



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL



INDOOR SPORTS FACILITY STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN



INDOOR SPORTS FACILITY STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

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GLOSSARY AND TERMINOLOGY

Active Places Power

The Active Places Power website has been developed to provide a planning tool for sports facilities. It has been designed to assist in investment decisions across Government and to help local authorities carry out audits of their sports provision and develop local strategies. It will also help national governing bodies of sport in identifying and planning where they need to improve and invest in facilities for their participants. Active Places Power has a single database that holds information on sports facilities throughout England. It includes local authority leisure facilities, as well as commercial and club sites. The site gives users enhanced capabilities for analysing the data on the system. These include standard reports, census databased thematics and a series of push-button analyses (based on the complex modelling functionality developed by the University of Edinburgh) designed to examine the catchments of existing and potential facilities. The site includes tools for detailed analysis, including thematic maps, reports, advanced queries and strategic planning tools, all of which have been utilised in this study

Sports Facilities Calculator (SFC)

The SFC has been created by Sport England to help local authorities quantify how much additional demand for the key community sports facilities (swimming pools and sports halls), is generated by populations of new growth, development and regeneration areas. It is designed to be used to estimate the facility needs of discrete populations, such as sports hall and swimming pool created by a new community of a residential development. Whilst the SFC can be used to estimate the swimming and sports hall needs for whole area populations, such as for a whole local authority, there are dangers in how these figures are subsequently used at this level in matching it with current supply for strategic gap analysis. The SFC does not take account of:

- Facility location compared to demand
- Capacity and availability of facilities - opening hours
- Cross boundary movement of demand
- Travel networks and topography
- Attractiveness of facilities

For these reasons, total demand figure generated by the SFC should not simply be compared with facilities within the same area. The SFC is therefore used in this study to give an overall indication of demand, but is only used in conjunction with other tools to assess the adequacy of existing provision, and highlight future needs

Sport England Facilities Planning Model (FPM)

The FPM is a computer model provided by Sport England (developed and used on licence from Edinburgh University), which helps to assess the strategic provision of community sports facilities. So far, the work has concentrated on the major community sports facilities of sports halls and swimming pools.

The Model has been developed as a means of:

- Assessing requirements for different types of community sports facilities on a local, regional or national scale
- Helping local authorities determine an adequate level of sports facility provision to meet their local needs
- Testing ‘what if’ scenarios in provision and changes in demand, this includes testing the impact of opening, relocating and closing facilities and the impact population changes would have on the needs of the sports facilities.

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In its simplest form, the model seeks to assess whether the capacity of existing facilities for a particular sport are capable of meeting local demand for that sport taking into account how far people are prepared to travel to a facility. In order to estimate the level of sports facility provision in an area, the model compares the number of facilities (supply), by the demand for that facility (demand) that the local population will produce.

The level of participation is estimated using national participation rates and applying them to the number of people who live in the local area.

The outputs considered in this study are from Sport England's National Facilities Audit Dataset as of May 2015.

ISFS

Indoor Sports Facility Strategy

NPPF

National Planning Policy Framework

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Indoor Sports Facility Strategy (ISFS) document will guide future provision of indoor sports facilities to serve existing and new communities in Ashford Borough Council. In line with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework, the strategy sets out to assess existing Indoor Sports Facilities, the future need for sport and active recreation, as the borough grows and develops for opportunities for new provision, and expansion of existing facilities.

The ISFS for Ashford summarises the information, key findings, and issues contained within the ISFS Needs Assessment Report Appendix 1.

Both the ISFS and ISFS Needs Assessment Report have been prepared in accordance with the guidance from Sport England contained in the document 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities (ANOG), December 2014.

The ISFS and Action Plan have been produced to ensure that there is a network of sustainable facilities in place that will promote and support participation and growth in sport, recreation and fitness across the Borough of Ashford to 2030.

POLICY CONTEXT

The development of an ISFS quantifies the present and future need for indoor sports facilities in the Borough. It allows proper planning for the delivery and playing of indoor sport into the future; as well as informing proposals for the development of new indoor sports facilities and improvements to existing sites.

The key strategic themes with regards to the ISFS in Ashford Borough Council that emanate from the policy context are:

- The requirements of the 2012 NPPF and specifically paragraphs 73 and 74.
- The need to address planned population growth in Ashford Borough Council.
- The growing focus on improving health and well-being at national, regional and local level as a result of identified and increasing levels of obesity and inactivity, and the need to plan opportunities for more active lifestyles (sport and physical activity) into new and existing communities.
- The new Government Sports Strategy which prioritises both informal and formal participation opportunities and the need to provide participation opportunities for both.
- The new Sport England Strategy which identifies the need for increased participation and recreational opportunities, and therefore the need to invest in both formal and informal facilities.
- Ashford Borough Council's Five Year Corporate Plan 2015 – 2020 and
- Ashford Borough Council's Emerging Local Plan 2030.

One of the principles of the NPPF is to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs. Paragraph 73 of the NPPF explores the importance of access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation.

Paragraph 73 and 74 of the NPPF explore assessments and protection of existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields.

Ashford Borough Council is preparing a development plan for the borough. This plan will set out a vision and objectives for the growth of the borough up to 2030. This draft Local Plan is in the form of one document that will cover the whole borough, and will replace the package of documents currently adopted (with the exception of Chilmington Green Area Action Plan).

The ISFS will help inform the policies included within the new Local Plan and strategically the ISFS will support the part played by sport and physical activity in meeting Ashford Borough Council's Corporate Objectives.

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THE VISION

The Vision for the ISFS is:

“To provide or enable a range of quality leisure and cultural activities where people can make healthy and affordable lifestyle choices and enjoy assets that create attractive, desirable and active communities.”

The ISFS provides evidence to support:

- The Council's emerging Local Plan 2030,
- The production of the Regulation 123 list of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funded infrastructure,
- Funding bids from National Sports bodies like Sport England and the National Governing Bodies (NGB's) of sport,
- Additionally, the ISFS will focus on revenue and capital spending in the medium term.

This ISFS will ensure that a planned approach to indoor sports facilities takes place across Ashford Borough Council over the medium term, ensuring that the Ashford community has access to high quality indoor sports facilities, helping communities improve their health and remain cohesive. It is imperative that where the Council provides facilities, they are as efficient and effective as possible due to continuing financial pressures.

The project scope for the ISFS includes:

- Sports Halls
- Activity Halls
- Swimming Pools
- Health and Fitness Suites
- Indoor Bowls
- Squash Courts
- Indoor Tennis
- Gymnastics
- Athletics
- Boxing

The ISFS addresses facilities provided by the following sectors:

- Local Authority
- Education, (school based), Higher and Further education.
- Voluntary and private sectors

RATIONALE FOR DEVELOPING A ISFS

Ashford Borough Council wishes to understand current and future needs for indoor sports facilities, driven by increased population, and identification of any gaps in the existing facility network.

The development of this ISFS will enable Ashford Borough Council and other local providers to shape their future indoor sports facilities offer; this may comprise direct provision and that undertaken by education, voluntary, community, and the private sector.

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The ISFS will underpin the contribution that sport, and the facilitation of opportunities to have a healthy lifestyle, makes to the local authority's Corporate Plan and priority objectives. It will also help provide a rationale to enable National Governing Bodies (NGBs) to further invest and deliver their working outcomes as outlined in their various strategic development documents.

The development of the ISFS is an opportunity to set out a strategic vision for future provision of indoor sports facilities, based on robust evidence and a needs assessment.

This will guide and inform future investment and partnerships, influence the Local Plan, future proof and increase participation opportunities to 2030 and beyond.

The ISFS can help to meet the Ashford Borough Council's Corporate Plan Priority 3 Active & Creative Ashford – Healthy Choices through physical, cultural and leisure engagement by:

- Delivering of the best mix of sports, cultural, recreational experiences supporting a range of health & wellbeing benefits for residents of all ages and abilities.
- Invest in new provision and refurbishment of existing facilities to provide a high quality sports, culture and leisure offer [Substantial investment in the Stour Centre].
- Improve the quality of the management of leisure & cultural facilities so that they are among the best in the UK.
- Extend the cultural, sport & recreational offers at key sites: Conningbrook, Julie Rose.
- Innovative ways for people to choose active lifestyles.
- Ascertain and support best solutions for providing healthy & active communities in new developments – Repton Park, Chilmington.
- Strengthen culture & sport in the Local Plan and through Master Planning.
- Recognising the growing elderly demographic, embed a new approach to activities for the 60+ group across the borough.
- Grow our cultural offer to be a successful and alternative destination.
- Support Tenterden's leisure & cultural offer.
- Work with the private sector on cultural & leisure provision.

POPULATION AND GROWTH

Ashford Borough Council is the largest local authority (spatially) within Kent and covers an area of approximately 58,062 ha. At the time of the 2011 Census the borough had a population of 118,405 residents.

The ONS 2014-based Subnational population projections project a population of 127,700 in 2017 rising to 145,300 in 2030. The population is projected to rise by 17,600 by 2030.

Understanding the needs of different indoor sports at a local level enables Ashford Borough Council to provide appropriately to meet the needs of its communities. It is inevitable that the needs of communities change over time, just as the playing and participative requirements of individual sports change. The demand for these at a local level need to be assessed and modelled to understand what this means in terms of actual indoor sports provision.

The very fact that the requirements of sports change is one of the several justifications for undertaking the ISFS at a local level and critically for updating this analysis every 5, if not 3 years. However, it must also be understood that the ISFS represents a 'snap-shot' in time based upon the anticipated level of growth planned for Ashford Borough Council.

This means there may be proposals that come forward for the new Local Plan 2030 such as large residential development that the ISFS has not taken into consideration. In such circumstances the Sport England Facility Calculator (SFC) that identifies new sports hall and swimming pool needs from housing developments should be used alongside consultation undertaken with National Governing Bodies of Sport. This is to ensure that sporting provision is planned at the start of the development and not as it grows.

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Chilmington Green is a site that has received planning permission. 2,500 of the overall 5,750 houses are anticipated to be developed by 2030. The Chilmington Green development has a Section 106 agreement in place that provides for a 2 badminton court community centre that is delivered by 2030. Phase 2 will be delivered after 2030 and will provide a 4 court community sports hall.

The Sport England Sports Facilities Calculator can be used to identify the ISFS sports hall and swimming pool requirements for the new development. Table 1. Identifies the sports hall and swimming pool requirements for Chilmington Green up to 2030, with the development of 2,500 homes. The population has been calculated using the Department for Communities and Local Government 2014-based Household Projections: England, 2014-2039 – Household average size projected 2029 of 2.27 persons per household.

Table 1: Chilmington Green – Sports Hall and Swimming Pool requirements to 2030

Chilmington Green Population 2500 homes by 2030	Sports Hall Requirements (based on a 4 court badminton hall)	Swimming Pool Requirements
Population – 5,675	1.58 badminton courts / 0.38 halls	60.72 sqm / 1.14 swimming lanes

Table 1. Identifies that the Chilmington Green development of 2,500 homes by 2030, requires 1.58 badminton court space and 60.72 sq m of swimming pool water space.

Table 2. Identifies the requirements for sports halls and swimming pools with the full development of an additional 3,250 houses at Chilmington Green beyond 2030. The population has been calculated using the Department for Communities and Local Government 2014-based Household Projections: England, 2014-2039 – Household average size projected 2029 of 2.27 persons per household.

Table 2: Chilmington Green Sports Hall and Swimming Pool Requirements Beyond 2030

Chilmington Green Population 3250 homes by 2030	Sports Hall Requirements (based on a 4 court badminton hall)	Swimming Pool Requirements
Population – 7,378	2.05 badminton courts / 0.51 halls	78.94 sqm / 1.49 swimming lanes

Table 2 identifies that the Chilmington Green development of 3,250 homes after 2030, requires 2.05 badminton court space and 78.94 sqm of swimming pool water space.

Main changes to the draft Local Plan 2030 are currently being consulted on. One of these main changes is the overall requirement for housing that has increased from 14,680 to 16,120 dwellings, to be delivered between 2011 and 2030. Factoring in completions since 2011, this figure is reduced to 12,943 between 2017 and 2030.

The Main Changes Consultation document suggests a proposed allocation of 7,110 new houses between 2017 and 2030. This does not include Chilmington Green, windfall sites or extant sites.

By applying the 7,110 proposed allocation of new houses and multiplying by a population of 2.27 persons per new dwelling the projected population is 16,139. This figure is slightly lower than the ONS 2014-based Subnational population projections increase between 2017 and 2030, which is 17,600.

Table 3 identifies the additional sports hall and swimming pool requirements to meet increased population demand across Ashford Borough Council by 2030.

