

OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND LEISURE STUDY 2016-2035

INITIAL FINDINGS

SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL

MARCH 2017



OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND LEISURE STUDY 2016-2035

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BACKGROUND

Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) has identified the need to develop an Open Space, Sport and Leisure Study, including a Playing Pitch Strategy and an Indoor Sports Facility report. The study will help to plan effectively for the future provision of open space (typology, location and amount), indoor and outdoor sports facility provision, for current and future need, population growth and increased participation.

Given the planning, policy and financial changes of the last five years, there is a need to identify options for future provision which meet local need, but can be delivered more effectively and efficiently. This also provides a fresh opportunity to deploy national best practice to ensure the needs of a diverse resident population are suitably planned for, and addressed. The time is therefore opportune to develop a robust needs and evidence base for future provision of open space, playing pitches and sports facilities (sports halls, swimming pools, health and fitness, squash courts, gymnastics, cycling, indoor tennis and bowls) in the District.

The 2016/17 Assessments of Open Space, Playing Pitches and Sports Facilities are aligned, and cover Sevenoaks District, referencing, where appropriate, provision in neighbouring local authorities. All typologies have been audited on the basis of quantity and quality, and subsequent assessments undertaken to analysis supply v demand, current and future need, and therefore priorities for investment.

Each assessment comprises a separate, but linked report, which sets out in detail the approach and methodology followed for each assessment, its quantitative and qualitative findings, the consultation feedback, key issues, priority needs for investment, and an Action Plan for Strategy Delivery. This Summary of Findings covers the key findings, recommendations and Action Plan for each assessment.

The three documents will ensure that the current and future demand for open space, sport and leisure facilities are planned for holistically and that the needs of the population of Sevenoaks District can be fully met. The three strategies provide clarity on how and where available investments should be targeted and how the Council and other partners can use their own resources and work with others to ensure that the right facilities are delivered in the right places, to deliver the right outcomes.

The Study will be used to inform the Council's emerging Local Plan 2015-2035 but can also be used as evidence to support the adopted Core Strategy, Allocations and Development Management Plan and the District's Sustainable Community Plan, which has a Vision that:

Sevenoaks District will be recognised by all as a place with:

- **Safe and caring communities**
- **A green and healthy environment**
- **A dynamic and sustainable economy**

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Located in the north west of Kent, Sevenoaks is a large District, with an overall area of just over 143 square miles (370 square km). The District is long and quite narrow measuring 20 miles North-South by about 7 miles East-West. To the north of Sevenoaks lies the Thames Gateway, and to the east and south east is the rest of Kent, including Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge. To the West is Surrey and to the South Sussex. Although Sevenoaks District adjoins the outer edge of London, the area is predominantly rural with 93% of the District designated as Green Belt.

Edenbridge is the main centre in the south of the District. There is no secondary school in Edenbridge, although there is a good range of service and retail. Other larger villages in the rural area include New Ash Green to the north east, which was built as a planned village in the 1960's, Hartley, Otford and Westerham. Sevenoaks is the main town, with the main retail provision and other services. It is the area of highest population and employment in the District, with good commuter links to central London by road and rail. The second largest settlement is Swanley, located close to the Thames Gateway, and the boroughs of Dartford, Bromley and Bexley. Swanley is more densely populated and has less open space than Sevenoaks, and there are fewer services provided in the town. Communities tend to look towards Dartford, Bromley and Bexley for services unavailable in Swanley. Around 50% of the population live in the District's 40 or so villages and hamlets. The majority of the remaining population live in Sevenoaks.

In 2013, the population of the District was 117,035. This is predicted to grow by 16.6% and 19,469 people, to 136,504 by 2033 (Source: Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) September 2015 v 3). This is in line with ONS Mid 2014 population estimates which see a growth from 121,000 population in 2016, to 139,000 by 2035.

Sevenoaks District is within the top 20% least deprived local authorities in the country and ranks 295 out of the 354 local authorities. (1st being most deprived and 354th being least deprived), although there are specific wards within the District where deprivation is much higher. Six out of the 74 Lower Layer Super Output Areas, the smallest area for which the level of deprivation is measured, are more deprived than the UK average. Five of these areas, including the two most deprived, are within Swanley and one is in Hartley.

Summary of Demographic Profile Sevenoaks

KEY FACTORS	SEVENOAKS DISTRICT
POPULATION 2016 (ONS Census mid-year estimates 2014)	Current Population 121,000 48.5% male 51.5% female
POPULATION TRENDS	The population of Sevenoaks District is forecast to increase by 6.0% ie 18,000 during the period from 2001 to 2026. This increase in population is less than the projected population change in Kent which is projected to increase by 16.7% over the same period. The population of Sevenoaks District is ageing; there are slightly higher numbers of people 45+ compared with the population averages of the South East and England.

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KEY FACTORS	SEVENOAKS DISTRICT
	<p>By 2033 there will be a 71% increase in the number of those aged 75+, and a 23.9% increase in those aged 60-74. Equally, there will be increased numbers of those under 15 (15.7%) and 9% more people aged 30-44 living in the District.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Source: Strategic Housing Market Assessment September 2015 v 3)</p>
CHARACTERISTICS	<p>Almost all of Sevenoaks District residents (97.6%) identify themselves as “white” and were born in the UK.</p> <p>The population of Sevenoaks District is well educated with 20% of residents educated to degree level or above.</p> <p>Car ownership is significantly higher than in Kent, the South East and England at around 86.7%, resulting in a very mobile population.</p>
DEPRIVATION	<p>Sevenoaks District is within the top 20% least deprived local authorities in the country and ranks 295 out of the 354 local authorities. (1st being most deprived and 354th being least deprived).</p> <p>Deprivation in Sevenoaks District is focused around Swanley Town, and to a lesser extent Edenbridge.</p> <p>The LSOAs surrounding Sevenoaks Town Centre are the least deprived in the district with all areas within the top 10% least deprived in the country.</p>
OBESITY	<p>In 2012, 65.3% of adults are classified as obese or overweight. In Year 6, 15.5% (172) of children are classified as obese, better than the average for England (Sevenoaks Health Profile 2015).</p>
TOTAL COST OF INACTIVITY	<p>£1,847,703. (Source: British Heart Foundation Health Promotion Research Group at Oxford University).</p>
HEALTH ISSUES	<p>The health of people in Sevenoaks District is generally better than the England average. Deprivation is lower than average, however about 11.7% (2,600) children live in poverty. Life expectancy for both men and women is higher than the England average.</p> <p>Priorities in Sevenoaks District include addressing childhood obesity, tackling smoking during pregnancy, and reducing road injuries (Sevenoaks Health Profile 2015).</p>

Sevenoaks District’s population will grow significantly over the next few years, so there is a need to ensure sufficient provision of accessible, quality and affordable facilities to meet local need.

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It is particularly important that there is increased access to opportunities for physical activity at local level, so it is easy for residents, particularly those who are currently inactive, and those without access to private transport, to participate, and become physically active.

PLANNING CONTEXT

The Council has a statutory duty to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the requirement of local authorities to establish and provide adequate and proper leisure facilities to meet local needs. Paragraphs 73 and 74 outline the planning policies for the provision and protection of sport and recreation facilities.

“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 are required.”

‘Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings 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***
- ***The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or***
- ***The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss’.***

The emerging Local Plan is the key reference point for this Strategy, unless otherwise stated. The Local Plan replaces the existing Core Strategy and Allocations and Development Management Plan and will play a key role in shaping the District up to 2035, setting out the local planning policy up to this date. The Plan is scheduled for adoption in 2019.

The plan will reflect the council’s aims and aspirations for the people of Sevenoaks District.

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ASSESSMENT FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLANS

SECTION 1: OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

1. A summary of the issues arising from the quality assessment of the District's open space is set out in Table 1.

Table 1: General quality Issues in the Sevenoaks District across all open space types

OPEN SPACE TYPE	ISSUE
PARKS AND GARDENS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks are generally very well managed but some small sites are not welcoming enough • Parks have high level of usage particularly at weekends • Most are well-designed to provide a range of different uses however play facilities are sometimes deficient. • A large number are not publically accessible (i.e. have restricted hours and/or an entrance fee) • At some there is a need for more information for visitors
AMENITY GREENSPACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards vary depending upon care taken by landowners • Some are in poor condition resulting from inappropriate parking • Absence of welcoming signage/information • Grass maintenance reasonable but many have poor landscaping with little or no trees or planting • Many lack litter bins or seating even in fairly extensive areas
CIVIC SPACES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards are high – no major concerns
CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS AND FACILITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variable standards, some surfacing in need of replacement • Lack of signage or only prohibitive signage • More exciting equipment needed in places and equipment in keeping with local character • Lacking in trees or landscaping to provide character or shading • A significant number have accessibility issues with no access path, difficult for less able-bodied.

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OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land surrounding the outdoor sports facilities for informal recreation can have wider social benefits • Outlying land can often be left in poor condition with little or no landscaping • Some sites lacked seating or litter bins • Opportunities missed for biodiversity enhancement
SEMI/NATURAL GREENSPACE AND GREEN CORRIDORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low standards of maintenance in places • Lack of information at some sites • Poor accessibility with limited waymarking or signage • Some isolated sites show signs of neglect
ALLOTMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very difficult to find in places, and unwelcoming • Modest facilities • Poor boundaries in places and a lack of external maintenance
CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally average or good standard • Some missed opportunities to exploit history and heritage.
ACCESSIBLE AREAS OF COUNTRYSIDE ON THE URBAN FRINGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor accessibility • Often low standards of maintenance • Can be unwelcoming

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1.1 LOCAL QUANTITY STANDARDS

PARKS AND GARDENS

- Sevenoaks District is particularly well-provided with Parks and Gardens. In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance, all open space which is of public value should be included in calculations relating to quantity and accessibility. The District is privileged to have access to a number of sites of at least national significance. These include Knole Park, Penshurst, Hever Castle and Chartwell. Not all the District's parks and gardens are publically accessible (i.e. without an entrance charge or restricted hours) but they form part of the landscape character of the area whether rural or urban and are of significant public value.
- Projected population figures for 2035 show a 14% increase over 2016. At the current level of provision, the quantity of land available in this category decreases accordingly. Nevertheless, there is an abundance of open space of this type which is easily accessible to the majority of residents of the district, as well as large numbers of external visitors from surrounding areas.
- A quantitative analysis of "Parks and Gardens" for current and future population levels is shown as Table 2.

