual review should consider the following:

- How the delivery of the recommendations and action plan has progressed and any changes required to the priority afforded to each action (e.g. the priority of some may increase following the delivery of others).
- How the SFS has been applied and the lessons learnt.
- Any changes to particularly important facilities and/or sites in the area (e.g. the most used or high-quality sites for a particular sport) and other supply and demand information, what this may mean for the overall assessment work and the key findings and issues.
- Any development of a specific sport or particular format of a sport.
- Any new or emerging issues and opportunities.
- A further FPM run to take account of the growth arising from the standard method revisions introduced by the December 2024 NPPF, which was not known at the point this was undertaken to inform the strategy.

13.6 Assessment implementation

The action plans in the SFS provide a long list of prioritised actions, but many will not be applicable, appropriate or manageable to deliver initially and all are dependent upon resource availability.