


MERTON SPORTS PITCH STRATEGY

FINAL REPORT

JUNE 2011





Contents

Section 1: Introduction	1
Section 2: Strategy Methodology	4
Section 3: Population and Sports Participation Profile	10
Section 4: Strategic Context	35
Section 5: Overview	41
Section 6: Artificial Grass Pitches	52
Section 7: Football	63
Section 8: Cricket	80
Section 9: Rugby	92
Section 10: Hockey	102
Section 11: Bowls	108
Section 12: Tennis	114
Section 13: Other outdoor sports	120
Section 14: Multi-use Games Areas	129
Section 15: Strategy and Recommended Actions	132
Section 16: Monitoring and Review	149
Glossary	150





Appendices

Appendix 1: Population Change

Appendix 2: Population by sports specific age groups

Appendix 3: Sites and Pitches

Appendix 4: FPM

Appendix 5: Football Teams

Appendix 6: Cricket Teams



1. Introduction

Purpose

Neil Allen Associates was commissioned during January 2011 to produce an in depth Sports Pitch Strategy for the borough, in order that an objective assessment can be made about the current supply and demand for pitches and the potential future requirements for pitch sports needs in Merton over the next 15 years. The study updates previous strategies undertaken for the Council in 2004 and 2010.

Merton contains a diverse wealth of green and open space, varying between historical parks and gardens, large open and wooded commons, local amenity spaces, equipped and natural play, and sports facilities. As in many other areas playing fields and other outdoor sports facilities are increasingly coming under pressure for alternative uses, while at the same time there is an ongoing and changing demand for places to play sport. If continuing demand is to be met, effective planning of pitch provision to ensure that there are sufficient pitches of the right quality, and in the right place, is of increasing importance.

The strategic and policy context for sport and recreation provision continues to evolve. Investment is under close scrutiny and there is significant pressure to achieve more and better services with fewer resources. As Sport England has stated:

'alongside this is a fresh drive for localism, promoting greater accountability for service delivery and improvement and giving more flexibility and responsibility for delivery to both local authorities and their communities'.

This presents further challenges as well as new opportunities for thinking innovatively about how services are delivered.

Drivers

This strategy is required to:

- Provide a robust and up to date picture of supply and demand in the borough,
- Inform decision making on the need for new and enhanced pitch provision both now, and as the population grows, and the profile of the population changes
- Support the creation of appropriate policy within the Local Development Framework and facilitate decisions on the protection and disposal of playing fields
- Guide a strategic and innovative approach to the delivery of playing pitches in the borough up to 2026, linking with National Governing Body, regional and local priorities and in the context of the challenging financial environment.

- Provide a strategic context for any funding opportunities that arise for playing pitch provision in the future

Strategic vision

The strategic vision for the report can be summarised as follows:

'An accessible, high quality and sustainable network of sports pitches and other outdoor sports facilities, which provides opportunities for participation by all residents of the borough at all levels of play from grassroots to elite'.

Objectives

The objectives of the study were set by the Council and are summarised as follows:

- Undertake an audit of existing pitches including the assessment of quality, accessibility and quantity of pitch sport facilities in the borough, distinguishing between sites in secured community use and sites that are not
- Provide an overall pitch quality score and benchmark with other authorities both in the area and more widely
- Carry out a pitch assessment of current and future need and opportunities around turf, sand and artificial pitches, in line with Planning Policy Guidance Guide 17: Planning for open space, sports and recreation (PPG 17) taking into consideration the projected population and development trends, in a variety of sports over the period to 2026
- Understand trends and needs of different users (e.g. male, female, children, disabled) including an analysis on where users are coming from
- Produce maps of all marked playing pitches and develop a database of all facilities at pitches (including pitch capacity, floodlights, changing room facilities, security and accessibility)
- Identify teams utilising playing pitches to set up a database of contacts, establish team generation rates (rates of teams using pitches) for whole year use if possible and assess seasonal supply and demand of pitches in all areas of the borough
- Identify potential "new" sports taking into account future population trends for South West London and having regard to sports provision in neighbouring boroughs.
- Identify sites for possible future pitch use from green land and sites of sufficient size to be used as sports pitches according to identified demand/possible future demand
- Prepare a schedule of criteria for development that will create a future need and necessitate contributions for sport pitches, and provide evidence to support the collection of planning contributions/obligations for any future green infrastructure needs identified in the assessment.

Methodology

This strategy has been developed following the methodology outlined by Sport England in 'Towards a Level Playing Field – A Manual for the Production of Playing Pitch Strategies' (TaLPF) and also draws on the principles of National Planning Policy Guidance Note 17. In addition the study has also drawn on various Sport England strategic planning tools including the Facilities Planning Model, Active Places Power, Active People and Market Segmentation.

Scope

The strategy considers the adequacy of provision for key pitch sports in Merton, mainly:

- Football
- Cricket
- Rugby Union
- Hockey.

It also considers other provision of particular importance in the sporting context of Merton, including:

- Aussie Rules, American and Gaelic football
- Lacrosse and other less popular pitch sports
- Tennis
- Bowls
- Artificial Grass pitches (AGPs) which are used for football, rugby and hockey. and Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs).

Sub areas

For the purpose of the study, the borough has been subdivided into sub areas based on those used by the Council in the Core Strategy (see below)

Timescale

The study was commissioned in early 2011, and the main field work undertaken during the winter months of February and March. The final document was submitted in June 2011

2. Strategy Methodology

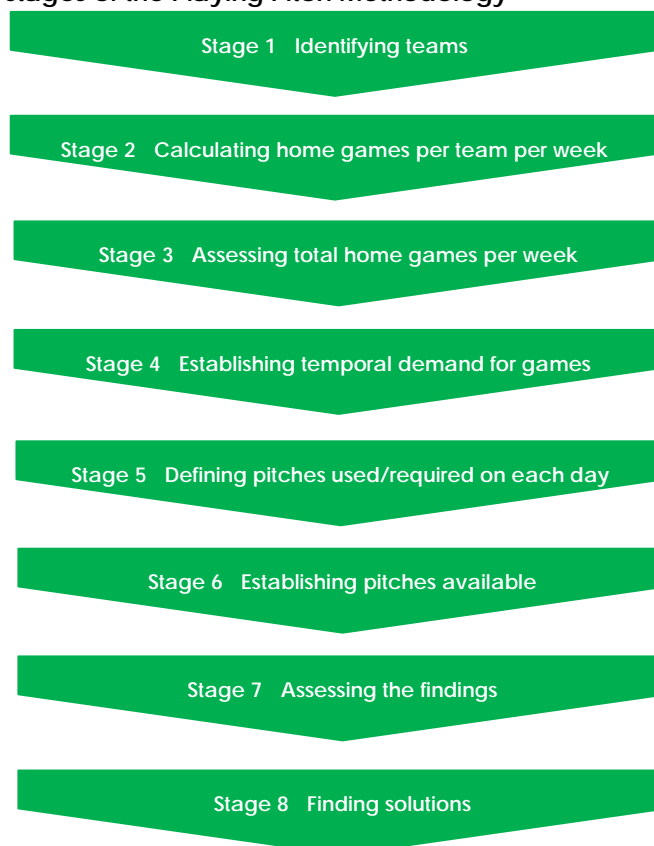
This section sets out the methodology that has been used to develop the playing pitch element of the strategy for Merton. The strategy has been developed in line with 'Towards a Level Playing Field: A Manual for the Production of a Playing Pitch Strategy' (Sport England, 2003) (TaLPF).

The aim of the Playing Pitch Methodology (PPM) is to determine the adequacy of pitch supply in a given area to meet current and future demand and to guide the development of a strategy for the future delivery of pitch sports. It seeks to promote the development of strategies that reflect the local situation.

The methodology comprises eight stages, which broadly cover the issues of supply and demand. While stages one to six are largely numerical calculations, designed to evaluate the current supply and demand, it is steps 7 and 8, the evaluation of issues and solutions, which are the essential components of a successful strategy.

The key stages of the Playing Field Methodology are set out in the figure below.

