



**MEDWAY COUNCIL
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY
ASSESSMENT REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



**A REPORT BY FMG CONSULTING LTD
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1. Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 The Executive Summary provides a summary of the key findings for each sport from the Assessment Report. The report is still in draft form at the time of writing and hasn't yet been reviewed by the steering group, therefore this data is subject to change, depending on the feedback received. There is also still some outstanding data to be provided for cricket and rugby union that forms part of the assessment. On this basis, balances for these sports have not been included within Table 1.1, and this information is not included within the summary section for these sports.
- 1.2 The numbers shown in Table 1.1 for grass football pitches and 3G Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) are on an authority-wide basis. The balance of these differs when assessed on a sub analysis area basis. This is described in more detail in each of the relevant sections within the Assessment Report.
- 1.3 Table 1.1 shows current (2026) and future (2041) balance of playing pitches in the Medway.

Table 1.1 - Current (2026) and future (2041) balance of playing pitches in Medway

Sport	Pitch Type	Current Balance 2026	Future Balance 2041
Football - Grass Pitches	Adult pitches	-13.5	-19
	Youth Football 11v11	-16	-23.5
	Youth Football 9v9	-19	-24.5
	Mini Soccer 7v7	-6.5	-14.5
	Mini Soccer 5v5	-2	-11.5
3G AGPs	Full size with sports lighting	-6.35	-8.25
Rugby Union	Senior	Unknown	Unknown
Rugby League	Senior	0	0
Hockey AGPs	Full size with sports lighting	Demand is being met	Demand can be met

Sport	Pitch Type	Current Balance 2026	Future Balance 2041
Cricket - Saturday	Senior grass wickets	Unknown	Unknown
Cricket - Sunday		Unknown	Unknown
Cricket - Mid-week		Unknown	Unknown

Football Summary

- 1.4 There are currently 84 operational sites in Medway that provide a total of 215 football pitches. There are 190 pitches that are available for community use across 69 sites. There is an additional 25 pitches which are not available for community use.
- 1.5 Gillingham currently provides the greatest number of football pitches, with 27% (51) of all pitches in the study area, this is closely followed by Chatham with 26% (49). The sub area with the least amount of pitch provision is the Peninsula sub area with 11 pitches (6%)
- 1.6 There have been 50 disused pitches identified across 41 sites. The number of different pitch types varies with the highest number of disused pitch types being adult pitches (18) and youth football 11v11 (14). There are three youth football 9v9 pitches, 10 mini soccer 7v7 pitches, and five mini soccer 5v5 pitches that are also disused. The sub area with the most disused pitches is the Strood and Rural area, with 16 disused pitches.
- 1.7 There are currently 24 sites used by community football clubs that are offer secure tenure. This equates to 65 clubs using secured sites within Medway.
- 1.8 There were 55 football pitches assessed as good quality, 59 assessed as standard quality, and 76 assessed as poor quality.
- 1.9 Of the 24 sites with ancillary facilities that were assessed, five provided good quality facilities, 14 provided standard quality facilities and five provided poor quality facilities.
- 1.10 In total, there are currently 77 football clubs in the Medway. Between them they have a total of 544 teams. There are four teams who export their demand outside the study area.
- 1.11 Ten clubs who responded to the consultation reported they require additional playing pitches, 15 clubs reported the need for additional training facilities, and 11 clubs reported the need for additional ancillary facilities.
- 1.12 Should future demand identified by clubs during the consultation be realised, there would be 72 additional teams playing within Medway. The greatest amount of demand generated would be for youth football and mini soccer teams, with 26 youth teams and 35 mini soccer teams. Across all age groups there would be an additional 36 MES of demand generated.
- 1.13 Overplay on football pitches in Medway equates to 40 MES. This results in there being shortfalls on all pitch types in Medway. When future demand is considered, these shortfalls increase.

3G AGPs Summary

- 1.14 There are currently 15 operational sites in Medway that provide a total of 27 3G artificial grass pitches (AGPs). There are 24 3G AGPs that are available for community use across 13 sites.