Table 2: Quantitative Analysis of Parks and Gardens across Sevenoaks District

AREA	TOTAL NO OF SITES.	HA	POPULATION 2016	CURRENT PROVISION HA/1000	STANDARD PROVISION HA/1000	CURRENT LAND REQUIREMENT	CURRENT DEFICIT/ OVERSUPPLY	POPULATION 2035	LAND REQUIREMENT BY 2035	DEFICIT/ OVERSUPPLY 2035
SEVENOAKS DISTRICT	14	539.3	120.600	4.47	0.8	96.5 ha	442.8 ha	139,100	111.3 ha	428.0 ha

 Deficit
 Oversupply

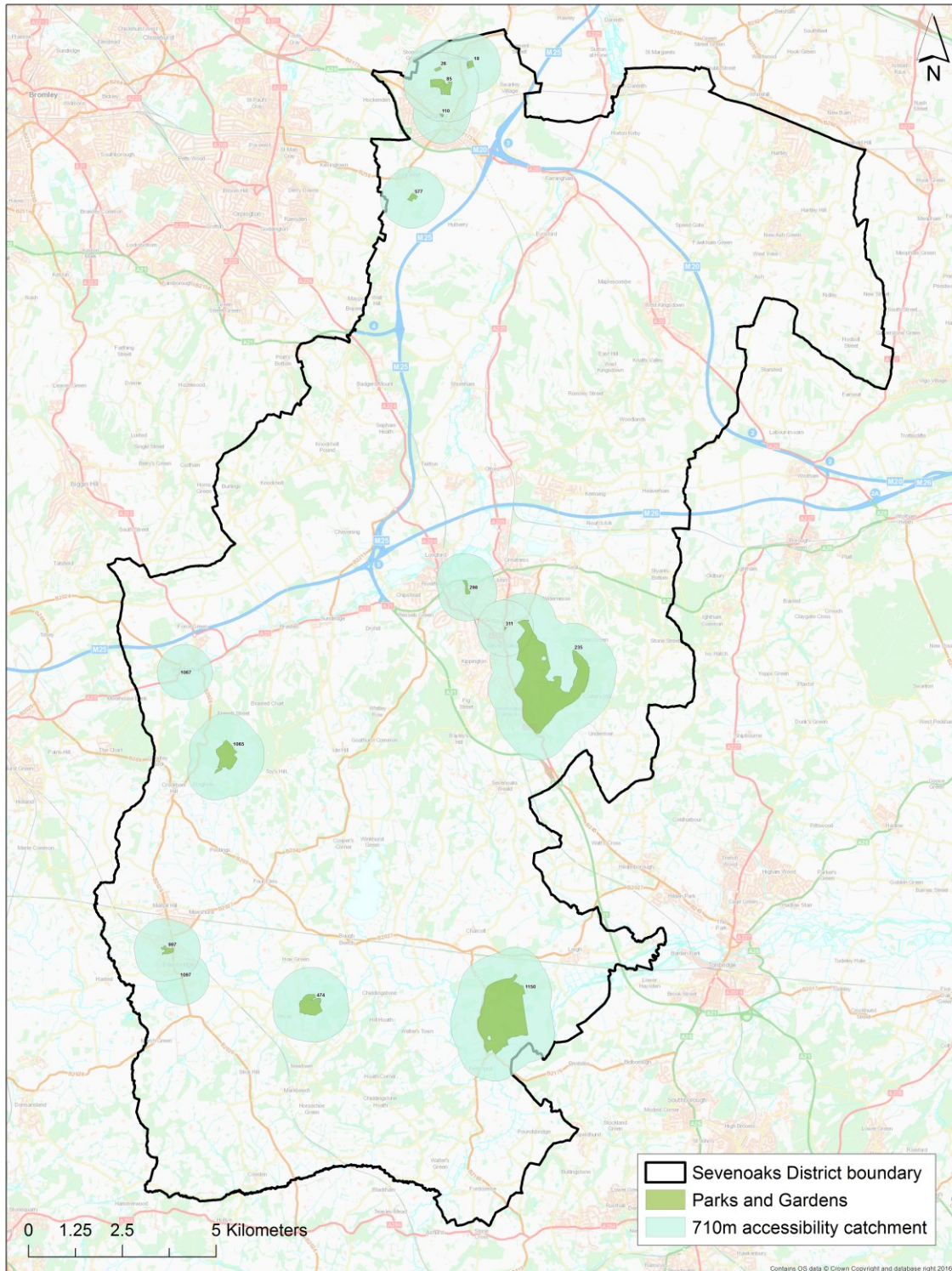
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5. The standard for Parks and Gardens is **0.8 ha/1,000 population** (total amount of current provision / population). This indicates that there is a requirement of 96.5 ha for the current population. However, the scale of provision in the District in the form of parks and gardens is significantly beyond the requirement. Because of the projected rise in population by 2035, a proportionately larger quantity is required (111.3 ha) in relation to the standard. However, supply is nevertheless well in excess of demand, and is likely to remain so.
6. A number of the District's supply of Parks and Gardens are on larger sites which are not always publically accessible. Many sites have restricted hours or require an entrance fee and some have no public rights of way through the site.
7. The Fields in Trust standard for accessibility in relation to Parks and Gardens is **710 m** (approximately a 10 minute walk).
8. This standard must be used in conjunction with quantity standards. These are well in excess of requirement for current and projected populations for Sevenoaks. Nevertheless, a map indicating accessibility is shown as Figure 1.
9. This does show some areas of shortfall in key areas of population, including parts of Swanley, Sevenoaks, north Edenbridge and West Kingsdown. However, a reasonable expectation is that larger Parks and Gardens need to be accessed by car, bicycle or public transport. In quantitative terms, Parks and Gardens in Sevenoaks District are dominated by Parks and Gardens of Regional, if not national, significance. These compensate considerably for a shortage of smaller Parks and Gardens in some areas of the District. It is unreasonable to expect open spaces in this designation to be extensively provided for small or isolated populations in rural areas, particularly as these are often compensated by access to large areas of accessible Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace and countryside however consideration could be given to small scale gardens across the District to increase accessibility to this type of open space.

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Figure 1: Accessibility of Parks and Gardens using Fields in Trust walking standards



Parks and Gardens accessibility catchment

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AMENITY GREENSPACE

10. There is fairly consistent coverage of Amenity Greenspace across the District. However, there is a deficit, despite the fact that some sites are below the guideline figure of 0.2 ha because of their significance, or because of the absence of other Amenity Greenspace in the area.

11. A quantitative analysis of “Amenity Greenspace” for current and future population levels is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Quantitative Analysis of Amenity Greenspace

AREA	TOTAL NO OF SITES.	HA	POPULATION 2016	CURRENT PROVISION HA/1000	STANDARD PROVISION HA/1000	CURRENT LAND REQUIREMENT	CURRENT DEFICIT/ OVERSUPPLY	POPULATION 2035	LAND REQUIREMENT BY 2035	DEFICIT/ OVERSUPPLY 2035
SEVENOAKS DISTRICT	144	67	120.600	0.56	0.6	72.4 ha	5.4 ha	139,100	83.5 ha	16.5 ha

	Deficit
	Oversupply

12. The Fields in Trust recommended standard for Amenity Greenspace is **0.6ha/1000 population**. The figure for 2016 is only 8% short of the guideline. However, with population increase predicted for 2035, the shortfall broadens from a deficit of 5.4 ha to 16.5 ha.

13. The Fields in Trust standard for accessibility in relation to Amenity Greenspace is **480 m** (approximately a 6 minute walk).

14. A map indicating accessibility is shown as Figure 2.

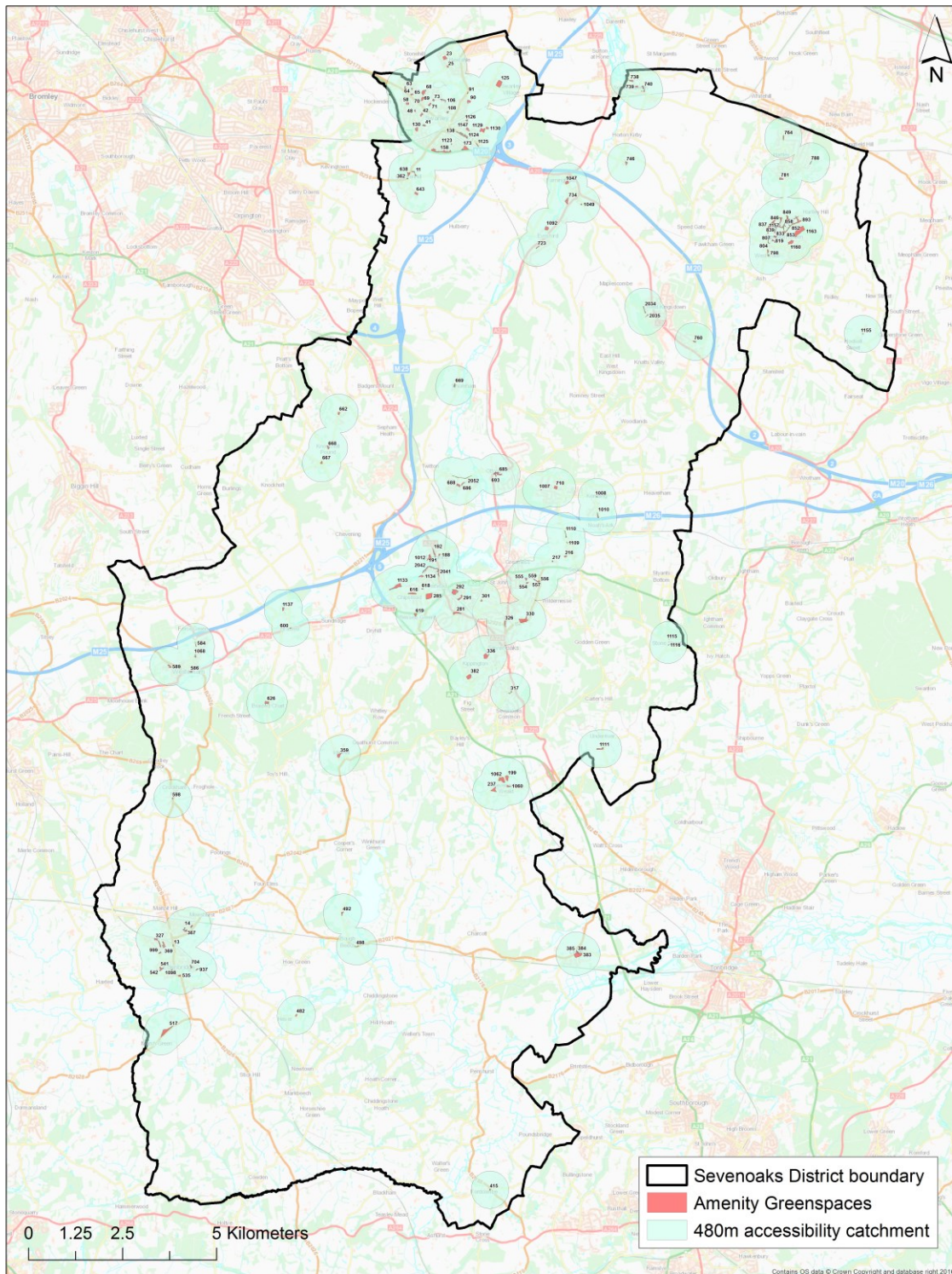
15. Most populated areas of the District are reasonably well supplied with Amenity Greenspace. In more urban and suburban areas this typically takes the form of areas of open space (usually grass areas) often forming part of residential areas. In rural areas these Amenity Greenspaces can take the form of a village green. There are some areas which are relatively undersupplied. However, some communities are very well served, with New Ash Green having a network of small linear routeways in and around much relatively recent residential accommodation.