Figure 2.1 - The key stages of the Playing Pitch Methodology



Our approach

Demand (Steps 1 – 5)

The success of the methodology depends largely on obtaining as accurate a tally as possible of the number of teams and pitches within Merton borough.

To achieve this, a full audit of pitches, users and providers within the authority boundary was conducted, in conjunction with National Governing Bodies (NGBs) for Football (the FA), Cricket (the ECB), Rugby Union (the RFU), and Hockey (EH).

This audit involved:

- Use of data collected by National Governing Bodies on participation in their sports and the surrounding area and discussions with National Governing Bodies on the issues arising
- Cross referencing of NGB data through discussions with local league secretaries, fixture lists, pitch booking lists and internet research
- Clarification telephone calls to clubs and providers.

Facilities on the edge of Merton's boundaries were also considered.

As well as collecting baseline data on the teams participating in and around Merton, a consultation exercise was carried out in order to provide full understanding of the issues and challenges currently experienced. This comprised:

- Discussions with National Governing Bodies covering current issues and key policy and facility priorities
- Discussions with officers of Merton Council, and ProActive South
- Telephone discussions with other key external stakeholders including Sport England and consultation with adjacent authorities
- Distribution of questionnaires to secondary schools, via the local School Sports Partnership
- Telephone discussions with league secretaries operating in the area
- A full programme of telephone calls to sports clubs for football, cricket, rugby and hockey
- Distribution of questionnaires to football, rugby, cricket, hockey, bowls and tennis clubs and telephone calls to all other clubs and clubs not responding to the questionnaires.

The above consultation provides a comprehensive understanding of the adequacy of pitch provision in Merton and the issues associated with participation in this area, and therefore enable a robust assessment of needs. Overall, a high proportion of teams within Merton were contacted successfully, with specific figures being:

- Football –65% of clubs
- Cricket - 62%

- Rugby - 80%
- Hockey – 71%.
- Bowls – 65%
- Tennis – 33%

Supply (Step 6)

As well as understanding the demand for pitches, a full audit of the supply of playing fields is an essential component of a Playing Pitch Strategy.

A detailed audit of the current pitches in Merton was compiled by:

- drawing on the findings of previous Playing Pitch studies and MOSS (the Merton Open Space Study 2005);
- reviewing National Governing Body data on pitches and using the Sport England Active Places tool, which provides data on playing fields;
- undertaking non technical site visits to all public playing fields;
- consulting with Grounds Maintenance staff and pitch providers across the borough; and
- carrying out internet searches and local consultation.

Availability and accessibility

The ownership and accessibility of pitches will influence their actual availability for community use. In line with Towards a Level Playing Field, the term 'secured community use' has been adopted to define this.

This embraces:

- all local authority facilities;
- school facilities where they are subject to formal community use agreements;
- other institutional facilities that are available to the public as a result of formal community use agreements; and
- any facilities that are owned, used or maintained by clubs/private individuals and which, as a matter of policy and practice, are available to large sections of the public through membership of a club or through an admission fee.

Pitches in secured community use are pitches that are available for use by community teams and whose future use is secured for the coming seasons by one or more of the following:

- a formal community use agreement;
- a leasing/management arrangement between the school and LEA requiring the pitch(es) to be available to community teams;

- a policy of community use minuted by the school or LEA, including tariff of charges, etc;
- minutes of the board of school governors allowing use of pitches by community teams; and
- written commitment from the school to the current community team(s) using the pitch(es) and where it is the intention of the school to maintain access for community teams to its pitch(es) at peak times (i.e. evenings, weekends and/or school holidays) for the next two or more years.

The strategy concentrates on the role of facilities that are available for community use – there are relatively few pitches in other sectors and these are mainly for school use only.

Strategy development (Stages 7 and 8)

Following the collation of supply and demand data, calculations were undertaken to evaluate the adequacy of pitches in the borough. In discussion with the project steering group, as well as with National Governing Body representatives and Sport England, and drawing on the key issues identified, a strategy was then devised setting out key recommendations and priorities for the future delivery of playing fields in Merton.

Artificial grass pitches

Analysis of artificial grass pitches has also been undertaken as part of the preparation of the preparation of the Playing Pitch Strategy. This assessment draws on the Sport England Facilities Planning Model (FPM) and is set out in Section 6. The key findings of this evaluation of the adequacy of pitches provide important context for pitches across the borough.

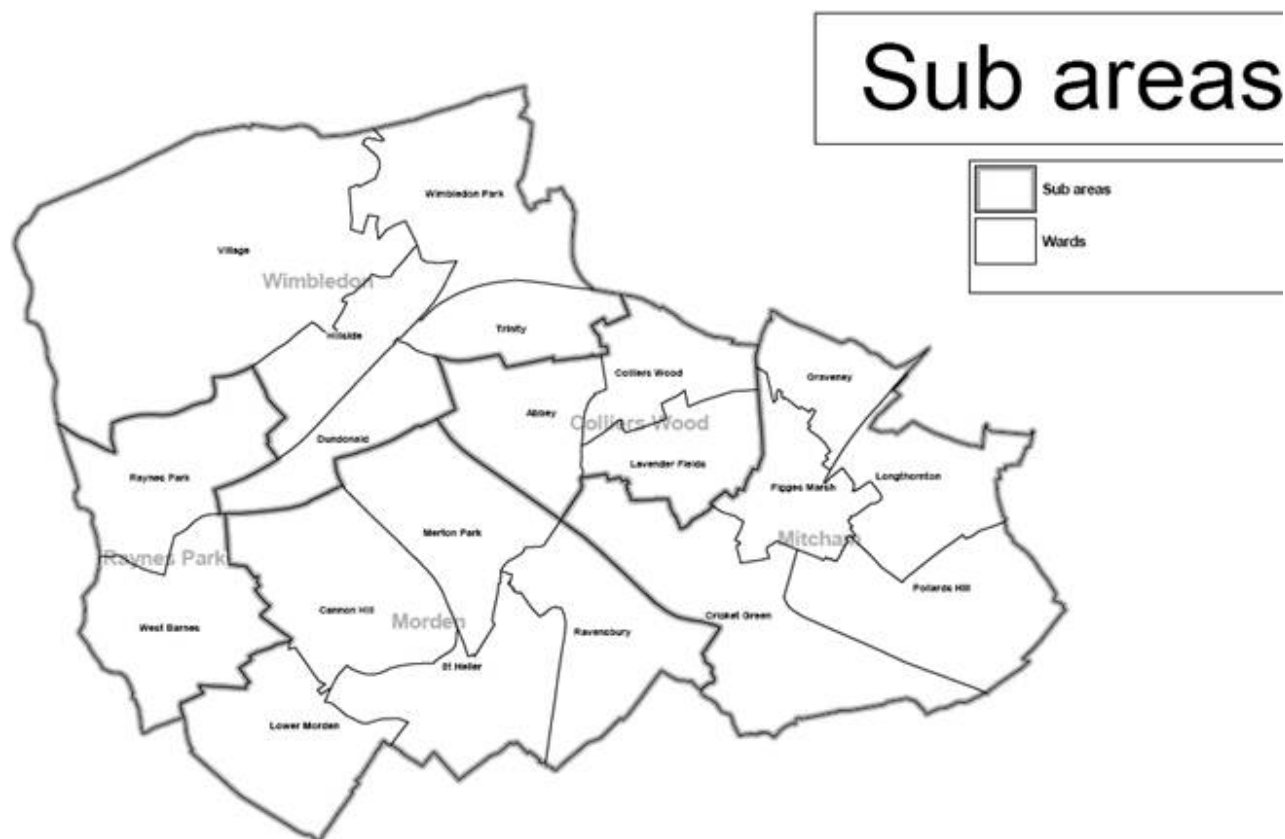
Geographical analysis

For completeness, and to fully understand the patterns of supply and demand in Merton, the adequacy of provision is analysed both on a borough wide level and where appropriate within five neighborhood areas. These areas are based on those used in the Core Strategy. The neighborhood areas are summarized in Table 2.1 below and are illustrated on Map 2.1 overleaf. Population figures have been provided by the GLA 2009 round based ward projections incorporating Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) development data.