- 1.15 Eight of the 24 3G AGPs available for community use are full-size, with the remaining 16 being smaller sized.
- 1.16 Seven 3G AGPs are currently on the FA Pitch Register, meaning they are capable of accommodating competitive football. Six of the seven pitches are full-size pitches. The one smaller sized 3G AGP on the 3G Pitch Register is located at Thinking Fitness at Chatham.
- 1.17 Of the 3G AGPs available for community use, six were assessed as good quality, nine as standard quality, and nine as poor quality. Eight of the nine poor quality 3G AGPs are smaller sized pitches.
- 1.18 Of the eight sites with ancillary facilities that were assessed, five provide good quality ancillary facilities and three provide standard quality. No ancillary facilities available to support 3G AGPs were assessed as poor quality.
- 1.19 The FA calculate that one full-size 3G AGP can support up to 38 teams. There are currently seven (one has been discounted to poor quality) full-size 3G AGPs in Medway available for community use. Smaller sized 3G AGPs contribute 1.25 full-size pitch equivalent. This discounts eight smaller sized 3G AGPs that are poor quality. This means that there is currently 8.25 full-size pitch equivalents in Medway.
- 1.20 Based on demand from 558 teams (this includes four exported teams), there is a need for 14.6 3G AGPs in Medway. With 8.25 full-size pitch equivalent currently being available, there is a shortfall of 6.35 pitches. Should future demand identified by clubs materialise (72 teams), the shortfall would increase by 1.9 pitches to 8.25 pitches.

Rugby Union Summary

- 1.21 There are currently nine operational sites in Medway that provide a total of 26 rugby union pitches. There are 17 pitches that are available for community use across five sites.
- 1.22 Security of tenure at Cliffe Recreation Ground for Cliffe Crusaders RFC and for Lordswood RFC at Lordswood Sports and Social Club is unknown. Both Gillingham Anchorians RFC and Medway RUFC have long term leases at their respective sites.
- 1.23 All rugby union pitches at site used by community rugby union clubs have been assessed as basic quality.
- 1.24 Three sites used by community rugby union clubs provide good quality ancillary provision. Cliffe Recreation Ground, which is used by Cliffe Crusaders RFC doesn't provide any changing rooms.
- 1.25 There are four community rugby union clubs in Medway, who between them have 42 teams. This includes nine senior men's teams, two senior women's teams, and 31 age grade teams.

Rugby League Summary

- 1.26 There is one senior rugby league pitch in Medway, which is located at Chatham Garrison Sports Field.
- 1.27 Tenure arrangements at Chatham Garrison Sports Field are unknown for Medway Dragons RLFC, therefore tenure has been deemed unsecured.
- 1.28 The rugby league pitch at Chatham Garrison Sports Field was assessed as standard quality.
- 1.29 Ancillary provision provided at Chatham Garrison Sports Field was assessed as good quality.

- 1.30 There are three rugby league clubs in Medway. Both London Roosters and Woodland Warriors only provide wheelchair teams who use indoor sports halls and not grass pitches. They each have one team. Medway Dragons RLFC have two senior mens teams, one under 16's boys team and a primary section. They also have a Masters team and a wheelchair team. The club are also looking to develop a senior women's teams for 2026.
- 1.31 The senior rugby league pitch at Chatham Garrison Sports Field has been identified as at capacity. Should the club develop a senior womens team, this could result in the pitch becoming overplayed, if no qualitative improvements are made.