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Table 3: Sports Hall and Swimming Pool Requirements 2017 - 2030 using increased population 145,300 ONS Subnational 2014 population projections and Sport England Facilities Calculator.

Ashford Population 2030 145,300	Sports Hall Requirements (based on a 4 court badminton hall)	Swimming Pool Requirements
Population – 145,300	40.40 badminton courts / 10.11 halls	1,554.54 sqm

The requirements to 2030 are 40.40 badminton courts by 2030 and 1,554.54 sqm of water space.

ISFS HEADLINE FINDINGS

KEY FINDINGS SWIMMING POOLS

Overall the Borough currently has a high level of swimming pool provision. Water space per 1000 population is 14.65m². This figure is higher than the figures for England 12.46m². The South east region 13.82m²

There is a need to ensure that there is sufficient water space for 2030. The additional water space required in 2030 is the difference between the new required water space in 2030, which is 1554.54 sq. m and the current available supply of 1,471.66 sq. m of water space giving a negative supply/demand balance of 82.88 sq. m of water space.

There are 2 public accessible swimming pools. The Stour Centre and Tenterden Leisure Centre. Other pools are commercially orientated with memberships or Education based such as Ashford School with limited opening hours.

The FPM has forecast that capacity of the Stour Centre is 92% and the capacity of Tenterden Leisure Centre is 37%.

All residents are within a 20 minute drive time of either the Stour Centre, Tenterden Leisure Centre or a neighbouring authorities swimming pool. The residents of Chilham in the North of Ashford are closer to Canterbury's Kingsmead Leisure Centre (7.2 miles 17 minutes) than it is to the Sour Centre in Ashford Town (10.5 miles 21 minutes).

Tenterden Leisure Centre swimming pool should be promoted across Ashford to ensure that the 37% capacity improves.

The Council could look to partner with the commercial sector and Ashford School to provide some community use within these pools.

KEY FINDINGS FOR INDOOR SPORTS HALLS

Ashford has 4.49 courts per 10,000 population. This figure is higher than the figures for England and three of the neighbouring local authorities. The rural areas are served with village halls and church halls where activities such as yoga, martial arts, badminton, short mat bowls and other physical activities take place.

Ashford's population generates an amount of demand for sports hall use that equates to 8,309 visits per week in the peak period (evenings and weekends). The Sport England Facilities Planning Model analyses this demand and converts it to a facility equivalent measured in the number of badminton courts required. In the case of Ashford Borough there is a current requirement for 38.05 courts of sports hall space. This compares to a current available supply of 35.10 courts. Which leaves a deficit of 2.95 courts (rounded 3 courts).

The future population to 2030 of 145,300 requires 40.44 courts. The current supply 35.10 courts subtracted

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from the required number of courts in 2030 equates to 5.34 courts rounded up is 6 courts.

Chilmington Green is planned to deliver 2,500 new homes before 2030 and will provide a 2 court hall in this phase of development. Chilmington Green Phase 2 will not be delivered until after 2030 and will deliver a 4 court sports hall. There is still a requirement to deliver a 4 court sports hall before 2030.

Developer contributions could be used to improve and open up existing sports hall space.

The Sport England Facility Planning Model does not take into account the 4 court sports hall at Ashford School and Preparatory School. There is room to improve capacity at Education sites e.g The Towers School 51%, Homewood School and Sixth Form Centre 51% and the North School 20%. The Sport England Facility Planning Model identifies current capacity at Tenterden Leisure Centre to be 64% by providing alternative accommodation for Kestrel Gymnastics Club this would provide additional capacity (opening up 16 hours a week of sports hall space). In contrast the Stour Centre sports hall is at 100% capacity.

All current residents have access to a sports hall as all residents are within a 20 minute drive time of a 4 court badminton sports hall either within the Borough or a neighbouring Borough.

KEY FINDINGS OTHER ACTIVITY HALLS

There are a number of activity halls, village halls, community halls and facilities such as Kingsnorth Recreation Centre that can and do provide for sport and physical activity in the towns and villages across Ashford Borough Council.

The needs assessment has identified a number of facilities in villages and where available the assessment has provided the size of the facility and the activity that takes place within the hall space. The activities vary but include dance, yoga, pilates, aerobics, table tennis, badminton, judo, martial arts, tai chi, boot camps, and short mat bowls.

Badminton can be played at Chillham Sports Centre, Mountbatten Hall, Mersham and the hall at Rolvenden.

These facilities need to be protected and enhanced to provide local door step sport and physical activity provision within the rural areas.

Where an opportunity arises through new developments that doesn't warrant a full size 4 court badminton hall then built facilities providing a 1 badminton court facility with meeting rooms toilets and changing space with an outdoor multi use games area should be provided. Repton Community Centre is an example of this facility in practice - currently being built.

There is a need to support Tenterden Boxing Club to find a home within Tenterden. The club currently train in Woodchurch. Ashford Boxing Club currently train at the old South Ashford School Jemmett Road. This site is a housing development site in the emerging Local Plan and the club will be looking for alternative accommodation in the future.

KEY FINDINGS FOR HEALTH AND FITNESS SUITES

Ashford Borough Council should support the development of new community accessible health and fitness facilities, where these are viable and supported by site specific latent demand analysis. Sites to consider are Tenterden Leisure Centre, Courtside and Julie Rose Stadium.

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KEY FINDINGS FOR INDOOR BOWLS

Current provision across Ashford Borough Council is meeting existing need. There is no requirement for additional indoor bowls provision in the Borough, assuming the long-term trend for declining participation continues. The Borough does however have an ageing population and therefore this could improve future trends in participation.

KEY FINDINGS FOR SQUASH COURTS

There is no requirement for additional squash provision across Ashford Borough Council. Demand for squash is falling nationally, resulting in underutilisation of courts. Operators are increasingly converting squash courts for more popular, revenue generating, activities.

Existing court provision should not be reduced as this would have a negative impact on squash and current users may find it difficult to secure bookings at alternative sites during peak times.

KEY FINDINGS FOR INDOOR TENNIS

Feasibility work is currently being undertaken to identify the best site within Ashford Borough Council for an Indoor Tennis Centre with support from Sport England and the Lawn Tennis Association.

KEY FINDINGS FOR GYMNASTICS

British Gymnastics have made it clear that they would like to see additional gymnastic activities within Ashford Borough Council's Sports Halls and would also support the development of Gymnastics Clubs having their own venues where the equipment is laid out permanently. The Clubs with their own venues would operate as commercially viable businesses.

It would be feasible for the Stour Centre to improve its own Gymnastic offer and roll out a programme at other venues such as the Julie Rose Stadium and Kingsnorth Pavilion.

As mentioned above under Sports Halls there is a need to relocate Kestrel Gymnastics Club into its own venue where the equipment is laid out permanently.

KEY FINDINGS FOR ATHLETICS

There is a sufficient supply of athletics facilities across Ashford Borough Council.

There is an option to improve the leisure offer at the Julie Rose Stadium with improved health and fitness facilities and further linkages to Conningbrook Lakes that could provide running trails way marked and providing km markers.

There are many different types of athletic activity. The growth area in the sport is in recreational road and off-road running that has resulted in significant new runners into the sport over the past few years and evidence strongly suggests this growth will continue.

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KEY FINDINGS INDIVIDUAL FACILITIES

STOUR LEISURE CENTRE

Identify and implement ways of reducing the carbon footprint and consider actions to improve the dry side offer such as:

- Adventure soft play
- Clip and climb
- Gymnastic classes

TENTERDEN LEISURE CENTRE

Improve the dry side offer by:

- Relocating the health and fitness facilities and grow the gym to cater for the anticipated growth in population.
- Use the existing gym as a clip and climb facility.
- Add soft play facilities

Create additional capacity in the sports hall by working with Kestrel Gymnastics Club to help find them premises that they can manage commercially as a stand-alone entity.

Improve the capacity of the swimming pool.

JULIE ROSE STADIUM

Consider relocating and extending the health and fitness offer. The existing gym could become a club room/meeting room and the indoor area could provide physical activity classes.

COURTSIDE

Consider improving the leisure offer on site by providing a health and fitness facility.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The three strategic objectives for the Ashford Borough Council ISFS follow Sport England's planning objectives for sport and they are:

- 1. Protect:** Develop Policies and provide evidence for the Ashford Borough Council Local Plan to protect sports facilities for use by the community irrespective of their ownership.
- 2. Provide:** Access to a sustainable sports facility infrastructure for all residents and visitors.
- 3. Enhance:** Enhance current facilities where feasible and provide a programme of sports activities that meets the needs of the Ashford Borough Residents and Visitors that leads to an increase in participation.

The Action Plan sets out the key priorities that have emerged from the ISFS and makes recommendations against timescales and whom the Partners to deliver should be.

1. ASHFORD BOROUGH INDOOR SPORTS FACILITY STRATEGY INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1 The Indoor Sports Facility Strategy (ISFS) for Ashford summarises the information, key findings, and issues contained within the Context and Needs Assessment report. Both the Assessment Report and the ISFS have been prepared in accordance with the guidance from Sport England contained in the document 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities (ANOG), December 2014.

1.2 The ISFS and Action Plan have been produced to ensure that there is a network of sustainable facilities in place that will promote and support participation and growth in sport, recreation and fitness across Ashford Borough Council.

1.3 In line with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework, the ISFS sets out to assess existing indoor sports facilities, the future need for indoor sports facilities, and opportunities for new provision. The key factors for Ashford Borough Council are:

- The requirements of the 2012 NPPF and specifically paragraph 73

'Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required'

(Source: NPPF 2012 Paragraph 73)

- and additionally, paragraph 74 of the NPPF emphasise that existing open space, sports and recreational facilities and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:
 - An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
 - Any loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
 - The development is for alternative recreation or open space facilities, the need for which clearly outweighs the loss.

1.4 The ISFS provides evidence to support:

- The Council's emerging Local Plan 2030,
- The production of the Regulation 123 list of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funded infrastructure,
- Funding bids from National Sports bodies like Sport England and the National Governing Bodies (NGB's) of sport.

1.5 The Strategy will ensure that a planned approach to sport and physical activity facilities takes place across the Borough of Ashford over the medium term, ensuring that the Ashford community has access to high quality facilities, helping communities improve their health and remain cohesive. It is imperative that where the Council provides facilities, they are as efficient and effective as possible due to continuing financial pressures.

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1.6 There will need to be an ongoing engagement with a range of key partners in the future these partners include:

- Ashford Borough Council
- Ashford Sports Clubs
- Ashford Schools
- Ashford Borough Council Leisure Management Operator
- Town and Parish Councils
- National Governing Bodies of Sport

STRATEGY SCOPE

1.7 The strategy scope includes:

- Sports Halls
- Other Activity Halls
- Swimming Pools
- Indoor Bowls
- Indoor Tennis
- Gymnastics
- Squash
- Athletics

THE VISION

1.8 The Vision for the ISFS is:

“To provide or enable a range of quality leisure and cultural activities where people can make healthy and affordable lifestyle choices and enjoy assets that create attractive, desirable and active communities.”

1.9 In translating the vision and results of consultation into practical outcomes. Ashford Borough Council has identified a number of priorities these are:

- Delivery of the best mix of sports, cultural, recreational experiences supporting a range of health & wellbeing benefits for residents of all ages and abilities.
- Invest in new provision and refurbishment of existing facilities to provide a high-quality sports, culture and leisure offer [Substantial investment in Stour Centre].
- Improve the quality of the management of leisure & cultural facilities so that they are among the best in the UK.
- Extend the cultural, sport & recreational offers at key sites.
- Innovative ways for people to choose active lifestyles.
- Ascertain and support best solutions for providing healthy & active communities in new developments.
- Strengthen culture & sport in the Local Plan and through Master Planning.
- Recognising the growing elderly demographic, embed a new approach to activities for the 60+ group across the borough.
- Support Tenterden’s leisure & cultural offer.