Table 2.1 – Neighbourhood areas in Merton borough

Sub area	Wards	Population (2011)
Colliers Wood (CW)	Abbey, Colliers Wood, Lavender Fields	32,367
Mitcham (Mi)	Cricket Green, Figges’s Marsh, Graveney, Pollards Hill, Longthornton.	51,160
Morden (Mo)	Cannon Hill, Lower Morden, Merton Park, Ravensbury, St Helier.	47,056
Raynes Park (RP)	Raynes Park, West Barnes.	19,921
Wimbledon (W)	Hillside, Trinity, Village, Wimbledon Park, Dundonald.	48,185

Map 2.1 –Wards and sub areas in Merton



In addition to provision located within the borough, consideration has been given to the role of pitches on the edge of but outside Merton, in Wandsworth, Croydon, Sutton and Kingston. This ensures that inward and outward migration of playing field users is taken into account within the strategy, although precise data on the usage of these facilities is difficult to ascertain without a wider investigation of all the surrounding boroughs.

Future population projections

Future population projections take into account the changing profile of the borough, as well as the projected increase in the number of people living within Merton.

Table 2.2 – Population projections

	Population	Increase in % over 2011
2011	198,691	
2016	201,658	+1.5%
2021	203,869	+2.6%
2026	206,263	+3.8%

The population data is analysed more fully overleaf.

3. Population and Sports Participation Profile

03

Introduction

This section sets out the trends in the Merton population as the context for reviewing adult sports participation, in particular, in pitch and other outdoor sports.

It evaluates the findings of the Sport England evidence base on adult sports participation including the Sport England Active People surveys and Market Segmentation work.

In particular this section covers

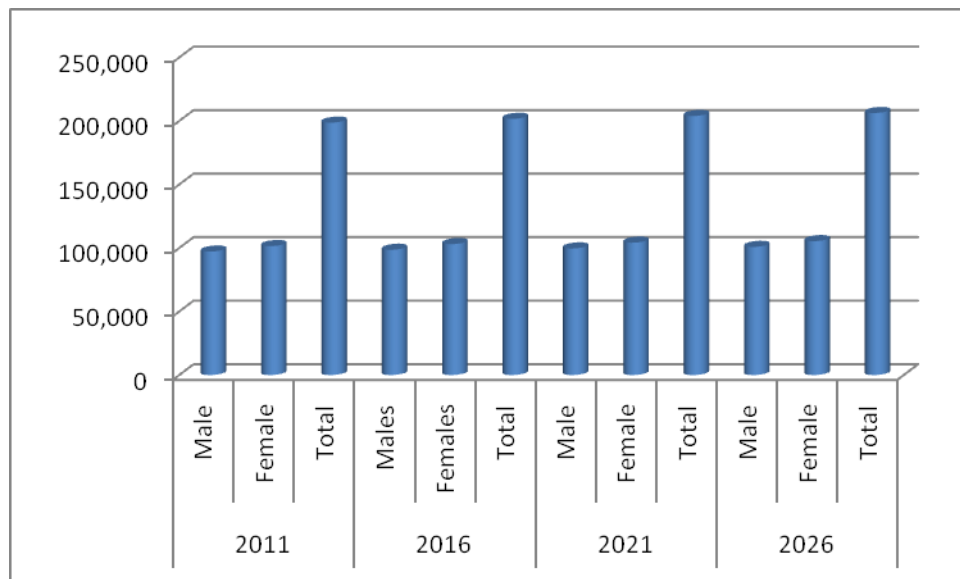
- **Population trends in Merton** - and in particular for the main adult age groups (16 – 34) that participate in outdoor pitch sports – what are the trends and what does this mean for changes in pitch sports participation?
- **Sports Participation Headlines - National Level and in Merton** – drawn from the Sport England Active People Survey, what are the trends overall in participation, how are these changing and what does it mean for pitch sports participation?
- **Sports Participation Analysis - Which are the most popular sports played by adults in Merton** – again drawn from the Sport England Active People survey and where do pitch sports rank in terms of popularity when compared with other sports/physical activity?
- **Sports Participation Analysis - What is the profile of sports participation in Merton and where do they live** – using the Sport England Active People market segmentation data to set out a sports profile and spatial profile of the most dominant market segments in the borough. How do pitch sports “rank” in terms of the importance and the amount of pitch sports played by these groups in Merton when compared with the national profile of participation in pitch sports? and
- **Sports Participation Analysis- What is the current and latent demand for pitch sports in Merton** – based on the Active People market segmentation survey findings, what percentage of the Merton population **DO play** pitch sports now and where are they located in the authority? Then what percentage of the Merton population would **LIKE TO** play pitch sports and where do they live?

In reporting on the findings for each of these bullet points, the implications of what this could mean for the provision of playing fields in Merton are also set out.

Population profile in Merton

The population profile and estimated changes over the period from 2011 to 2026 are based on GLA 2009 round based ward projections incorporating SHLAA development data. The estimated current and future population totals by age group and gender in 5-year steps up to 2026 are set out in Appendix 1. In general the current population of 198,961 is estimated to increase to 201,658 in 2016, 203,869 by 2021 and 206,263 by 2026

Figure 3.1- Population change



The main features of this are:

- an overall increase in population of 1.5% to 2016, 2.6% to 2021 and 38% to 2026;
- generally higher increase in the age bands 5-19 and over 50 (and in particular 90+ though actual numbers are low);
- a decline in the 20-49 age group and up to 2021 in the 75-89 band;
- Merton's population is considerably younger than the national average – 24.7% are younger than 20 (compared with 23.8% in England), 48.5% are between 20 and 49 (England 41.6%) while 15.3% are 50-64 (England 18%) and 11.5% over 65 (England 16.3%); and
- Merton's age range is broadly comparable with London's overall, though there is a smaller proportion of the local population in the 20-49 age group (48.5% compared with 50.1%) and slightly more between 50 and 64 (15.3% and 14.4%).

The population estimates have also been sorted to reflect the age bands that take part in a range of different pitch sports, based on the identified age groups in Towards a Level Playing Field. The implications of this for the main pitch and other outdoor sports are set out in Appendix 2 and can be summarised as follows:

- despite an overall estimated population increase in Merton in the five year bands up to 2026, the 'active' population (i.e. those aged between 6 and 55) actually only increase by 1.1 to 1.6%;
- there are significant increases (above 10%) in age groups playing mini and junior football, cricket and rugby;
- there are estimated significant falls in the numbers of people in the age groups playing senior/adult sports (up to 9%);
- the 'non-active' age group, but that sector of the population which might be particularly

suitable to bowls increase by 9-16%; and

- the trends in population change tend to be similar for 2021 and 2026, although in some cases they peak at the earlier date.

Other socio economic characteristics

- the population is fairly evenly split between males (49%) and females (51%);
- a quarter of the population is from black and minority ethnic groups. 160 languages are spoken in Merton's schools;
- there are extremes of poverty and wealth in the borough. Some wards are in the top 5% most affluent wards in the country, while some are in the top 15% most income-deprived. The Council's neighbourhood renewal strategy seeks to develop the quality of life for residents in the east of the borough; and
- about 13% of local residents have a disability.

Major housing and growth areas in Merton

The Council's Core Strategy submitted to the Secretary of State in November 2010 included the following requirements for future housing provision in the borough up to 2026:

- 1450 -1800 additional units in Morden
- 1550 -1850 in Mitcham
- 500 - 600 in Colliers Wood and South Wimbledon
- 500 - 600 in Wimbledon
- 500 - 600 in Raynes Park.

Adult sports participation: headline overview

The nationally accepted measure of adult participation in sport is the Sport England Active People survey. The first year of the survey, was conducted between October 2005 and October 2006, and was a telephone survey of 363,724 adults in England (aged 16 plus) and is unique in providing reliable statistics on participation in sport and active recreation for all 354 local authorities in England (a minimum of 1,000 interviews were completed in every Local Authority).