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16. It will be important to provide areas of amenity greenspace within new housing schemes where possible and to consider how the existing clusters of small poor quality amenity greenspace can be better utilised to meet the needs of the residents.

Figure 2: Accessibility of Amenity Greenspace using Fields in Trust walking standards



Amenity Greenspaces accessibility catchment

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PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

17. The Fields in Trust recommended standard for equipped/designated play areas is **0.25 ha/1,000 population**. Some play areas were found whilst conducting the audit that had not been included in the 2008/9 audit. Despite this there is a large shortfall (deficit) in provision for this type of open space throughout the district.

18. The position is exacerbated by the projected increase in population for 2035.

19. A quantitative analysis of provision for “Children and Young People” is shown as Table 4.

Table 4: Quantitative Analysis of Provision for Children and Young People

AREA	TOTAL NO OF SITES.	HA	POPULATION 2016	CURRENT PROVISION HA/1000	STANDARD PROVISION HA/1000	CURRENT LAND REQUIREMENT	CURRENT DEFICIT/ OVERSUPPLY	POPULATION 2035	LAND REQUIREMENT BY 2035	DEFICIT/ OVERSUPPLY 2035
SEVENOAKS DISTRICT	37	4.03	120.600	0.03	0.25	30.15 ha	26.12 ha	139,100	34.78 ha	30.74 ha

	Deficit
	Oversupply

20. The Fields in Trust standard for accessibility in relation to Amenity Greenspace is as follows:

- **Local Areas for Play (LAPs) aimed at very young children: 100m;**
- **Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) aimed at children who can go out to play independently: 400m; and**
- **Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs) aimed at older children: 1,000m.**

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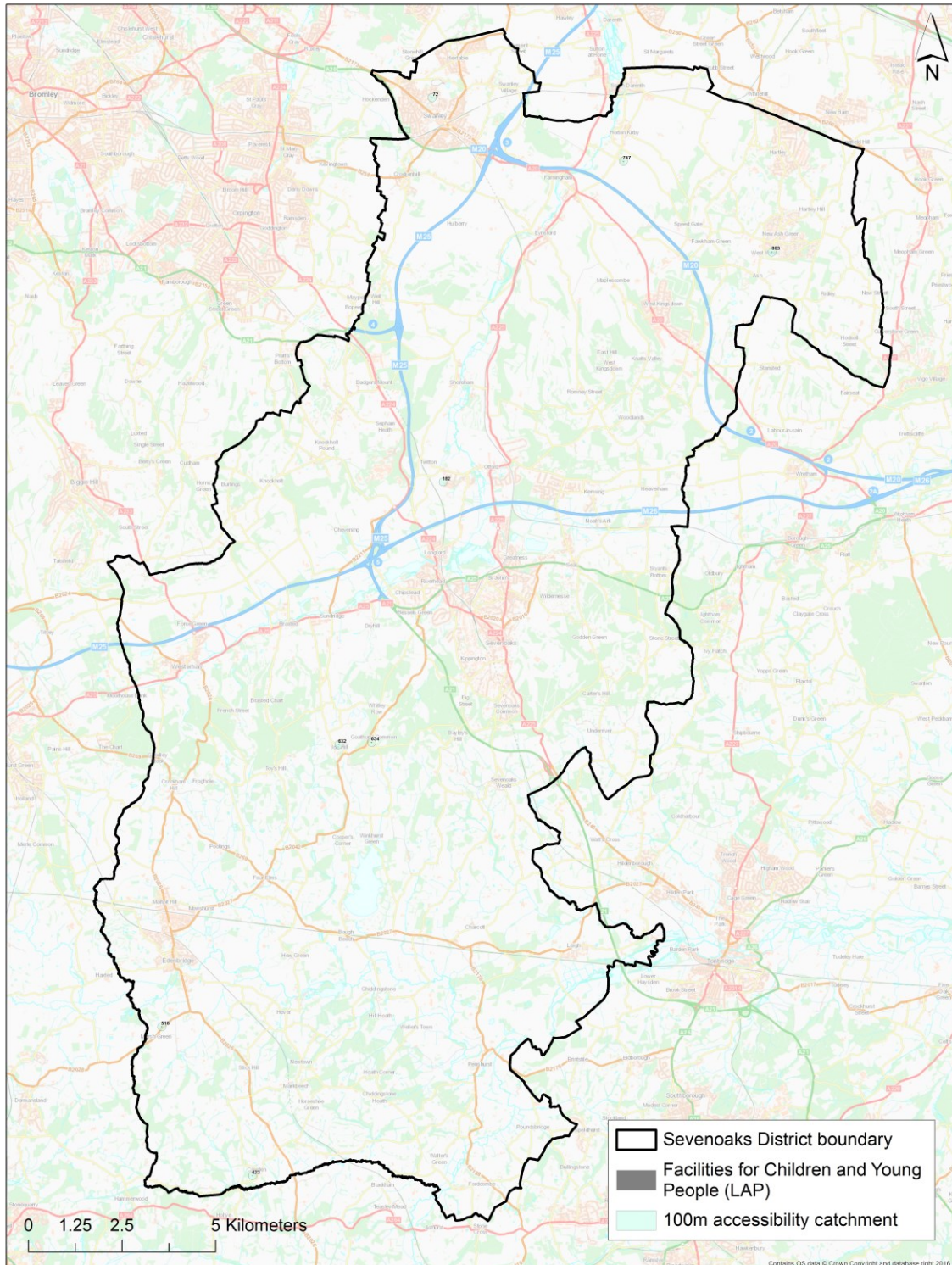
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21. Maps indicating accessibility are shown as Figures 3a and 3b.
22. As might be expected from the extremely low level of quantitative provision, most communities exhibit accessibility shortages in relation to Provision for Children and Young People in Sevenoaks District. There is a particular shortfall in terms of access relating to the provision of Local Areas for Play (minimum activity zone of 100sqm) and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (minimum activity zone of 1,000sqm). There is an opportunity to increase provision of children's and young people playspace by redeveloping areas of poor quality amenity greenspace or parks and gardens to include additional provision of playspace.

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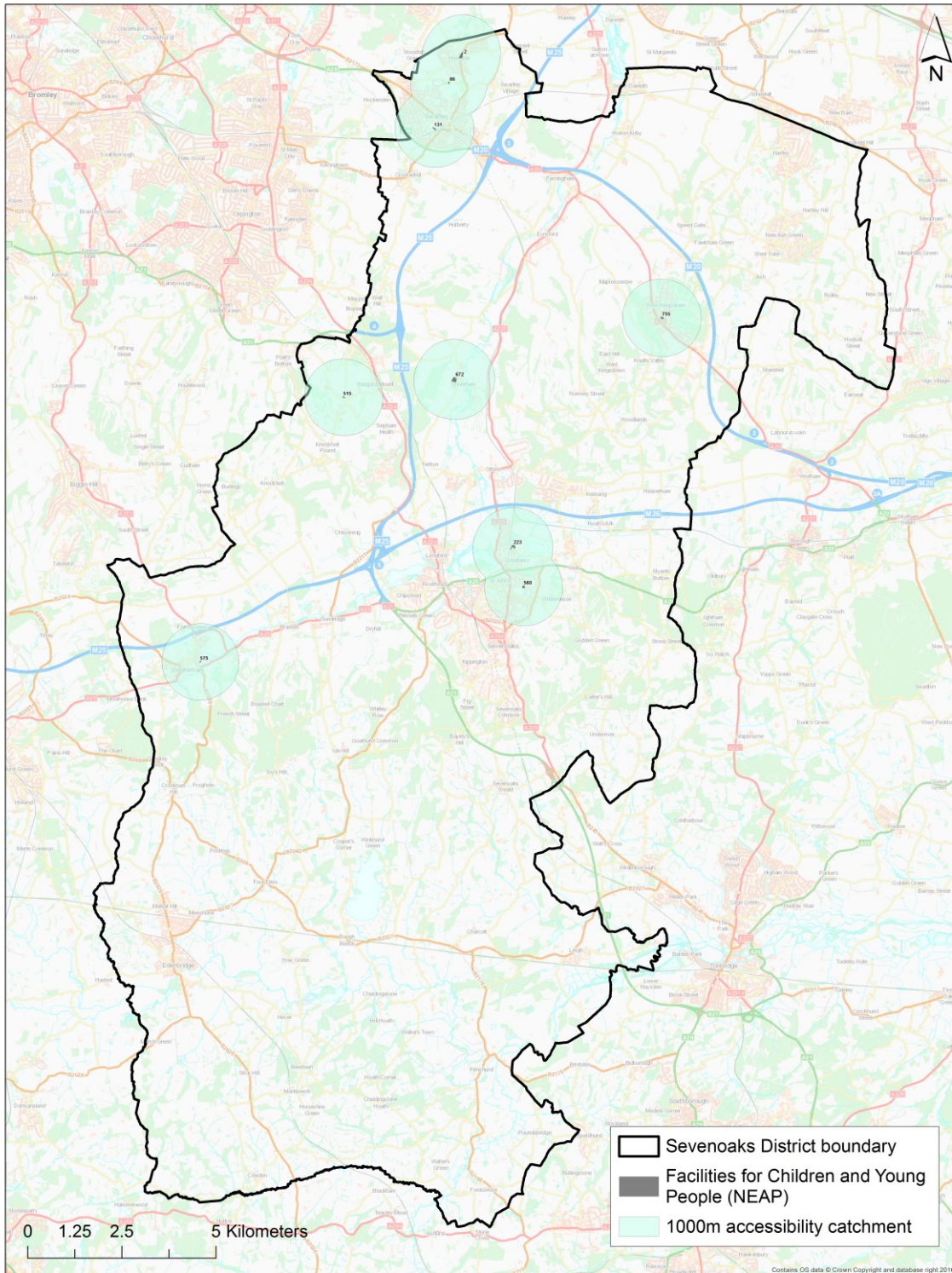
Figure 3a: Accessibility of Local Facilities for Children and Young People using Fields in Trust walking standards



**Facilities for Children and Young People (LAP)
accessibility catchment**

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Figure 3b: Accessibility of Neighbourhood Facilities for Children and Young People using Fields in Trust walking standards



**Facilities for Children and Young People (NEAP)
accessibility catchment**

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NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL GREENSPACE AND GREEN CORRIDORS

23. The Fields in Trust guideline quantitative figure for Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace is **1.8 ha per 1,000 population**.