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1.10 The three strategic objectives for the ISFS follow Sport England's planning objectives for sport and they are:

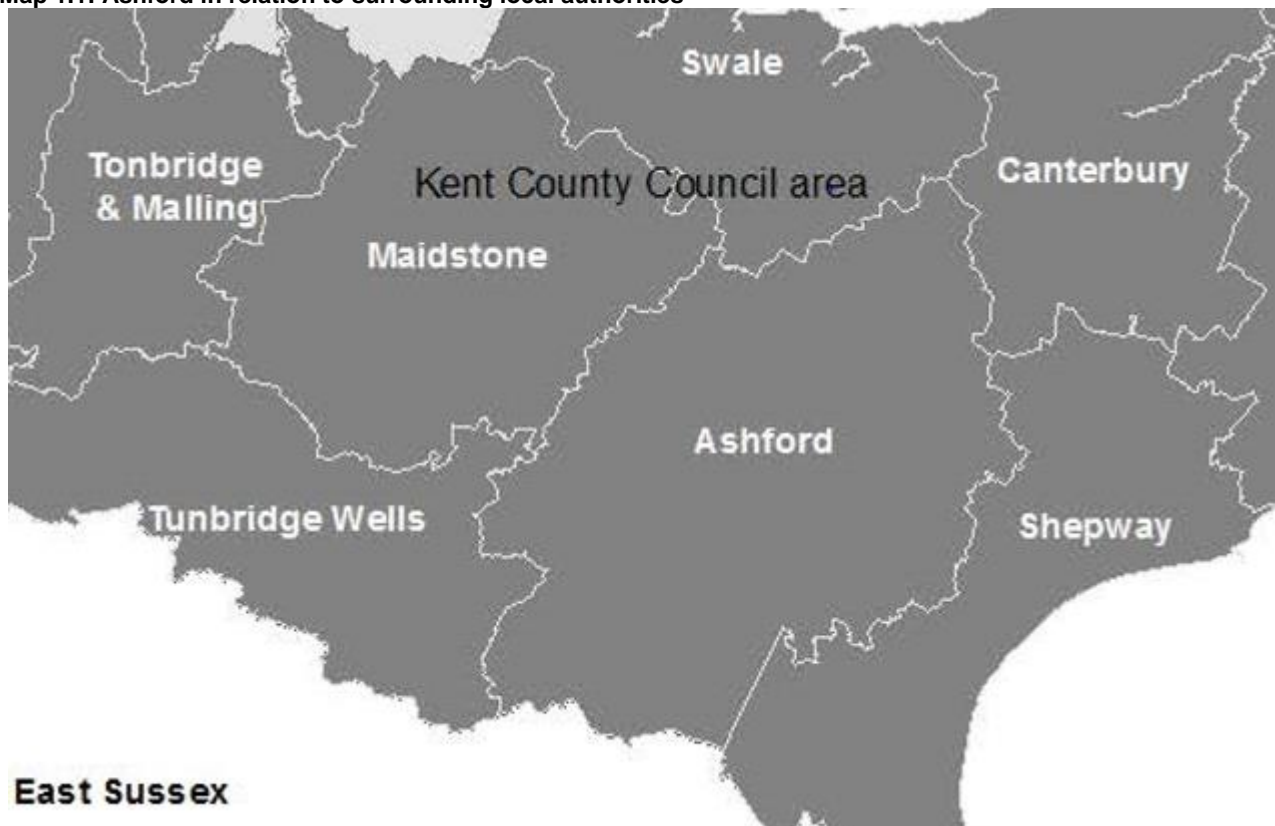
- 1. Protect:** Develop Policies and provide evidence for the Ashford Borough Council Local Plan to protect sports facilities for use by the community irrespective of their ownership.
- 2. Provide:** Access to a sustainable sports facility infrastructure for all residents and visitors.
- 3. Enhance:** Enhance current facilities where feasible and provide a programme of sports activities that meets the needs of the Ashford Borough Council Residents and Visitors that leads to an increase in participation.

1.11 The Action Plan sets out the key priorities that have emerged from the strategy and makes recommendations against timescales and whom the Partners to deliver should be.

THE STUDY AREA

1.12 The extent of the study area is within Ashford Borough Council. Map 1.1 shows Ashford Borough Council in the County of Kent, bounded to the north by the borough of Swale, by Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells to the west, Rother district to the south west (East Sussex), Shepway district to the south east, and Canterbury to the north.

Map 1.1: Ashford in relation to surrounding local authorities



1.13 Ashford Borough Council is the largest local authority (spatially) within Kent and covers an area of approximately 58,062 ha. At the time of the 2011 Census the borough had a population of 118,405 residents.

1.14 The town of Ashford (population of approximately 60,000 people) is the Borough's largest settlement and is where most sporting and cultural activity is focused.

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1.15 The rest of the borough is rural in nature and includes the historic market town of Tenterden (population of approximately 7,000 people) and a number of medium to small sized villages.

1.16 Map 1.2 below shows Ashford and its relationship to the rest of Kent, London and Paris.

Map 1.2: Ashford in relation to Kent, London and Paris



1.17 Ashford is well connected to the South East, the rest of the UK, and mainland Europe via the M20 and A28, domestic rail services, and the international rail link to Paris and Brussels. Both domestic and international links have improved with the opening of the High Speed 1 (HS1) rail services to London and Europe. Journey times to London are now just 38 minutes. These links give Ashford a major competitive advantage, which will be vital to the future growth of its economy.

1.18 The population is expected to be 145,300 by 2030 (Source: ONS Sub National 2014 Population Projections). In addition, the Ashford age profile is changing, by 2030 there are expected to be 35,000 people over the age of 65 and over and around 17% more people aged under 15.

1.19 The Council is in the process of producing its Local Plan which will set out the level of housing growth that is needed to come forward by 2030. Currently, the evidence base which supports the Local Plan is suggesting that an additional 14,680 houses will be required (2011 – 2030). The majority of this future growth will be focused towards the town of Ashford 75% and 25% in the rural areas.

OTHER LOCAL FACTORS

1.20 The Indices of Deprivation 2015 shows a change in Ashford Borough Council's national rank, moving up 22 places between 2010 and 2015. This indicates that Ashford Borough Council area was more deprived in 2015 than in 2010 relative to all other local authorities in England. Ashford Borough Council has a deprivation ranking in 2015 of 198 out of 326 nationally and in Kent 8 out of 12. In 2010 Ashford Borough Council was 176 out of 326 nationally and 7 out of 12 in Kent.

1.21 Ashford Borough Council does not have any Lower Super Output Areas ranked within the top 10% most deprived in England. Stanhope and Victoria Wards are the most deprived areas.

1.22 84% of Ashford Borough Council's households have access to private transport, with 31% of households having access to 2 cars or vans. This suggests that the households in Ashford are fairly mobile.

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- 1.23 There is high dependence on private transport because although there are larger villages in the area, many people travel to Town for education, retail opportunities and employment. This explains why 84% of the population has access to private transport.
- 1.24 Overall communities have good health, life expectancy is not significantly different for people in the most deprived areas of Ashford than in the least deprived areas
- 1.25 21.6% of children in year 6 are classified as obese. This is worse than the average for England. 22.7% were classified as obese.
- 1.26 The Health Profile for Ashford 2015 identified the priorities in Ashford to include improving the levels of healthy weight amongst adults and children through increasing levels of physical activity, addressing health inequalities (heart disease), and addressing smoking prevalence and smoking in pregnancy.

ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN:

FIVE YEAR CORPORATE PLAN 2015 – 2020

ASPIRATION, ACTION, ACHIEVEMENT

PRIORITY 1: ENTERPRISING ASHFORD – ECONOMIC INVESTMENT AND GROWTH

Our Aspiration: To promote growth and achieve greater economic prosperity for Ashford Borough. We will work to secure inward investment to create a wide range of jobs carried out by highly skilled workforce.

PRIORITY 2: LIVING ASHFORD – QUALITY HOUSING & HOMES FOR ALL

Our Aspiration: To secure quality homes across the Borough, catering for a range of ages, tenure and need, in well planned and attractive new places.

PRIORITY 3: ACTIVE & CREATIVE ASHFORD – HEALTHY CHOICES THROUGH PHYSICAL, CULTURAL AND LEISURE ENGAGEMENT

Our Aspiration: To provide or enable a range of quality leisure and cultural activities where people can make healthy and affordable lifestyle choices and enjoy assets that create attractive, desirable and active communities.

PRIORITY 4: ATTRACTIVE ASHFORD – ENVIRONMENT, COUNTRYSIDE, TOURISM & HERITAGE

Our: Aspiration: To achieve an environment that creates higher standards of public space, design, alongside improved standards of presentation of key green spaces. To safeguard and conserve our local heritage and areas of outstanding landscape quality to ensure the very best attractive environment with thriving and vibrant town centres.

- 1.27 The Corporate Strategy Priority 3 identifies what Ashford BC wishes to achieve by healthy choices through physical, cultural and leisure engagement. The priorities are shown below.

“Our Aspiration: To provide or enable a range of quality leisure and cultural activities where people can make healthy and affordable lifestyle choices and enjoy assets that create attractive, desirable and active communities.

- What do we want to achieve and how will we do it?
 - Delivery of the best mix of sports, cultural, recreational experiences supporting a range of health & wellbeing benefits for residents of all ages and abilities.
 - Invest in new provision and refurbishment of existing facilities to provide a high quality sports, culture and leisure offer [Substantial investment in Stour Centre].
 - Improve the quality of the management of leisure & cultural facilities so that they are among the best in the UK.
 - Extend the cultural, sport & recreational offers at key sites: Conningbrook, Julie Rose.

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- Innovative ways for people to choose active lifestyles.
- Ascertain and support best solutions for providing healthy & active communities in new developments – Repton Park, Chilmington.
- Strengthen culture & sport in the Local Plan and through Master Planning.
- Develop a 'cycle town' strategy.
- Recognising the growing elderly demographic, embed a new approach to activities for the 60+ group across the borough.
- Grow our cultural offer to be a successful and alternative destination.
- Deliver town centre cinema & associated attractions.
- Continue to support Revelation St Mary's, Develop Create & exploit its brand.
- Attract cultural industries.
- Support Tenterden's leisure & cultural offer.
- Work with the private sector on cultural & leisure provision.
- Maximise the value of our key green sites.
- Masterplan future development at Conningbrook.
- Planned improvement to key public space and parks – Victoria Park, Memorial Gardens & Willesborough Dykes

LOCAL PLAN TO 2030 – PUBLICATION DRAFT JUNE 2016

THE VISION

1.28 The following sets out the vision for Ashford Borough in 2030.

"Ashford Borough will meet its housing and employment needs, and take account of the needs of investors, through the provision of new high quality development forming attractive places, with the necessary supporting infrastructure and services, and in sustainable and accessible locations that take account of the Borough's environmental constraints.

The town of Ashford will continue to be the main focus for development with the regeneration of the town centre and areas where there are existing environmental and social issues and the creation of attractive and vibrant new communities on the periphery of the town.

A regenerated Ashford Town Centre will expand significantly its leisure, cultural, educational and residential offer. A new Commercial office Quarter next to the railway station will be a major economic impetus for the area, helping to substantially increase employment, trigger more spending in the town centre economy, and improve wage rates and skills levels. The town centre's heritage will be conserved and enhanced alongside quality new public realm reflecting the various different character areas.

Tenterden will continue to serve the south western part of the Borough as a principal rural service centre with a strong offer of shops and services, conserving and enhancing its historic centre and accommodating development of a suitable scale, design and character.

The other rural service centres of Charing, Hamstreet and Wye will remain important providers of local shops and services, with care taken to conserve and enhance their historic centres and the delivery of limited development.

The identity and attractive character of the Borough's rural area, with its range of attractive settlements, wealth of heritage assets and its expansive countryside, including the Kent Downs AONB to the north and the High Weald AONB to the south, will be protected and enhanced.

The Boroughs green spaces will be protected and enhanced to serve expanding populations including two new strategic parks at Ashford and the promotion of sporting and recreational hubs in accessible locations; the retention of flood storage areas; reinforcement of wildlife corridors and an improved cycle network to foster healthier lifestyles for residents and workers.

SPORT RECREATION AND PLAY

1.29 The draft Local Plan 2030 states the following:

“Recreation, sport, open space and play areas can enrich the quality of our lives and contribute towards healthy living. The Borough currently enjoys a wide range of such space and this provision will be added to when current planning applications are implemented, most notably Chilmington Green which will deliver significant recreational and leisure areas.

In order to determine the quantum and type of provision required for each qualifying proposal, applicants will be expected to use the Sports England Facility Calculator and the relevant standards in the Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD. Aside from informal space – which will normally be delivered on site and form part of the wider landscaping/ SUDs strategy, incidental space around buildings, discussions with the Council shall then take place as to what exact provision will be sort from any S106 monies to be collected, using the projects identified within the supporting Infrastructure Delivery Plan schedule as the starting point”.