The Active People survey has been updated on the same basis, commencing in October each year until the following October. The latest Active People survey is AP 4, which commenced in October 2009 and finished in October 2010. The headline findings from this latest Active People survey were published on 16 December 2010 with the detailed findings to follow. (Note: The headline findings from AP 4 are set out below and where the data is available have been incorporated into the various tables on the findings for AP 4).

The survey provides by far the largest sample size ever established for a sport and recreation survey and allows levels of detailed analysis previously unavailable. It identifies how participation varies from place to place and between different groups in the population.

The survey also measures; the proportion of the adult population that volunteer in sport on a weekly basis, club membership, involvement in organised sport/competition, receipt of tuition or coaching, and overall satisfaction with levels of sporting provision in the local community.

The questionnaire was designed to enable analysis of the findings by a broad range of demographic information, such as gender, social class, ethnicity, household structure, age and disability.

Active People 4 Survey Findings - National Level

During 2009/10, 6.938 million adults (aged 16 and over) participated in sport three times a week for 30 minutes at moderate intensity (16.5% of the adult population in England). This is 123,000 more adult participants than the 2007/08 baseline.

Compared with Active People Survey 2, sports participation among non-white adults has increased by 64,100, from 722,800 (16.1%) to 786,900 (17.3%).

Since 2007/08, participation in athletics (including running and jogging) has grown by 263,400 to 1.876 million adults (4.5%) in 2009/10. Cycling has grown from 1.767 million adults (4.3%) in 2007/8 to 1.866 million adults (4.4%) in 2009/10, an increase of 99,200 participants.

Active People Survey NI8 Measure of Adult Sports Participation - National Level

Most importantly the Active People survey provides the measurement for National Indicator 8 (NI8) - adult participation in sport and active recreation. This measures the percentage of the adult population who participate in 3 x 30 minutes of moderate sport and active recreation in any 12 days a month (or rounded for once a week).

This national measurement has become the benchmark measure for the rate of adult sports participation. Any assessment of adult sports participation has to start with setting out the findings for NI8. The **England wide** trend for this NI8 measure for adults in the important age group for pitch sports of 16 – 34 has decreased from 26.7% of the adult population in AP 2, to 26.2% of the adult population by AP 4, a decrease of 0.5% over the Active People surveys 2 – 4.

In short, there is no national trend for an increase in sports participation for the adult age groups that participate in pitch sports, as well as other sports/physical activity. This is set out in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 - Active People 2 – 4 Trends in adult sports participation at England Wide level for age bands 16 – 34, 35 – 54 and 55+ based on NI 8

APS2 (Oct 2007-Oct 2008)		APS3 (Oct 2008-Oct 2009)			APS4 (Oct 2009-Oct 2010)		
16 to 34	26.7%	3,421,900	27.0%	3,486,900	26.2%	3,406,400	No Change
35 to 54	15.9%	2,293,900	16.2%	2,348,100	16.6%	2,414,600	Increase
55 +	7.8%	1,099,300	7.6%	1,095,200	7.7%	1,117,000	No Change

Active People Survey NI8 Measure of Adult Sports Participation – Merton and surrounding areas

The NI8 measure of adult sports participation in Merton and surrounding boroughs is set out in Table 3.2 for the Active People Survey 1 (2005/06), AP 2 (2007/08) and the most recent published results for AP 3 and 4 (2008/10). The corresponding findings for neighbouring boroughs are also included are set out for information.

Table 3.2 - Active People Surveys 1 - 4 for the NI8 measure of adult sports participation of 3 x 30 minutes of moderate sport and physical activity 3 times a week

AP Survey	Merton	Kingston	Richmond	Lambeth	Wandsworth	Croydon	Sutton
Year							
AP 1- 2005/06	21.9%	25.3%	30.0%	25.8%	27.2%	20.3%	18.8%
AP 2- 2007/08	22.7%	18.6%	27.9%	25.0%	28.5%	15.5%	18.9%
AP 3 & 4 2008/10	24.1%	26.7%	27.0%	21.5%	28.4%	18.1%	20.4%
Significance	No change	No change	No change	Decrease	No change	No change	No change

Source: Sport England Results for participation in sport and active recreation based on data from Active People Survey 3 (2008/09) and 4 (2009/10) shown against the baseline data from 2005/6 (Active People Survey 1). Published December 2010.

The main findings are:

- adult participation in Merton has risen in five years from 22% to 24% though because of sample sizes this is not considered a significant change;
- the only borough in the area where participation has significantly decreased is Lambeth;
- adult participation is exceeded by three neighbouring boroughs and is higher than the other three; and
- for comparison, the national proportions have increased from 21.3% to 22% over the same period, so Merton participation has increased faster than the national average.

Sports Participation Analysis - Which are the most popular sports played by adults in Merton?

Alongside the rates of adult sports participation, it is also important to understand which individual sports and activities people most like to participate in. These activities include informal recreation such as walking and cycling, which are undertaken as much for the health benefit as for playing formal sport.

The profile of the five most popular sporting activities based on participation at least once a month (from the Active People 3 survey) is set out in Table 3.3. This shows that:

- the five most important sports are consistent across Merton and the adjoining boroughs;
- football is the favourite pitch sport in Merton (and 4th overall) with 8.5% of the adult population playing. This is considerably higher than the national and London averages;
- athletics (which also includes jogging) is the fifth most popular sport although the local rate of participation is below the national average; and

- across the wider area, the main pitch sport, football, varies between 6.8% and 11.7% (in Lambeth), which is either side of the average.

Table 3.3 - Profile of the Most Popular Sporting Activities (Participation rate of the top 5 sports of people that participate at least once a month)

Merton	Kingston	Richmond	Lambeth	Wandsworth	Croydon	Sutton	London	England
Gym 12.5%	Cycling 22.6%	Gym 17.0%	Cycling 15.9%	Cycling 9.8%	Swimming 13.0%	Swimming 17.9%	Gym 13.0%	Swimming 12.9%
Cycling 11.6%	Swimming 20.6%	Swimming 11.9%	Gym 13.6%	Gym 9.7%	Cycling 11.9%	Gym 14.4%	Swimming 12.3%	Cycling 12.0%
Swimming 11.2%	Gym 15.1%	Athletics 10.5%	Football 11.7%	Swimming 9.7%	Athletics 10.3%	Cycling 12.7%	Cycling 11.5%	Gym 10.6%
Football 8.5%	Athletics 12.9%	Cycling 10.2%	Swimming 10.5%	Football 8.0%	Gym 10.1%	Athletics 8.8%	Athletics 8.4%	Football 7.3%
Athletics 6.1%	Football 6.8%	Football 7.4%	Athletic 10.2%	Athletics 4.7%	Football 8.7%	Football 7.2%	Football 7.6%	Athletics 6.3%

Source: Active People Survey 3, Population data ONS Annual Population Survey 2008 Measure: Participation rate of the top 5 sports and the number of people that participate at least once per month

Sports Participation Analysis - What is the profile of sports participants in Merton and where do they live?

As an extension to the Active People survey findings, together with DCMS's 'Taking Part' survey and the Mosaic work by Experian, Sport England analysed the data on the English population (18+) to produce 19 market segments with distinct sporting behaviours and attitudes.

This includes information on specific sports people take part in as well as why people do sport, whether they want to do sport and the barriers to doing more sport. In addition, the segments provide information on media consumption and communication channels, social capital, health indicators including obesity and engagement in the wider cultural sphere.

The power of these sporting segments lies not only in their ability to help us better understand the characteristics of our potential market but also to explore the market base at differing geographic levels. It is possible to analyse the market in a particular community, local authority or regions. Each segment has been assigned a name that reflects the most popular first names for the group.

Market segmentation allows us to develop a more sophisticated, tailored approach to delivering services. In tailoring the service we provide to the customer's individual needs, rather than adopting a 'one size fits all' approach. It is one of the best tools we have to improve public services and outcomes.

The market segmentation map and profile for Merton are set out in the maps and figures overleaf.