24. There is an unprecedented quantity of accessible Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace as well as two Green Corridors within the District. This amounts to over 2,200 hectares, and consists of many smaller areas of woodland and common as well as very large areas such as Sevenoaks Wildfowl Reserve (76.68 ha), Millbank Woods (100.41 ha) and Lullingstone Park (201.27 ha). Even accounting for population increases by 2035, there is a large oversupply of open space in this category, reflecting the rural nature of the district and the availability of open land. As with the Parks and Gardens not all sites are publically accessible but all have public value in terms of landscape character and the setting of settlements.

Table 5: Quantitative Analysis of Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace

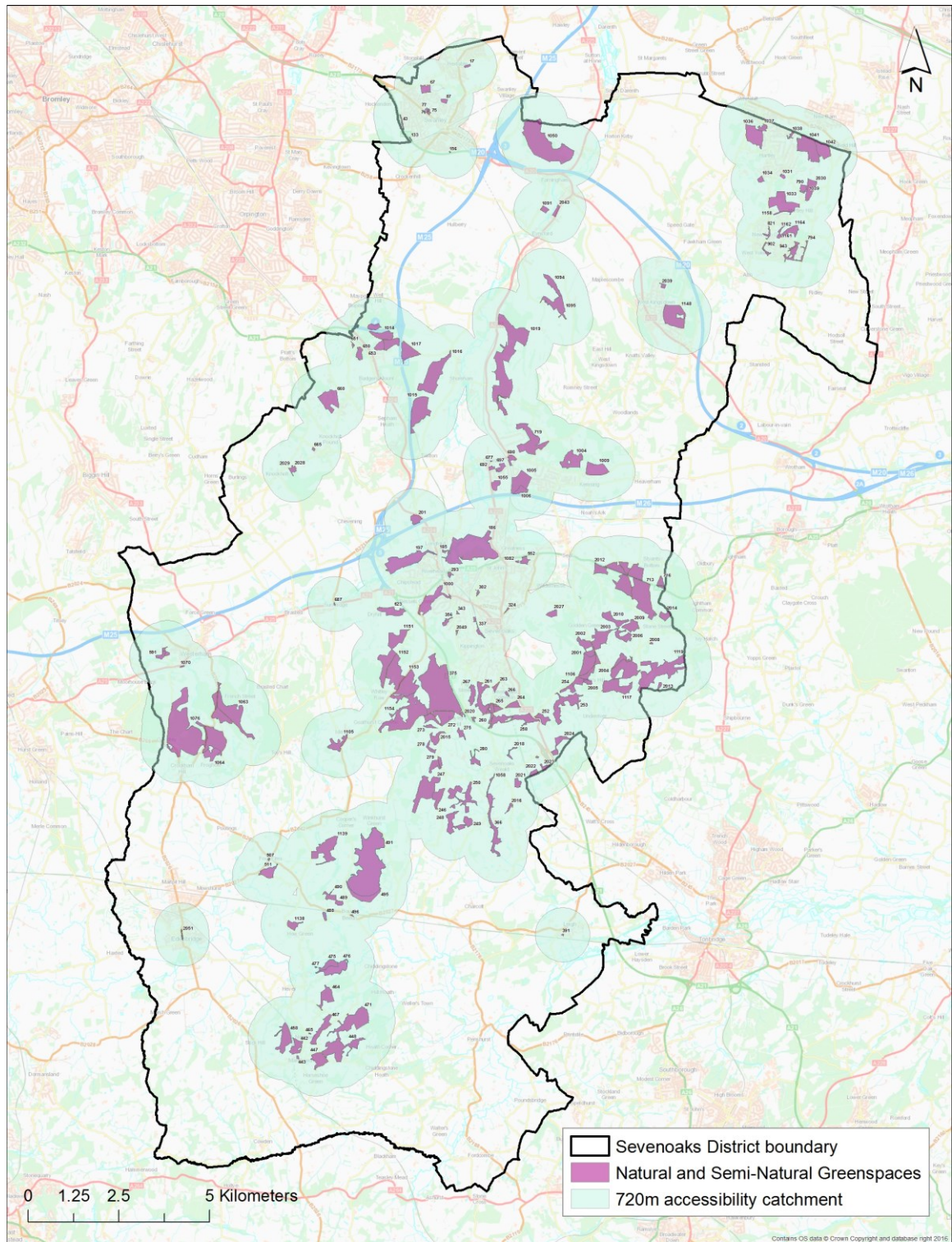
AREA	TOTAL NO OF SITES.	HA	POPULATION 2016	CURRENT PROVISION HA/1000	STANDARD PROVISION HA/1000	CURRENT LAND REQUIREMENT	CURRENT DEFICIT/ OVERSUPPLY	POPULATION 2035	LAND REQUIREMENT BY 2035	DEFICIT/ OVERSUPPLY 2035
Sevenoaks District	173	2283	120.600	18.93	1.8	217.1 ha	2065.9 ha	139,100	250.38 ha	2032.6 ha



25. The Fields in Trust standard for accessibility in relation to Amenity Greenspace is **720 m** (approximately a 10 minute walk). A map indicating accessibility is shown as Figure 4.

26. There is an excellent supply of Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace in and around all key settlements in Sevenoaks District. Swanley is perhaps the least well-served urban area, but even this has the 78 hectare Farningham Woods to the east. This is very accessible, with a series of tracks leading from good parking provision. There is some shortage around Edenbridge, although the Millennium Woods to the north east of the town provide an excellent and accessible open space for recreation, with ample car parking, and good track and seating facilities.

Figure 4: Accessibility of Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace using Fields in Trust walking standards



**Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces
accessibility catchment**

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ALLOTMENTS

27. There is no Fields in Trust guideline for allotments. However, the Thorpe Report arising from the Departmental Committee of Inquiry into Allotments, 1969, made 44 major recommendations. One was a recommendation that the standard level of provision should be **0.2 ha per 1,000 population**.
28. There are 30 allotment sites in the District. The total area of these sites is nearly 40 ha. This is comfortably in excess of the current requirement of 24.12 ha. Even accounting for the need for a further 3.7 ha by 2035, there is still an oversupply of 11.75 ha.
29. A quantitative analysis of provision for “Allotments” is shown as Table 6.

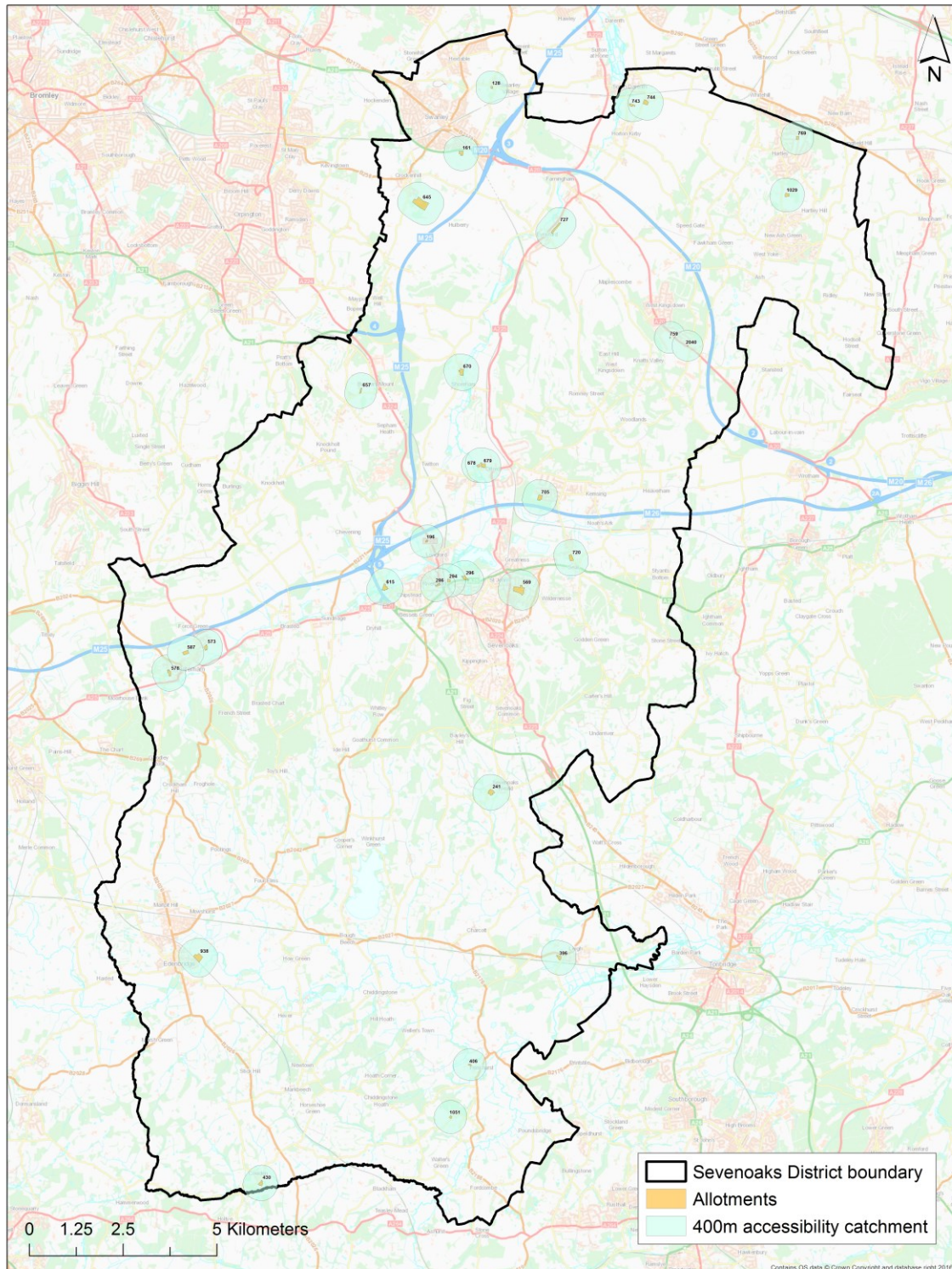
Table 6: Quantitative Analysis of Allotments

AREA	TOTAL NO OF SITES.	HA	POPULATION 2016	CURRENT PROVISION HA/1000	STANDARD PROVISION HA/1000	CURRENT LAND REQUIREMENT	CURRENT DEFICIT/ OVERSUPPLY	POPULATION 2035	LAND REQUIREMENT BY 2035	DEFICIT/ OVERSUPPLY 2035
SEVENOAKS DISTRICT	30	39.55	120.600	0.33	0.2	24.12 ha	15.43	139,100	27.8 ha	11.75 ha



30. There is no Fields in Trust standard for accessibility in relation to Allotments. However, Greater London Authority guidelines for Allotments of local significance (all in Sevenoaks District are only of local significance in terms of size) indicate a standard of **400 m** (approximately a 5 minute walk)
31. A map indicating accessibility is shown as Figure 5.
32. There is an adequate supply of allotments in the District. However, it can be seen that some areas (particularly urban and suburban communities) are deficient in terms of accessibility using the GLA guidelines.