THE SPORTS HUB APPROACH

1.30 The Local Plan seeks to deliver a community sports hub model and the strategies emerging for recreation, sports, open space and play all recommend the same model. The sports hubs are:

- **Discovery Park:** a new, major open space and recreational area that is proposed to include a number of sports pitches (including the provision for 3G pitches), a large scale indoor sports building, strategic play space and managed outdoor recreational space. The majority of Discovery Park will come forward in response to development at Chilmington Green and the area is protected as part of the Chilmington Green Area Action Plan, the provisions of which fall outside the scope of this Local Plan. However, an extension to Discovery Park is proposed to come forward as part of the Court Lodge development (policy S3).
- **Conningbrook Lakes Country Park:** a new large water based recreational resource and facilities at Conningbrook Lakes and significant indoor sports provision in the form of the existing Julie Rose Stadium. Complementary provision in the form of strategic play space and informal space will also be provided here.
- **Ashford Town Centre:** a key location for indoor sports provision within the Borough. The Stour Centre is the principal indoor sports facility in the borough and caters for a range of sports, including swimming, badminton, squash, netball and football. In addition, the Town Centre is also home to green spaces in the form of Victoria Park, Memorial Gardens and the Green Corridor. The Town Centre will continue to be a key recreational and sporting hub over the plan period.
- **Finberry/ Park Farm:** a community and leisure hub adjacent to the planned primary school that compliments the facilities planned at Bridgefield Park. This Hub aims to deliver a 3G state of the art sports pitch which will be supported by a community building with indoor sports court and changing facilities.
- **Kingsnorth Recreation Centre:** already a well-established urban hub for the area and town. This could support an increase in the recreational and outdoor space offer located here.
- **Sandyhurst Lane:** another site already offering social, community and sports provision (comprising two full size grass football pitches and one rugby pitch supported by a pavilion comprising four team and one officials changing room, bar and large function room). New provision is proposed which could include improved sports pitches, informal and natural green space and potentially allotment space.

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- **Spearpoint:** a busy football hub already existing on this site and contains six grass pitches, a newly built pavilion and tennis courts. Further leisure development on this site could also be considered.
- **Pitchside/Courtside:** Pitchside and Courtside are adjacent dual use sites in South Ashford on the campus of John Wallis Academy. Pitchside consists of a full size 3G pitch and two full size grass football pitches for community use. In addition, the Academy grass playing field has a junior pitch, full size football pitch and full size rugby pitch which are available for occasional community use as demand dictates. Pitchside is supported by a 4-changing room pavilion. Courtside comprises six hard courts supported by a two-changing room pavilion with meeting room and office. The primary use of the courts is for netball with tennis the main secondary use. This provides a key mixed use sports hub and has the potential to be extending and upgraded.

LOCAL PROVISION

- 1.31 Not all of the provision of recreation, sport, open space and play areas will serve a wider catchment or play a strategic role. There are a number of local areas which fulfil a key role in meeting the everyday community's needs. These areas include Bridgefield Park, South Willesborough (Bulleid Place/Swan Centre), Singleton (Cuckoo Park/ Singleton Environment Centre), and Repton Park and Community Centre. These offer multi-use community space for local residents, children's play and informal recreational open space.
- 1.32 When new development comes forward, there will remain a need to deliver provision at a local scale, to directly serve the community in which it is located.

THE APPROACH IN THE RURAL AREA

- 1.33 The spatial approach in the rural area has to be a different one to the strategic hub approach above, given the dispersed nature of the settlement pattern.
- 1.34 In the rural areas, it is important that the provision is linked where possible to public transport routes in order to work to avoid social exclusion, to ensure facilities are as accessible as possible to the widest catchment of users and thereby maximize the viability and vitality of the facilities themselves.
- 1.35 The Council will continue to liaise with the Parish Councils to determine the optimum level of provision possible in the rural areas.
- 1.36 The Policy for Recreation and Sport is covered under Policy COM2 below.

Policy COM2 - Recreation, Sport, Play and Open Spaces

As a target, the Council shall seek to deliver the quantum of provision as new recreation, sport, play and open space provision by 2030 as set out in table 4 of this Local Plan.

Proposals will utilise the Sports England Calculator and comply with the standards set out within the Green Spaces and Water SPD, where practical.

Informal green space will normally be provided on site in line with the guidance and provisions contained within the Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD.

In Ashford, the provision of children's play, strategic parks, allotments, sports facilities shall be concentrated on key allocated sites within this Local Plan or at the sports and recreation hubs identified above. Proposals which undermine the ability of a hub to play a role in delivering this provision shall not be supported.

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Provision that meets a localised need shall normally be required to be delivered on-site in a way that supports the local community as it comes forward.

In the rural area, provision should normally be delivered in a way that helps maintain, enhance and potentially expand existing provision at the settlement where development is proposed, or at the nearest settlement.

In line with the provision within the NPPF exceptions to the approach outlined above could be justified, should the following circumstances arise in that:

- a. there is suitable open/green space provision nearby and this provision can be accessed by green routes,
- b. there is suitable sports provision nearby and this provision is accessible and the facility is able to and has the capacity to be used by the public at key times and this access can be secured over the long term at determination of the application,
- c. delivering such provision would render a scheme unviable,
- d. not delivering the required provision is supported by the Council or in agreement with the Parish Council.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN ASHFORD

- 1.37 The ONS 2014-based Subnational population projections project a population of 127,700 in 2017 rising to 145,300 in 2030. The population is projected to rise by 17,600 by 2030.
- 1.38 Understanding the needs of different indoor sports at a local level enables Ashford Borough Council and its partners to provide appropriately to meet the needs of its communities. It is inevitable that the needs of communities change over time, just as the playing and participative requirements of individual sports change. The demand for these at a local level need to be assessed and modelled to understand what this means in terms of actual indoor sports provision.
- 1.39 The very fact that the requirements of sports change is one of the several justifications for undertaking the ISFS at a local level and critically for updating this analysis every 5, if not 3 years. However, it must also be understood that the ISFS represents a 'snap-shot' in time based upon the anticipated level of growth planned for Ashford Borough Council.
- 1.40 This means there may be proposals that come forward for the new Local Plan 2030 such as large residential development that the ISFS has not taken into consideration. In such circumstances the Sport England Facility Calculator (SFS) that identifies new sports hall and swimming pool needs from housing developments should be used alongside consultation undertaken with National Governing Bodies of Sport. This is to ensure that sporting provision is planned at the start of the development and not as it grows.
- 1.41 Chilmington Green is a site that has received planning permission. 2,500 of the overall 5,750 houses are anticipated to be developed by 2030. The Chilmington Green development has a Section 106 agreement in place that provides for a 2 badminton court community centre that is to be delivered by 2030. Phase 2 will be delivered after 2030 and will provide a 4 court community sports hall.
- 1.42 The Sport England Sports Facilities Calculator can be used to identify the ISFS sports hall and swimming pool requirements for the new development. Table 2.1. Identifies the sports hall and swimming pool requirements for Chilmington Green up to 2030, with the development of 2,500 homes. The population has been calculated using the Department for Communities and Local Government 2014-based Household Projections: England, 2014-2039 – Household average size projected 2029 of 2.27 persons per household.

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Table 1.1: Chilmington Green – Sports Hall and Swimming Pool requirements to 2030

Chilmington Green Population 2500 homes by 2030	Sports Hall Requirements (based on a 4 court badminton hall)	Swimming Pool Requirements
Population – 5,675	1.58 badminton courts / 0.38 halls	60.72 sqm / 1.14 swimming lanes

1.43 Table 1.1. Identifies that the Chilmington Green development of 2,500 homes by 2030, requires 1.58 badminton court space and 60.72 sq. m of swimming pool water space.

1.44 Table 1.2. Identifies the requirements for sports halls and swimming pools with the full development of an additional 3,250 houses at Chilmington Green beyond 2030. The population has been calculated using the Department for Communities and Local Government 2014-based Household Projections: England, 2014-2039 – Household average size projected 2029 of 2.27 persons per household.

Table 1.2: Chilmington Green Sports Hall and Swimming Pool Requirements Beyond 2030

Chilmington Green Population 3250 homes by 2030	Sports Hall Requirements (based on a 4 court badminton hall)	Swimming Pool Requirements
Population – 7,378	2.05 badminton courts / 0.51 halls	78.94 sqm / 1.49 swimming lanes

1.45 Table 1.2 identifies that the Chilmington Green development of 3,250 homes after 2030, requires 2.05 badminton court space and 78.94 sqm of swimming pool water space.

1.46 Main changes to the draft Local Plan 2030 are currently being consulted on. One of these main changes is the overall requirement for housing that has increased from 14,680 to 16,120 dwellings, to be delivered between 2011 and 2030. Factoring in completions since 2011, this figure is reduced to 12,943 between 2017 and 2030.

1.47 The Main Changes Consultation document suggests a proposed allocation of 7,110 new houses between 2017 and 2030. This does not include Chilmington Green, windfall sites or extant sites.

1.48 By applying the 7,110 proposed allocation of new houses and multiplying by a population of 2.27 persons per new dwelling the projected population is 16,139. This figure is slightly lower than the ONS 2014-based Subnational population projections increase between 2017 and 2030, which is 17,600.

1.49 Table 1.3 identifies the additional sports hall and swimming pool requirements to meet increased population demand across Ashford Borough Council by 2030.

Table 1.3: Sports Halls and Swimming Pools required between 2017 and 2030 using increased population 145,300 ONS Subnational 2014 population projections and Sport England Facilities Calculator.

Ashford Population 2030 145,300	Sports Hall Requirements (based on a 4 court badminton hall)	Swimming Pool Requirements
Population – 145,300	40.40 badminton courts / 10.11 halls	1,554.54 sqm

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- 1.50 The principal opportunities for new growth lie on the edge of the existing built up area of Ashford through carefully managed and planned growth.
- 1.51 This approach has been influenced by a number of important factors, including the implementation of the Chilmington development across the Plan period, the availability of additional motorway junction capacity that is due to be created by the construction of the proposed M20 Junction 10a and the need to ensure a consistent supply of available housing sites to cater for different elements of the market.
- 1.52 Development at Tenterden: Tenterden is the second largest settlement in the borough and it's only other town. It plays a main rural service centre role for much of the south-western part of the borough. It is an attractive, historic town which is relatively well served by shops and services and is an important tourist destination which contributes greatly to the rural economy of the borough.
- 1.53 Tenterden has been the focus of relatively small-scale 'organic' growth which has been usually more on a village-type scale than the scale of allocations at Ashford. However, the previous Core Strategy identified increased levels of development for Tenterden and the Tenterden & Rural Sites DPD allocated a significant development area to the south of the town centre (TENT1) for which the first phase now has planning permission.
- 1.54 Development at villages: The borough has a wide range of smaller rural settlements which play a key part in establishing its overall character. Some fulfil a local service centre role and have a range of key local facilities such as a primary school or a post office.

ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL SPORTS PARTICIPATION - CURRENT PARTICIPATION RATES

- 1.55 Sport England's Active People Survey (APS) 10 (2015/16) based on a survey of 500 people for Ashford Borough Council, shows that 29.9% of those aged 16+ participate once a week in sport; this is lower than the South East (37.7%) and England (35.8%), and is lower than previous levels of participation in Ashford Borough Council in 2012/2013 (34.5%), 2013/2014 (35.1%) and 2014/15 (33.8%). This means that circa 66% of Ashford Borough Council residents aged 16+ are not physically active at least once a week.
- 1.56 Table 1.4 shows the Adult (16+) Participation in Sport (at least once a week), by year 2005/6 to 2015/16 for Ashford Borough Council.

