

### **Outdoor sports facilities**

#### **Definition**

- 9.1 PPG17 guidance includes both indoor and outdoor sports facilities. This section considers the provision of outdoor sports facilities across Bexley. Indoor facilities will be considered separately as an annex to this study.
- 9.2 Outdoor sports facilities is a wide-ranging category of open space which includes both natural and artificial surfaces for sport and recreation that are either publicly or privately owned.
- 9.3 Facilities included within this category are:
- playing pitches (including football, rugby, cricket, hockey)
  - synthetic turf pitches
  - tennis courts
  - bowling greens
  - athletics tracks
  - golf courses
  - outdoor netball courts.
- 9.4 Outdoor sports facilities are a focal point of a local community, functioning as a recreational and amenity resource in addition to a formal sports facility. This is particularly true of pitches, which often have a secondary function of a local dog walking and kickabout area. Likewise, amenity areas sites often provide informal sporting opportunities.
- 9.5 The public parks in Bexley are key locations in the infrastructure of outdoor sports provision in Bexley, and many of the largest playing pitch sites are situated within the boundaries of parks. This further emphasises the overlap between outdoor sports facilities and other informal open spaces. In many instances, pitches operate as informal areas for recreation for the majority of the week.
- 9.6 Private facilities/clubs play a crucial role in the provision of outdoor sports facilities in Bexley and several large clubs provide opportunities for player progression from a young age through to veterans.
- 9.7 While this PPG17 study provides a strategic overview of existing provision of outdoor sports facilities and future priorities across Bexley, in light of the demand led nature of outdoor sports facilities, specific studies should be carried out relating to each type of facility. This will be considered within the updated sport and recreation strategy for Bexley.
- 9.8 There are many opportunities for the improvement of facilities across Bexley, particularly capitalising upon the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. In addition, other sources of funding (such as National Governing Bodies) may offer further avenues for improvement, although it is recognised that funding opportunities for the majority of sports are currently limited.

#### **Context**

- 9.9 The Active People survey, conducted by MORI on behalf of Sport England in 2005/06 reveals that Bexley is among the bottom five Boroughs' within London regarding levels of participation despite having the highest volunteer rate in the

## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

region. The findings of the survey can be used to evaluate existing participation that can be translated to assist in understanding overall demand. Benchmarking can facilitate comprehension of latent demand and inform projects as to future demand for sports facilities across the Borough.

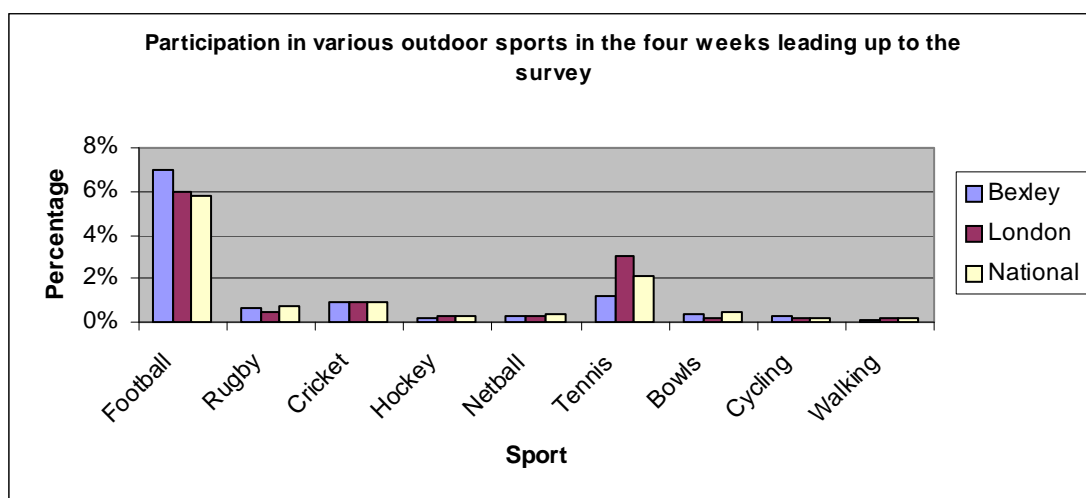
- 9.10 Table 9.1 below illustrates a comparative analysis of participation in various sports in the four weeks prior to the completion of the survey. Table 9.1 compares Bexley's results against regional and national patterns. An individual is assumed to have participated if they took part in the activity for at least 30 minutes (at moderate intensity) during the four weeks prior to the survey.

**Table 9.1 – Participation in various outdoor sports in the four weeks prior to the survey in comparison with regional and national patterns**

Sport	Bexley	London	National
Football	7%	6%	5.8%
Rugby	0.6%	0.5%	0.7%
Cricket	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
Hockey	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
Netball	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%
Tennis	1.2%	3%	2.1%
Bowls	0.4%	0.2%	0.5%
Cycling	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
Walking	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%

- 9.11 Table 9.1 reveals that participation in football, rugby, bowls and cycling in London Borough of Bexley is above the regional average. Participation in football and cycling is also above the national average. These results are further illustrated below in Figure 9.1.

**Figure 9.1 – Bar chart showing participation in various outdoor sports in the four weeks prior to the survey in comparison with regional and national patterns**



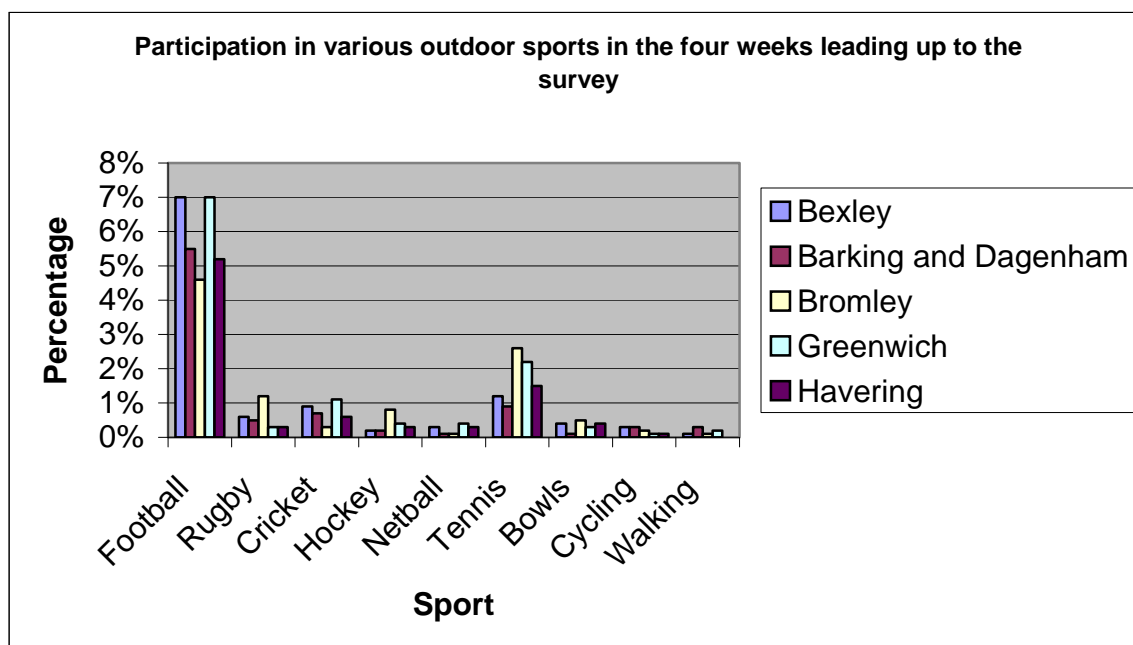
- 9.12 Table 9.2 and Figure 9.2 below display participation levels in Bexley in comparison with adjoining Local Authorities.

## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

**Table 9.2 - Participation in various outdoor sports in the four weeks prior to the survey in comparison with adjoining Local Authorities**

Sport	Bexley	Barking and Dagenham	Bromley	Greenwich	Havering
Football	7%	5.5%	4.6%	7%	5.2%
Rugby	0.6%	0.5%	1.2%	0.3%	0.3%
Cricket	0.9%	0.7%	0.3%	1.1%	0.6%
Hockey	0.2%	0.2%	0.8%	0.4%	0.3%
Netball	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.4%	0.3%
Tennis	1.2%	0.9%	2.6%	2.2%	1.5%
Bowls	0.4%	0.1%	0.5%	0.3%	0.4%
Cycling	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Walking	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0%

**Figure 9.2 - Bar chart showing participation in various outdoor sports in the four weeks prior to the survey in comparison with adjoining Local Authorities**



- 9.13 Comparison with adjoining Local Authorities reveals that Bexley has the highest levels of participation in football and cycling. Bexley also has the second greatest participation in rugby, cricket, netball and bowls. Both comparisons therefore suggest that Bexley has a high level of participation in a number of sports in comparison with national and regional patterns and adjoining Local Authorities.
- 9.14 In comparison with some other areas, participation in some more informal activity, such as walking is lower. This emphasises the opportunities that exist to promote parks and alternative forms of physical exercise to increase the overall participation.

## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

**Table 9.3 - Strategic Context – outdoor sports facilities**

Document Reviewed	Summary of key strategic drivers	Links to Open Space Strategy and PPG17 Assessment
<p>Bexley Unitary Development Plan (2004)</p>	<p>Specific policies in the UDP relating to the provision of outdoor sports include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies ENV2 and ENV3 state that developments inside the Metropolitan Green Belt will not be permitted unless essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, cemeteries and any other use of land which preserve the openness of Green Belt land</li> <li>• Policy ENV10 states the Council will encourage recreational use of open nature in suitable parts of the Metropolitan Green Belt, for open-air recreational proposals</li> <li>• Policy ENV15 states that within Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) the construction of new buildings or change of use of land will not be permitted unless for the purpose of: agriculture and forestry, open air recreation, nature conservation, educational grounds, cemeteries or other uses that would maintain the character of the land</li> <li>• Policy ENV20 states the future use of land designated as educational use or playing fields on the proposals map that becomes surplus will be assessed on the following criteria: the need to relieve any deficiencies in the provision of open space, requirements for its use during the plan period for recreation, leisure, sport or other appropriate use should be considered and land safeguarded where a need is identified, the need to meet other land use requirements, the need to preserve landscape feature of open land, providing future use does not conflict with policies for MOL or Metropolitan Green Belt.</li> </ul>	<p>The study will identify the need for any new facilities and will ensure that they are appropriately located, giving due consideration to other types of open space across the Borough.</p>

## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

Document Reviewed	Summary of key strategic drivers	Links to Open Space Strategy and PPG17 Assessment
<p>Let's Get Moving! Increasing Physical Activity in Bexley A Joint Strategy (2004)</p>	<p>The strategy has been developed in partnership with Bexley Care Trust to provide opportunities and encourage people in Bexley to become more physically active.</p> <p>The objectives of the strategy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase awareness of the benefits of physical activity</li> <li>• reduce barriers to participation in physical activity</li> <li>• provide accessible and equitably distributed resources and facilities for physical activity</li> <li>• produce up to date information on safe and appropriate levels of physical activity</li> <li>• raise awareness of the importance of infrastructure changes.</li> </ul>	<p>The identification of deficiencies in the provision of sports facilities in the Borough can facilitate the appropriate provision of facilities in the area and encourage local residents to participate in sport.</p> <p>Local consultation will help to identify the main barriers to participation in physical activity.</p> <p>Accessibility mapping will illustrate the distribution of open space, sport and recreation facilities in the Borough. Recommendations for improving the distribution and therefore access to facilities will be made.</p>
<p>Playing Pitch Strategy</p>	<p>The strategy considers the supply and demand of playing pitches in Bexley and provides a framework for the future provision in the Borough. The key findings of the strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there are sufficient pitches to meet demand, with the exception of rugby</li> <li>• there is a high level of demand for pitches and this needs to be monitored on a season by season basis</li> <li>• the high level of demand requires the need for an ongoing robust maintenance program</li> <li>• the poor quality of ancillary facilities has an impact on usage and sports development opportunities.</li> </ul> <p>The three key objectives of the strategy are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. sustain and improve existing playing pitch provision</li> <li>2. monitor usage levels to enable identification of changes in demand</li> <li>3. release underused facilities or develop new sites as required.</li> </ol>	<p>The Playing Pitch Strategy considers specific issues relating to the supply and demand of pitches and provides detail on the quantity of pitches required to meet local demand as well as considering specific management and maintenance issues.</p> <p>The findings of the Playing Pitch Strategy are integrated within this wider study and provide additional detail on the demand for pitches.</p>

## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

Document Reviewed	Summary of key strategic drivers	Links to Open Space Strategy and PPG17 Assessment
<p>Developing Communities through Sport -The Bexley Sports Strategy 2003 - 2008</p>	<p>The vision for sport across London Borough of Bexley is:</p> <p><i>"Bexley Council will seek to maximise the range and quality of sports activities available to provide safe, enjoyable and accessible sporting opportunities for all residents and visitors to Bexley. The Council aims to develop, in partnership with other sports providers, a sustainable and cost effective range of activities and events that combine to provide for the needs of the local community."</i></p> <p>The primary aim of the strategy is to support equal access, providing accessible and affordable facilities and services that will increase participation in sport</p> <p>The sports strategy sets out five key policy statements for sport:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. strategic planning of sports facilities</li> <li>2. sports development</li> <li>3. target groups – promoting equality of access</li> <li>4. community development – to use projects to support the Council's key policy objectives</li> <li>5. voluntary sports clubs – developing partnerships and extended networks</li> </ol>	<p>This study will provide information regarding local needs and aspirations for sports facilities that will contribute to the development of an updated strategy</p> <p>The preparation of this PPG17 assessment contributes towards the strategic planning of sports facilities enabling the Council to make informed decisions regarding current and future provision.</p>
<p>Diversity and Inclusion Strategy</p>	<p>The strategy sets out the key priorities and vehicles for addressing issues experienced by ethnic minority groups across London Borough of Bexley.</p> <p>The vision of the strategy is split into three areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. participation – to increase participation in sport and physical activity across all ethnic minority groups</li> <li>2. awareness – to promote awareness of sport and physical activity through the media and different languages</li> <li>3. equity - to be committed to the equity principles described in Sport England Policy</li> </ol> <p>The vision of the strategy will be achieved through the provision of appropriate facilities. Appropriate funding, as well as investment in time and manpower will be essential if the strategy is to be successfully delivered. Effective information and signage will be essential if awareness of facilities is to be raised.</p>	<p>The study will provide an assessment of local need and aid the Council in the delivery of appropriate facilities that are accessible to all sectors of the community.</p>

## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

Document Reviewed	Summary of key strategic drivers	Links to Open Space Strategy and PPG17 Assessment
Bexley Talk Back Survey 2006 – Parks and Open Spaces	<p>11% of respondents stated they use outdoor sports facilities less than monthly. 37% of respondents stated they do not use outdoor sports facilities.</p> <p>The majority of respondents to the survey stated the provision of outdoor sports facilities was about right (26%). However, 21% of respondents felt provision was insufficient.</p> <p>The quality of outdoor sports facilities was considered to be average, with 33% of respondents neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the current standard of facilities.</p> <p>The most common travel method used to access an outdoor sports facility was by car (21%).</p> <p>9% of respondents to the survey stated that when accessing an outdoor sports facility a journey time last for 15 minutes. 8% of residents also indicated a travel time of 10 minutes is experienced.</p>	

### Assessing Local Needs - Consultation

#### Local Resident Consultation

9.15 Consultation was undertaken with local residents in order to understand opinions on the existing outdoor sports facilities. Emerging issues included:

- respondents to the household survey showed dissatisfaction with the provision of outdoor sports facilities with the exception of grass pitches and golf courses. The highest levels of dissatisfaction were highlighted with the provision for athletics (43%) and netball courts (36%)
- within the clusters residents in Bexleyheath and Erith each showed the greatest satisfaction with three of the seven facilities. In contrast, residents in the Thamesmead cluster portrayed the highest level of dissatisfaction with the provision of all seven outdoor sports facilities
- residents at workshops highlighted the value of the use of school facilities, although constraints of this policy were also highlighted, focusing particularly on the lack of appropriate ancillary accommodation, particularly changing facilities (at Danson Park, the distance of changing facilities from some pitches could cause issues regarding child protection) However, it should be noted that all junior/mini pitches are the closest to the changing rooms)
- the multifunctional use of outdoor sports facilities emerged as a key issue, with comments at both workshops and drop in sessions highlighting problems with dog fouling and litter, occurring as a result of the use of pitches as amenity space for dog walking (Hall Place)
- consultation indicated that the overall quality of outdoor sports facilities is considered average by 50% of household respondents. A higher percentage of people stated that they were poor (20%) as opposed to being good (17%)

## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

- across the clusters, Bexleyheath displayed the highest level of satisfaction with 28% of people stating that the quality of the facilities was good. Within the clusters the modal response was average
- the household survey reveals that Bexley residents would expect to walk to grass pitches (45%) and tennis courts (48%), whereas the majority of respondents would expect to drive to golf courses (69%), synthetic turf pitches (57%), athletics (55%), bowling greens (50%) and netball courts (50%) – this highlights that there are realistic expectations with regards access to different types of facility
- drop in sessions raised concerns over access to sports facilities across Bexley. Cost was identified as the main barrier to participation. However, opening access to some outdoor sports facilities was praised by residents, particularly for children and young people. The Goals Soccer Centre, Bexleyheath was raised as a specific example.

9.16 In light of the specialist nature of outdoor sports facilities, it is essential to gain the views of current users on sports facilities in the Borough. The sports club focus group provided further detail on the adequacy of the current provision of pitches in Bexley. Questionnaires were sent to other organisations and followed up with telephone consultations. Key issues arising from discussions with clubs and other users of sports facilities in Bexley are summarised overleaf in Table 9.4.

**Table 9.4 - Specific sport consultation**

Sport	Issues arising
Football	<p>Changing accommodation is particularly problematic across the Borough, with few high quality facilities and many sites which will require significant investment if ongoing use is possible. In some instances, there are insufficient changing rooms provided at the site for the number of pitches on the site.</p> <p>There is high demand for training facilities. This impacts both on the demand for synthetic turf pitches and also contributes to the high level of illegal training on pitches.</p> <p>Cross boundary travel is relatively common, with many teams travelling in and out of the Borough to participate.</p> <p>Footscray Lions are no longer able to use their home ground facilities due to contamination on the land. Teams in the club are therefore currently spread across five different venues. The club are keen to relocate to a new site where all teams can play together.</p> <p>The pressures on existing pitches in the Borough are further evident following applications for pitches during the 2007 – 2008 season, with at least ten teams having been turned away due to insufficient pitches.</p> <p>A lack of car parking was also highlighted as problematic at several football sites across the Borough.</p> <p>Football clubs responding to the sports club survey stated the quantity of pitches was average (60%). 40% of respondents also felt the provision of pitches was good. The quality of facilities was perceived to be average (80%). With regards to membership, the majority of respondents identified the levels as increasing. Many clubs indicated that they are unable to accommodate the ongoing increases in demand for junior and mini football.</p>
Cricket	<p>Bexley Cricket Club are considering the potential expansion of their site.</p> <p>Quality is perceived to be a particular issue for cricket clubs in the area. Clubs suggested the potential for artificial strips to be provided to improve the quality of existing facilities and minimise wear and tear.</p>



## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

Sport	Issues arising
	<p>There is an opportunity to both increase participation in cricket at schools and simultaneously upgrade existing facilities to provide enhanced quality for school pupils which would also meet the needs of the local community. Some schools currently provide good quality cricket nets. The impact of increased usage on facilities at school sites may lead to increased costs for reinstatement of pitches and therefore artificial pitches at some sites may be appropriate</p> <p>Although the quality of facilities is key issue for cricket clubs, clubs are also facing challenges accommodating female teams and demand from juniors.</p> <p>Respondents to the sports club survey stated the provision of cricket pitches was good. The quality of facilities was perceived to be average.</p>
Rugby	<p>Old Dartfordians are currently working on plans to enhance the quality of their site and the facilities that are available – there is a need for additional pitches and training grids to meet the needs of both junior and senior expansion for this club.</p> <p>Bexley RUFC currently play outside of the boundaries of the Borough and are keen to relocate back into the Borough should an appropriate facility arise.</p> <p>All rugby club respondents' highlighted membership was increasing. The majority of respondents regarded the quantity of rugby pitches to be poor (67%). The quality of facilities was perceived to be good, however Bexley RFC stated they have to travel outside the Borough due to a lack of suitable playing pitch provision and changing facilities.</p>
Hockey	<p>The quality of existing astroturf at some sites in the Borough is perceived to be unsuitable for high level hockey. This is considered a greater issue than the quantity of pitches in the Borough at the current time.</p> <p>Although there are a good variety of synthetic hockey pitches, with some new pitches installed in 2006, however all facilities are sand based and there are no water-based facilities suitable for those clubs with aspirations to play at much higher league level.</p> <p>There have been recent increases in junior hockey, although the cost of participating is perceived to inhibit greater increases in the number of players.</p> <p>The club atmosphere and the social side of hockey is perceived to be as important as the provision of pitches. Social provision at key hockey sites is therefore essential.</p> <p>The provision of hockey pitches was considered to be insufficient because of the associated quality issues at the two oldest sites by respondents to the sports club survey. The quality of facilities was stated as being average. The main issue raised was with the quality of facilities, with respondents stating pitches were old and in need of refurbishment.</p>
Tennis	<p>There are vandalism issues at several tennis clubs across the Borough.</p> <p>There are perceived to be limited opportunities for tennis outside of the summer months and consultation with residents highlighted demand for indoor tennis courts. Clubs expressed demand for covered tennis facilities.</p>
Bowls	<p>Consultation relating to bowls focused around the need for indoor bowls. No requirement for additional outdoor facilities was identified.</p>
Netball	<p>There are limited facilities for netball, particularly in terms of multi court venues that offer the opportunity to run a successful league.</p> <p>The quantity and quality of provision was perceived to be average by respondents to the sports club survey. The main issue was identified as the quality of facilities.</p>

9.17 In addition to facility related issues, several other opportunities were also highlighted by clubs including:

## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

- coordination of seasons ie between hockey/football/cricket
- improved communication between leagues/neighbouring areas. Communication with the Council was perceived to be particularly strong
- development of ‘hubs’ with multiple sports on location with clubhouse/social facilities. This would help coordinate fundraising and resources
- recruitment from other areas ie cross boundary travel
- improvement of player pathways particularly with regard the provision from junior to senior sports.

9.18 While consultation emerging from the analysis of the household survey and drop in sessions focuses primarily on qualitative and quantitative issues, it is clear from consultation with clubs that there are also several issues regarding the quantity of open space which need to be addressed.

### Assessing the current provision of outdoor sports facilities in Bexley

9.19 The existing provision of outdoor sports facilities in Bexley has been assessed in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility. The findings of this assessment are discussed on the pages that follow.

#### Quantity of provision

9.20 The quantity and distribution of outdoor sports in London Borough of Bexley is summarised in Table 9.5 below. This includes all type of outdoor sports facilities. The provision and distribution of specific facilities is set out in Table 9.6. Where pitches or tennis facilities are part of a larger open space (for example Hall Place) which has another primary purpose, only the area dedicated to pitches has been included within calculations for outdoor sports facilities.