Figure 5: Accessibility of Allotments using GLA standards

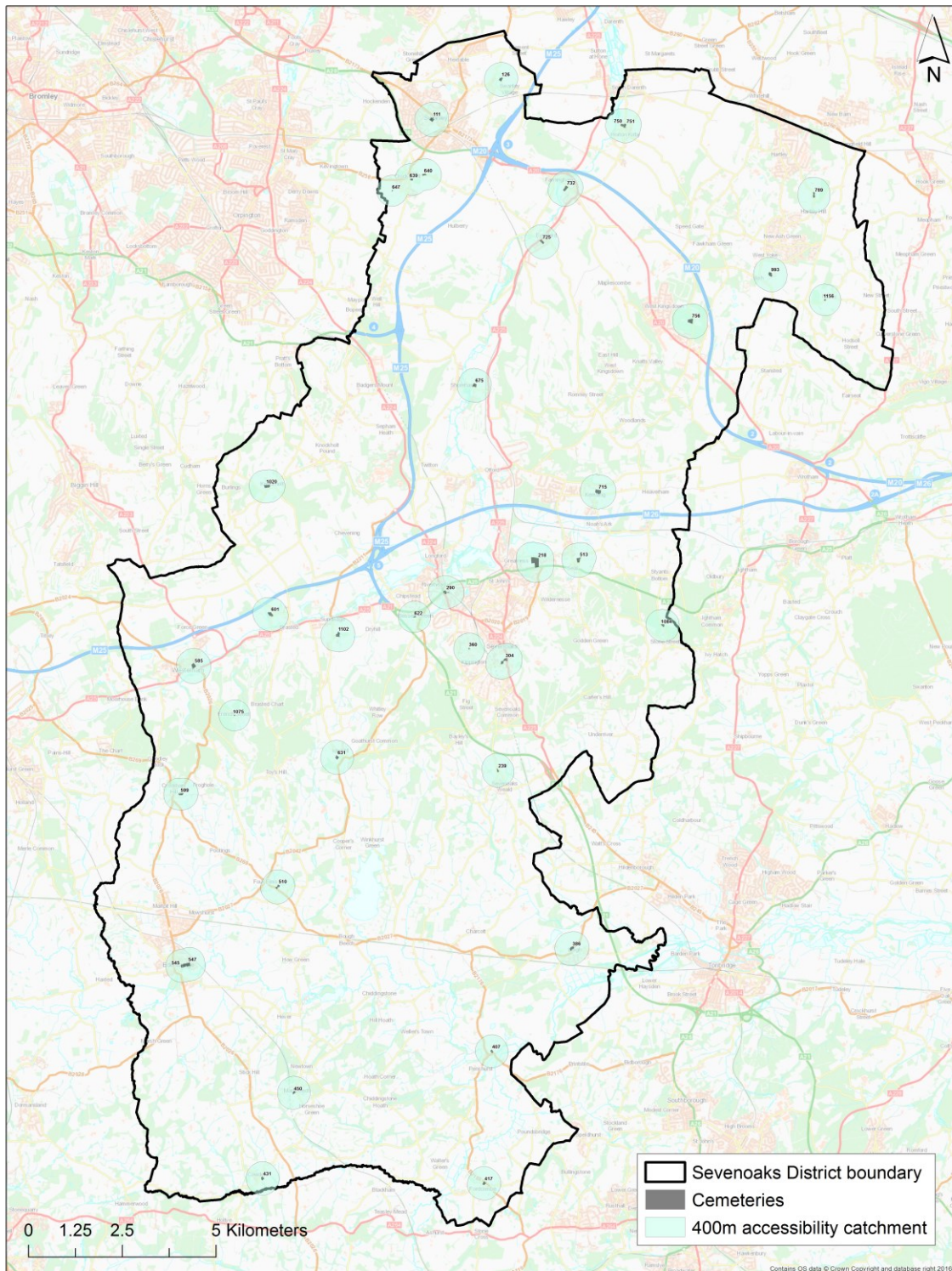


Allotments accessibility catchment

CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS

33. There are no defined guidelines in terms of quantitative standards for cemeteries and churchyards. Any standard would be hindered by the different types of cemetery and churchyard currently encountered, including:
- Churchyards which are still accepting burials
 - Cemeteries which are still open for burial
 - Churchyards which are redundant
 - Cemeteries which are full
 - Woodland burial.
34. Any standard would also need to differentiate between the primary purpose of a cemetery or churchyard (i.e. for burial), and its purpose for informal recreation.
35. There is also no Fields in Trust standard for accessibility in relation to Cemeteries and Churchyards for outdoor recreation. However, Greater London Authority guidelines for Cemeteries and Churchyards of local significance (all in Sevenoaks District are only of local significance in terms of size) indicate a standard of **400 m** (approximately a 5 minute walk)
36. A map indicating accessibility is shown as Figure 6.
37. There are no significant areas of deficit in the District, although there are some localised areas that do not have access to a churchyard or cemetery for informal recreation.

Figure 6: Accessibility of Cemeteries and Churchyards using GLA standards



Cemeteries accessibility catchment

1.2 KEY FINDINGS IN RELATION TO QUANTITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

38. The priorities and conclusions from the overall assessment process are:

- **Parishes are united in the conclusions about the importance of open space**
- **There is a need for provision of some small multi-purpose parks in urban and suburban locations**
- **Due to the variability in provision for children and young people, an upgrade is necessary in a number of communities. This should include the provision of safer surfaces in places, and the installation of challenging and exciting pieces of equipment. There is a significant shortage of supply, particularly of Neighbourhood Areas of Equipped Play**
- **There is a demonstrable need for teenage and youth facilities such as BMX/pump tracks**
- **Adventurous play provision such as iplay should be considered in urban settlements**
- **“Green” play provision would be desirable and suitable for all areas, but in particular in rural locations**
- **The rich heritage and history of the district should be interpreted in parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural greenspaces, amenity greenspaces, and cemeteries and churchyards across the district**

1.3 KEY PLANNING FINDINGS

39. Findings relating to the future direction of countryside and green space planning in the District are:

- **The countryside needs to be protected to offset shortfalls in the quality, quantity and accessibility of more formal open space provision throughout the District**
- **Measures need to be enhanced to improve biodiversity by using open space through the introduction of meadow, native tree planting and other conservation methods**
- **More green corridors should be considered, or existing natural and semi-natural greenspace upgraded in order to improve biodiversity, encourage sustainable travel, and connect isolated communities**

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- **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding could be used to meet shortfalls in quality. In particular improvements should be made to open spaces to make them more welcoming, and to interpret the diverse history and heritage of the district in order to increase residents' "sense of place"**
- **The Council should work with partners to develop projects to improve the quality, quantity and accessibility of open space which could be funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy.**
- **Shortfalls in the quality, quantity and accessibility of facilities for children and youth should be addressed by seeking on site requirements in new developments and CIL funding for innovative play (iplay, "green' Play, etc.), and for specific facilities such as "low ropes" adventures, BMX and pump tracks**

1.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

TACKLING KEY SERVICE ISSUES

40. The following recommendations are made in relation to future provision of open space in the District

- S1: Provision of a small number of multi-purpose Parks and Gardens.**
- S2: Creation of challenging and exciting play areas using concepts such as “iplay”**
- S3: More teenage and youth provision in areas of need (e.g. Teen shelters, skateparks, BMX/Pump Tracks)**
- S4: The use of “green play” in suitable rural locations**
- S5: Interpretation of the heritage and history of the area for residents and visitors in the District’s open spaces. This is true of both urban and rural settlements/ Improved and welcoming entrances. This is crucial across all types of open space**
- S6: Use of more “naturalesque” landscape methods in open spaces. This is particularly important in Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace. However, many areas around the edges of Outdoor Sports Facilities, and in larger expanses of Parks and Gardens and Amenity Greenspace can be utilised**
- S7: Improvements to “green corridors” need to be made and already accessible Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces improved with better access footpaths and cycle routes, improved signage, better landscaping and better seating**
- S8: More car parking facilities need to be provided for all open space types**
- S9: Improvements to the quality of allotment sites where required.**

PLANNING

41. Based on the overall findings of the assessment, the following recommendations are made in terms of future planning for open space in the District:

P1. Protection of the countryside

P2: Enhancement of biodiversity

P3: Plans to upgrade and create green corridors should be considered in order to improve biodiversity, encourage sustainable travel, and connect isolated communities

P4: Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding could be used to meet shortfalls in quality. In particular improvements should be made to open spaces to make them more welcoming, and to interpret the diverse history and heritage of the district in order to increase residents' "sense of place"

P5: The Council should work with partners to develop projects to improve the quality, quantity and accessibility of open space which could be funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy or provided onsite as part of a wider development scheme. In addition, local communities should be encouraged to include appropriate open spaces using the local green space designation in neighbourhood and local plans in order to protect valuable existing open space

P6: Shortfalls in the quality, quantity and accessibility of facilities for children and youth should be addressed by seeking on site requirements in new developments and CIL funding for innovative play (iplay, "green' Play, etc.), and for specific facilities such as "low ropes" adventures, BMX and pump tracks

P7: Measures should be adopted to acquire land where possible for additional burial space

P8: The quality and accessibility of allotment plots is in need of improvement.