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Table 1.4: Adult (16+) Participation in Sport (at least once a week), by year

YEAR	ASHFORD	SOUTH EAST	ENGLAND
2005/06	32.3 %	37.1 %	34.6 %
2007/08	35.6 %	39.0 %	36.6 %
2008/09	32.6 %	37.9 %	36.5 %
2009/10	30.3 %	37.9 %	36.2 %
2010/11	26.3 %	36.8 %	35.6 %
2011/12	32.9 %	38.4 %	36.9 %
2012/13	34.5 %	38.1 %	36.6 %
2013/14	35.1 %	37.6 %	36.1 %
2014/15	33.8 %	37.7 %	35.8 %
2015/16	29.9%	38.3%	36.1%

Source: Active People Survey. Measure: Adult (16+) participation in sport (at least once a week) by year, one session per week (at least 4 sessions of at least moderate intensity for at least 30 minutes in the previous 28 days). Time period(s): 2005/06, 2007/08, 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14, 2014/15, 2015/16

1.57 Other key participation performance indicators are shown below in table 2.5.

Table 1.5: Active People Survey Key Performance Indicators

INDICATOR	ASHFORD				SOUTH EAST				ENGLAND			
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
KPI3 - Club Membership in the last 4 weeks	18.5 %	26.3 %	21.0 %	20.3 %	24.3 %	24.2 %	23.7 %	24.5 %	21.0 %	21.6 %	21.8 %	22.2 %
KPI4 - Received tuition or coaching in last 12 months	11.2 %	17.4 %	17.1 %	14.6 %	18.1 %	19.0 %	18.0 %	18.3 %	15.8 %	16.4 %	15.6 %	15.6 %
KPI5 - Took part in organised competition in last 12 months	11.9 %	11.8 %	13.5 %	10.0 %	14.2 %	15.0 %	14.7 %	15.6 %	11.2 %	13.3 %	13.3 %	13.3 %
KPI6 - Very/fairly satisfied with local sports provision	64.9 %	59.3 %	56.6 %	70.5%	63.7 %	63.8 %	63.6 %	64.6 %	60.3 %	61.6 %	61.8 %	62.1 %

Source: Active People Survey. Measure: Key Performance Indicators 3,4,5,6. Time Period(s): 2012/13, 2013/14, 2014/15, 2015/16

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- 1.58 Table 1.5 shows that club membership in the last 4 weeks is slightly lower in Ashford Borough Council in 2015/2016 (20.3%) than in 2014/2015 and is lower than the South East and England. Those that have received coaching in the last 12 months (14.6%) is lower than that of England (15.6%) and the South East (18.3%).
- 1.59 Those that have taken part in organised competition in Ashford Borough Council 2015/2016 (10.0%) is lower than the South East (15.6%) and England (13.3%).
- 1.60 The Very/Fairly satisfied with local sports provision in Ashford Borough Council is 70.5% in 2015/2016 higher than the previous year 56.6% and has risen above the previous high 64.9% and is higher than the South East (64.6%) and England (62.1%).
- 1.61 Active People Survey 10 identifies that:
- In terms of Latent Demand, 57.4% of all those aged 16+ want to do more sport
 - 28.8% of those aged 16+ in Ashford who are already physically active, want to do more sport
 - 28.5% of those who are physically inactive in Ashford want to do more sport

SPORT ENGLAND MARKET SEGMENTATION

- 1.62 Sport England has developed nineteen sporting segments to provide a better understanding of people's attitudes to sport, their motivations and barriers. The key data sources were Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) 'Taking Part' survey and Active People. Further data was added from Experian Mosaic databases. Population data is used for people aged 18 and over.
- 1.63 Segmentation provides information on who participates in sport and what they want in terms of sport and active recreation provision. In total, there are nineteen segments.
- 1.64 The Market Segmentation analysis for Ashford Borough Council identifies that the dominant segments are Tim, Philip, Alison, Roger and Joy.

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Table 1.6: Market Segmentation Summary – Dominant Segments Ashford Borough Council

MARKET SEGMENT AND NUMBER	SEGMENT NAME	DESCRIPTION	TOP PARTICIPATION SPORTS NATIONALLY	ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL	
				NUMBER	RATE
Tim (6)	Settling Down Males	Sporty male professionals (aged 26-45), buying a house and settling down with partner.	Tim is an active type that takes part in sport on a regular basis. Tim's top sports are cycling (21%), keep fit/gym (20%), swimming (15%), football (13%) and golf (7%)	10,200	11.7%
Philip (1)	Comfortable Mid-life Males	Mid-life professional, sporty males with older children and more time for themselves	Philip's sporting activity levels are above the national average. Philip's top sports are cycling (16%), keep fit/ gym (15%), swimming (12%), football (9%), and golf (8%)	8,800	10.1 %
Alison	Stay at Home Mums		Alison is a fairly active segment with above average levels of participation in sport. Alison's top sports are: keep fit/ gym (27%), swimming (25%), cycling (12%), athletics including running (11%), and equestrian (3%)	6,400	7.4%
Roger and Joy	Early retirement couples, free time couples nearing the end of their careers.	The main motivations for Roger & Joy playing sport are enjoyment and keeping fit where their scores are above the national average.	Keep fit/gym, swimming, cycling, golf and angling.	10,400	7.4%

Source: Sport England, 2010, Measure: Sport Market Segmentation

1.65 The top dominant segments in the table 1.6 identify a large number of the resident population likely to participate in indoor sport particularly swimming and keep fit. There are also quite large groups of: Ben (Competitive male urbanites - who participate in Football, 'keep fit and gym', cycling, and athletics or running); Chloe (Fitness Class Friends, young image conscious female keeping fit and trim) and Elaine (Empty nest career ladies. Mid-life professional who have more time on their hands since their children left home).

2. NEED ASSESSMENT REPORT CONCLUSIONS

- 2.1 The following section summarises the key findings of the ISFS Needs Assessment Report Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The Context and Needs Assessment Report identifies that in facility terms the nature of provision is changing from traditional offers to more flexible facilities, which match health and physical activity aspirations as opposed to traditional sport's needs.
- 2.3 In terms of delivery partnership working, particularly with education providers and Town and Parish Council's is a key strategic theme.
- 2.4 The future demographics of Ashford Borough Council indicates that the proportion of residents most likely to participate in sport in Ashford is expected to decrease slightly in the period to 2037 as a result of population change. These population trends will have implications for future provision of sports facilities. The population is increasing in age. There will be a need to provide additional day time sports provision for the ageing population in the future and local smaller provision.
- 2.5 Regular users of the main types of community sporting and recreation facilities, such as swimming pools, sports halls, dance studios and health and fitness centres travel between 2 – 3 miles to participate on a regular basis. However, in rural areas where there are fewer towns and concentrated centres of population then regular users will travel greater distances.
- 2.6 Ashford Borough Council fits with the rural description and Sport England research data on travel distances and catchment areas for community level provision such as sports halls and swimming pools and which is applied in all its modelling of the current and future needs for community sports facilities does evidence greater travel distances for regular participation. This can be up to 5 miles before the rate of participation starts to decline based on fewer people prepared to travel between 5 – 10 miles to participate (known as the distance decay function).
- 2.7 This strategy looks at the evidence base for Ashford Borough Council as a whole.
- 2.8 Sport England's Active People survey 2015/16 clearly identifies cycling, gym session, swimming and fitness classes as the 4 most popular activities to participate in across the Ashford Borough Council area.
- 2.9 Sport England Active People survey 2015/16 Participation in sport once per week shows Ashford Borough Council as having a lower percentage of people 29.9% participating in sport than the national average 36.1% and the regional average 38.3%.
- 2.10 Other Sport England key indicators show that sports club membership across Ashford Borough Council in 2015/16 is lower 20.3% than the South East (24.5%) and in England (22.2%). Those that received tuition in sport is also lower across Ashford Borough Council (14.6%) compared to the South East (16.8%) and England (18.3%). Those that took part in competition across Ashford Borough Council (10.0%) is just than England (13.3%) and lower than the South East (15.6%).
- 2.11 Satisfaction with local sports provision was fairly high in 2015/16. 70.5% a rise on the previous year's 56.6%. Satisfaction in the South East was 64.6% and England 62.1%.

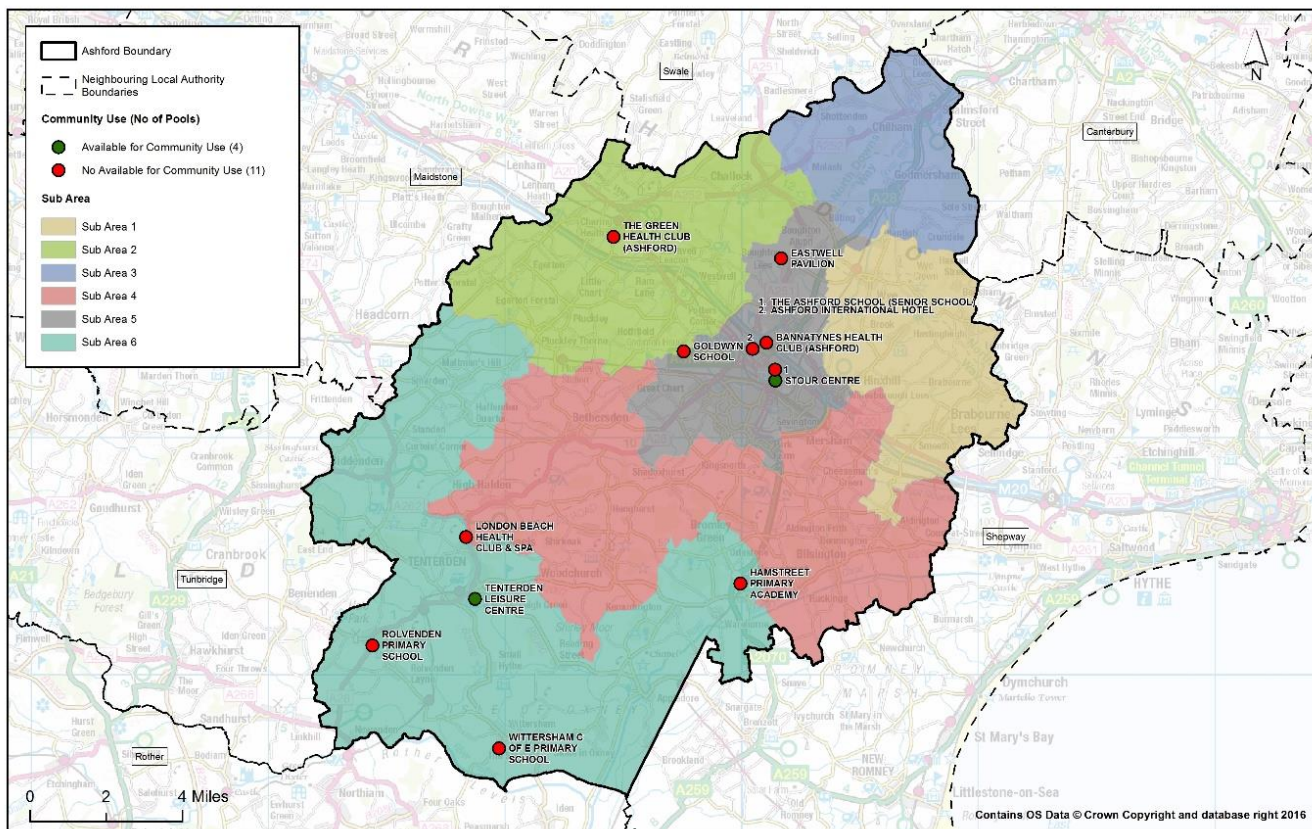
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SWIMMING POOLS

THE SPORT ENGLAND FACILITY PLANNING MODEL

- 2.12 The Sport England Facility Calculator (SFC) is primarily intended to estimate the demand for facilities in discrete areas e.g. it is useful in determining the likely demand for sports halls, swimming pools from increased populations or residents of new housing growth. With some provision it can be used to give a broad estimate of the demand over a local authority area, though it takes no account of demand across LA boundaries, quality of facilities and detailed opening times.
- 2.13 The SFC estimates that (with the latest population estimate of 127,700 in 2017 and an increase in population to 2030 145,300 – population increase of 17,600 persons (ONS Subnational Population Projections 2014) there will be a requirement for 1554.54 sq. m of swimming pool water space in 2030. The current available supply is 1,471.66 sq.
- 2.14 The additional water space required in 2030 is the difference between the new required water space in 2030, which is 1554.54 sq. m and the current available supply of 1,471.66 sq. m of water space giving a negative supply/demand balance of 82.88 sq. m of water space.
- 2.15 Map 2.1 shows the location of swimming pools across Ashford Borough Council.