9.21 The table below excludes the provision of golf courses.

**Table 9.5 – Provision of outdoor sports facilities across London Borough of Bexley**

Cluster	Current provision	Current provision per 1000 population	Scenario 1 Provision per 1000	Scenario 2a Provision per 1000	Scenario 2b Provision per 1000	Scenario 3 a Provision per 1000	Scenario 3 b Provision per 1000
Bexleyheath	45.78	1.41	1.37	1.38	1.38	1.34	1.38
Crayford	36.88	1.81	1.58	1.47	1.49	1.38	1.49
Erith	33.307	0.81	0.69	0.67	0.54	0.65	0.49
Sidcup	96.643	3.11	1.85	1.87	1.93	1.80	1.93
Thamesmead	32.80	0.78	0.86	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.87
Welling	38.41	0.75	0.86	0.86	0.88	0.83	0.88
Overall	288.84	1.32	1.20	1.20	1.16	1.16	1.12

## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

- 9.22 The key issues emerging from Table 9.5 and consultations relating to the quantity of provision of outdoor sports facilities across the Borough include:
- in terms of both hectares and provision per 1000 people, provision in Sidcup is significantly higher than in other areas of the Borough. Quantity of outdoor sports facilities is however dependent upon the type of facilities provided, for example pitches are larger than tennis courts
  - the quantity of facilities in the Welling, Crayford and Thamesmead clusters is significantly below the rest of the Borough. This reflects the findings of the consultation, with satisfaction being lower in Welling and Thamesmead
  - overall, the current provision equates to 1.32 ha per 1000. This is set to decrease across the five growth scenarios, with the level of provision per 1000 of the population ranging from 1.20ha in scenario 1 and decreasing to 1.12ha in scenario 3b. Provision in Erith decreases to 0.54 / 0.49 per 1000 in the event of the uneven growth scenarios
- 9.23 In addition to the facilities provided above, the River Thames is an important sporting facility, offering opportunities such as rowing, yachting and fishing.
- 9.24 Although PPG17 groups together outdoor sports facilities under one umbrella, in order to properly understand the distribution of sports facilities it is essential to subdivide the typology to consider the different functions that different facilities provide.
- 9.25 Table 9.6 below sets out the distribution of each type of sports facility enabling more in depth analysis and interpretation.

**Table 9.6 – Provision of outdoor sports facilities within each cluster**

Cluster	Sites containing Grass pitches	Sites containing Cricket pitches	Synthetic turf pitches	Tennis courts	Bowling greens	Golf courses
Bexleyheath	11	1	1	16	4	2
Crayford	13	5	0	11	1	0
Erith	8	0	3	6	1	0
Sidcup	21	3	1	21	2	1
Thamesmead	4	1	1	9	1	1
Welling	11	1	0	13	2	0
Overall	68	11	6	76	11	4

- 9.26 As illustrated in Table 9.6 above:
- the distribution of facilities across the Borough is fairly even, with the exception of Sidcup area, which contains a significantly higher number of sites with grass pitches and tennis courts than any other area
  - overall, the Sidcup cluster has the greatest provision of outdoor sports facilities within London Borough of Bexley. The lowest level of outdoor sports facilities can be found in the Thamesmead cluster
  - there are 6 synthetic turf pitches in the Borough located predominantly at school sites, specifically Trinity, Hurstmere, Bexley Business Academy and two facilities

at Erith School. The only public facility is located at Mayplace. The pitch situated at Welling School does not meet governing body standards for run offs and is not floodlit. Trinity is only a ¾ size synthetic pitch not full

- the 2006 talkback survey illustrates that there is a split in opinion relating to the quantity of facilities, with 34% stating provision is about right compared to 28% stating that there is not enough
- the household survey analysis indicates that the provision of grass pitches is about right. The greatest level of satisfaction was located in Bexleyheath, where 59% of residents indicated provision was about right
- there was an overall satisfaction with the provision of bowling greens and again, the greatest satisfaction was shown in the Bexleyheath cluster, where 41% of respondents indicated provision was sufficient. Findings from table 9.6 support this perception with the greatest provision of bowling greens found in this area
- there was a clear dissatisfaction with the provision of netball courts within the individual areas. The greatest level of satisfaction for netball courts was located in the Erith cluster, where 25% of residents felt provision was about right. This is surprising given that there are no public courts in the Erith cluster
- within the individual clusters there was a perception that the provision of synthetic turf pitches was insufficient. Only in the Crayford and Erith clusters did residents feel provision was sufficient (It should be noted that there are no synthetic pitches noted in Crayford Cluster but Mayplace pitch is in Crayford
- a general satisfaction with the provision of golf courses was portrayed within the individual areas. Only in the Thamesmead cluster did the majority of residents indicate that provision was insufficient (36%)
- respondents in five of the six clusters felt the provision of tennis courts was sufficient. Dissatisfaction with the level of provision was shown in the Thamesmead and Sidcup clusters
- although residents responding to the household survey indicated that there are sufficient grass pitches, other consultations indicate that there are high pressures on existing grass pitches and that there is insufficient provision to meet current need. This is exacerbated by growth in participation in junior sports and is also reflected through analysis of the pitch bookings.

### Playing Pitch Provision

- 9.27 The Playing Pitch Methodology, explained in the Sport England document 'Towards a Level Playing Field', enables a more detailed estimate of the adequacy of the current supply of playing pitches to meet demand. It specifically considers provision for football, cricket, rugby and hockey.
- 9.28 A playing pitch strategy was produced during 2005 and concluded that:
- there are sufficient pitches to meet demand, with the exception of rugby
  - there is a high level of demand for pitches and this needs to be monitored on a season by season basis
  - the high level of demand requires the need for an ongoing robust maintenance program
  - the poor quality of ancillary facilities has an impact on usage and sports development.

## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

- 9.29 Following significant recent increases in participation in pitch sports, the calculations undertaken as part of the 2005 Playing Pitch Strategy have been updated to reflect the current demand for pitches. This information will feed into the overall standard for the provision of outdoor sports facilities across Bexley.
- 9.30 Recent analysis undertaken by the Football Association (The FA) highlights that while participation has recently increased in Bexley, participation levels fall below the national average. Despite this, participation remains significantly above the average levels in comparison to other London Boroughs.

### Supply of pitches

- 9.31 In line with '*Towards a Level Playing Field: A Manual for the Production of a Playing Pitch Strategy*' only community pitches are considered within calculations.
- 9.32 In practice this definition embraces:
- all local authority facilities
  - any school facilities where they are subject to formal dual/community use agreements between the school/education authority and the Council
  - any other institutional facilities which are available to the public as a result of formal dual/community agreements
  - any facilities owned, used or maintained by clubs/private individuals, which as a matter of policy or practice are available for use by large sections of the public through membership of a club or admission fee. In either case the cost of use must be reasonable and affordable for the majority of the community.
- 9.33 An audit of pitches was carried out as part of the 2005 playing pitch strategy. This audit has been updated during the process of data collection for this PPG17 study. While a full verification of all data has not been undertaken, the audit data is sufficiently accurate to provide an updated picture of supply and demand for pitches in Bexley. Data for all public pitches has been recalculated to reflect pitch layouts for the 2007 – 2008 season. It has been assumed that provision at private sites and schools remains the same as at the time of the Playing Pitch Strategy.
- 9.34 Current pitch provision is summarised in Table 9.7 below. This includes schools that were accessible to the community at the time of the playing pitch strategy and also private pitches. The totals below do not include the home pitches of Footscray Lions which are currently out of use.
- 9.35 A full summary of the pitches counted within this total can be found in Appendix J.

**Table 9.7 – Current provision of pitches across the Borough**

Sport	Number of senior pitches	Number of junior pitches	Number of mini pitches
Football	48	34	19
Cricket	19		
Rugby	8	14	None
Hockey	6 synthetic pitches		

### Demand for pitches

- 9.36 In order to calculate the adequacy of the pitch provision across Bexley, current participation rates in each of the sports are analysed. The spread of teams across the Borough is summarised in table 9.8 overleaf.
- 9.37 In the absence of updated team data for the sports of cricket, rugby and hockey it has been assumed that participation has increased at an approximate rate of 1% per annum since the production of the playing pitch strategy (2005). It is thought that these estimates may be conservative when considering participation in junior sport, particularly rugby.
- 9.38 In addition to the figures displayed in Table 9.8, there are 265 teams playing small sided (ie 5 a side football). These teams are excluded from playing pitch calculations but it is important to consider these teams in the context of demand for indoor sports facilities as the use of sports halls for five a side may impact on other opportunities in sports hall. The Goals Facility in Bexley caters for much of the five a side football in the area. This data was taken from the FA County Administration System.

**Table 9.8 – Current participation in Bexley (Source: FA County Administration System).**

	Football	Cricket	Rugby Union	Hockey
Total number of teams	306	31	66	39
Number of adult teams	118 (3 female)	16	22	30
Number of junior teams	119 (4 female)	15	19	9
Number of mini-teams	62		25	0

### Setting provision standards – quantity

- 9.39 The recommended local quantity standard for outdoor sports facilities considers all outdoor sports facilities and provides an overarching standard for broad planning need only. This standard should be used to provide an indication regarding the amount (in hectares) of sports facilities that should be provided per 1000 population i.e. to predict the increase in demand for sports facilities as a result of growth in the local population. Local decisions would then be taken in order to determine the most appropriate type of facility in an area.
- 9.40 The application of the playing pitch methodology enables the calculation of a more specific local standard for pitches that provides detail on the quantity of community use pitches required. The development of a local standard specific to pitches for Bexley will be discussed after the development of the overarching quantity standard.

### Developing a local Quantity Standard

- 9.41 The recommended standard is summarised below. Full justification is provided within Appendix E and F.

**Quantity Standard (see appendices E and F – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)**

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
1.32 ha per 1000 population	1.32 ha per 1000 population (of which 0.52ha is dedicated to the provision of community pitches)
Justification	
<p>Outdoor sports facilities are very much demand-led and the outdoor sports facility typology encompasses a wide variety of different facilities including athletics tracks, pitches, golf courses and bowling greens. In order to understand the demand for outdoor sports facilities in a greater level of detail it is therefore essential to consider each type of sports facility separately.</p> <p>The variation in responses indicates that there may be a disparity in the distribution of facilities across the Borough although overall, there is dissatisfaction in the quantity of all types of facility with the exception of grass pitches and golf courses (golf courses have been removed from all figures due to their size and subsequent tendency to skew figures). While this indicates that a quantity standard greater than the existing level of provision should be set, many of the comments from other consultations focus on the quality of provision, and enhancing access to existing provision.</p> <p>Residents at drop in sessions emphasised the value of outdoor sports provision, stating that facilities should be protected from development. The majority of respondents to the sports club survey indicated an overall satisfaction with the current level of provision and stated that the quality of facilities in the Borough was the most important issue. Specifically, the quality of ancillary accommodation at outdoor sports facilities (eg changing rooms) was considered a key issue.</p> <p>The calculations undertaken specifically for playing pitches indicate that there are sufficient pitches to meet local demand, although supply is almost in balance with demand, particularly as a result of demand generated by junior teams. Some teams also indicated that there area insufficient pitches for them to have a home ground. As the population grows, additional provision will be required. Increasing the amount of facilities available for the community will protect the current provision of outdoor sports facilities and focus on the enhancement of the quality of sites. Application of the quantity and accessibility standards will highlight any shortfalls in provision and locational deficiencies will be identified. Increases in the quantity of pitches required can be delivered through negotiations to increase access to school facilities as well as new provision where facilities are required.</p>	

**The Playing Pitch Methodology**

- 9.42 The Playing Pitch Methodology (PPM) comprises eight stages. Stages one to six involve numerical calculations, whilst stages seven and eight develop issues and solutions. The methodology is employed to analyse the adequacy of current provision and to assess possible future situations, in order that latent and future demand (identified through Team Generation Rates), and the problems with quality, use and capacity of existing pitches can be taken into account.
- 9.43 It is important to note that the methodology deals with each sport individually with a specific set of calculations because, despite some superficial similarities, they exhibit very different patterns of play.