1.5 PROPOSED ACTION PLAN

42. The actions outlined in previous sections are included in the Proposed Action Plan. This is divided into the following:

- **Short-term actions – within the next three years**
- **Medium-term actions – three to five years**
- **Long-term actions – up to ten years.**

43. Each action is numbered in accordance with the system used to identify actions in the previous sections, i.e.:

- **“P” numbers (P1; P2; P3, etc.) indicate actions relating to planning issues**
- **“S” numbers (S1; S2; S3, etc.) indicate actions relating to service issues**
- **There is a section where actions are detailed**
- **Resources are indicated either in terms of sources of finance for implementation, or as officer time required for preparation and implementation**
- **The “Progress to Date” and “Review Date” sections are included for the client in order to allow for self-monitoring of progress.**

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INITIAL FINDINGS

Action Plan

SHORT TERM ACTIONS

No.	ACTIONS	SECTION REF	POTENTIAL RESOURCES	PROGRESS TO DATE	REVIEW DATE
P2	Draft Toolkit for enhancement of biodiversity with colleagues in green space management	12.8	Officer time both within SDC EU projects (e.g. Green and Blue Space Adaptation for Urban Areas and Eco Towns (GRaBS))		
P3	Support proposals for new green corridors through Local Plan policy either through future planning proposals or on sites allocated in the Local Plan.	12.14	SDC Officer time		
P4	Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding could be used to meet shortfalls in quality. In particular improvements should be made to open spaces to make them more welcoming, and to interpret the diverse history and heritage of the district in order to increase residents' "sense of place"	12.31	SDC Officer time		
P5	The national standards set out in this assessment to be used to protect existing open spaces which meet the needs of residents and the local standards identified to be used to calculate provision of new facilities and spaces. This policy approach relating to quantity, quality and accessibility standards to be set out in adopted Local Plan policy.	12.37	SDC Officer time		
P5	Assist local parishes in the production of Neighbourhood Plans and grant LGS designations where appropriate. Any new LGS designations or new areas of open space to be incorporated in future reviews of the Open	12.38	SDC Officer and Town/Parish Councils time		-

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INITIAL FINDINGS

SHORT TERM ACTIONS					
NO.	ACTIONS	SECTION REF	POTENTIAL RESOURCES	PROGRESS TO DATE	REVIEW DATE
	Space Assessment.				
S8	Investigate how the allotment provision within the District could be improved	11.28	SDC Officer and Town/Parish Councils time		

MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS					
NO.	ACTIONS	SECTION REF	POTENTIAL RESOURCES	PROGRESS TO DATE	REVIEW DATE
P8	Consider conducting an appraisal of current and future demand for allotment plots throughout the District.	12.44	SDC Officer time/Town and Parish Councils/ Consultants Capital Funding		
S2	Consider building an "iplay" playground, or introduce to an existing playground, and analyse usage.	11.4	Capital funding/ Sponsorship/		
S3/P6	Consider constructing new pumptrack	12.31; 11.10	Capital funding/CIL funding		
S4	Renovate existing playgrounds, or build new "green play" area and assess	11.13	Capital funding/ Grant funding/ CIL funding		
S5	Develop programme for introduction or replacement of information signage, including QR codes, in open spaces	11.16	Capital funding		
P2 S6	Selectively introduce areas of natural landscape to open spaces	12.8: 11.22	Revenue funding		

LONG TERM ACTIONS					
NO.	ACTIONS	SECTION REF	POTENTIAL RESOURCES	PROGRESS TO DATE	REVIEW DATE

OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND LEISURE STUDY 2016-2035

INITIAL FINDINGS

LONG TERM ACTIONS					
NO.	ACTIONS	SECTION REF	POTENTIAL RESOURCES	PROGRESS TO DATE	REVIEW DATE
P1	Have regard to existing Landscape Character Assessments for all countryside areas when appropriate.	12.22	SDC Officer time		
P4/5/6	Meet quantitative shortfall of open spaces across the District	12.31; 12.37; 12.41	CIL funding, onsite provision,		
P6	Consider conducting a strategic options appraisal of the provision of burial space throughout the District and adopt measures to increase the general availability (see also P4 above) of burial space in accordance with strategic appraisal	12.41	SDC Officer time/Town and Parish Council Councils/Consultants Capital funding		

SECTION 2: PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

2.1 OVERVIEW

44. **The Playing Pitch Strategy is not yet complete and the findings are still subject to agreement by the National Governing Bodies and Sport England. This section sets out the initial findings which have not yet been agreed.**
45. The majority of football pitches in the District are of standard quality.
46. All cricket pitches are rated as good or standard, except one which is rated as poor.
47. All rugby pitches are rated as poor, except 5 which are adequate.
48. Of the seven hockey pitches, two are rated as poor, four as standard, and one as good.
49. Based on the analysis to date, Sevenoaks District has sufficient cricket, rugby and hockey pitches to meet both current and future demand. There is an under supply of youth football pitches, but currently this is addressed by using adult pitches. There will be a future need for more youth 11v 11 and 9 v 9.

2.2 KEY FINDINGS

FOOTBALL

Key Findings for Football

FOOTBALL SUMMARY

- There is a deficit of dedicated Youth 11 v 11 pitches
- This deficit is mitigated by a surplus in Adult 11 v 11 pitches (there is a surplus of 47.5 match equivalents for 11 v 11 pitches)
- Youth 9 v 9 pitches will almost be at capacity by 2035 if current Team Generation Rates are maintained.
- There is a significant surplus of Mini 7 v 7 pitches (secured access).
- Future demand equates to an additional 36 teams across the District. 58% of this growth will come in the Youth age groups and are likely to place additional demand on Youth 11 v 11 and Youth 9 v 9 pitch types (as well as Adult 11 v 11).

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INITIAL FINDINGS

CRICKET

Key Findings for Cricket

CRICKET SUMMARY

- When all demand is applied to grass wickets, Sevenoaks District has a surplus of grass wickets.
- There is enough spare capacity in the District to take another 34 adult teams if all grass wickets were to be used 5 times in a season.
- There are insufficient NTPs in the District to displace any junior or mid-week cricket.
- By 2035, there will be an additional 3 adult teams and 8 junior teams. The Team Generation Rate (TGR) is based on 2014 Sub National Population Projections (SNPP 2014).
- The demand created by these teams will be in line with ECB guidance, 10 matches per adult team and 8 per junior team. This means the TGR calculation is projecting that there will be a future 70 matches played in Sevenoaks in 2035, compared with 2016

RUGBY

Key findings for Rugby

RUGBY SUMMARY

- All rugby pitches in the District have secured community use, however, only 4 sites are actually used by the community for rugby
- Sevenoaks District has an over-supply of senior rugby pitches, ie 12.5 adult match equivalents.
- However, taking into account the demand for junior rugby, which cannot be accommodated on existing rugby pitches, this over-supply reduces to +4 match equivalents
- Future demand equates to 4 additional teams playing and training every week
- Therefore, there is a balance between supply of, and demand for, rugby pitches, and all existing pitches should be retained

OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND LEISURE STUDY 2016-2035

INITIAL FINDINGS

HOCKEY

Key findings for Hockey

HOCKEY SUMMARY

- Although there is currently some spare capacity at key hockey sites, Sevenoaks Hockey Club and Sennocke are either at capacity or have no capacity at peak times. Sevenoaks HC identify that they are at capacity during the week and are having to limit their intake of new members as no more teams can be created to accommodate them. The spare capacity on their site is at mid-week or on Sundays; these are not necessarily 'peak hours' as they are either too late or early in the evening to be considered convenient or appealing by current or future players
- There will be an estimated 6 additional teams in the District with the growth relatively evenly split between the genders. The largest growth will be in junior teams with 4 of the 6 additional teams expected to be in this category. Despite this growth, demand for adult male teams will continue to represent the largest group for hockey demand (32%).

Sevenoaks and Surrounds has the largest supply and demand for hockey

- The highest demand for hockey in the District is in Sevenoaks town, which also has the largest number of facilities
- Sevenoaks Hockey Club has identified the need for sites available at sociable hours and local to the club; it considers its home pitch to be at capacity
- The only other floodlit training facilities available are at Trinity School which the club has rated as poor to use for hockey and has been as scored poor in our site assessments, therefore, although the hours are available for use, this is far from a favourable situation
- The club's preferred alternative training pitches, at the Sennocke Centre, score significantly better than Trinity School but do not have floodlights so cannot be used for midweek training or for very many hours during the winter period.

Edenbridge and the South

- There is significant available capacity for hockey at the Edenbridge Leisure Centre, compared to existing demand.
- The majority of the available pitch capacity is taken up by informal football so the facility is occupied at other times.
- There is significant capacity for the hockey club to expand; as this is the only hockey appropriate pitch outside of the Sevenoaks and Surrounds area, it is important to retain this as a facility capable of hosting competitive hockey.
- The existing all weather pitch in Edenbridge is currently of poor quality and in need of improvement.

SECTION 3: INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES REPORT

3.1 VISION

50. The Vision for future provision of sport and leisure facilities in Sevenoaks District is:

'To ensure provision of high quality, well-located, and accessible sport and leisure facilities, to facilitate increased participation in sport and physical activity across the District.'

51. As a minimum, SDC wishes to facilitate provision of accessible community sport and leisure facilities, for swimming, fitness and sports hall sports/activities available for all residents. This includes both formal and informal spaces e.g. village/community halls in which to play sport and be physically active.

3.2 AIMS

52. The aim of providing sufficient high quality, fit for purpose and accessible provision, places and spaces is to:

- **Increase the regular amount of physical activity undertaken by individuals, and particularly by those who are currently inactive**
- **Encourage new participants to start taking part in physical activity and underpin the partnership with Public Health**
- **Facilitate opportunities for participation to be provided in a wide range of places and spaces, and particularly at a very local level, using e.g. village/community halls**
- **Facilitate the development of healthier lifestyles across Sevenoaks District's communities**
- **Create active environments where the opportunity to be more physically active is an integral part of everyday life**
- **Support and provide opportunities for local sports clubs and community groups**

53. The provision of high quality and accessible facilities, and the opening up of existing education facilities, as well as the development of new provision, will contribute to the overall priority for the development of healthier lifestyles in Sevenoaks District, across all age groups. Facilitating opportunities to be more physically active, more often is also important, to help people to live and age better.

54. Sustainability of high quality, and critically, accessible facility provision is key to maintaining these opportunities; SDC needs to plan now for the investment requirements of its existing facilities, and work in partnership with other providers and stakeholders to address the other priorities identified through this Strategy.

3.3 BACKGROUND

55. Overall, Sevenoaks District has a good range and level (compared to national averages), of existing sport and leisure facilities across the area. Sports facilities are delivered and operated by a variety of organisations. Including schools and colleges, and clubs. Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) is the largest provider of sports facilities including the indoor facilities of:

- **Edenbridge Leisure Centre**
- **Sevenoaks Leisure Centre**
- **White Oak Leisure Centre**

56. However, some facilities are now ageing, and will require replacement. This is particularly true of facilities at White Oak Leisure Centre, and in the longer term, Edenbridge Leisure Centre, and Wildernesse Sports Centre.

57. A large proportion of the District's sports facilities are located within education environments. Sevenoaks District schools and colleges have varying levels of sports facilities with some having excellent provision and some having poorer facilities. The majority of schools allow for community use of their facilities; three provide only for sports club use.