Hockey Summary

- 1.32 There are currently eight operational sites in Medway that provide a total of nine hockey AGPs, all of which are available for community use. Of these, eight are considered to be full-size with one, located at The Rochester Grammar School, considered to be small size. Holcombe Hockey and Sports Club provides two full-size, hockey suitable AGPs.
- 1.33 Gillingham Anchorians and Holcombe hockey clubs both have long-term lease agreements for their respective home venues whilst K Sports and Old Williamsons hockey clubs are considered to have unsecure tenure agreements at The Thomas Aveling School and Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School respectively.
- 1.34 Four (50%) pitches are assessed as good quality whilst three (38%) are assessed as standard quality. One (12%) is assessed as poor quality, located at The Thomas Aveling School. Gillingham Anchorians Hockey Club reports plans to resurface the AGP at Gillingham Anchorians Sports Club in five years.
- 1.35 Only the full size pitch at The Thomas Aveling School and the small size pitch at The Rochester Grammar School are without sports lighting. Holcombe Hockey Club reports an aspiration to improve the sports lighting at Holcombe Hockey and Sports Club to LED lights.
- 1.36 Of the four sites that are accessed for club hockey in Medway, three (75%) are serviced by good quality ancillary provision. Thomas Aveling School is without ancillary facilities.
- 1.37 Across the four clubs they field 23 senior men's, 15 senior women's, 17 junior boys' and 15 junior girls' teams. Where membership information is known, there are a total of 858 hockey members in Medway.
- 1.38 K Sports Hockey Club is considered to be Kent-based, despite all of its demand currently being accommodated in Medway after the sudden closure of its previous home site. The Club is not known to have any long-term aspirations to relocate into Medway, utilising The Thomas Aveling School until it secures a new, permanent home venue.
- 1.39 Gillingham Anchorians Hockey Club notes a desire to add an additional two junior boys' and two junior girls' teams.
- 1.40 Both Old Williamsons and Holcombe hockey clubs currently offer Back to Hockey sessions.
- 1.41 The AGP at The Thomas Aveling School is played to capacity at weekends. Where known, all other hockey suitable AGPs offer some level of spare capacity during the week and at weekends although these are predominantly at less preferable time slots.

Cricket Summary

- 1.42 There are currently 12 operational sites in Medway that provide a total of 14 cricket pitches. There are 12 pitches that are available for community use across ten sites.
- 1.43 Five cricket clubs in Medway either have long term security of tenure or own the freehold at the sites they use. Tenure arrangements are unknown for Lordwood CC and Old Williamsons.
- 1.44 Three cricket pitches in Medway were assessed as good quality, six as standard quality and three as poor quality.
- 1.45 Of the ten sites with ancillary facilities that were assessed, nine provided good quality facilities, zero provided standard quality facilities and one provided poor quality facilities.
- 1.46 There are currently 7 cricket clubs in Medway, who between them they have a total of 78 teams. High Halstow CC have one team who export demand outside Medway to Gravesham Borough Council.

Tennis Summary

- 1.47 Overall, the supply of tennis courts is sufficient to meet known club and community demand within Medway.
- 1.48 There are currently 20 operational sites in Medway that provide a total of 91 tennis courts. Of these, 73 courts are available for community use across 17 sites.
- 1.49 Three sites have been identified as providing disused tennis courts; Bridgewood Manor, Kent Coast Holiday Park and Roffen Sports Club.
- 1.50 City Lawn Tennis Club has six years remaining on its existing lease agreement whilst Frinsbury Lawn Tennis Club is assumed to have a secure tenure agreement for its site of the same name.
- 1.51 Of the community available tennis courts in Medway, 20 (29%) are assessed as good quality, 40 (57%) as standard quality and 10 (14%) as poor quality. Poor quality courts are identified at Deangate Ridge Recreation Ground and Rainham Mark Grammar School. Court quality at The Thomas Aveling School is not known.
- 1.52 City Lawn Tennis Club reports trees adjacent to its site are leading to quality issues on its grass tennis courts.
- 1.53 There are five sites in Medway that provide a total of 32 tennis courts with sports lighting. All courts are available for community use.
- 1.54 Most tennis sites (53%) in Medway that are available for community use are without ancillary provision. Four sites (24%) are serviced by good quality ancillary provision and one site (6%), City Lawn Tennis Club, has standard quality ancillary facilities. It is unknown whether three (17%) sites provide ancillary facilities.
- 1.55 City Lawn Tennis Club plans to construct a new clubhouse on site whilst Cuxton Parish Council has plans to develop café and toilet facilities to service the courts at Cuxton Recreation Ground.
- 1.56 City Lawn Tennis Club currently has 20 adult members and no junior members. It aspires to add a further 15 adult and ten junior members, which would equate to a further 25 tennis members in Medway. The Club believes it could attract more members if it had improved playing and ancillary facilities on site.