- 9.44 We have subdivided the analysis of some sports to deal with specific sub-sectors of activity, eg junior play or adult play, so that important aspects are not submerged in aggregated data. Football and rugby have been subdivided in this manner, whereas no differentiation has been made between junior and senior cricket and junior and senior hockey teams as they play on pitches of similar dimensions.
- 9.45 The calculations undertaken assume that 70% of football is played on the peak day. The supply at school pitches has been reduced (by 50%) to reflect the usage that these pitches get midweek for curricular purposes.
- 9.46 The key issues emerging from the playing pitch calculations include:
- overall, supply is just equal to demand at the current time (1.8 pitches surplus) although there are no opportunities for the rest and recovery of any pitches
  - although there are sufficient adult pitches to meet the demand for football (there is less than 1 pitch spare) large increases in the number of junior teams have generated an undersupply in provision of over 18 pitches
  - ongoing increases in mini soccer participation mean that provision of mini soccer pitches is now only just sufficient to meet demand (5.8 pitches surplus)
  - provision of rugby facilities is insufficient to meet local need (shortfall of 3 adult pitches) and is inhibiting demand. This is exacerbated by the inclusion of Bexley RUFC within the calculations who currently play outside of the Borough but wish to play within the boundaries of Bexley
  - while there are sufficient facilities for cricket, like both rugby and football, growing participation at junior level is placing increasing pressures on the club infrastructure
  - although there are just sufficient pitches to meet the needs of hockey teams, consultation highlights that it is the quality of these facilities that is particularly problematic and two of the sites will need replacement carpets in the next couple of years. Whilst the existing sites have been able to accommodate Hockey training requests, the newer higher quality sites are in greater demand and at this can lead to a perception that hockey teams are facing competition from football teams at these sites for training.
- 9.47 A full table of results is provided overleaf in Figure 9.9.

### **Predicting the future demand for playing pitches**

- 9.48 Team Generation Rates (TGRs) indicate how many people in a specified age group are required to generate one team. TGRs are derived by dividing the appropriate population age band for the relevant sport (e.g. for adult football it is the 16-45 age group) by the number of teams playing that sport.
- 9.49 TGRs enable the calculation of the likely impact of population increases on the demand for pitches using the assumption that the current participation rate will continue in the incoming population. Additional increases (generated through sports development initiatives can also be modelled. According to the Active People survey (Sport England) participation in football in Bexley is already above the national average.
- 9.50 Based on the assumption that participation in junior sports will increase by 5% over the next five years (and assuming that the current pitch stock remains), the supply of



## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

sports pitches will be insufficient to meet long-term demand in all growth scenarios. In particular, shortfalls of junior football and adult rugby union will continue to rise.

- 9.51 Table 9.9 below summarises the findings of the Playing Pitch Methodology for the current year and for each of the future growth scenarios. Figures in red indicate that there will be shortfall of that type of facility.

**Table 9.9 – Shortfalls and surpluses of pitch provision in Bexley**

Sub-area name	Shortfall of adult football	Shortfall of junior football	Shortfall of Mini-soccer	Shortfall of cricket	Shortfall of adult rugby union	Shortfall of junior rugby union	Shortfall of hockey
Current Year	0.7	-18.1	5.8	13.4	-3.0	4.5	-0.5
Scenario 1	-6.0	-24.8	-5.1	12.5	-4.7	3.0	-1.5
Scenario 2a	-5.9	-24.7	-5.1	12.5	-4.7	3.0	-1.5
Scenario 2b	-7.8	-26.7	-6.1	12.3	-5.2	2.6	-1.8
Scenario 3a	-7.7	-26.5	-6.0	12.3	-5.2	2.6	-1.8
Scenario 3b	-9.5	-28.4	-6.9	12.1	8.0	14.0	-2.1

### Integrating the findings of the application of the Playing Pitch Methodology into the local quantity standard

- 9.52 The calculation of an appropriate standard for pitch sports in Bexley is set out in Table 9.10 overleaf. It is based on meeting the current demand for pitches.
- 9.53 It can be seen in Table 9.10 that the existing level of provision is based upon the current supply of pitches (measured in area – area dedicated to pitches used) divided by the overall population. The local standard calculated from the findings of the playing pitch methodology and takes into account the need for additional (or surplus) pitches identified.
- 9.54 Although some shortfalls of provision have been identified, in light of surpluses of facilities for cricket, the area required to meet these shortfalls is almost equivalent to the existing level of provision. This is summarised below.

**Table 9.10 – Development of a local standard for pitches**

Population	Total playing pitch area with secured community use (ha)	Playing pitch area per 1,000 population (ha)	Additional pitch area required (ha)	Total pitch area required to meet shortfalls / surpluses	Standard per 1000
218,307	116.06	0.53	-12.75	103.31	0.47

- 9.55 As illustrated in Table 9.10, calculations undertaken specifically in relation to the demand for pitches suggest that a minimum of 0.47 hectares per 1000 population should be dedicated to the provision of community pitches for football, rugby, cricket and hockey. Consideration should also be given to the provision of sufficient pitches to allow for rest and recovery. It is therefore suggested that an additional 10% is added to the figure for this purpose, generating an overall standard of 0.52 ha per 1000 population.

## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

9.56 It is therefore suggested that of the overall quantity standard for outdoor sports facilities (1.32 hectares per 1000), a minimum of 0.52 hectares per 1000 is dedicated to the provision of pitches for the community.

### Current provision - quality

9.57 The quality of existing provision of outdoor sports facilities in the Borough was assessed through site visits and is set out in Table 9.11. It is important to note that site assessments are conducted as a snapshot in time and are therefore reflective of the quality of the site on one specific day.

9.58 The quality of sites for outdoor sports is essential in order to ensure that sites are fit for the purpose they are intended. Detailed consideration of the quality of the ancillary accommodation is as important as the facility itself. In some instances, insufficient ancillary accommodation means that all facilities at the site cannot be used at the same time.

9.59 The quality scores provide an overall indication of the quality of facilities at the site. It is important to emphasise that these assessments do not represent detailed assessments on the suitability of the site for the sport intended. Additionally, not all sites were assessed for quality during the production of this assessment. Table 9.11 overleaf considers only those sites for which quality assessments were undertaken.

**Table 9.11 – Quality of provision of outdoor sports facilities across London Borough of Bexley**

Cluster	Number of sites	Range of quality scores (%)	Average quality scores (%)
Bexleyheath	5	56% - 75%	67%
Crayford	7	51% - 84%	67%
Erith	5	52% - 77%	69%
Sidcup	8	77% - 84%	81%
Thamesmead	3	50% - 66%	57%
Welling	3	44% - 66%	55%
Overall	35	44% - 84%	66%

9.60 The key issues emerging from Table 9.11 and the consultation relating to the quality of outdoor sports facilities are:

- the average quality score for an outdoor sports facility in the Borough is 66%. This suggests that the overall quality is average
- the quality of sites within the Borough is varied with scores ranging from 44% to 84%
- the average quality scores within each cluster are similar with the exception of the Sidcup cluster, where the average quality score is 81%. This suggests the provision of higher quality facilities in this area of London Borough of Bexley
- there was little evidence of excessive wear and tear at parks pitches and line markings were clear and well maintained
- although offering a limited range of activities, the general quality of private pitch provision is deemed to be good, particularly with regards grass cover and

## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

drainage. Furthermore, there was little or no evidence of litter or graffiti during site visits

- the quality of parking at private sports clubs was varied.

### Setting provision standards – quality

- 9.61 The recommended local quality vision for outdoor sport facilities has been summarised overleaf. Full justification is provided in Appendix G.

#### Quality Standard

Recommended standard	
Based on the calculated quality scores from detailed site assessments providers of all outdoor sports facilities should aspire to achieve a quality score of 76%.	
Justification	
Local consultation, national guidance and best practice therefore suggest that the following features are essential to the provision of high quality outdoor sports facilities:	
<b>Essential</b>	Good Access
Parking Facilities	Toilets and changing facilities
Clean/litter free	Well kept playing surface

### Setting provision standards – accessibility

- 9.62 The accessibility of sites is paramount in maximising usage as well as providing opportunities for people to use the site. The recommended local standard is set in the form of a distance threshold and is derived directly from the findings of the local consultations.
- 9.63 Site-specific accessibility issues were also analysed as part of the programme of site visits where information and signage, transport and general issues were assessed.
- 9.64 Access was considered to be of particular importance for sports facilities. Many sites were deemed to be inaccessible as a result of the level of community access agreement, particularly school sites. Consultation also indicates that the cost of outdoor sports facilities is prohibitive to some users. This was raised particularly with regard junior sport and also the use of synthetic pitches.
- 9.65 Consultation also raised a consensus that there is a need for improved cycle routes to encourage cycling between homes and facilities.
- 9.66 The recommended local accessibility standards for provision of outdoor sports facilities have been summarised below. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix H. Residents should have access to a range of different facilities. Where possible, residents should have access to one of each type of facility within the recommended distance threshold for that facility.

**Accessibility Standard**

<b>Recommended standard</b>
<p><b>Grass Pitches and tennis courts- 16 minute walk - 768 metres</b>  <b>Bowling Greens, Synthetic Turf Pitches, Golf Courses, Netball Courts and Athletics - 20 minute drive</b></p>
<b>Justification</b>
<p>There are several factors to consider in setting a standard for outdoor sports facilities. In particular, the range of facilities that lie within this typology makes it difficult to set a meaningful standard that can be applied across the board as per PPG17 requirements. For example, residents have different expectations for synthetic turf pitches (to which they are willing to travel further) than they do for grass pitches (where there is a presumption of more localised provision).</p> <p>Given the findings from the local consultation, it is suggested that two standards are set, one for grass pitches and tennis courts, and a separate standard for synthetic turf pitches, athletics tracks, bowling greens, netball courts and golf courses to reflect local expectations regarding driving and walking to outdoor sport facilities. The 75% threshold level for those who expect to walk to grass pitches, tennis and bowling greens is 15 and 16 minutes respectively. As a consequence, a 16 minute (768 metre) walk time to these “local” outdoor sports facilities is considered an appropriate standard that will ensure quantitative improvements whilst also focusing on improving the quality of existing provision. This is in line with incorporating sustainable transport choices, to account for the wide mix of facilities types within the standard to meet all expectations.</p> <p>The 75% threshold level for those who expect to drive to synthetic turf pitches, athletics tracks and golf courses are all 20 minutes. Given the more specialist nature of these facilities, alongside the fact they are usually built in strategic locations to incorporate local demand, a 20-minute drive time standard is recommended. Consultation also shows that residents would expect to drive up to 20 minutes to access a netball court or bowling green. An accessibility standard at this distance has therefore been set. Again this is reflective of the 75% level as advocated by PPG17 guidance.</p> <p>The formal use of school facilities by the community after school hours will be particularly important if the recommended standards are to be delivered.</p>

**Applying provision standards**

- 9.67 The application of the recommended quality, quantity and accessibility standards is essential in understanding the existing distribution of outdoor sports facilities and identifying areas where provision is insufficient to meet local need.

**Quantity Standards**

- 9.68 The application of the quantity standard is set out overleaf in Table 9.12. This considers the application of the standard against the current population and also the impact that each of the five growth scenarios would have.
- 9.69 The findings of the application of these standards should inform future decision-making and stimulate more detailed investigations into the key issues raised.

## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

**Table 9.12 – Application of quantity standard outdoor sports facilities**

Cluster	Current provision per 1000 population	Scenario 1 Future balanced against local standard (1.32 hectares)	Scenario 2a Future balanced against local standard (1.32 hectares)	Scenario 2b Future balanced against local standard (1.32 hectares)	Scenario 3a Future balanced against local standard (1.32 hectares)	Scenario 3b Future balanced against local standard (1.32 hectares)
Bexleyheath	2.90	1.62	2.01	2.01	0.55	2.01
Crayford	10.04	6.02	3.79	4.12	1.50	4.12
Erith	-21.28-2	-30.63	-32.15	-47.96	-34.55	-57.03
Sidcup	55.65	27.75	28.55	30.41	25.85	30.41
Thamesmead	-22.51	-17.64	-15.21	-15.22	-15.21	-16.72
Welling	-29.14	-20.59	-20.21	-19.02	-22.91	-19.02
Overall	0.67	-28.45	-28.20	-40.64	-39.74	-51.20

Green = above the minimum standard; Red = below the minimum standard

9.70 The application of the local standard for quantity results in the following issues:

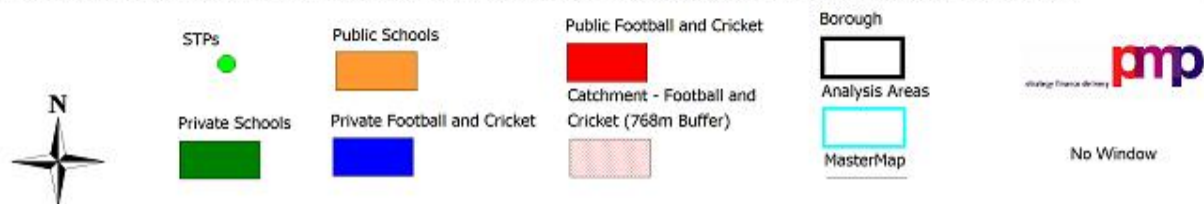
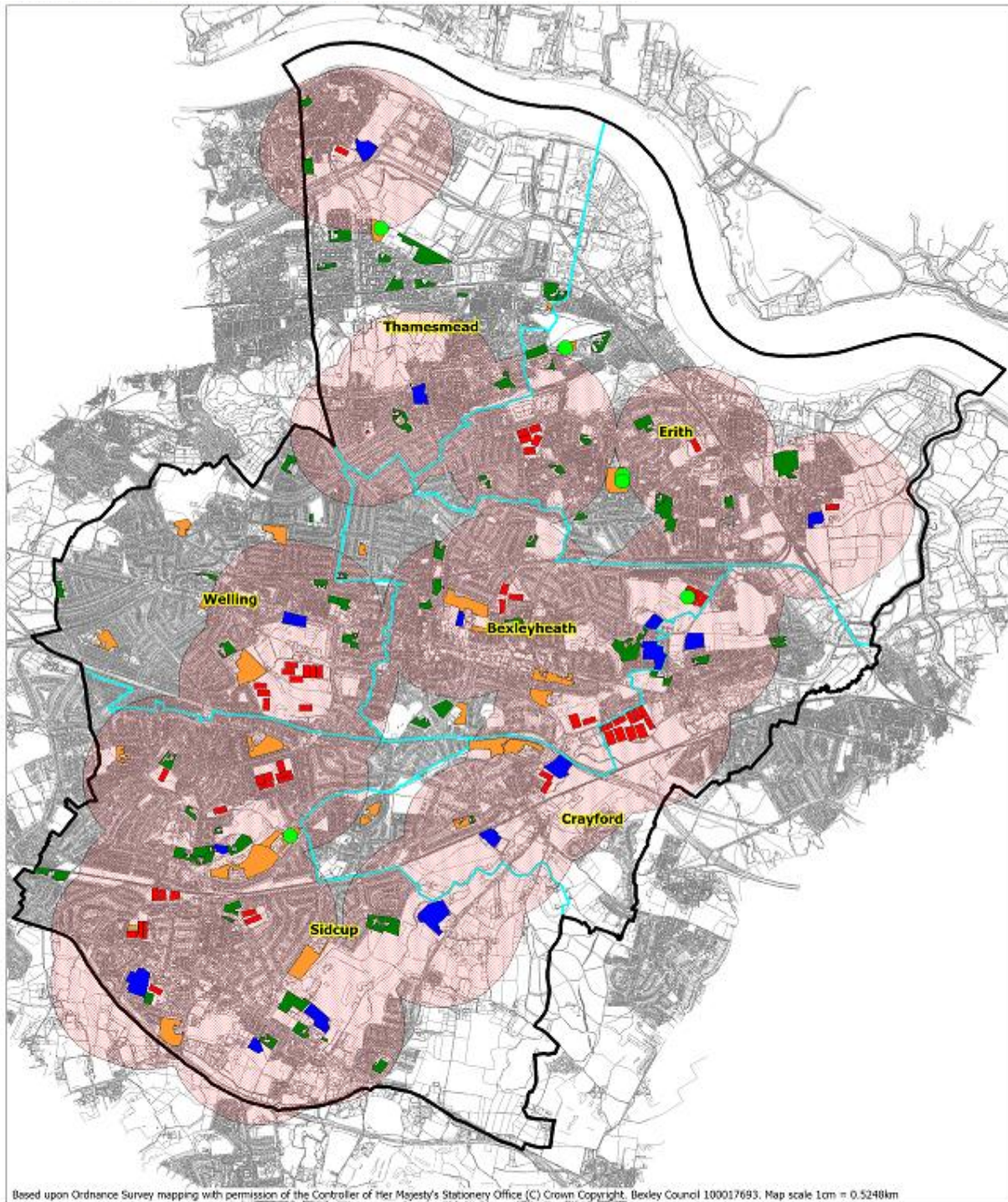
- the recommended standard has been set at the existing level of provision at 1.32 ha per 1000 population – this suggests that increases in the population will stimulate increases in the demand for outdoor sports facilities. Participation increases may generate further requirement for new provision
- overall, the current provision of outdoor sports facilities is sufficient to meet current needs, however the Erith, Thamesmead and Welling clusters have a shortfall in provision
- based on future population projections there will be insufficient provision of outdoor sports facilities based on all five scenarios. Scenario 2a indicates there will be a shortfall of 32.21 hectares by 2026, with Scenario 3b showing the largest shortfall (58.52ha) against the local standard. This suggests that there will be a need for new provision over the Local Development Framework period.

9.71 The application of the local accessibility standards in relation to provision for outdoor sports facilities is set out in Maps 9.1 – 9.3 overleaf. Map 9.1 considers the distribution of grass pitches across the Borough. The distribution of tennis courts is illustrated in Map 9.2 and map 9.3 depicts the spread of bowling greens.



## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

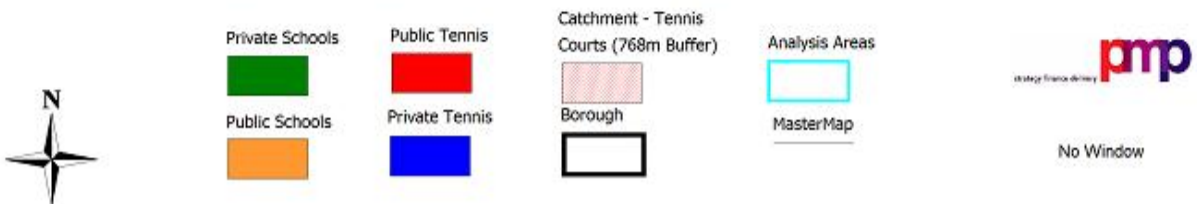
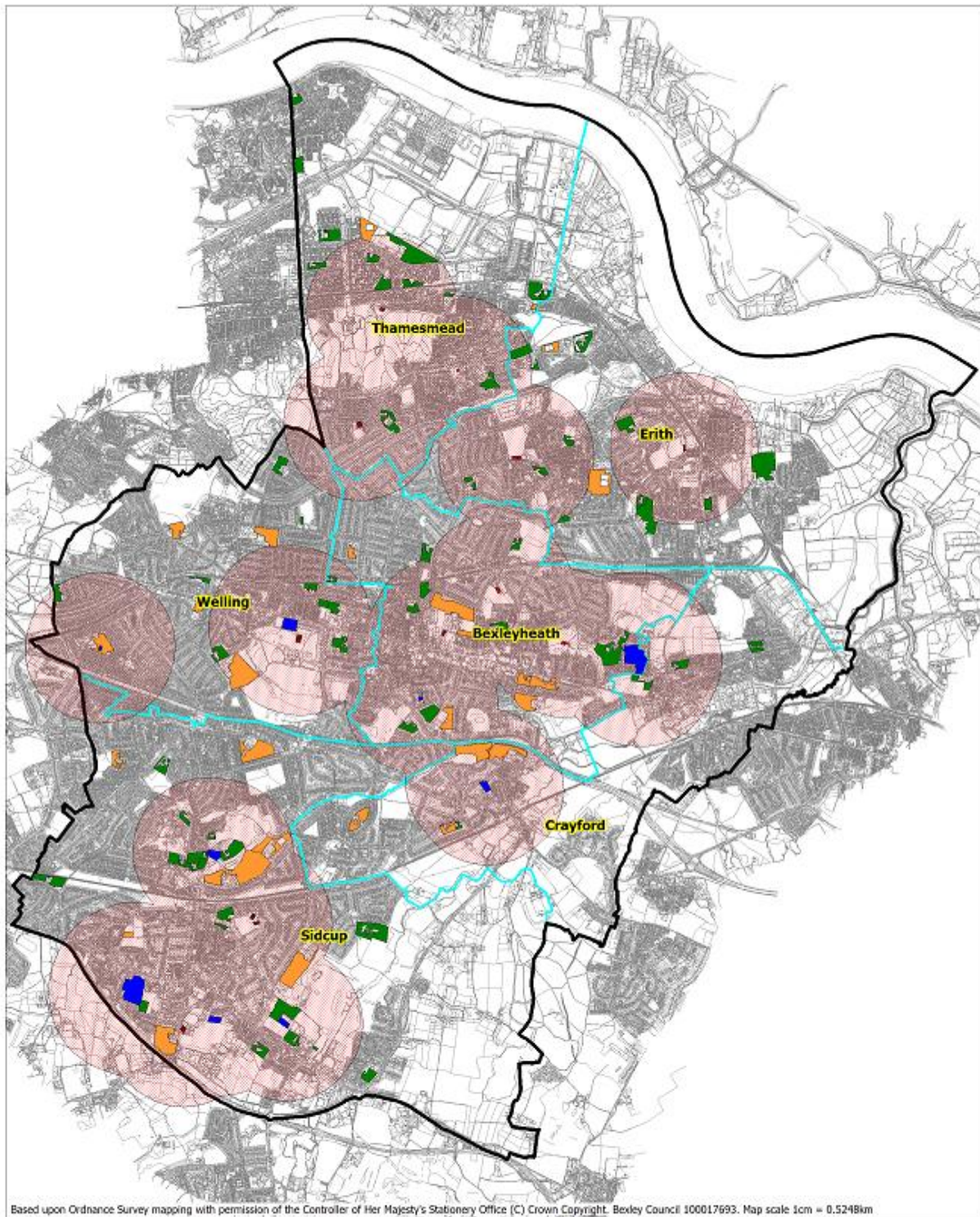
Map 9.1 – Provision of grass pitches and synthetic turf pitches in London Borough of Bexley





## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

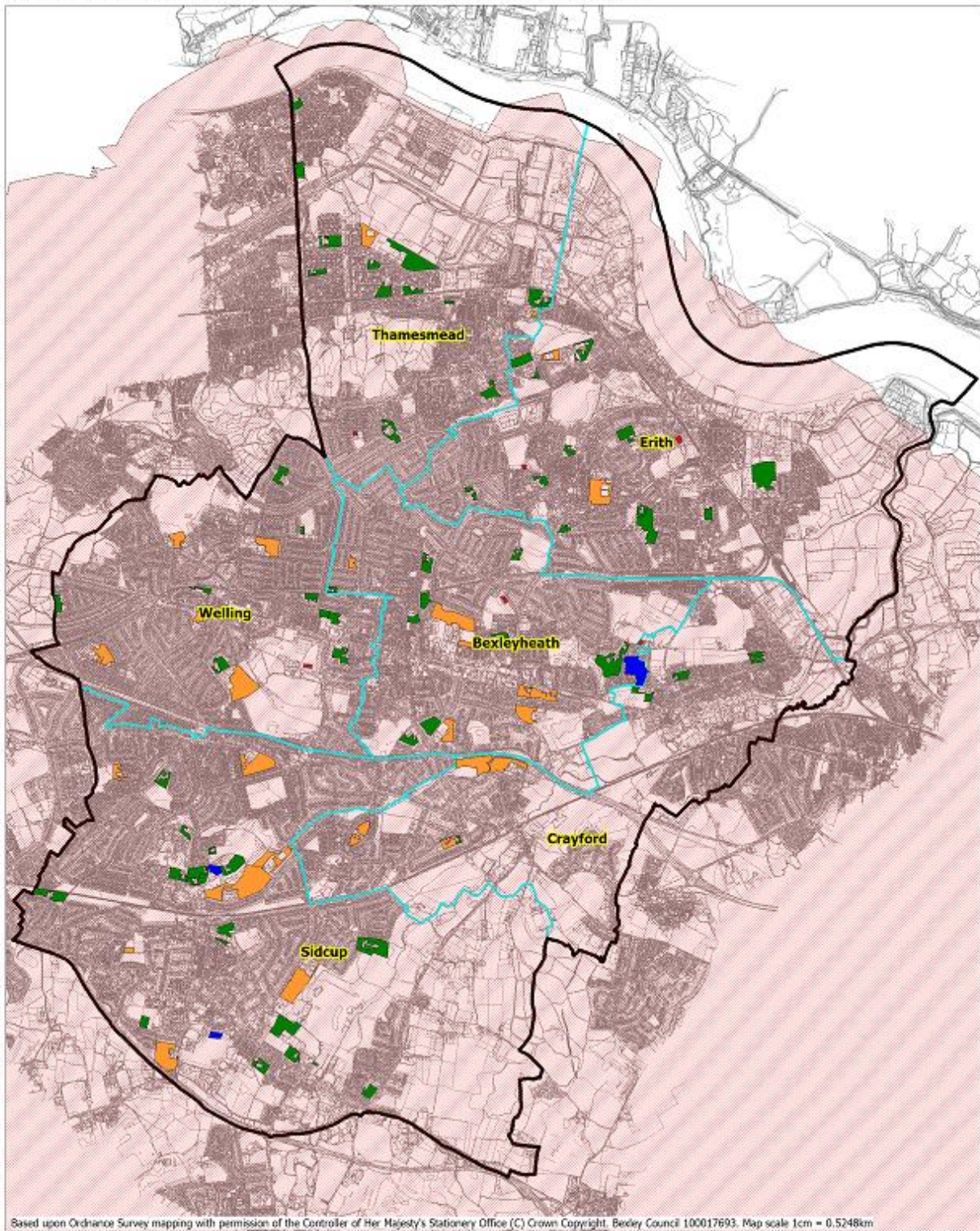
Map 9.2 – Provision of tennis courts in London Borough of Bexley





**SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES**

**Map 9.3 – Provision of bowling greens in London Borough of Bexley**



Private Schools  
Public Schools

Public Bowls  
Private Bowls

Catchment - Bowls  
(20 Minute Drivetime)  
Borough

Analysis Areas  
MasterMap



No Window



## **SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES**

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9.72 The key issues arising from accessibility mapping regarding the provision of outdoor sports facilities include:

- there is an even distribution of outdoor sports facilities across the Borough
- the majority of residents have access to at least one type of local facility and all residents are within the recommended drive time catchment of a strategic facility
- all residents are able to access a bowling green within the recommended accessibility standard
- the majority of residents have access to a grass pitch, however key deficiencies do exist in the west of the Welling cluster and centre of Thamesmead cluster
- a significant amount of the population of the Borough are outside the recommended accessibility catchment for a tennis court. The majority of facilities in the Borough are private and this may therefore further restrict access for a number of residents in the Borough. Clear areas of deficiency are prominent in the north of the Sidcup cluster, the Welling cluster, north of the Thamesmead cluster, north west of the Bexleyheath cluster and in the Crayford cluster
- opportunities at school sites are clear and many schools are located in areas where access to other outdoor sports facilities is limited.

9.73 Specific opportunities will be returned to later in this section.

### **Applying the quantity, quality and accessibility standards**

9.74 Quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards will help determine where those deficiencies are of high importance.

9.75 Applying the standards together is a much more meaningful method of analysis than applying the standards separately. Consideration should therefore be given to the application of standards both in isolation and in conjunction with each other.

9.76 In light of the demand led nature of outdoor sports facilities, user consultation is also a particularly important determinant of the identified priorities. The Active People survey indicates that participation is above the national average in some sports. Increasing participation in sport is a key priority nationwide and specifically within Bexley and additional facilities may be required to meet this increase. The Playing Pitch Strategy highlights the importance of sustaining and improving existing provision. It identifies the opportunity to release underused facilities or develop new sites as required. Analysis indicates while some new facilities are required now in order to accommodate existing teams, it is likely that further new provision will be required as the population grows.

9.77 Local consultation and user group discussions highlighted the importance of the existing outdoor sports facilities infrastructure and reinforced the high levels of usage experienced at sports sites. Protection of existing sites through the Local Development Framework process is therefore of paramount importance.

## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

<b>OSF1</b>	Incorporate a policy within the Local Development Framework that advocates the protection of pitches and other sports facilities. The LDF should facilitate the development of new facilities or improvements to existing outdoor sports facilities in appropriate locations. This may include permitting the development of outdoor sports facilities in MOL.
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### Quality of facilities

- 9.78 The majority of residents identified the quality of facilities as being as important as providing additional facilities. Research and consultation with clubs highlighted many specific quantitative issues. It is therefore important to consider both the quality and quantity of provision.
- 9.79 The desire for improvements to the quality of facilities is reinforced by the varying quality of existing sites. Sports Clubs identified that a number of facilities were in need of refurbishment and stated that the poor quality ancillary accommodation, such as changing rooms, made some facilities unusable. In some instances, clubs travel outside the Borough to participate as a result of the quality of facilities. As there are few accessibility deficiencies, where specific shortfalls in provision haven't been identified, the initial focus should be on the enhancement of existing facilities.
- 9.80 The quality of the existing sites assessed for this study has therefore been divided into quartiles in order to provide an indication of sites requiring improvement. Sites falling into the top quartile are set out in Table 9.13 below. Benchmarking scores can be found in appendix J, enabling comparisons against other types of open space. A full list of all scores achieved during site assessments can be found within Appendix I. To fall within the top quartile, a score of 76% would be required.

**Table 9.13 – Selection of quality assessment results for outdoor sports facility provision**

Above upper quartile	76% +	(84%) Sidcup Sports Club – Site ID 163 (84%) Hall Place Playing Fields – Site ID 16 (82%) Mayplace Golf Course – Site ID 14 (77%) North Heath Recreation Ground – Site ID 12 (77%) Penhill Park – Site ID 9 (77%) Erith Recreation Ground and Sports Centre – Site ID 11
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- 9.81 The key issues emerging from Table 9.13 and analysis of the site assessments are:
- the average quality score for an outdoor sports facility in London Borough of Bexley is 66%, highlighting that facilities are average overall and some are in need of qualitative improvements
  - seven sites achieved scores below 60%. These sites should be prioritised for improvement.

## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

<b>OSF2</b>	Seek to improve the quality of outdoor sports facilities, to achieve 76% (the score required to fall within the top quartile). This should ensure that all are fit for their intended purpose. A detailed audit of each type of facility (including ancillary accommodation) should be undertaken.
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9.82 Specific issues relating to the quality of facilities raised during the data gathering exercise included:

- the need to enhance the quality of changing facilities for pitch sports

<b>OSF3</b>	Draw up a rolling programme of improvements to the borough's changing facilities ensuring that there are sufficient changing rooms for all pitches on site and that facilities are of sufficient quality to meet needs. This should be done through the rolling capital programme. Work with key voluntary and private sector sports providers to enable external funding opportunities to be explored and quality standards maintained.
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- the need to investigate the quality of synthetic facilities

<b>OSF4</b>	Ensure a sinking fund is in place to replace facilities when they come to the end of their lifespan. Ensure that new facilities meet the necessary specification including floodlights. Opportunities for the development of new synthetic facilities at school sites could be explored.
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- the importance of the provision of social facilities at private sports grounds.

<b>OSF5</b>	Provide guidance and support to private clubs to fulfil specific needs where this is required. This may include guidance in the preparation of funding bids and long-term planning or financial support for a project that would benefit the whole community.
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### Quantity of Outdoor Sports Facilities

9.83 In addition to the quality of outdoor sports facilities, consultation highlighted that the quantity of provision in some areas and for some sports is a significant issue. Some clubs confirmed that rapid growth in membership has created supply difficulties for them and the service that they provide.

9.84 The quantitative breakdown of provision reveals a requirement for further provision up to 2026 in the Erith (-57.03 ha), Welling (-19.02 ha), Thamesmead (-16.72 ha) clusters, and as highlighted, while analysis of provision in quantitative terms is distorted by the varying size of each facility, it provides an indication regarding the quantity of provision in the area.

9.85 The good distribution of facilities illustrated in Maps 9.1 - 9.3 suggests that on the whole, quantity issues relate to the capacity of existing facilities to accommodate the level of demand from local residents. Quantitative issues may relate to access to facilities (or to the specific type of facility required) rather than an overall shortfall. Facilities are particularly under pressure to accommodate increasing demand for junior teams.

## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

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- 9.86 This reinforces the need to maximise the number of sites that are accessible to local residents, in particular focusing on access to school facilities for local residents. This is particularly critical where there are deficiencies in provision (for example in pitch sports).

<b>OSF6</b>	In locations where there is expressed demand for further sporting provision, and where school facilities could be made available to the public but aren't currently, the Council should consider the feasibility of formalising community-use agreements at school sites prior to seeking delivery of new outdoor sport facilities.
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- 9.87 As well as focusing on enhancements to the quality of existing provision, it will be important to address locational deficiencies and quantitative issues. In order to address locational quantitative issues, consideration is given to the opportunities and demand for new provision.

### **Athletics**

- 9.88 There is only one athletics track in the Borough and this provides an important resource for local residents. While demand analysis suggests that additional provision is not required, protection should be afforded to this site. Any further demand for similar facilities should be addressed through the provision of a multipurpose facility at school sites.

### **Netball**

- 9.89 Consultation highlighted a shortage of netball provision across the Borough, with no sites currently able to successfully host a league – a site with a minimum of three courts is required. Consultation highlighted upgrades to Town Park as a potential opportunity and this should be reviewed further.

<b>OSF7</b>	Investigate opportunities to provide a central netball facility for the Borough.
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### **Bowling Greens**

- 9.90 Application of the accessibility standard for bowling greens illustrates all residents within the Borough have access to a bowling green within the recommended 20 minute drive time. Facilities are primarily located in the north of the Borough, with map 9.3 showing only one bowling green located in Erith and two within Sidcup. Consultation did not highlight the need for any additional facilities in the area.

<b>OSF8</b>	Monitor the ongoing demand and utilisation of all bowls facilities, particularly in the South of Bexley where there is limited provision.
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### **Tennis**

- 9.91 There was limited evidence to suggest that additional tennis provision is required. The overall emphasis considered increasing the functionality of existing provision (to ensure it is accessible all year round) rather than providing new facilities. While facilities at parks are available all year round, the weather was felt to be prohibitive to the use of these facilities and indoor opportunities were therefore required.
- 9.92 Analysis of the distribution of tennis courts highlights that they are relatively evenly spread across the Borough, although sites are generally focused around the

## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

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Bexleyheath cluster and there is limited provision to the west of the Borough or in northern areas of the Thamesmead cluster. Many facilities are in private ownership and are not accessible on a casual pay and play basis. In light of evidence regarding the barriers that the price of facilities generates, ongoing programmes, such as that at Westheath should continue.

<b>OSF9</b>	Monitor the ongoing demand for public tennis facilities in the Borough. Work with clubs to promote public interest in tennis and ensure that facilities are accessible to all.
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### Watersports

- 9.93 The River Thames offers significant opportunities for residents of Bexley in terms of watersports. Sports available include rowing, fishing, yachting and sailing. Furthermore, the Thames is also an important cycle and walking route. In order to further encourage physical activity, sporting uses of the River should be promoted and developed in conjunction with the Port of London Authority.
- 9.94 The River Thames and other rivers in Bexley are also an important part of the blue ribbon network, a policy area of the London Plan. The London Plan promotes the use of the waterways for leisure, passenger and tourist traffic, and the transport of freight and general goods. The River Cray is also included within this network. The plan promotes the sustainable use of the river corridors and highlights the importance of protecting and improving provision of sport and recreation opportunities.