Map 3.1 - Dominant market segments in Merton by population and location

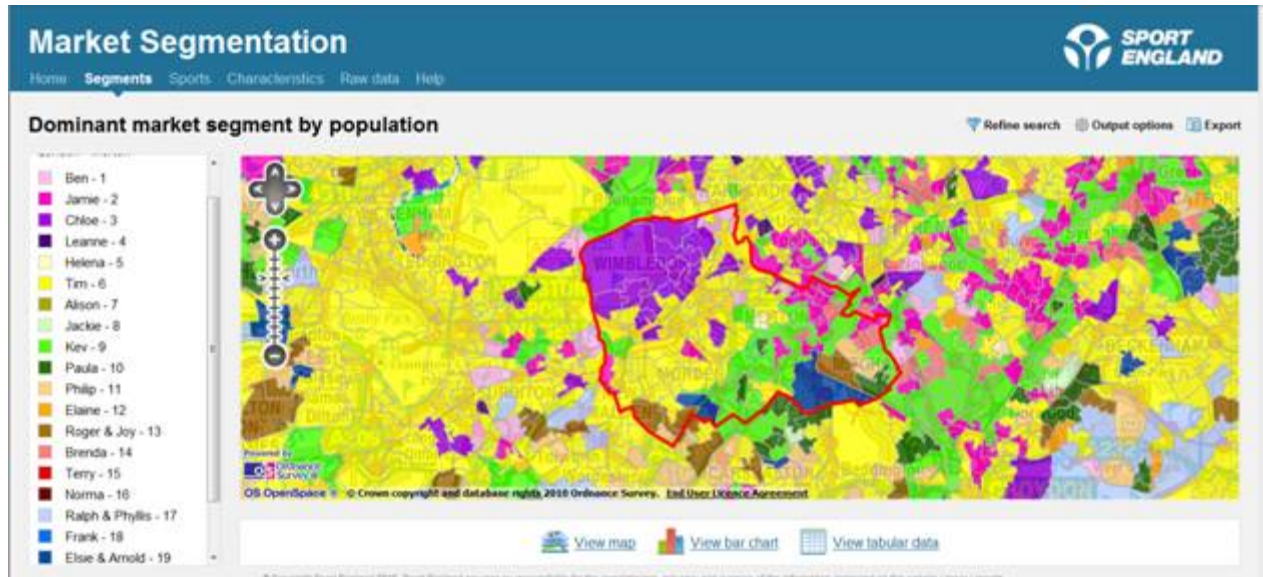
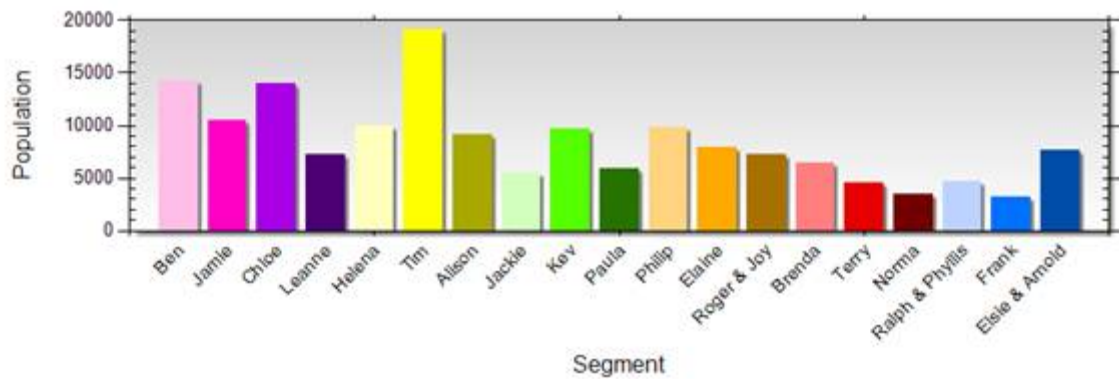


Figure 3.2 - Dominant market segments in Merton by population total



In total the various market segments in Merton are distributed as in Table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4 - Market segments in Merton

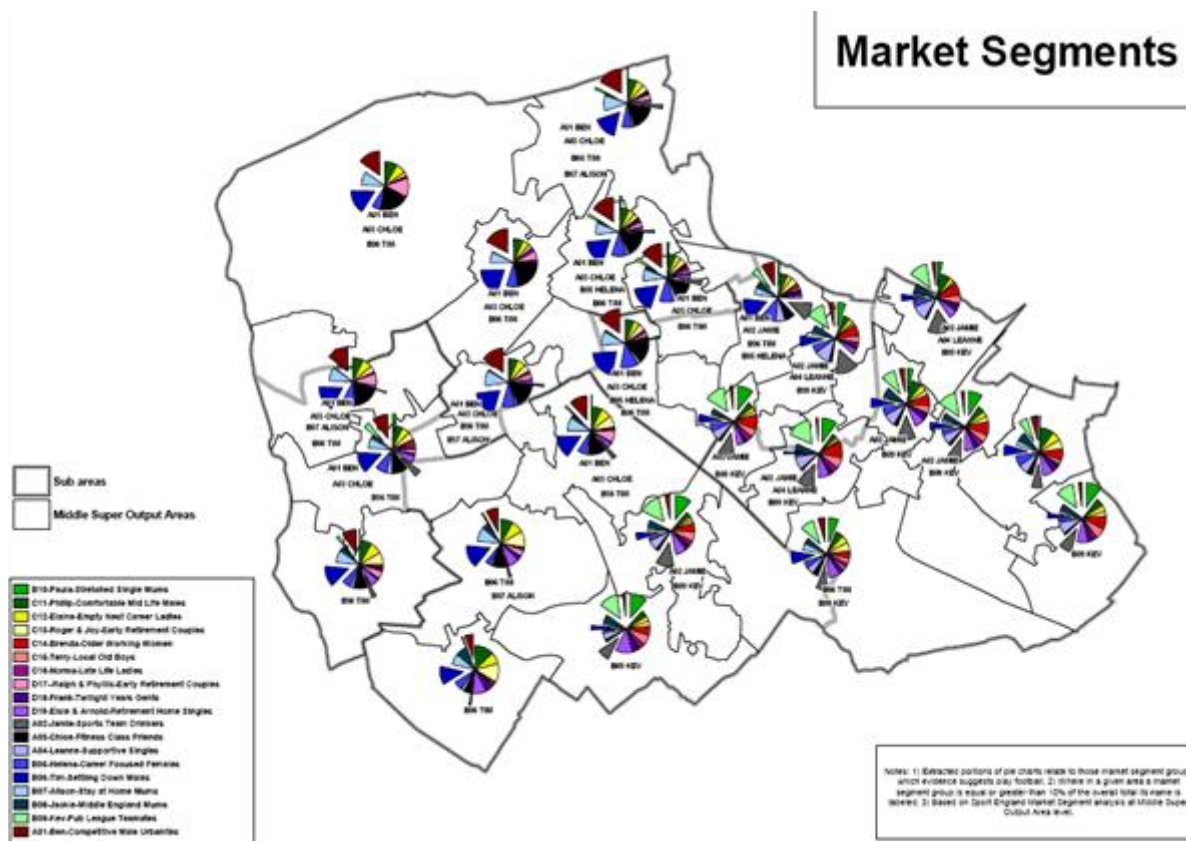
Segment		Population	%
1	Ben	14308	9%
2	Jamie	10451	7%
3	Chloe	14037	9%
4	Leanne	7298	5%
5	Helena	9965	6%
6	Tim	19074	12%
7	Alison	9119	6%
8	Jackie	5511	3%
9	Kev	9675	6%
10	Paula	5868	4%
11	Philip	9759	6%
12	Elaine	7979	5%
13	Roger and Joy	7254	5%
14	Brenda	6327	4%
15	Terry	4477	3%
16	Norma	3421	2%
17	Ralph and Phyllis	4685	3%
18	Frank	3184	2%
19	Elsie and Arnold	7639	5%

The four most dominant market segments in Merton are as follows:

- Tim (segment 6)** – known as ‘a settling down male’, a very active type enjoying high intensity activities. Enjoys technical sports such as skiing, uninhibited by financial outlay. Both team games and individual activities feature high on his agenda and personal fitness activities are also popular. High activity rates (27% of 3x30 minutes per week compared with average of 22%). 21% of the Tim segment take part in cycling compared to 9% of all adults nationally; 20% of this segment takes part in keep fit/gym, compared to 17% of all adults nationally, and 15% in football (compared with the average of 4%). Swimming and athletics or running are also popular sports for Tim. Tim is more likely than all adults to take part in football and athletics. Tim is the dominant segment across the central part of Merton;

