

Outdoor sports facilities

Definition

- 10.1 Outdoor sports facilities is a wide-ranging category of open space and includes natural and artificial surfaces either publicly and privately owned, which are used for sport and recreation. Examples include playing pitches, athletics tracks, bowling greens, water sport sites and tennis courts. The primary purpose is participation in outdoor sports.

Picture 10.1 Sedlescombe Sports Field (Site ID 330)



Strategic context and consultation

- 10.2 Many of the policies in the Local Plan affect outdoor sports provision, either directly or indirectly. Policies regarding the green belt allow pitch sports to be accommodated but they may prevent the construction of ancillary facilities which are necessary to complement pitches or other outdoor sports facilities.
- 10.3 The Local Plan seeks to both protect and enhance existing facilities where appropriate and uses NPFA standards as a guide to provision levels.
- 10.4 The consultation results from the sports club survey are covered in detail in section four. It is important to note the general themes of:
- quantity levels showed highest dissatisfaction for tennis courts and synthetic turf pitches whilst 13% believed there to be too many golf courses
 - despite the sizable minority who believe there to be too many golf courses, there is also demand for publicly accessible golf facilities
 - due to their position on flood plains, there were a large number of comments regarding the quality of playing pitches.

- 10.5 20% of respondents to the household survey used outdoor sports facilities more than once a month whilst 21% used them less than once a month. The remainder indicated they did not use such facilities at all.
- 10.6 It is important to note that an open space, sport and recreation study will not resolve all the issues highlighted through the consultation. It is recommended the Council should prepare a playing pitch strategy to understand the details of the playing pitch situation in the District.

OSF 1

The Council to consider undertaking a playing pitch strategy and sports facility strategy in partnership with external partners.

Setting provision standards

- 10.7 In setting local standards for outdoor facilities there is a need to take into account any national or local standards, current provision, other local authority standards for comparison, site assessments and consultation on local needs. Full justifications for the local standards are provided within Appendices G, H and I.
- 10.8 A quantity standard for this typology is set for **broad planning need only**. It covers too broad a range of facilities to accurately determine shortfalls or surpluses of facilities.

Quantity standard

- 10.9 Without a specific playing pitch strategy, it is impossible to quantify the comments made about the lack of sport specific pitches in the area and how closely these relate to the quality of pitches. There is currently a large variance between the quantity of facilities in the rural areas compared to the urban areas. This can be partially explained by the number of golf courses in the rural areas. Table 10.1 provides a breakdown of the number of sites per analysis area. An average site size is not given due to the wide variance of sizes between different sports facilities.

Table 10.1 Analysis area breakdown (excluding golf courses and water sites)

Analysis area	Number of sites	Total hectares	Hectares per 1,000 population
Bexhill	28	61.39	1.52
Battle	12	12.37	2.59
Rye	9	11.91	2.97
East Rother	47	85.51	4.84
West Rother	46	63.76	4.53

- 10.10 As per most other typologies, two different standards have been set. The first covers the urban analysis areas; Bexhill, Battle and Rye. The second standard covers the two rural areas.

- 10.11 Consultation from the household survey showed that 39% of residents believed current provision levels to be “about right” whilst 29% indicated they were “not enough” and a further 16% stated “nearly enough”. On this basis the quantity standard for each area has been set at the current level of provision. Where the standard is set for more than one area the higher of the provision levels have been chosen in order to achieve parity. Therefore the local standard for the urban areas is set at 2.97ha per 1,000 population, and at 4.84ha per 1,000 population for the rural analysis areas.

RECOMMENDED LOCAL QUANTITY STANDARD

**Urban – 2.97ha per
1,000 population**

**Rural – 4.84ha per
1,000 population**

Quality standard

- 10.12 The National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) provides guidance on quality for outdoor sports facilities, covering gradients, orientation, ancillary accommodation, planting and community safety.
- 10.13 Outdoor sports facilities are the most frequently used type of open space for only a small proportion of respondents to the household survey. These respondents indicated the following quality aspirations: well kept grass, litter free, parking facilities, level surface and toilets. The most significant problems involved vandalism and graffiti, poor maintenance and dog fouling.
- 10.14 When judging the quality scores for individual sites it should be remembered that there are a large of outdoor sports facility providers in the District including the Local Education Authority, private operators and Parish Councils. Therefore the average quality score of 63% for the District is a reflection of all providers. The highest scoring sites included:
- Highwood’s golf course, Bexhill (Site ID 150)
 - Knole Road Bowling Greens, Bexhill (Site ID 223)
 - Canada Way Recreation Ground, Bexhill (Site ID 192).
- 10.15 *Appendices G, H and I* provide further explanation on the suggested approach to future benchmarking of sites.