Map 2.1. Swimming Pools across Ashford Borough Council



Swimming Pools by community use availability in Ashford



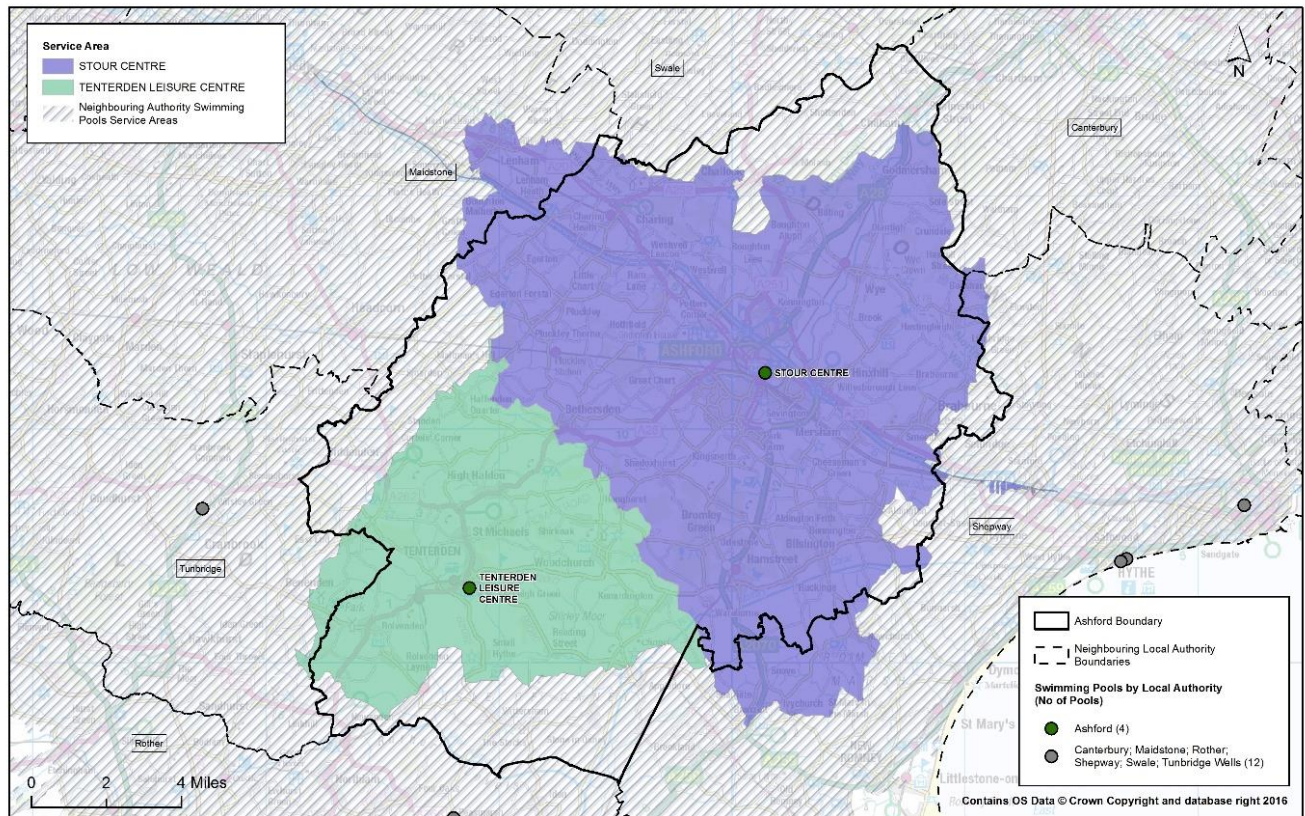
- 2.16 The Ashford Borough Council area has 6 swimming pools on 6 separate sites. In addition there are 3 small school swimming pools. There are only 2 pay and play swimming pools offering full community use, The Stour Centre (Owned by Ashford Borough Council and managed by Ashford Leisure Trust) and Tenterden Leisure Centre (Owned by the Town Council, leased to a Trust and operated by a leisure management company Serco).

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- 2.17 There are 3 swimming pools attached to commercial health and fitness facilities. These are not completely available to all the community but do provide for those residents that can afford to pay for membership. Sport England Market Segmentation identified that the highest segment in Ashford is Tim. Tim's profile states that he is likely to be a member of a gym and likes swimming.
- 2.18 The Ashford School provides an indoor pool for its students use at the Senior School and the Preparatory School. Both swimming pools are 20m x 10m.
- 2.19 Given that communities use sports facilities in areas other than where they live, the development of new or improved provision can impact significantly on both participation levels and capacity cross-boundary. Local Authority Leisure provision that may impact on Ashford Borough Council residents in the future include Canterbury City Council and Shepway Council swimming pool developments. Chilham in the north of Ashford is closer to Canterbury's Kingsmead Leisure Centre (7.2 miles 17 minutes) than it is to the Stour Centre in Ashford Town (10.5 miles 21 minutes). Parts of the South East of Ashford are relatively close to Hythe. There are proposals to rebuild Hythe Swimming Pool.
- 2.20 Canterbury City Council recognises the need for investment into its Kingsmead Leisure Centre in Canterbury. Current plans will see the refurbishment and retention of the Centre's three pools – main pool, learner pool and leisure pool. The Council does not foresee an increase or decrease in pool provision; however, the final decision on investment at the Centre has not yet been made.
- 2.21 Shepway District Council has just provided £170,000 emergency refurbishment work for the 40-year-old swimming pool in Hythe and is currently considering a new swimming pool in Hythe at Princess Parade as a replacement for the ageing swimming pool. This could serve some rural residents in the South East of Ashford.
- 2.22 Appropriate drive time accessibility standards can be applied to swimming pools to determine deficiencies in provision. Catchment mapping, based on an amalgamated 20-minute drive time has been used to analyse the adequacy of coverage of swimming pool provision across Ashford Borough Council; it also helps to identify areas currently not served by existing swimming pools. The 2 public swimming pools are shown in the map below with 20 minute catchment areas. The areas not covered by the catchment of the Stour Centre and Tenterden Leisure Centre are covered by other neighbouring authority swimming pools.

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Map 2.2: Community accessible swimming pools in Ashford; 20 minutes' drive time catchment



Swimming Pool service areas with community access in Ashford (up to 20 minute drive time)



- 2.23 The residents of Chilham in the North of Ashford are closer to Canterbury's Kingsmead Leisure Centre (7.2 miles 17 minutes) than the Sour Centre in Ashford Town (10.5 miles 21 minutes).
- 2.24 Sport England FPM (2015 National Run), the total supply of water space in the Borough equates to a supply of 14.65m² of water space per 1,000 of population. This figure is higher than the figures for England 12.46m², the South-East Region (13.82m²) and all but two of the neighbouring authority areas.
- 2.25 The Sport England FPM model predicts that Ashford's population generates an amount of swimming pool demand that equates to 7,890 visits per week in the peak period.
- 2.26 The model analyses this demand and converts it to a facility equivalent – 1,309.47m² of water space in the case of Ashford. This includes a built-in comfort factor that helps to ensure that any "target figure" includes additional space so as to make sure that any facilities are not going to be at 100% of their theoretical capacity.
- 2.27 The analysis suggests that the current supply of water space is sufficient to meet the demand that is generated by the population of Ashford.
- 2.28 The Supply/Demand Balance identifies a 'surplus' of circa 162m² of water space. This is a very simplistic picture of the overall supply and demand across Ashford. The resident population is estimated to generate a demand for 1,309.47m² worth of water space. This compares to a current available supply of 1,471.66m² of water space giving a positive supply/demand balance of 162.19m² of water space.

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- 2.29 It must be remembered that 4 of the 7 different swimming pool sites are commercial facilities which, as already mentioned, may not be affordable for all members of the local community who will therefore be dependent upon accessing public facilities.
- 2.30 Satisfied demand is the demand created by the residents of the District that is met by current swimming pool supply in the area, including pools inside and outside of the borough boundaries. The FPM shows that 93.3% of the demand generated by the residents of Ashford is currently being met. This is slightly higher than both National (91.4%) and Regional figures (93%) and also higher than all but 1 of the neighbouring authority areas in Kent.
- 2.31 Circa 86% of the demand satisfied is from people that travelled by car – a figure that is also above national and regional averages. This suggests that there is a mobile population in Ashford.
- 2.32 94.2% of the demand is retained within Ashford and met by facility provision within the borough. Again, this is relatively high when compared to Ashford's neighbouring authorities. Not all of the demand that is created by Ashford's population will be met by swimming pools within the borough. The model shows that 5.8% of the demand that is currently satisfied is exported into other authority areas.
- 2.33 The Stour Centre is well used by the community it also highlights that there may be potential opportunities to increase the levels of community use at Tenterden Leisure Centre, which the model forecasts as having a low level of used capacity (37%).
- 2.34 The pools at the commercial sites and private education are predicted to have relatively lower levels of used capacity from their membership and visitors. There may well be opportunities to explore potential relationships with these sites to see if it is feasible for their pools to be used by the wider community during peak times for community aquatics activity.
- 2.35 The model identifies that Ashford imports the lowest level of visits as a percentage of the overall used capacity when compared to the other neighbouring authority areas and therefore retains a higher level of visits from its own residents (93.6% of the overall used capacity).
- 2.36 The Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) has been consulted and stated the following:

“The swimming club are keen but not performing with great regularity. They are always seeking more water space and the programme that the Ashford School run is picking up time that has been taken away from the local swimming club. This will either restrict the opportunities for growth of the club or compromise the offer to the community if more time is granted. Ashford as a club belongs to East Invicta Network which has been in place for about five years, they compete as East Invicta at Regionals and Nationals. The ASA recognises that Kent is without a 50m pool and see this as a priority area for future growth to support community and competitive swimming. With its good infrastructure links, the exception being Operation Stack, Ashford represents an area that we would consider being explored further. Links with Ashford School would open up opportunities for a more diverse business case to support such a consideration. Stour Leisure Centre having been built in 1975 is an area to focus on when considering the long-term future and investment strategies.”

- 2.37 From consultation with Ashford School it appears that they do not have any plans to increase community usage of their current facilities. In considering a 50m pool to replace the Ashford School swimming pool and the Stour Centre swimming pool there would not be any additional water space. The Stour Centre Swimming Pool was refurbished in 2007 and does require energy saving plant and equipment replacements to reduce the carbon footprint. Apart from the replacement equipment the swimming facilities are in good order.

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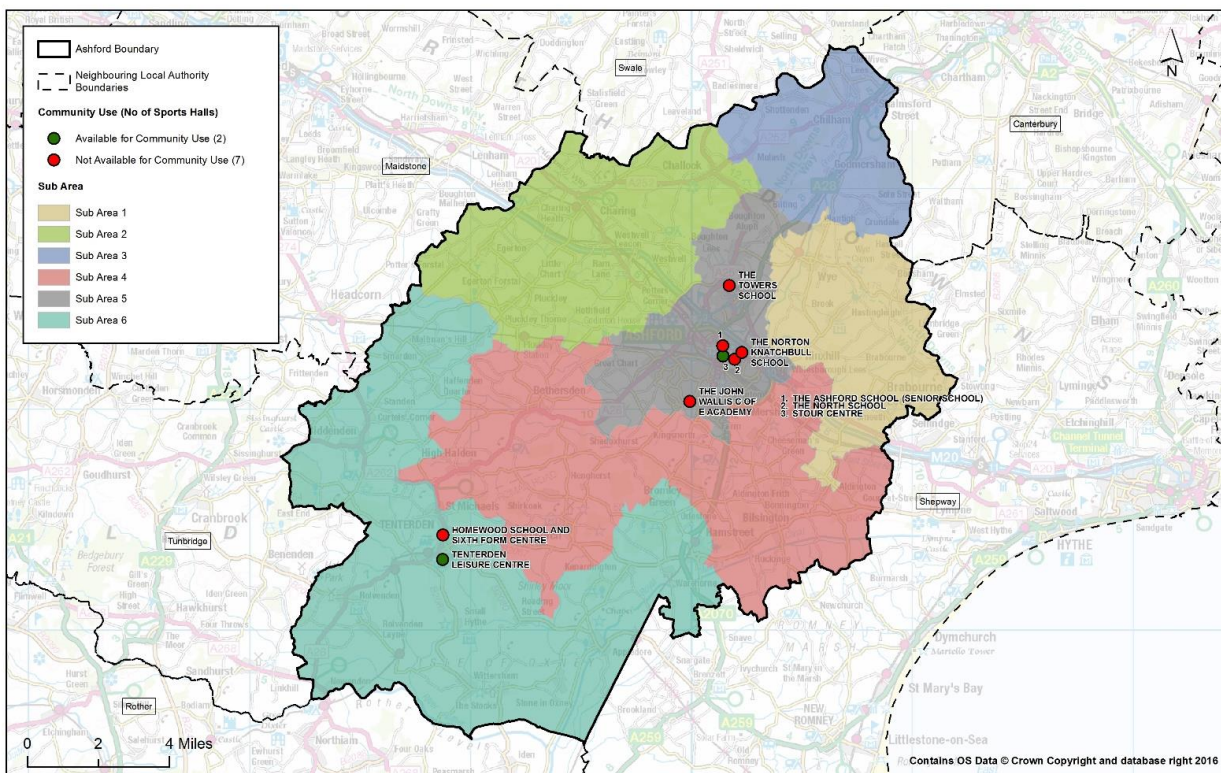
ASHFORD BOROUGH

- 2.38 Ashford Town Swimming Club Masters use to use the Ashford School Pool once a week. They currently use a pool elsewhere in Maidstone for 1 hour a week.
- 2.39 Consultation has identified that there is spare capacity at Tenterden Leisure Centre. The review of the centre supports this. Whilst the centre would like further space for teaching lessons, there is current capacity within the programme.
- 2.40 The Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) would like to see all swimming water space protected and would like to work with the authority to share its knowledge on the most appropriate swimming programmes for the Borough. The ASA have invested into the swimming participant in order to ensure that swimming programmes are appropriate in facilities to increase usage and participation of swimming pools.
- 2.41 The Sport Facility Calculator calculates the need for additional water space of 82.88 sq. m by 2030. Tenterden Leisure Centre is currently operating at 37% capacity with a 6-lane pool. Tenterden Leisure Centre swimming pool needs to be promoted to increase its capacity of use. This facility can accommodate the spare capacity required in the future.
- 2.42 The alternative would be to consult and negotiate community use of the Ashford School Swimming Pools or the commercial sector to allow some community use.