- **Ben (segment 1)** is known as a 'competitive male urbanite'. He is an active person that takes part in sport on a regular basis and the sportiest of all segments (39% 3x30 minutes). Top sports are football (33% play compared with the average of 4%), cycling (18%), athletics and running (15%) and swimming is also a popular activity, as well as other active sports like badminton, tennis, golf, cricket and squashy. Ben is a major segment across much of the borough but the dominant segment only in small parts of Wimbledon and Mitcham; and
- **Chloe (segment 3)** is known as a 'fitness class friend'. She is a young image conscious female who likes to keep fit and trim, and takes part in sport on a regular basis (27% overall). Favourite activities are keep fit and gym (25% compared with 12% overall), swimming (24%), and she also takes part in tennis, hockey and netball. Chloe is the dominant segment in Wimbledon;

Map 3.2 - Market segments in Merton



- **Jamie (segment 2)** is a 'sports team lad', a young bloke who enjoys football, pools and pints. 60% of Jamies do sport once a week, and 31% 3x30 minutes. This is the second most active segment after Ben. Jamie takes part in sport on a regular basis. The top sports that Jamie participates in are football with 28% of this group playing football, compared to 4% of all adults, 22% take part in 'keep fit and gym' compared to 17% of all adults; 12% take part in both athletics (running) and cycling, and 10% go swimming. Jamie also likes badminton, tennis, cricket, basketball and golf. Jamie is the dominant segment in some parts of central Merton.

There are also concentrations (dominant segments) of other groups in the borough:

- **Kev (segment 9)** – is the dominant segment in the south east part of the borough. Known as ‘a pub league team mate’, Kev occasionally trains with the pub football team, and may sometimes play on a Sunday. This segment has average levels of participation (42% once a week, 17% 3x30 minutes), the most popular sports being keep fit and gym (14%), football (12%), cycling (11%) and swimming (11%). Kevs may also do running, badminton, golf, archery and martial arts. Kev is the dominant segment in large parts of Mitcham and Morden;
- **Elsie & Arnold (segment 19)** are much less active than the average adult population (6% 3x30 minutes), but their activity levels are more consistent with other segments in this age range. They are likely to be doing less sport than 12 months ago, mainly due to health or injury. The top sports that Elsie & Arnold participate in are keep fit and gym with 10% of this group taking part, 7% take part in swimming, and 3% do bowls. Elsie and Arnold are the dominant segment in Cricket Green and St Helier; and
- **Roger & Joy (segment 13)** are known as an ‘early retirement couple’, and are slightly less active than the average adult population. Roger & Joy have below average levels of sports participation. 66% of this segment has done no sport in the past four weeks, compared with 60% of all adults. 38% have participated in sport at least once a week, which is consistent with other segments of the same age. The top sports that Roger & Joy participate in are keep fit/gym and swimming which are the most popular sports with 13% of the segment doing these, followed by cycling with 8% of this segment doing cycling, golf with 6% of the segment playing golf and angling with 2% of this segment doing angling. Their participation levels are below average for all these sports, with the exception of golf and angling. They are the dominant segment in the south west part of Merton and in parts of Mitcham.

What do these market segmentation findings say about participation in pitch sports?

The findings above are of particular importance for the pitch and outdoor sports as follows

- the top market segments in Merton, Tim, represents about 12% of the total adult population with about 19000 people. 15% of Tims are likely to play football (compared with 4% of the total population), and other outdoor sports considered popular include athletics and running. Tims are located across the borough and are the dominant segment across the central part of Merton;
- Ben is the second highest participant segment with 9% of the total adult population (14000 people). This segment plays most sport and 33% play football (compared with 4% of the population). Other popular activities are athletics, tennis, golf and cricket. Bens are distributed across the borough, with the highest concentrations in the north west;
- Jamie is the fourth largest segment with 7% of the population (10500 people). Jamies are the second highest participants of all, and 28% of this group plays football, while tennis, cricket and golf are also popular;
- the other main group in the borough is Chloe (9%, 14000 people) who while active, does not concentrate on the main outdoor sports, while there are concentrations of Kevs (6%, 9500 people), who plays football, Roger and Joy (5%, 7000 people), and Elsie and Arnold (5% 7500) who are low participants in outdoor activities, but likely to play bowls; and

- of the 4 main segments, three have high activity rates in outdoor sport, particularly football. In total these groups comprise 43700 people, or 28% of the adult population.

Sports participation analysis- what is the current and latent demand for pitch sports in Merton?

Again based on the Active People market segmentation survey findings, it is possible to identify the percentage of the adult population who play pitch sports now and those who would like to play pitch sports, as well as to see how this profile is distributed spatially across Merton.

This profile can be reviewed for several pitch sports and is set out here for football, cricket, hockey and rugby union, although some of the findings for the latter sports have to be treated with caution because of the small sample sizes. Looking first at football, the profiles set out:

- how many of the Merton population **DO** participate in football and how this varies across the authority; and
- how many of the Merton population **WOULD LIKE** to participate in football and again how this varies across the authority.

Football

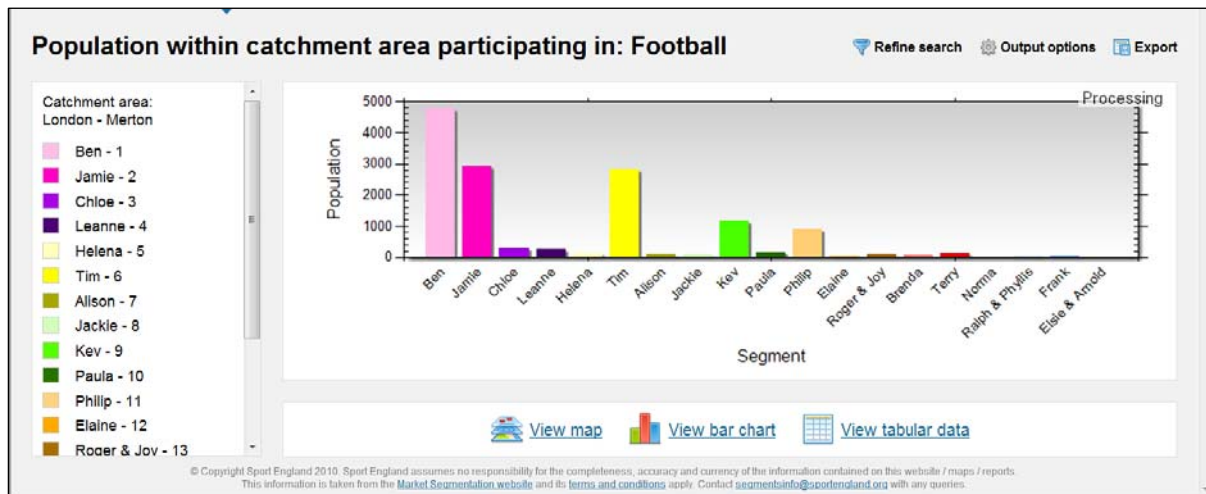
This data can provide a spatial and population profile of existing football participation. Map 3.3 shows the percentage of the Merton population who, based on the Active People survey 4 findings, are currently participating in football across the borough.

Map 3.3 - Percentage and location of the Merton adult population who do play football



This spatial profile can also be presented showing which of the market segments make up this football population and this is set out below in Figure 3.3 overleaf.

Figure 3.3 - Profile of the market segments who participate in football in Merton.