- 1.57 City Lawn Tennis Club has significant spare capacity on site to accommodate an increase in membership whilst there is capacity for up to 35,000 pay-and-play bookings per year on community tennis courts.

Padel Tennis Summary

- 1.58 The LTA's demand calculator, based on the current population in Medway, identifies a need for 21 padel courts within the study area. This is not seen as a cap, more that the LTA has confidence there is sufficient demand for the number of courts identified.
- 1.59 There are currently ten outdoor padel courts providing in Medway across three sites. This means that there is currently a shortfall of 11 padel tennis courts in Medway based on LTA calculations.
- 1.60 Medway Park is specifically mentioned as the sort of site that could be suitable for padel development.

Netball Summary

- 1.61 Netball in Medway is well catered for through the provision of good quality, sports lit court and ancillary provision at key sites. However, unsecure usage provided by Education sites is a concern.
- 1.62 Two England Netball affiliated clubs have been identified as being based in Medway. Both clubs were invited to take part in the consultation but did not respond.
- 1.63 There are ten sites in Medway that provide outdoor netball courts, providing a total of 38 courts. All ten sites are available for community use. although only the courts at Cuxton Recreation Ground and Strand Leisure Pool and Park provide secure community access.
- 1.64 Of the 38 netball courts provided in Medway, quality is known for 17. For the courts of known quality, 13 (76%) are assessed as good quality and four (24%) are assessed as standard quality. No poor quality courts have been identified.
- 1.65 Five sites providing 21 courts are serviced by sports lighting. All sports lit netball court provision is located at Education sites.
- 1.66 Ancillary facilities provided at Kings Rochester Sports Centre, Rainham School for Girls and Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School are considered to be of good quality whilst Cuxton Recreation Ground is without ancillary provision. It is not known whether the remaining sites provide ancillary facilities.
- 1.67 There are two netball clubs (Swifts and Macklins netball clubs) based within Medway, who between them have nine teams.
- 1.68 Two netball leagues, the Medway Netball League and a Play Netball Social League, are identified as operating within Medway. Both operate on a central venue format, with fixtures played at Rainham School for Girls and Kings Rochester Sports Centre respectively.
- 1.69 Whilst no formal imported demand has been identified in Medway, some level of imported demand is anticipated due to the nature of the central venue format operated by the Medway Netball League.
- 1.70 There is one Walking Netball session currently being delivered in Medway on Monday mornings at Kings Rochester Sports Centre.

Bowls Summary

- 1.71 Across Medway, supply is sufficient to meet demand. However, three poor quality greens are identified whilst Civil Service Bowls Club is operating above recommended capacity guidelines.
- 1.72 Eight bowling clubs have been identified as playing within Medway. Of these clubs, two responded to consultation requests, resulting in a 25% response rate.
- 1.73 There are currently eight operational sites in Medway that provide a total of eight bowling greens. All greens are flat greens and are available for community use.
- 1.74 One disused green has been identified at Jackson's Recreation Ground.
- 1.75 Only Sturdee Bowls Club is known to have security of tenure at its home site, through ownership of Sturdee Social & Bowls Club Gillingham. Civil Service Bowls Club rents its site of the same name and is therefore considered to have an unsecure tenure agreement on site. All other clubs' tenure agreements are unknown.
- 1.76 Three (37.5%) greens are assessed as good quality, two (25%) as standard quality and three (37.5%) are assessed as poor quality. Poor quality greens are located at Cliffe Bowls Club, Peninsula Bowls Club and Rochester Clarence Bowling Club.
- 1.77 Four (50%) sites are serviced by good quality ancillary provision and four (50%) are serviced by standard quality ancillary provision. No poor quality ancillary facilities have been identified.
- 1.78 Across the two clubs where membership numbers are known, a total of 127 adult bowls members are identified. Civil Service and Sturdee bowls clubs note aspirations to add a further ten and 20 members respectively.
- 1.79 With 82 members currently, Civil Service Bowls Club is operating above Bowls England's recommended capacity guidelines.

Baseball Summary

- 1.80 Kent Buccaneers Baseball Club and Kent Mariners Baseball Club (previously based at Hoo Village Institute) merged in 2024 to create Kent Baseball Club. The club is based at Williams Field in Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.