RECOMMENDED LOCAL QUALITY STANDARD

‘A clean and litter free sports facility with appropriate and well-drained good quality surfaces, and appropriate ancillary accommodation including toilets, car parking, litter and dog-fouling bins. All new sites should meet national governing body guidelines, with all existing sites aspiring to this.’

- 10.16 It is important to note that the aspirations for all sites to meet the applicable governing body guidelines refers not only to the playing surface but also the ancillary facilities too.

Accessibility

- 10.17 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) sets out a performance indicator for sports facilities, namely the percentage of the population that are within 20 minutes travel time of a range of different sports facilities, one of which has achieved a quality assured standard. The travel time is a walk time in urban areas and a drivetime in rural areas.
- 10.18 The average accessibility score for the District is 57%. The sites which scored highest for accessibility criteria include:
- Canada Way Recreation Ground, Bexhill (Site ID 192)
 - Sidley Sports and Social Club, Bexhill (Site ID 183)
 - Rye Bowling Green, Rye (Site ID 47).
- 10.19 The favoured mode of transport to get to outdoor sports facility sites for all analysis areas except for the West Rother analysis area was on foot. In West Rother, driving was the dominant mode. The accessibility standard for the District has been set at a 20 minute walktime, based on the District wide 75th percentile response. A 20 minute walktime equates to 1.6km along roads and footpaths, or a 960m straight line distance.

**RECOMMENDED
ACCESSIBILITY
STANDARD**

**20 minute walk
(1.6km)**

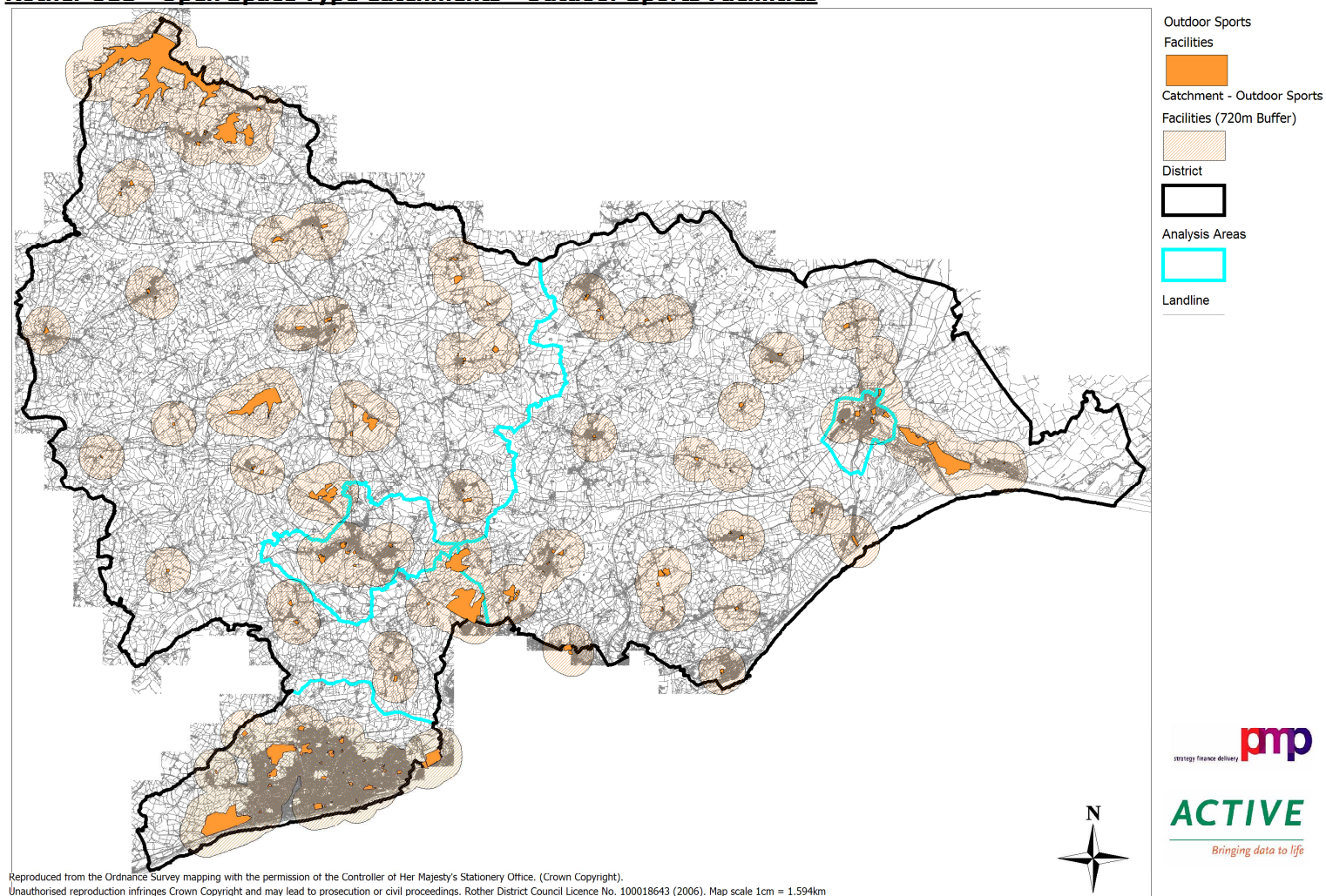
Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