<b>OSF10</b>	Continue to promote and develop the use of the River Thames corridor for sporting activities including yachting, sailing, rowing and fishing and protect existing facilities.
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### Playing Pitches

- 9.95 Pitches were one of the key priorities emerging throughout consultation and calculations undertaken using the Playing Pitch Methodology highlight unmet demand across the Borough, particularly with regard junior facilities. This has arisen as a result of the significant rise in demand over the past few years.
- 9.96 As highlighted through consultation, there is specific evidence of unmet demand for pitches, in particular:
- Footscray Lions do not have a home ground and are currently spread across several pitches
  - Dartfordians Sports Club wish to expand their home ground
  - Bexley RUFC wish to relocate back inside the Borough.

<b>OSF11</b>	Identify opportunities to accommodate the above clubs. This may involve negotiations with schools not currently permitting community use, partnership working with another club or new provision.
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- 9.97 The analysis below considers the supply of sports pitches in each of the areas across the Borough. In light of the identified shortfalls of pitch provision, opportunities for increased community access are highlighted. Where possible, new provision should be located in an area currently devoid of facilities in order to maximise access to

## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

facilities. The analysis considers the spread of public facilities and highlights the roles that schools can play in meeting local community need.

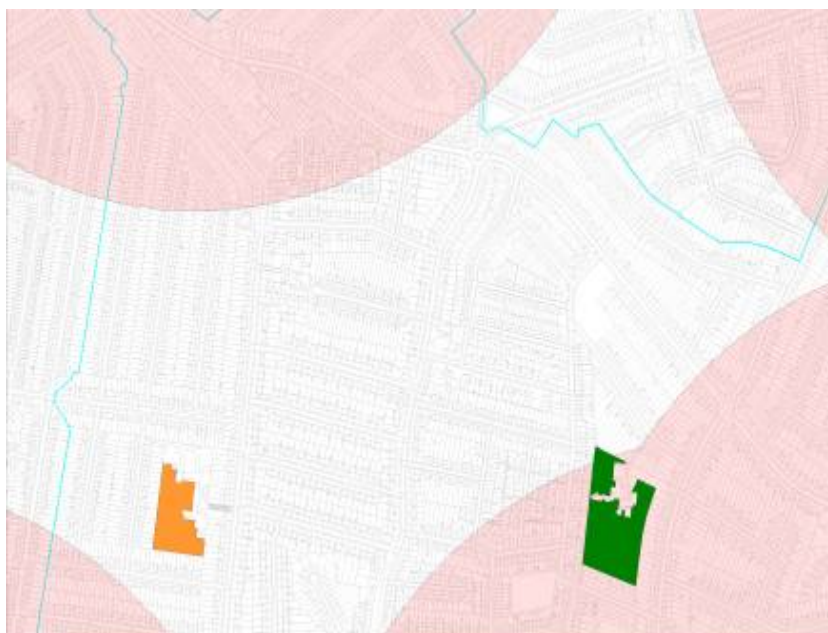
- 9.98 While it is important to maximise local access to facilities, the provision of large strategic sites (containing a variety of sports and usually social facilities) should be supported. These provide different opportunities for local residents and encourage involvement in a wide range of sports and are more financially viable than small sites. Successful introduction of these “community hubs” may involve the amalgamation of some clubs/associations.

<b>OSF12</b>	Seize opportunities to develop community hubs offering a variety of different sporting activity.
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### ***Bexleyheath Cluster***

- 9.99 Application of the quantity standard indicates there is sufficient provision of outdoor sports facilities in the Bexleyheath cluster across all five growth scenarios. Accessibility mapping illustrates there is a good distribution of facilities in the area with the majority of residents within the appropriate distance threshold of either a grass pitch or tennis court. Despite this, residents in the north west of Brampton ward are unable to access a grass pitch or tennis court (Figure 9.4).

**Figure 9.4 – Deficiencies in the north west of Brampton ward**



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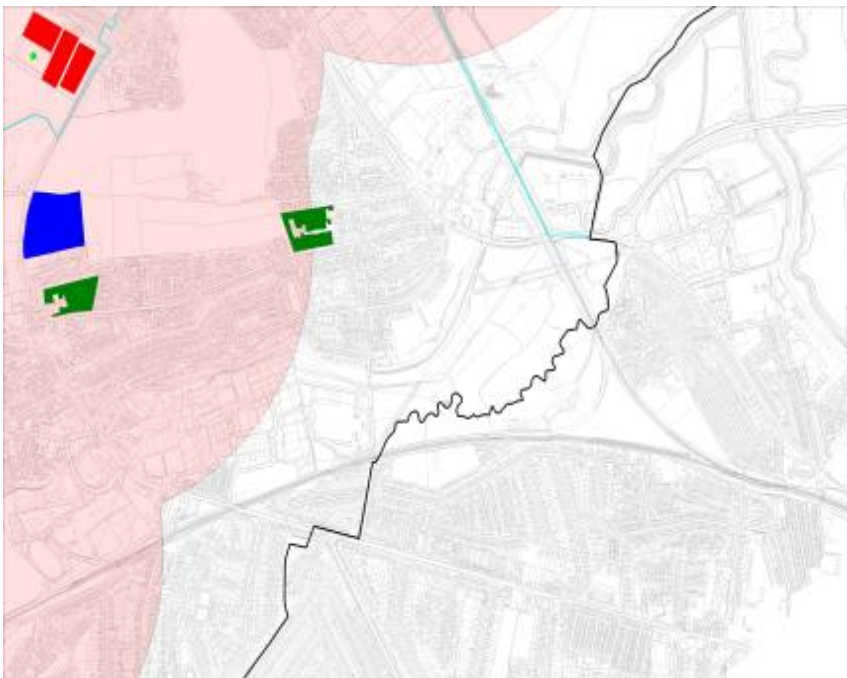
- 9.100 The location of Brampton Primary School in this area of deficiency is particularly important as the site allows community of its grass pitch and therefore provides opportunities for both formal sports and informal recreation. The location of a private school in the area also offers potential opportunities and consideration should be given to maximising community access to this site.
- 9.101 Dartfordians Sports Association (Rugby, Cricket and Short Mat Bowls) is located in this area and has identified the need for further provision at their site. Expansion of

this site could provide an opportunity for the development of a high quality sporting hub.

### ***Crayford Cluster***

- 9.102 Quantitative analysis reveals the Crayford cluster has sufficient provision to meet the minimum standard and application of the accessibility standards illustrate the majority of residents have access to either a grass pitch or tennis court within the recommended distance threshold. However, residents located in the east of Crayford ward and south east of St Mary's ward are unable to access a grass pitch or tennis court (Figures 9.5 and 9.6). Furthermore Footscray Lions base was at Baugh Rd, Cray Meadows Ward and are currently looking for a home ground, indicating that there is a shortfall in this area of the Borough.

**Figure 9.5 – Deficiencies in the east of Crayford ward**

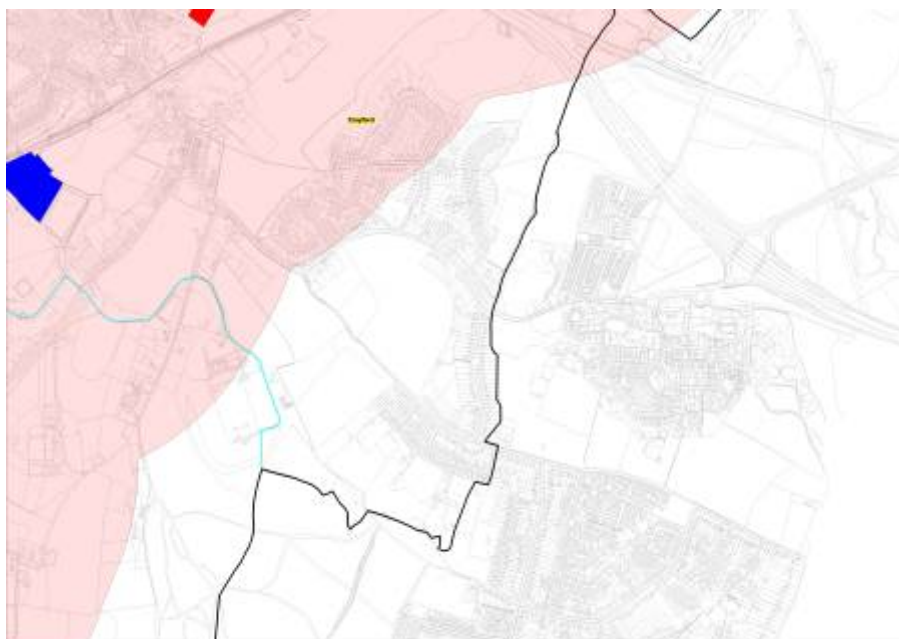


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- 9.103 The location of a private school in the area of deficiency in the Crayford ward provides an opportunity for local residents to have access to an outdoor sports facility. Opportunities of formalising a community-use agreement at this site should be explored. This will contribute to alleviating deficiencies in the east of Crayford ward.



**Figure 9.6 – Deficiencies in the south east of St Mary’s ward**



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***Erith Cluster***

9.104 Whilst there is insufficient provision of outdoor sports facilities in Erith in quantitative terms, application of the accessibility standards shows there is a good distribution of facilities within Erith meaning the majority of residents are able to access either a grass pitch or tennis court within the recommended distance threshold. Despite this good distribution of facilities, areas of deficiency are evident in the central of Erith ward and in the south of Colyers ward (Figures 9.7 and 9.8).

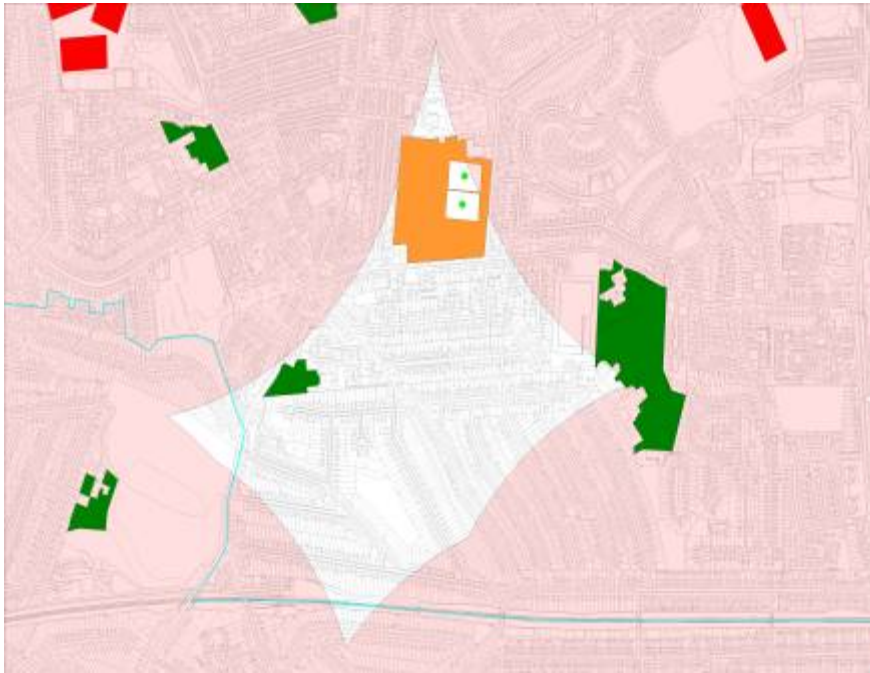
**Figure 9.7 – Deficiencies in central of Erith ward**



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**Figure 9.8 – Deficiencies in south of Colyers ward**