58. Some existing facilities on education sites do not benefit community participation as much as they have the potential to do. This is because community use is available for clubs and organisations/groups, not for individuals on a pay and play basis. The majority of SDC sports halls and pools which do offer pay and play community use have significant capacity which could be used to increase and develop participation. Edenbridge is the most used sports hall and White Oak the most used pool.

59. Sevenoaks District's population will grow significantly over the next few years, so there is a need to ensure sufficient provision of accessible, quality and affordable facilities – formal and informal, to meet local need.

60. It is particularly important that there is increased access to opportunities for physical activity at local level, so it is easy for residents, particularly those who are currently inactive, and those without access to private transport, to participate, and become physically active. Linking facility provision, informal and formal, to opportunities for active travel, and informal places is a key opportunity to encourage and facilitate increased walking, jogging and cycling.

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61. This is very important given the need to retain and further increase existing levels of physical activity in the District, the high level of childhood obesity, plus the health inequalities between the more and less deprived areas of the District.
62. It is also important that SDC continues to work with partners moving forward, given funding restraints, to develop and deliver facility provision. SDC can no longer be the provider and funder of last resort, but needs to adopt more of an enabling and facilitating role.
63. Based on the local context, the supply and demand analysis, and the identified key issues, there is clearly a need to consider how best to achieve secured pay and play community access to existing education facilities, and critically ensure there is sufficient provision to cater for current and future needs for swimming (community accessible pay and play). There is also a need to begin to plan now for the replacement of/investment in, some existing sports and leisure facilities in Sevenoaks District, due to their age.

3.4 NEEDS ANALYSIS

64. The indoor sports provision of the District has been assessed to determine current and future needs within the District.

SPORTS HALLS (BOTH SPORTS AND ACTIVITY)

65. Indoor, multi –sports halls are defined as areas where a range of sport and recreational activities are carried out. They are at least 10mx18m and include leisure centres and school sports halls. The formal sports halls within the District are operated through the education sector, by Sevenoaks District Council's operator Sencio Community Leisure, by sports clubs/associations, or commercial operators. The District also has a number of informal activity halls which often take the form of village halls, school halls or community centres. Specialist centres e.g. dance centres are not included.
66. In the District there are:
- **A total of 25 sports halls and activity halls across 23 sites**
 - **A total of 14 activity halls**
 - **12 main halls in total (all strategic size i.e. 3 courts+)**
 - **9 community accessible pay and play sports halls (all strategic size i.e. 3 courts+)**
 - **3 community accessible sites i.e. available for sports club use**

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INITIAL FINDINGS

67. The **quality** of the majority of sports halls is good. However there are a number of halls which are aging and in poor condition these include the facilities at White Oak Leisure Centre built in 1967 and Wildernesse Sports Centre built in 1974.
68. The **accessibility** of existing halls is generally good, with most of the District's residents within 20min drivetime of a strategic (3 courts+) pay and play facility. Areas to the north west, north east and far south east are a little further out but are generally served by smaller facilities or facilities outside of the District. It was found that a large number of education facilities offer community use without having formal Community Use Agreements (CUAs) in place. This could mean that the community use at these facilities could be withdrawn at any time if the school/college decides it no longer wishes to provide any form of community access.
69. In 2016 the **used capacity** of the strategic sports halls averages at 45.9% across the District with Edenbridge Leisure Centre with a usage capacity of 98%, White Oak Leisure Centre at 47% and Sevenoaks Leisure Centre at 66%. It was found that the sports halls at educational facilities all have a usage capacity of less than 50%. These relatively low usage figures could be a result of the age and condition of existing facilities but even newer high quality facilities such as the Sennocke Centre only has a usage capacity of 31%.
70. The Sport England Facilities Planning Model analysis identifies 13 halls across 11 sites within Sevenoaks District where there is community use (pay and play and sports club) e.g. sports halls with private use are excluded from the supply. The model identified a **supply** of 43.27 peak period community accessible courts in sports halls in 2016.
71. Based on the 2016 District population the Model generates a **current demand** for 32.30 courts within the District therefore resulting in an **over-supply of 10.97 courts across the District**. However, much of this provision is on educational facilities and there is only one CUA in place.
72. The Sport England Facility Calculator generates a **future demand** up to 2035 of an additional 1.21 sports halls, equivalent to 5 courts. Therefore given the current 10.97 court over-supply the **future demand can be accommodated within existing facilities giving a net over-supply of 5.97 courts**.
73. An extensive consultation process was carried out with educational facilities, leisure facilities, Town and Parish councils and the National Governing Bodies for indoor sports. The analysis of the consultation responses received during the study identified a current over-supply of approximately 9.7 courts with a future oversupply of 4.7 courts. The responses also indicated that there was a desire for higher quality facilities to better meet the needs of the District's residents.
74. Overall, the findings indicate the potential to reduce the level of sports hall provision in the District. This could facilitate closure of ageing facilities in poor condition such as Wildernesse, particularly given there is a new sports hall on the same site at Trinity School. In considering rationalisation of any sports hall facilities, it will also be important to consider that the only SDC sports hall which is larger than 4 court is that at White Oak Leisure Centre. The only other larger sports hall in the District is the 8-court hall at the Sennocke Centre, based at an Independent School, with no formal CUA.

SWIMMING POOLS

75. The supply analysis identifies that Sevenoaks has an overall total of 18 swimming pools across 13 sites. 11 of the existing 18 swimming pools provide pay and play community access. The **quality** of swimming pools varies across the District, but is generally of good quality. The oldest pool available for pay and play community use is White Oak Leisure Centre, built in 1967 and refurbished in 2006. There is a need to consider future provision of this facility, given its age and condition.
76. The majority of residents within the District have **access** to a community pay and play swimming pool. The north east, north west and far south east parts of the District are not within 20mins drivetime of a facility within the District. However many of the residents within these areas are served by facilities in neighboring authorities.
77. In 2016 the **used capacity** of the strategic size swimming pools averages at 44.6% across the District. White Oak Leisure Centre pool has the highest level of use at 61% with Sevenoaks Leisure Centre at 38% and Edenbridge Leisure Centre at 42%. This analysis suggests that all pools could potentially have capacity for further usage during the weekly peak period.
78. The Sport England Facilities Planning Model identifies 13 pools across 8 sites within the District which are of strategic size and available for community pay and play access. The total **supply** of water space, taking into account peak periods and opening times, equates to 1,914.26m². This reflects the supply of water space available in each pool.
79. The Model analysis indicates that the 2016 population of Sevenoaks District generates a **demand** for 1,264.53m² of water space. This equates to a **current over-supply of 649.73m² across the District**. It should be noted that the District's supply includes water space which is only available for sports clubs/community associations equivalent to 762.16m².
80. The Sport England Facility Calculator estimates a **future demand for an additional 190.18m² up to 2035**.
81. Given the existing over-supply of 649.73m² within the District this gives a **future net oversupply of 459.55m² up to 2035**. However, much of this oversupply is accounted for in facilities only available to clubs or community associations. Therefore the extension of the availability of these facilities to wider community use would help meet the needs of all the District's residents. Consideration should also be given to the improvement of other existing facilities to improve pay and play capacity and usage.
82. Consultation was undertaken with education facilities, local aquatic sports clubs, town and parish councils and National Governing Bodies. The consultation analysis indicates that there is a demand for swimming pool space within the district despite the low usage figures. Club membership continues to increase in all types of aquatic sports.

HEALTH AND FITNESS FACILITIES - SUITES

83. The supply analysis identifies that overall there are 24 health and fitness facilities (15 sites) (13 fitness suites and 11 studios) in Sevenoaks District with a total of 354 stations. All facilities require some form of payment/membership payment before use. However, some operate on a community accessible pay and play basis, as opposed to a more commercial outlook. The average number of stations per commercial fitness suite is 24.8, significantly lower than the majority of commercial fitness chains, which would usually have an average of around 75+ stations. This is because there are no large chains operating in Sevenoaks District.
84. The **quality** of the community accessible pay and play health and fitness facilities is generally very good with significant recent investment in several facilities. The majority of facilities are on a par with the private sector. Most education-based fitness facilities are also very good quality.
85. The majority of the District's residents have **access** within 20minutes drive time of Health and fitness facilities within the District. The remaining areas have access to facilities outside of the District in neighbouring authorities.
86. There are **currently 204 pay and play community accessible fitness stations in the District.**
87. A demand forecasting model has been produced using fitness industry association parameters and information from the annual fitness industry reports. The model estimates that the District has a **current demand for 361 fitness stations.** This gives the District **a current undersupply of 157 fitness stations.** This undersupply does not take account of private health and fitness facilities that are not available for community pay and play use, however such provision is reasonably small across the District therefore it is likely that there is still unmet demand for fitness stations.
88. The model indicates that future demand up to 2035 is calculated to be 423 fitness stations, giving **a future undersupply of 219 fitness stations.**
89. The Council has an unmet demand for fitness suites and stations across the District, the Council will need to consider options for helping to meet this demand including through redevelopment of existing facilities but also through new facilities or through the provision of small scale fitness provision (5-6 stations) in community centres and facilities. The District also has a lack of commercial facilities particularly on a large scale, consideration could be given to identifying where such facilities could be located.

HEALTH AND FITNESS FACILITIES - STUDIOS

90. The **supply** analysis identifies that overall there are 11 fitness studios in Sevenoaks District. The majority are provided as part of a health and fitness offer within facilities. Studios provide a space in which a range of aerobic, fitness and dance classes, plus activities such as yoga and Pilates, can take place as well as martial arts, and boxing. Although requiring some specialist equipment for martial arts and boxing, it is also possible to do a form of these activities in an informal space such as a community hall. Informal halls can also accommodate a range of fitness and dance classes, often run by dance schools.
91. The **quality** of studios is generally very good with significant recent investment in a number of facilities. Existing studio facilities at White Oak Leisure Centre would benefit from investment.
92. The majority of the District's residents have **access** within 20minutes drive time of fitness studios within the District. The remaining areas have access to facilities outside of the District in neighbouring authorities.
93. There are **currently 8 pay and play community accessible fitness studios in the District.**
94. There is no specific methodology for assessing supply and demand for studio provision. **However, given there is some unmet demand for fitness stations, there is also likely to be unmet demand for studios and the range of activities which these can accommodate.**
95. There is an opportunity to increase access to halls which currently provide for use by sports clubs/associations since they are open, just not for pay and play community use. The consultation responses provided by Town and Parish Councils indicate that many community hall facilities are already used as informal fitness studios and increasing access to, and using more capacity in community halls, could also help to address any unmet demand for studio space for a range of activities, including dance, fitness and aerobic classes, martial arts etc. New provision as part of a wider community use could also address demand across the District.