SPORTS HALL SUMMARY

- 2.43 The population estimate of 127,600 in 2017 and an increase in population to 145.300 in 2030 an increase of 17,600 persons (ONS Subnational Population Projections 2014). The Sport England Facility Calculator shows there will be an additional future demand in 2030 for 5.34 courts rounded up to 6 additional badminton courts.
- 2.44 Map 2.3 below identifies the Sports Halls with 3 or more badminton courts across Ashford.

Map 2.3: Sports Halls across Ashford with 3 or more Badminton courts including Ashford School.



Sports Halls by community use availability in Ashford

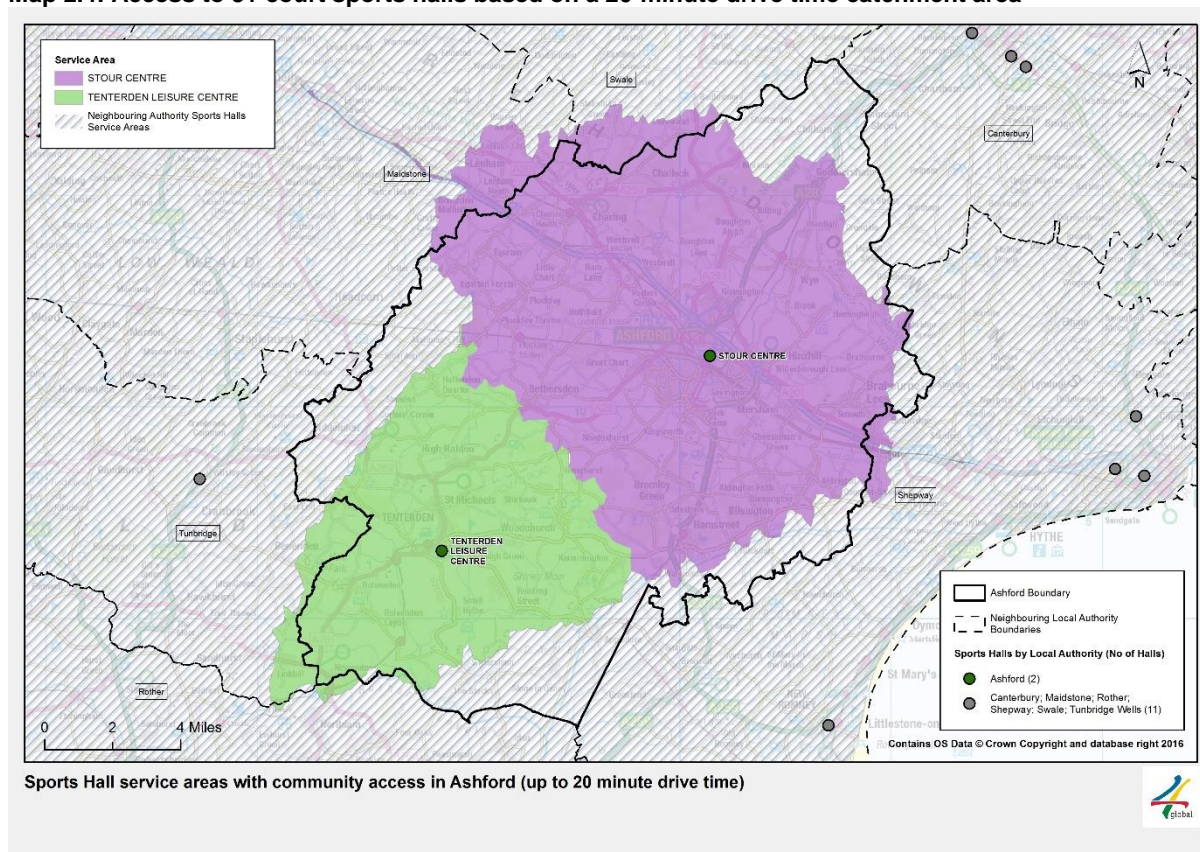


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- 2.45 There are seven main halls (3+ courts) that are currently available for community use. The largest hall is located at the Stour Centre (8 courts) and is the jewel in the crown of Ashford Borough Council facilities. Homewood School and Sixth Form Centre has six courts and the remaining five halls are all 4-court in size.
- 2.46 Five of the main halls are owned by education. There are no formal community use agreements in place on the education sites. The school sports halls are block booked by clubs and associations. The Norton Knatchbull School will only take bookings of 2 hours or more for its sports hall.
- 2.47 The Stour Centre and Tenterden Leisure Centre operate on a pay and play basis
- 2.48 There are 2 sports halls both at The Ashford School (Senior) and the Preparatory School with 4 court sports halls that are not open to the public.
- 2.49 5 of the available sports halls are in and around Ashford Town and 2 other available sports halls are provided for in the next largest populated area in Tenterden.

Map 2.4: Access to 3+ court sports halls based on a 20-minute drive time catchment area



- 2.50 The largest gaps in provision are in rural areas. Residents in these areas are likely to be willing to travel by car (up to 20 minutes) to a main sports hall in an urban area. The rural villages are also well provided for with village halls and community centres.
- 2.51 All current residents across Ashford Borough Council have access to a 4 court sports hall within a 20 minute catchment either within Ashford Borough Council or a neighbouring authority.
- 2.52 The Sport England's Facility Planning Model identifies that the current need is for 38.05 courts of sports hall space across the Ashford Borough Council area. The current supply is 35.10 courts, which leaves a deficit of 2.95 courts (rounded 3 courts).

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- 2.53 Non-technical visual assessments were carried out and, in the main, the quality of sports halls in and around Ashford is considered good. Generally, the sports halls in the Borough are fit-for-purpose in terms of quality, although the Tower School is ageing and will soon be due for refurbishment. The Stour Centre dry side facilities require refurbishment.
- 2.54 The sports hall at Stour Leisure Centre is forecast to be operating at 100% capacity during the peak period which underlines its importance as a community facility. Whilst the sports hall at The John Wallis C of E Academy is also forecast as being completely full during the weekly peak periods there may be opportunities to increase community usage of other educational sites within Ashford.
- 2.55 The Stour Centre – the Council is committed to updating the dry-side sport and leisure facilities at the Stour Centre. The Centre tends to be seen in two parts. The new re-modelled section with a high-quality gym, swimming pool, fitness and dance studios and a health suite and the older section, which includes a large main hall, changing facilities, a crèche, squash courts, and meeting rooms. Since the remodelling of the wet-side facilities was completed in 2007 some piecemeal changes have been made to the dry-side part of the building. To offer an alternative leisure attraction to the Stour Centre considerations are being given to:
- Adventure Soft-Play
 - Adventure Climbing and
 - To improve health and fitness performance and introduce an older person wellness centre and programme. (To help with the need for facilities for the ageing population)
- 2.56 The 3 new activities above would not impact on the provision of the 8 existing badminton courts in the existing sports hall.
- 2.57 There are opportunities to raise capacity of usage at Tenterden Leisure Centre. The Sport England Facility Planning Model states the sports hall to be at 64% capacity at peak times.
- 2.58 Kestrel Gymnastics Club have been looking for premises for some time. They have 260 members at Tenterden Leisure Centre and are at maximum capacity. They have 180 on the waiting list at present and are likely to expand their membership to nearly 700 over the next 5 years.
- 2.59 The requirements of Kestrel Gymnastics Club would include an area, which would need to be permanently set up to avoid dismantling and re-assembly. They also have a requirement for a 10m high ceiling in the trampoline area (6m elsewhere). The club has plans for a new proposed building of 25 x 35 metres.
- 2.60 By releasing space from Tenterden Leisure Centre used by Gymnastics would create 16 additional hours of use for other sports. The club use the facility on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.
- 2.61 There will be a need to access day time use of Sports Hall space in the future due to the ageing population.
- 2.62 In real terms, there are sufficient sports hall facilities currently in Ashford Borough Council and surrounding neighbouring authorities, but they could be improved and they need to be maintained and cannot be lost to development. Consultation has identified that a new purpose built basketball facility is to be built in Folkestone. If this is the case, then this will release spare space at John Wallis Academy where Folkestone Basketball club currently play their home matches.
- 2.63 Consultation has identified that there is a need for a boxing facility in Tenterden.
- 2.64 The Ashford Boxing Club has use of facilities at the former South Ashford Primary School, Jemmett Road. There will be a need to relocate the club if this site is developed for housing.

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- 2.65 Ashford Outlaws Basketball club currently use the Stour Centre on a Friday evening. There has been a women's club in the past and it is hoped this will come back in to being in the future.
- 2.66 Badminton clubs that play in leagues are Kennington, Willesborough and Appollo Badminton Clubs. Kennington Badminton Club use Norton Knatchbull School Sports Hall on Wednesday evenings. Willesborough Badminton club use Norton Knatchbull on Thursday evenings and Appollo are based at the Mountbatton Centre, Mersham.

OTHER ACTIVITY HALLS

- 2.67 There are a number of activity halls, village halls, community halls and facilities such as Kingsnorth Recreation Centre that can and do provide for sport and physical activity in the villages across Ashford Borough Council. The needs assessment has identified a number of facilities in villages and where available has provided the size of the facility and the activity that takes place within the hall space. The activities vary but include dance, yoga, pilates, aerobics, table tennis, badminton, judo, martial arts, tai chi, boot camps, and short mat bowls.
- 2.68 Badminton can be played at Chillham Sports Centre, Mountbatten Hall, Mersham and the hall at Rolvenden.
- 2.69 These facilities need to be protected and enhanced to provide a local door step sport and physical activity provision in the rural areas. Where an opportunity arises through new developments that doesn't warrant a full size 4 court badminton hall then built facilities providing a 1 badminton court facility with meeting rooms toilets and changing space with an outdoor multi use games area should be provided. Repton Community Centre is an example of this in practice currently being built.
- 2.70 The council has recently rebuilt Spearpoint Pavilion and the new facility can now accommodate martial arts and exercise classes during the week.

HEALTH AND FITNESS

- 2.71 Health and fitness facilities are normally defined and assessed using a base scale of a minimum of 20 stations. A station is a piece of static fitness equipment and larger health and fitness centres with more stations are generally able to make a more attractive offer to both members and casual users. They can provide a valuable way to assist people of all ages, ethnicities and abilities to introduce physical exercise into their daily lives with the obvious benefits to health, fitness and wellbeing. The assessment looks at 20 fitness stations and above across Ashford Borough Council and latent demand from Sport England's Market Segmentation has been used to identify any current latent demand across the Borough.
- 2.72 The 2016 State of the UK Fitness Industry Report reveals that the UK health and fitness industry is continuing to grow. It has more clubs, more members and a greater market value than ever before. The 2016 report highlights that the industry has experienced another year of impressive growth over the twelve-month period to the end of March 2016, with increases of 1.9% in the number of fitness facilities, 5.3% in the number of members and 3.2% in market value. For the first time, ever, member numbers have exceeded 9 million. 1 in every 7 people in the UK is a member of a gym, an all-time penetration rate high of 14.3%. The influential low cost market with its large membership numbers, online joining, 24/7 opening hours and low price points has continued to expand rapidly and drive the growth in the industry. The private low cost sector now accounts for 12% of the total number of private clubs, 13% of the private market value and a huge 32% of the private sector membership. For the first time, ever, a low-cost fitness operator is the UK's number one operator. Pure Gym have added 60 clubs in the last 12 months taking them past the 150 mark and into the top position.
- 2.73 Increasing provision within the low-cost segment is expected to remain the primary source of further development into the medium term, a period in which consumers are expected to respond particularly favourably to the more flexible payment and pricing options becoming available.

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- 2.74 The flexible payment trend poses a trading-down threat to the mid-market and premium segments. In response, operators are likely to invest strongly in new technologies that offer more stimulating exercise experiences and increasingly personalised training programmes including nutrition and diet.
- 2.75 Across the existing health and fitness gyms there are 859 fitness stations. Access is generally good for health and fitness facilities across Ashford. There are some areas to the north and south of the Borough where neighbouring facilities meet the demand.
- 2.76 The largest gaps in provision are in the rural areas. Rural area residents have high numbers of cars per household and are likely to be willing to travel by car to a health and fitness facility in an urban area. Some rural residents have a choice of neighbouring borough facilities.
- 2.77 The model is based on the premise that for the supply to be sufficient, it must be large enough to cater for demand at any one time at peak time. Utilising the UK penetration rate of 14.3% in 2016 and the population aged 15+ (102,000 – source ONS 2014 Population Projections) requirement of fitness stations is 418 across Ashford Borough. Using this model the supply (859 stations) is higher than the required demand in 2016 (418) providing a surplus of 441 stations.
- 2.78 If the rate of the UK penetration rate was to continue rising upwards as it has done in the past year by 0.6% until 2030. The penetration rate would be 22.7% and demand would be 774 fitness stations. The current supply (859) would still meet the demand and provide an oversupply of stations.
- 2.79 The existing Sport England Market Segmentation shows there are high numbers of Tim's and Philip's resident across Ashford. These 2 segments profiles identify that they are likely health and fitness club members. There is also a high latent demand identified for health and fitness by the sport England latent demand rate 6,366. This identifies a possible need for 183 stations to meet latent demand currently.
- 2.80 Latent demand could be met by reconfiguring facilities at the Julie Rose stadium to improve the health and fitness offer and also at Courtside where the overall leisure offer could be improved in conjunction with the John Wallis School. Tenterden Leisure Centre will need to enlarge its fitness facilities to cater for new housing in the area.