- 10.20 In order to identify important geographical areas and those areas with local need we apply the quantity standard and accessibility standard together. The quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards will help determine where those deficiencies are important. It is important to note that this map covers all sites in the District, regardless of their public access policy.
- 10.21 Map 10.1 overleaf examines outdoor sports facility provision in the Rother District. It can be seen that coverage in the West Rother analysis area is good with only the outskirts of some towns without provision within the 20 minute walktime. Therefore there is not a need from an accessibility viewpoint for new provision in this analysis area however as this typology does not differentiate between sites with and without public access or demand levels only a limited value can be gleaned from this map.
- 10.22 The East Rother analysis area is similar to the West Rother area in terms of coverage however the Brede area currently lack access but is close to the Broad Oak area which does have coverage.

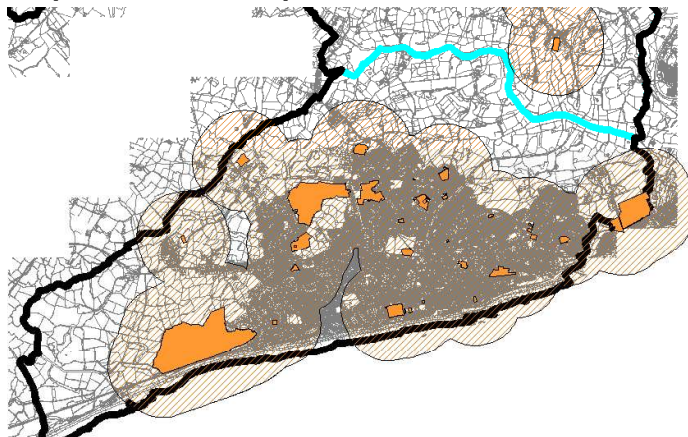
SECTION 10 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