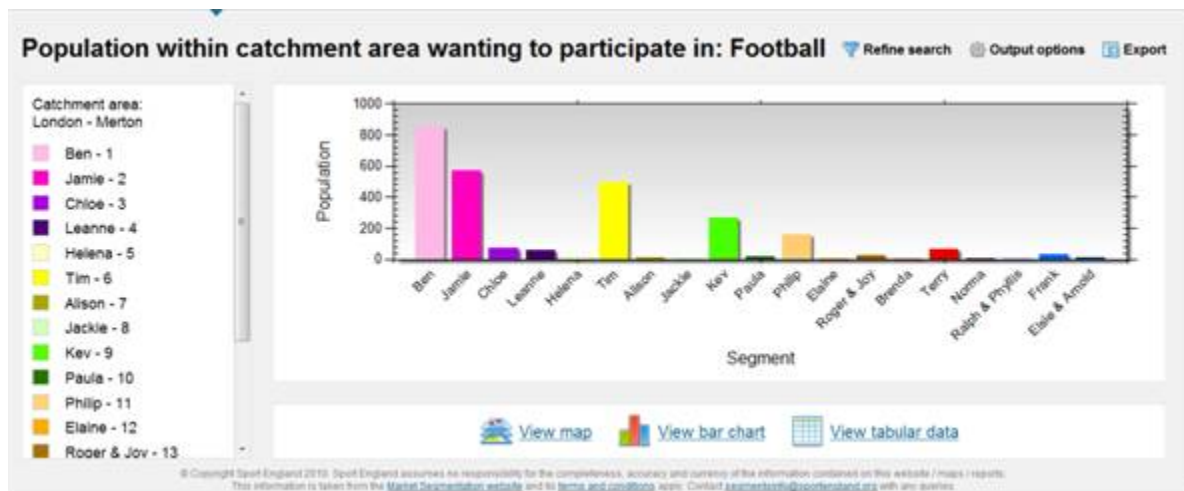
The map and table shows that across the whole borough at least 5-10% of each output area plays football, and in some areas this is as high as 10-20% (compared with the average nationally of 4%). This participation is concentrated in 3 main segments – Ben, Jamie and Tim who represent over 10500 footballers, who play football in a competitive environment, out of a total of about 13000.

The equivalent map and figure for those people who would like to play football are shown below.

Map 3.4 - Percentage and location of the Merton adult population who would like to play football



Figure 3.4 - Profile of the market segments who would like to participate in football in Merton.



Between 1 and 2% across most of the borough would like to play football, based on their market profile) and in some areas a further 2-5%. The total number of potential adults who wish to play football is about 2700, mainly the same groups as currently participate. This might be considered to represent a fairly low level of latent demand for football, but this is mitigated by high existing levels of activity.

Cricket

The data on the spatial and population profile of cricket participation is set out in Map 3.5 below and shows the percentage of the Merton population who based on the Active People survey 4 findings which record people who are currently participating in cricket across the borough.

Map 3.5 - Percentage and location of the Merton adult population who do play Cricket

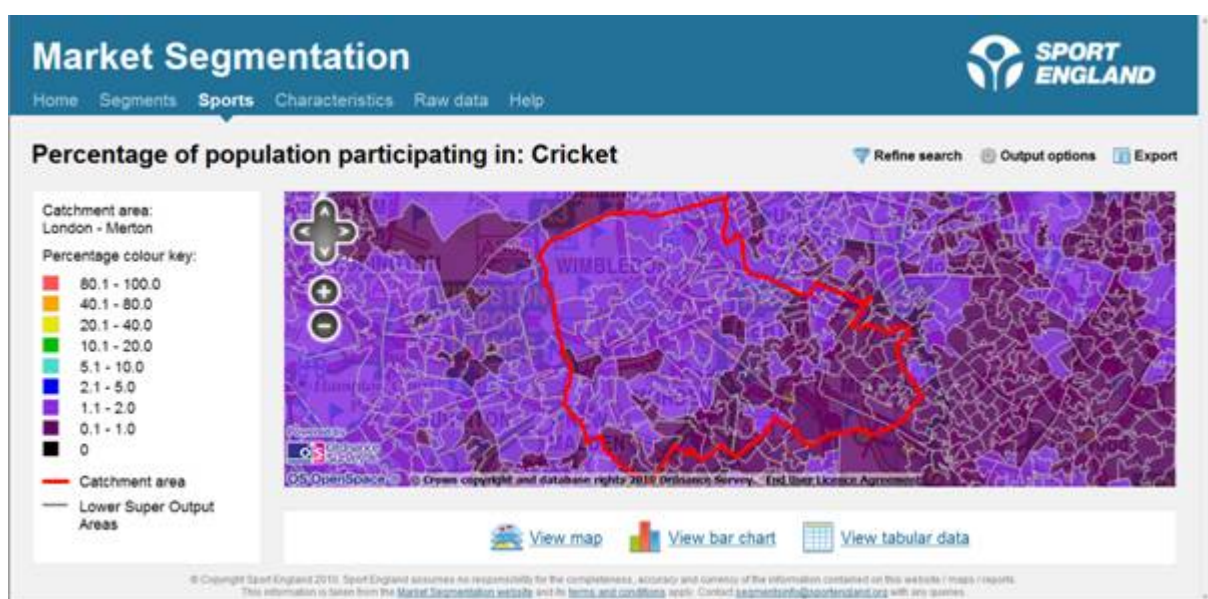
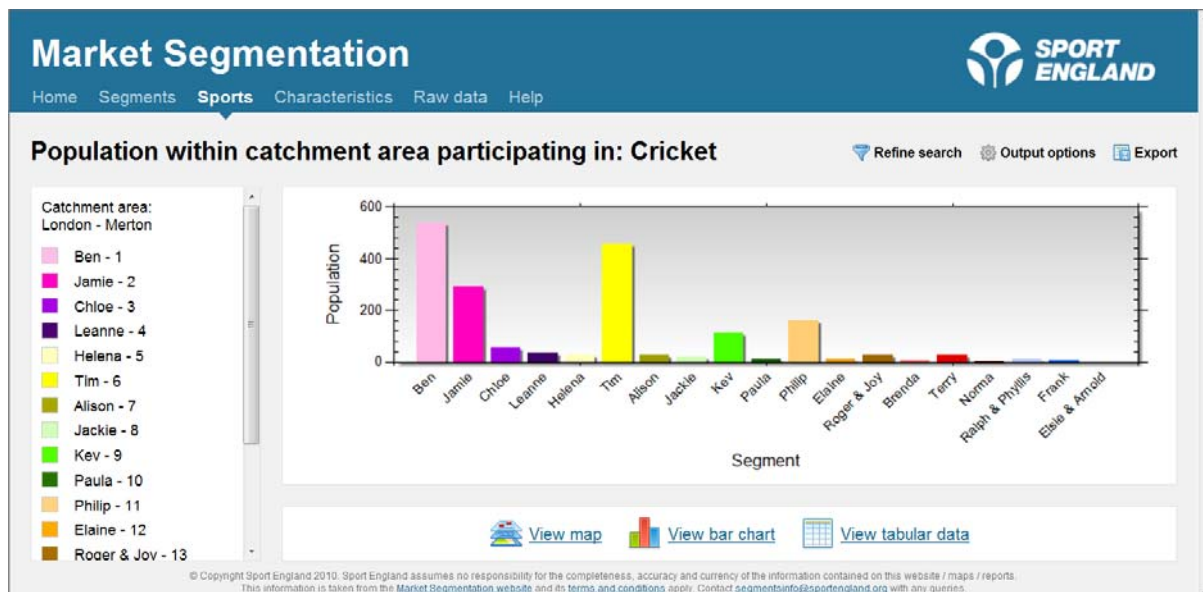


Figure 3.6 - Profile of the market segments who participate in Cricket in Merton.



The key findings from both the map and the bar chart are that:

- across most of Merton the level of adult participation in cricket is between 1 and 2% of the adult population, though this is lower in the south and east of the borough; and
- of the three main market segments for cricket participation, the Active People survey finding is showing a cricket population in Merton for Ben of about 550 participants, Tim of 500 people and Jamie with 300 people. With other market segments, the total cricket population in Merton as projected by Active People 4 is about 1700 people.