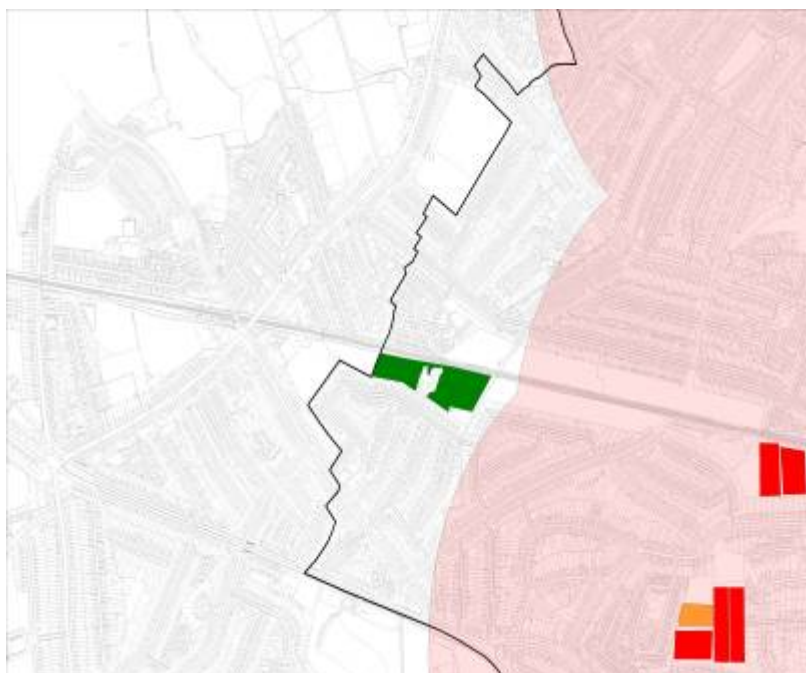
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- 9.105 Within these areas of deficiency there are a number of school sites, with some sites offering community access. Trinity School, located in the area of deficiency in Erith ward, has a wide range of outdoor sports facilities available for community access. At this site there is two full size grass pitches, athletics and one all weather pitch. The location of this site in an area of deficiency ensures residents have access to a number of outdoor sports facilities. Erith School, located in the Colyers ward, is a large site that has three full size grass pitches and one astro turf pitch. This school also allows community access and therefore provides significant opportunities for sport and recreation for residents in this area of deficiency.

### ***Sidcup Cluster***

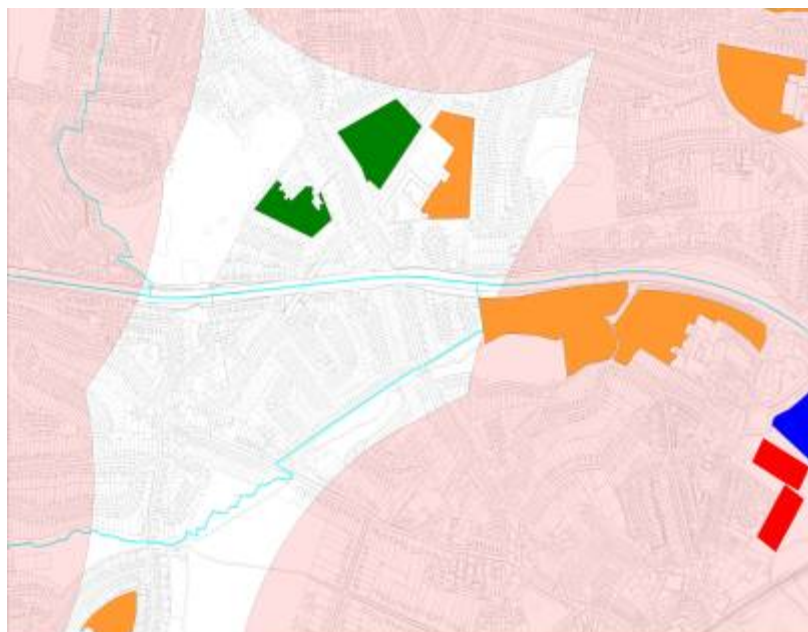
- 9.106 The Sidcup cluster has the greatest level of provision of outdoor sports facilities in the Borough (99.88 ha). Application of the quantity standard supports this, indicating there is adequate provision to meet current and future needs. Accessibility mapping further reinforces this illustrating a good distribution of sites, meaning the vast majority of residents have access to either a grass pitch or tennis court within the recommended distance threshold. Only those residents located in the outskirts of the area, to the south west of Blackfen and Lamorbey ward and north east of Blendon and Penhill ward (Figures 9.9 and 9.10) are not within the recommended distance threshold of a facility.

**Figure 9.9 – Deficiencies in the south west of Blackfen and Lamorbey ward**



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**Figure 9.10 – Deficiencies in the north east of Blendon and Penhill ward**



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- 9.107 The utilisation of school sites could play a key role in increasing access, particularly where school sites are located in areas of deficiency, such as the two private schools in Figure 9.9.

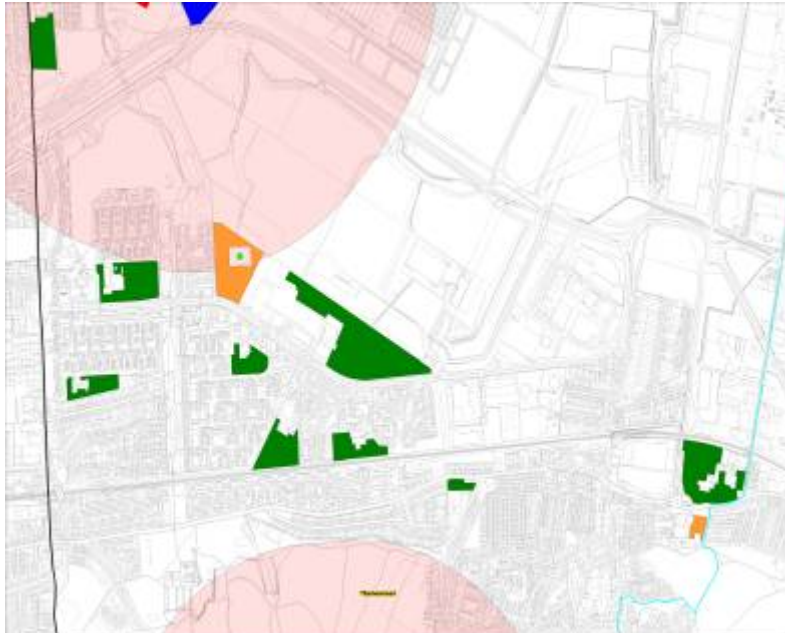
***Thamesmead Cluster***

- 9.108 Quantitative analysis reveals there is a significant undersupply of outdoor sports facilities in the Thamesmead cluster (-22.51 ha). Although future population

## SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

projections based on all five scenarios show this is set to decrease there will still be a significant undersupply by 2026. Accessibility mapping reflects this undersupply, highlighting a poor distribution of facilities, with sites concentrated in the north and south of the area leading to deficiencies in access in central Thamesmead (Figure 9.11). This poor distribution is particularly prevalent for the provision of tennis courts with residents in the centre and north of Thamesmead unable to access a facility.

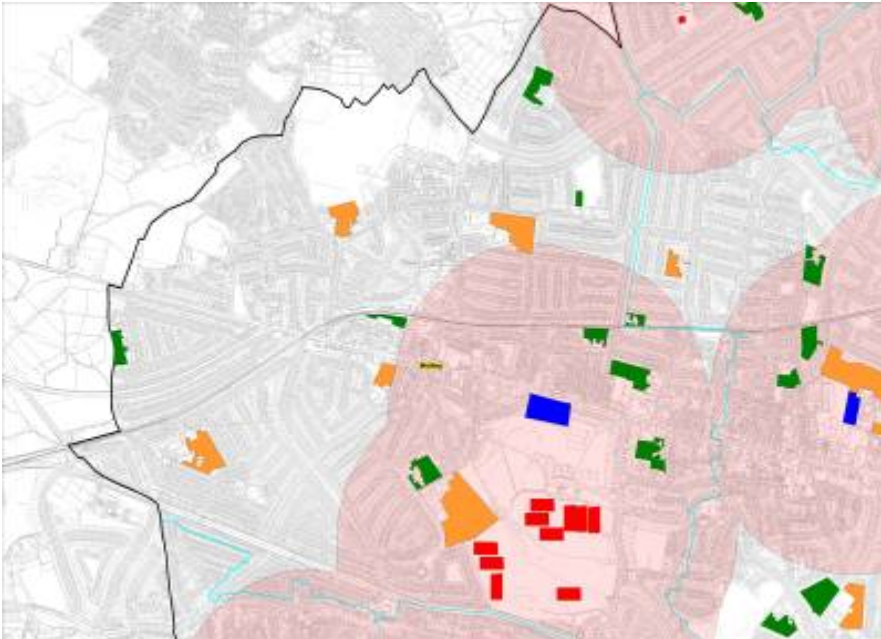
**Figure 9.11 – Deficiencies in central Thamesmead**



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- 9.109 In light of the quantitative deficiencies in the area consideration should be given to the new provision of facilities in Thamesmead increasing access to existing sites. The Council should continue ongoing work with Thamesmead Town FC to provide satellite sites in the area.
- 9.110 Increasing access to schools in the area should also be considered. This is particularly important as there are a lot of schools located in the area of deficiency in central Thamesmead. Although the majority of these sites do not offer community access, if community access agreements are established there is potential sport and recreation opportunities for residents in this area.
- 9.111 Application of the quantity standard reveals the Welling cluster has the largest deficiency in the provision of outdoor sports facilities (-38.95 ha). Accessibility mapping illustrates a poor distribution of facilities, with the majority of residents unable to access a grass pitch or tennis within the recommended accessibility standards. The majority of facilities are located in the Danson Park ward, which creates clear deficiencies across Welling (Figure 9.12).

**Figure 9.12 – Deficiencies in Welling cluster**



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9.112 Despite a poor distribution of outdoor sports facilities there is an even distribution of schools in the area that are available for community use. Westwood College, located in Falconwood, is one of the schools in the area and this site has a wide range of sporting provision including athletics, grass pitches, tennis courts, and a multi use games area. Welling School also has an all weather pitch. The variety of provision offered by schools in the area therefore provides a wide range of sport and recreation opportunities for the residents of Welling.

### Summary

- 9.113 Outdoor sports facilities is a wide-ranging category of open space which includes both natural and artificial surfaces for sport and recreation that are owned and managed by Councils, sports associations, schools and individual sports clubs. Examples include playing pitches, athletics tracks, bowling greens and golf courses with the primary purpose of participation in outdoor sports.
- 9.114 PPG17 considers the provision of all the different types of outdoor sport facilities as one and does not break down the typology into more detailed assessments for each sport. However, for the purpose of this study each different sport has considered individually and an update of the Playing Pitch Strategy calculations have been undertaken.
- 9.115 Consultation highlights issues with both the quantity and quality of facilities. Analysis of the existing provision supports this. There is significant variation in the quality of facilities across the Borough, with site assessment scores ranging from 44% to 84%.
- 9.116 The distribution of outdoors sports facilities is generally good across the Borough, however in some areas facilities are concentrated in one area leading to clear accessibility deficiencies. The River Thames provides significant opportunities for watersports.

## **SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES**

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- 9.117 While the distribution of facilities is even, analysis of demand illustrates that some new facilities are required, particularly to cater for the increase in junior participation.
- 9.118 There is a good provision of schools distributed across the Borough that offer community access to facilities. These schools play a key role in providing opportunities for sport and recreation for residents Bexley. The location of these sites in areas of deficiency makes them a highly valuable resource to the local community.
- 9.119 Increasing access to existing sites, particularly school sites within the Borough is a priority. The strategic location of some school sites in areas of deficiency sometimes makes them the only facilities available for use to community and therefore access to these sites is vital. Qualitative enhancements should also be made to existing sites within the Borough, however consideration should be given for the new provision of facilities where demand is expressed.
- 9.120 It will be essential that the Local Development Framework facilitates the delivery of increased provision up to 2026 in order to accommodate rising demand and growing participation.