SQUASH

96. There are 17 squash courts (8 facilities) in Sevenoaks District.
97. The **quality** of existing squash courts is generally of a reasonable to good standard. However, all courts are now ageing and consideration should be given to refurbishment of existing facilities .
98. Most of the existing squash courts are in and around the main areas of population in the District and in the Hartley area, co-located with golf. There are no courts in the north west or south east of the District. However, there are some courts in neighbouring local authorities adjoining these areas.
99. There are **8 pay and play community accessible squash courts within 4 facilities within the District.**
100. There is no specific methodology for assessing the current and future need for squash courts. Overall participation in squash is increasing at national level, based on Active People survey data. England Squash and Racketball identify that participation is growing in the District, but based on current levels of provision, **there is sufficient provision to meet demand.** Feedback from England Squash and Racketball identifies that it is not possible to host England Squash and Racketball competitions in the District because four courts are needed in one venue. The NGB supports retention of all existing courts as a minimum.
101. **No demand has been identified for additional squash courts by local clubs up to 2035.**
102. Given the location of some existing squash courts in community accessible facilities and the fact they are the type of facility which tends to be most used in the evenings and weekends, there is potential to partner with clubs and operators to use these spaces for other day time activities (as long as the court surfaces are protected). This could generate additional income for squash court providers, and create new opportunities for physical activity e.g. racketball, circuit classes, high intensity training, yoga/mat Pilates etc.

INDOOR BOWLS

103. There are two indoor bowling facilities in the District; Sevenoaks Indoor Bowls club and White Oak Indoor Bowls Club in Swanley. Both facilities are operated by clubs, but do provide for some pay and play access.
104. Both facilities are of very good **quality** and provide a valuable resource for local people, many of whom are elderly, to meet, socialise and participate in bowling, which keeps them active.
105. The indoor bowls rinks are available for pay and play bookings as well as league and club use.
106. Consultation was undertaken with Town and Parish Councils, Local Sports Clubs and the National Governing Body. Analysis of the responses suggests that **there is currently sufficient indoor bowls provision to meet demand.**
107. Sevenoaks District has an ageing population. By 2035 the number of people aged 65+ in the District will have increased more than the growth in younger people. Although bowls is not just played by older people, they do make up a significant element of the participation base. Bowls is a great physical activity and sport, and an opportunity for social inter-action. It is therefore an important activity to maintain, and indeed develop, in the District, both for its health benefits, but for those living in the rural areas, particularly on their own. It can also help to address social isolation.

INDOOR TENNIS

108. There is one indoor tennis facility in the District, with three courts, at the Sennocke Centre, Sevenoaks.
109. The **quality** of the indoor tennis facilities are good. The Sennocke Centre courts were built in 1984 and refurbished in 2005.
110. The indoor tennis facility is available for pay and play bookings as well as lessons, coaching, league and club use. There are also two indoor tennis facilities at Orpington in Bromley and Kings Hill in Tonbridge which are accessible to Sevenoaks residents.
111. There is no specific methodology for assessing current or future demand for indoor tennis facilities. The Lawn Tennis Association has not identified the need for any additional courts given the existing level of provision in the District. Their focus is more about increasing participation, and in facilitating increased use of outdoor courts in inclement weather, by covering them, to increase year-round opportunities for participation on existing facilities.
112. **No clubs have identified the need for additional indoor tennis facilities in the District.**

GYMNASTICS AND TRAMPOLINING

113. Gymnastics is a very active sport in the District, with several clubs, some of which also incorporate trampolining. 7oaks Acorns Trampoline club is based from both Sevenoaks Leisure Centre and Tunbridge Wells Leisure Centre. Lightning Gymnastics Club, formed in 2012, is based from Walthamstow Hall School. Sevenoaks Gymnastics Club is based at Radnor House (formerly Combe Bank School). White Oak Gymnastics club is based out of White Oak Leisure Centre.
114. There are **no purpose-built gymnastics or trampolining facilities in the District**; clubs use a number of different halls and venues. The sports halls vary in **quality** across the District.
115. Given there are no existing purpose-built gymnastics and trampolining facilities in the District, clubs have to hire halls around the area, impacting on their ability to grow and take on new members.
116. There is clearly a high level of demand for participation in gymnastics in the District, and a keen interest to get involved (all gymnastic/trampolining clubs report extensive waiting lists). There a demand for more facilities, as indicated by the fact that six clubs are considering development of purpose-built facilities.
117. Demand is identified by the NGB for existing clubs who need more space or their own dedicated facilities due to growth in participation. The NGB highlights that clubs need support to develop their own purpose-built/dedicated facilities to grow and deliver existing programmes.
118. There appears to be need for dedicated trampolining facilities or, as a minimum, space where trampolines can be left in situ or easily stored. This could be addressed through improvements to existing provision,

3.5 PRINCIPLES FOR FUTURE PROVISION

119. Analysis of existing provision also identifies the principles that should underpin all future sport and leisure facility development in Sevenoaks District. These are to:

- **Ensure residents in all areas of Sevenoaks District have pay and play access to good quality, local, accessible and affordable provision, whether it is a formal sports facility or a village/community hall,**
- **Aim to ensure that existing, and any new, sports facilities on education sites provide a balance of opportunities (through a formal agreement) for community access – both pay and play and club use**
- **Replace / refurbish ageing facilities where new provision is needed; all new and refurbished provision should be designed and developed based on Sport England and NGB guidance, and be fully inclusive**
- **Rationalise existing provision where new fit for purpose facilities can replace/improve existing buildings**
- **Make better use of all existing facilities, irrespective of provider; an example would be extending access at evenings and weekends to education sites which are currently unavailable e.g. Orchards Academy, Walthamstow Hall School, St Michael's School,**
- **Invest in existing provision to improve quality i.e. White Oak Leisure Centre, Edenbridge Leisure Centre, potentially Wildernesse Sports Centre**
- **Invest strategically to ensure economic viability and sustainability of provision**
- **Where possible, provide facilities (formal and informal) closer to where people live; improving access still further to multi-purpose halls (not strategic size) across the District could facilitate increased opportunities for participation at local level**

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3.6 SUMMARY OF NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS UP TO 2035

FACILITY TYPE	CURRENT NEED	NEED BY 2035	RECOMMENDATIONS
SPORTS HALLS	Small percentage of community use agreements at educating sites.	Small percentage of community use agreements at educating sites.	<p><u>Recommendation 1:</u> Sevenoaks District Council work with relevant education partners to develop and implement CUAs which provide a better balance of pay and play and club use, to secure community access (pay and play, and club) to sports hall and swimming pool facilities at existing education sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDC works with relevant partners to extend opportunities at existing sports halls with capacity for increased community use e.g. Orchards Academy, St Michael's School, Walthamstow Hall School <p>SDC works with local schools, and Sport England to review, revise and re-implement formal community use agreements in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools where they are currently in place, to increase opportunities for pay and play community access • Any new schools as part of Planning Conditions
	Improve quality of existing provision across the District	Improve quality of existing provision across the District	<p><u>Recommendation 2:</u> SDC works with Sencio, education sites and health and well-being partners to better use the available capacity in existing sports halls</p>
SWIMMING POOLS	Improve the quality of existing provision across the District	Improve the quality of existing provision across the District	<p><u>Recommendation 3:</u> SDC working with Sencio Community Leisure, parish councils and health and well-being partners to better use the available capacity in all existing swimming pools</p>
	Secure formal community access agreements to ensure supply	Secure formal community access agreements to ensure supply	<p><u>Recommendation 1:</u> Sevenoaks District Council work with relevant education partners to develop and implement CUAs which provide a better balance of pay and play and club</p>

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FACILITY TYPE	CURRENT NEED	NEED BY 2035	RECOMMENDATIONS
			<p>use, to secure community access (pay and play, and club) to sports hall and swimming pool facilities at existing education sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDC works with relevant partners to extend opportunities at existing sports halls with capacity for increased community use e.g. Orchards Academy, St Michael's School, Walthamstow Hall School <p>SDC works with local schools, and Sport England to review, revise and re-implement formal community use agreements in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools where they are currently in place, to increase opportunities for pay and play community access • Any new schools as part of Planning Conditions
FITNESS STATIONS	Undersupply of 157 Fitness stations	Additional 62 fitness stations needed giving an overall total undersupply of 219.	<p><u>Recommendation 4:</u> SDC and its partners identify opportunities to address the current and future under – supply of fitness stations in the District.</p>
SQUASH	Retention of provision to meet demand.	Retention of provision to meet demand.	<p><u>Recommendation 5:</u> Facilitate retention of existing level of squash courts given growing participation in the District</p>
INDOOR BOWLS	Retention of provision to meet demand.	Retention of provision to meet demand.	<p><u>Recommendation 6:</u> Work with indoor bowling clubs to increase participation levels at existing indoor bowling facilities.</p>
GYMNASTICS FACILITIES	Potential to develop additional dedicated gymnastics facilities (club led developments, in partnership with British Gymnastics)	Potential to develop dedicated gymnastics facilities.	<p><u>Recommendation 7:</u> Work with gymnastics clubs and the NGB over future provision of club-led developments for dedicated gymnastics and trampolining facilities.</p>

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FACILITY TYPE	CURRENT NEED	NEED BY 2035	RECOMMENDATIONS
INFORMAL FACILITIES	<p>Increased provision of safe, locally accessible walking, cycling and jogging routes/paths.</p> <p>Opening up other informal, multi-purpose places and spaces where people can be active.</p>	<p>Increased provision of safe, locally accessible walking, cycling and jogging routes/paths, and especially in new housing developments.</p>	<p><u>Recommendation 8:</u> SDC and its partners, including Town and Parish Councils, to identify projects which could benefit from CIL funding to develop additional and safe walking and cycling routes and where possible to open up other informal, multipurpose places and spaces where people can be active.</p>
ALL FACILITY TYPES	<p>Ageing facilities at White Oak Leisure Centre</p>	<p>Ageing facilities at White Oak Leisure Centre</p>	<p><u>Recommendation 9:</u> Future re-development of White Oak Leisure Centre</p>
	<p>Improve access to and quality of all facilities across the District.</p>	<p>Improve access to and quality of all facilities across the District.</p>	<p><u>Recommendation 10:</u> SDC and its partners to investigate investment in the development of high quality community sports facilities, in partnership with Public Health and other local partners.</p> <p>Increasing secured capacity on education sites, as well as better utilising all available capacity and therefore opportunities to take part in regular physical activity, in the local community, will contribute to reduced health inequalities, increased participation, better community cohesion at local level, and particularly in the more disadvantaged areas of the District.</p> <p><u>Recommendation 11:</u> There should be on-going monitoring of this Strategy through its implementation, but as a minimum, progress should be reviewed and refreshed every five years. On-going monitoring should include partnership working with neighbouring local authorities to keep aware of facility changes and developments.</p>

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