INDOOR BOWLS

- 2.81 There is one indoor bowls facility in Ashford. In summary, there is sufficient supply of indoor bowls facilities in Ashford Borough. Assuming the long term down trend for declining participation nationally continues. The identified downward trend of bowls participation in England has shown a 30% drop in the last 10 years. However, the borough does have an ageing population and therefore this could lead to improved participation trends in the future.

ATHLETICS FACILITIES

JULIE ROSE STADIUM

- 2.82 There is one athletics facility in Ashford at the Julie Rose Stadium. Its facilities are at a very high level and include a 400m all-weather running track, an 800-seater stand, floodlighting and an indoor training area. In summary, there is sufficient supply of athletics facilities in Ashford Borough. There is an option to improve the leisure offer at the site with improved health and fitness facilities and further linkages to Conningbrook Lakes that could provide running trails way marked and providing km markers.
- 2.83 There are many different types of athletic activity. The growth area in the sport is in recreational road and off-road running that has resulted in significant new runners into the sport over the past few years and evidence strongly suggest this growth will continue.

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GYMNASTICS

- 2.84 The National Governing Body (British Gymnastics) would be keen to see the provision for more dedicated Gymnastic spaces increased, with facilities able to house gymnastic equipment permanently set up to be able to cater for the diverse range of participants that want to be involved. With over seven hundred active members taking part on a weekly basis (or more frequently) in Ashford Borough, and each of the gymnastics clubs operating in the area having a waiting list; the demand is clear for access to more time and space to enable gymnastics to grow. Dharma Gym for All specifically has grown very quickly in the few years it has been in operation; they are keen on developing low level gymnastics at grass roots level and giving opportunity for participants to progress and have the expertise to support international level competitive participants. Dharma are currently looking for a dedicated facility or space to be able to expand their programme and increase participation in gymnastics.
- 2.85 Kestrel gymnastics club at Tenterden Leisure Centre is seeking its own facilities and is in discussion with Tenterden Town Council, Tenterden Football Club and Homewood School.
- 2.86 There is a demand for gymnastics and an opportunity to develop the Gymnastics' offer further at The Stour Leisure Centre. This if successful, could be rolled out to other venues across the Ashford area e.g. Julie Rose Stadium and Kingsnorth Recreation Centre.

SQUASH AND RACQUETBALL

- 2.87 There are three venues for squash in Ashford Borough providing 5 courts for community use:
- Stour Leisure Centre – 2 courts Built 1975 refurbished 2007
 - Biddenden Squash club – 2 courts Built 1975 refurbished 2006
 - Elwick Club – 1 court Built 1973 refurbished 2012
- 2.88 The Stour Leisure Centre is Local authority owned, Biddenden Squash Club is a members club and the Elwick Club is a private members club.
- 2.89 There is no recognised methodology for estimating the level of demand for squash. The Active People survey, undertaken regularly by Sport England, shows there was a small increase in participation levels between 2014/15 and 2015/16. However, overall it indicates a significant drop of more than 30% in participation over the last 10 years.
- 2.90 Facility managers have, in some cases, echoed this downward trend. Tenterden Leisure Centre has changed its squash courts into health and fitness.
- 2.91 Demand for squash is generally falling and operators may wish to use space for more popular/revenue generating activities such as for dance/aerobic classes or extension of health and fitness suite, as demonstrated at Dover Leisure Centre with reduction of courts from four to three in order to accommodate more health and fitness facilities.
- 2.92 Biddenden Squash club has circa 150 members, operating from the clubhouse which has a bar and separate changing rooms in addition to two well-maintained, heated courts. They have three men's teams in the Kent squash League and have a thriving junior section with 60 under 18s and run 4 teams in the Kent junior leagues.
- 2.93 The Elwick Club runs an internal squash league for its members and also enters a team in the Kent league. They have found that racquetball is becoming more popular.

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- 2.94 The Stour Centre runs 4 divisions of internal league with 5 players in each league. The courts at Stour Leisure Centre are described by England Squash as extremely important because they are the Borough's main provision available to the public and should be kept. Kent is a high performing area in terms of squash participation.
- 2.95 There is no requirement for additional squash provision across Ashford Borough Council. If court provision is reduced this would have a negative impact on squash and current users may find it difficult to secure bookings at alternative sites during peak times.

3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

3.1 The Strategic Objectives are:

PROTECT:

- To protect the current Ashford Borough Council wide infrastructure of indoor sports facilities.

PROVIDE:

- Community use agreements for continued use of school sports facilities.
- Consider new activities at the Stour Centre to include adventure play, clip and climb, and an Older Peoples Well Being Centre.
- A carbon reduction programme at the Stour Centre to reduce energy costs.
- Work with Tenterden Town Council to provide a stand-alone gymnastics facility for the Kestrel Gymnastics club (releasing time for other community sports activities in the Sports Hall).
- Consider if required consultation and negotiation with Ashford School to open a swimming pool for community use if and when required to meet demand in the future.
- Work with rural communities to provide space within village/ community halls/centres for provision of sports and physical activities.

ENHANCE:

- Grow the existing gymnastics programme at the Stour Centre and consider rolling this out to other venues e.g. Julie rose and Kings North recreation centre.
- Work with Partners, Schools and NGBs to enhance the current programme offer and increasing participation through improved programming of sporting activities.
- Relocate the health and fitness at the Julie Rose Stadium.
- Consider a health and fitness facility at courtside to improve the Leisure offer on site.
- Work to increase the capacity of use at Tenterden Leisure Centre Swimming Pool between now and 2030 to assist in meeting the water space requirements for the whole Borough.

PLANNING

3.2 The Council's Planning Department should use the Local Plan to protect, enhance and provide sport and recreation facilities. Supplementary planning documents should be used to set out an approach that secures sport and recreational facilities through new housing developments.

3.3 CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) can be used to refurbish and improve existing facilities and increase participation. Section 106 funding can be used to provide new facilities.

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4. ACTION PLAN

- 4.1 The Action Plan sets out a list of requirements between now and 2030:
- 4.2 Timescales: (S) -Short (1-3 years); (M) - Medium (4-7 years); (L) - Long (7+ years)
- 4.3 The action plan will need to be updated as the recommendations are delivered

Table 4.1: Action Plan

STRATEGIC FUNCTION	CHALLENGES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	TIMESCALE SHORT MEDIUM LONG	PARTNERS	OBJECTIVE
PLANNING		<p>Prepare and improve planning policies to protect existing facilities across Ashford Borough Council Area.</p> <p>Consider Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy for future funding</p>	Short Term	Ashford Borough Council	Provide & Protect
BOROUGH WIDE PROGRAMMING	Ensure that facilities are programmed to ensure maximum participation driving up income and reduce operating costs.	<p>Review current programming at The Stour Centre and Tenterden Leisure Centre.</p> <p>Monitor membership data to ensure programming is effective to all residents and visitors.</p> <p>Work with partners to look at offering day time activities for older people and health related activities</p> <p>Discuss with the ASA the most appropriate pool programme for the 2 Local authority Swimming pools.</p>	Short Term	<p>Ashford Borough Council</p> <p>Management Operator</p> <p>NGB Partners</p>	Enhance

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STRATEGIC FUNCTION	CHALLENGES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	TIMESCALE SHORT MEDIUM LONG	PARTNERS	OBJECTIVE
COMMUNITY USE AGREEMENTS	Review current community use agreements on Education sites with sports halls.	Put in place community use agreements to safeguard current and future sports club use of Education Facilities	Short Term	Ashford Borough Council Management Operator Schools	Provide & Enhance
SPORTS HALLS / SWIMMING POOLS / OTHER /ACTIVITY HALLS	Improving access to facilities during the day time particularly for older people. Utilise spare capacity at Tenterden Leisure Centre Sports Hall Improve capacity levels of use at Tenterden Swimming Pool.	On a site by site basis consider different sport and physical activity solutions to extending day time access. Work with Tenterden Leisure Centre to improve participation in the swimming pool and raise capacity levels of use. Work with Tenterden Town Council, Homewood School, Tenterden Tigers and Kestrel Gymnastics Club to find their own permanent home alongside finding a home for Tenterden Boxing Club.	Medium Term	Ashford Borough Council Management Operator Schools Parish & Town Council's	Provide & Enhance
SPORTS HALLS	Ensure that there is sufficient Sports Hall space in Ashford Borough by 2030 – require additional 6 badminton courts.	Chilmington Green development will provide 2 badminton courts before 2030. In addition develop a plan to increase the under capacity at Tenterden Leisure Centre. Work with schools to improve capacity eg	Long Term		

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STRATEGIC FUNCTION	CHALLENGES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	TIMESCALE SHORT MEDIUM LONG	PARTNERS	OBJECTIVE
		<p>The Towers School.</p> <p>Discuss the possibility of Ashford School opening its Sports Hall facilities for community use</p> <p>This will be sufficient until a 4 court hall is developed as part of Phase 2 of the Chimington Green Development post 2030.</p>	Medium Term		
SWIMMING POOLS	Ensuring that there is sufficient water space in Ashford given the undersupply of water space by 2030. Requirement for an additional 88.28m ²	<p>Utilise the current under capacity at Tenterden Leisure Centre.</p> <p>Provide partner funding (Management Operator) through procurement to enhance existing facilities e.g. moveable floors – The Stour Centre and Tenterden Leisure Centre.</p>	Medium Term Medium Term	<p>Ashford Borough Council, Tenterden Leisure Trust. Management operator.</p> <p>Ashford Borough Council Management operator.</p>	Provide & Enhance

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STRATEGIC FUNCTION	CHALLENGES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	TIMESCALE SHORT MEDIUM LONG	PARTNERS	OBJECTIVE
CREATE A HIERARCHY OF FACILITIES.	Ensure that there is an understanding of the hierarchy levels. Town and Rural	Consider how the programming of these facilities fits into the wider programming offer across Ashford Town (The Stour Centre and Education Sports Facilities) and Tenterden (Tenterden Leisure Centre and Holmewood School) and the rural areas (Village, Church Halls and Primary Schools). Investigate how to increase programming time in facilities during the day as the population gets older.	Short Term	Ashford Borough Council Town and Parish Council's Schools Management Operator	Provide & Enhance
REVIEW	Keeping the Facilities Strategy relevant and up to date	Review the Strategy & Action Plan annually and that it is completely reviewed within 5 years of its implementation.	Ongoing	All Partners	Protect, Provide and Enhance

4.4 The following actions are relative to each of Ashford Borough Council's key facilities.

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Table 4.2: Boroughs Key Facilities

FACILITY	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	TIMESCALE	PARTNERS	AIM
STOUR LEISURE CENTRE	1. Consider actions to improve the dry side offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adventure soft play • Clip and climb • Gymnastic classes 	Short Term	Ashford Borough Council	Provide & Enhance
	2. Reduce the Carbon footprint	Medium Term	Management Operator	
TENTERDEN LEISURE CENTRE	1. Improve the dry side offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocate the health and fitness facilities and grow the gym to cater for the anticipated growth in population. • Use the existing gym as a clip and climb facility. • Add soft play facilities 	Medium – Long Term	Tenterden Leisure Trust Management operator Tenterden Town Council Ashford Borough Council Kestrel Gymnastics Club	Protect Provide Enhance
	2. Create additional capacity in the Sports Hall by working with Kestrel Gymnastics Club to find their own home.	Medium to Long Term		
JULIE ROSE STADIUM	2. Relocate and extend the health and fitness offer.		Ashford Borough Council	Provide
	3. Existing gym becomes club room/meeting area.		Management Operator	Enhance
	4. Indoor training area to provide physical activity classes.			
COURTSIDE	1. Improve the Leisure offer on site by providing a health and fitness facility.	Short Term	Ashford Borough Council	Provide
			School	Enhance
			Management Operator	

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FACILITY	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	TIMESCALE	PARTNERS	AIM
INDOOR TENNIS CENTRE	Ashford Borough Council to work with Sport England and the Lawn Tennis Association to provide a 4 court indoor tennis facility in Ashford.	Short Term	Ashford Borough Council Sport England Lawn Tennis Association	Provide Enhance