Map 10.1 Accessibility catchment areas for outdoor sports facilities

Rother OSS - Open Space Type Catchments - Outdoor Sports Facilities



Map 10.2 Outdoor sports facilities in Bexhill



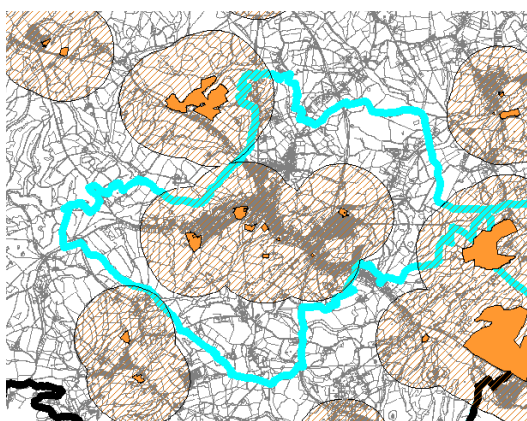
- 10.23 Map 10.2 shows that all major populated areas of the Bexhill analysis area are encompassed by the accessibility catchment area. However this does not automatically mean that a good coverage is enjoyed by residents in this area as living in close proximity to a golf course to a non-golfer is relatively worthless from a sporting participation point of view. Therefore the case for any new provision must be reviewed on a case by case basis.
- 10.24 Of particular note for the Bexhill area is the case for new playing pitches in the northeast. In terms of accessibility there is not a clear argument for providing the pitches in this area except for the availability of land in this area. There is a clear argument, however, for the need for additional pitches. Consultation has shown both quantity and quality issues with pitches in Bexhill, and the wider District. The quality issues relate both to the standard of the pitches, which restricts the amount of usage the pitches take, but also the ancillary facilities. It is important that the Council undertake further research into this area so that the precise type of pitches needed can be confirmed.

OSF 2

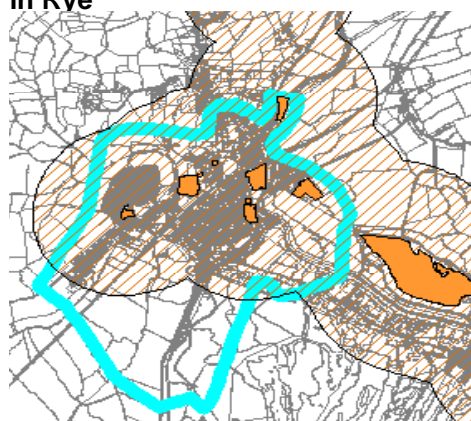
The Council to continue plans for additional pitches in the Bexhill area.

- 10.25 Maps 10.3 and 10.4, overleaf, of Battle and Rye show a similar situation to the Bexhill area with virtually all of these settlements covered by the accessibility catchment area. As with Bexhill, the provision of any new facilities should be determined on a case by case basis. In particular, any old school playing fields should be subject to a playing pitch strategy review or similar assessment method.

Map 10.3 Outdoor sports facilities in Battle



Map 10.4 Outdoor sports facilities in Rye



Value assessment

- 10.26 Assessing quality and value is fundamental to effective planning for future provision for outdoor sports facilities. This can be done simply through comparing value with quality or by assessing all options and combinations when comparing quality, accessibility and usage of sites.
- 10.27 Sites which scored most highly and are judged to have a high value to the District include:
- Little Common Recreation Ground, Bexhill (Site ID 152)
 - Knole Road Bowling Greens, Bexhill (Site ID 223)
 - Sidley Sports and Social Club, Bexhill (Site ID 183).
- 10.28 Sites which scored most poorly for both quality and access include:
- Soloman's Lane Recreation Ground, West Rother (Site ID 927)
 - Beckley Cricket Ground, East Rother (Site ID 691)
 - Northiam Bowls Club, East Rother (Site ID 867).
- 10.29 An additional element for the Council to consider increasing the value of sites is the role of artificial surfaces. In particular third generation football pitches could help to overcome many of the pitch quality issues in the District. However careful consideration of their siting is needed if they are to be floodlit and near to residential areas.

Summary and conclusions

- 10.30 As per PPG17 methodology, this typology does not take into account the access of facilities or the issue of demand, it is important that the Council take forward this work and use it to produce a sports strategy for the District. Such a strategy should allow for additional consultation to establish demand for new and existing facilities as well as the possibility of opening up access to school sites where applicable.

OSF 1	The Council to consider undertaking a playing pitch strategy and sports facility strategy in partnership with external partners.
OSF 2	The Council to continue plans for additional pitches in the Bexhill area.