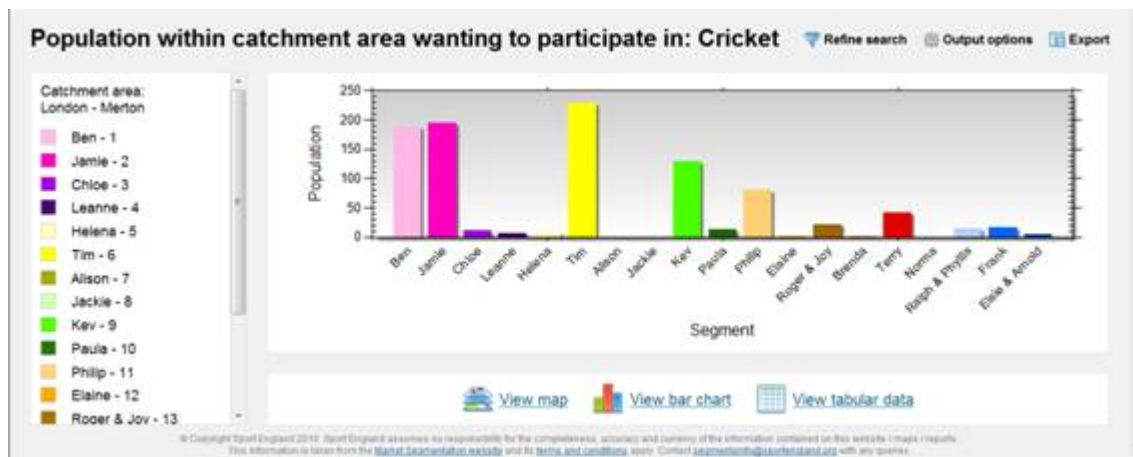
The cricket participation is focused in the same market segments as football and participation is by young adult males who play team sports on a very regular basis and for competitive sporting reasons. Around 20% of the total cricket participation is focused in the market segments that play cricket for more social and recreational reasons.

Turning to the Active People analysis of the percentage of adults who would LIKE TO play cricket this is again represented in map and bar chart form and set out in Map 3.7 and Figure 3.5 overleaf.

Map 3.7- Percentage and location of the Merton adult population who would like to play Cricket



Figure 3.5 - Profile of the market segments who would like to participate in Cricket in Merton



The key findings from both the map and the bar chart are that:

- the map is showing that across the authority there is between 0.1% - 1% of the Merton adult population who would like to participate in cricket; and
- in terms of the potential market profile for cricket based on the Active People market segments this shows a further emphasis on the active segments who currently already play cricket - Tim, Ben and Jamie segments although Kev who may play more recreational cricket is also represented. The total who would like to play cricket is about 900 people.

Overall the Active People survey findings are showing there is a very low latent demand for cricket of only between 0.1% – 1% of the adult population across Merton, who would like to play cricket. This potential cricket participation is spread quite evenly across the competitive organised cricket segments of Jamie, Tim and Ben and the casual recreational cricket segments of Kev. There are no noticeable adult female cricket participation/segments. The total latent demand for cricket across all market segments is about 900 people.

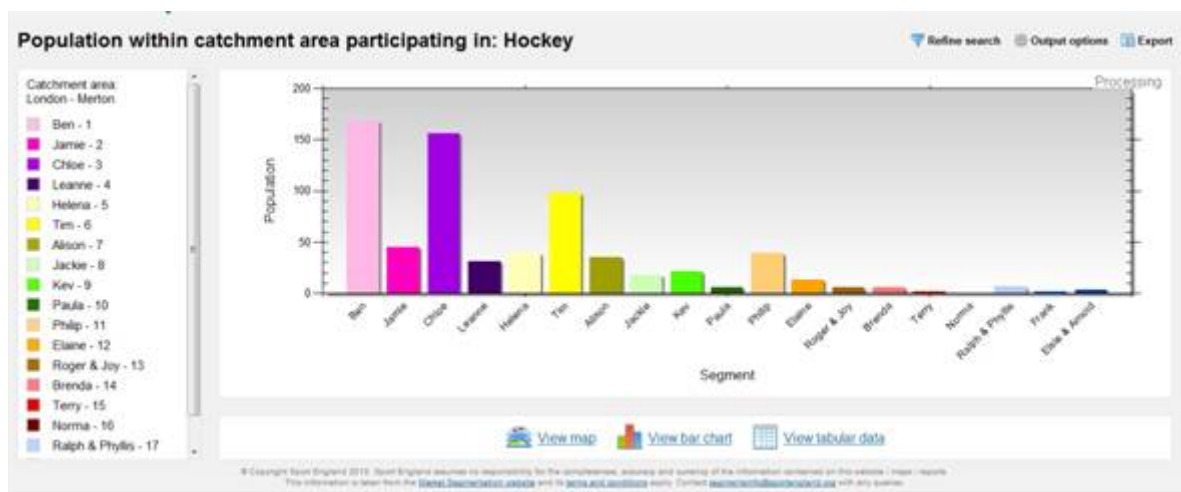
Hockey

The Active People market segmentation data on the spatial and population profile of hockey participation is set out in Map 3.8 below and shows the percentage of the Merton population who based on the Active People survey 4 findings are currently participating in cricket across the borough.

Map 3.8 - Percentage and location of the Merton adult population who do play Hockey



Figure 3.6 - Profile of the market segments who participate in Hockey in Merton



The key findings from both the map and the bar chart are that:

- across the whole of Merton the Active People 4 survey is showing a profile of adult participation in hockey which is between 0.1% - 1% of the adult population; and
- the number of market segments involved in hockey in Merton is slightly wider than for any other sport, and this reflects both male and female segment, although the main participants are again Ben Chloe and Tim. However the numbers of people projected to be playing hockey are low. The three main segments have about 420 participants of a total of about 700 likely players.

The Active People analysis of the percentage of adults who would like to play hockey is set out in Map 3.9 and Figure 3.7 below.

Map 3.9 - Percentage and location of the Merton adult population who would like to play Hockey

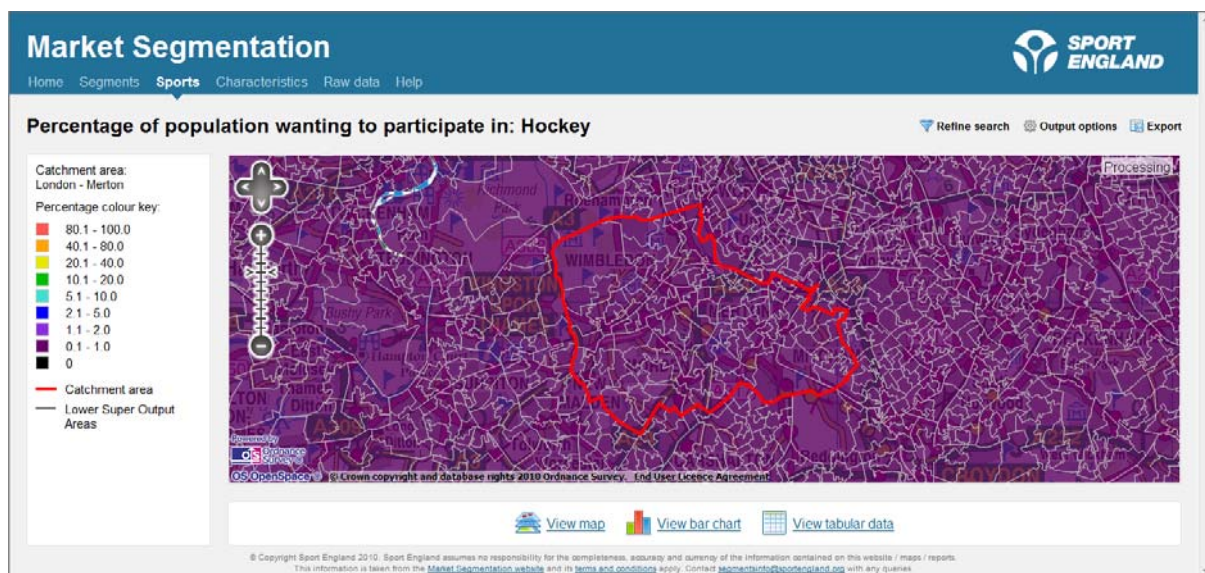
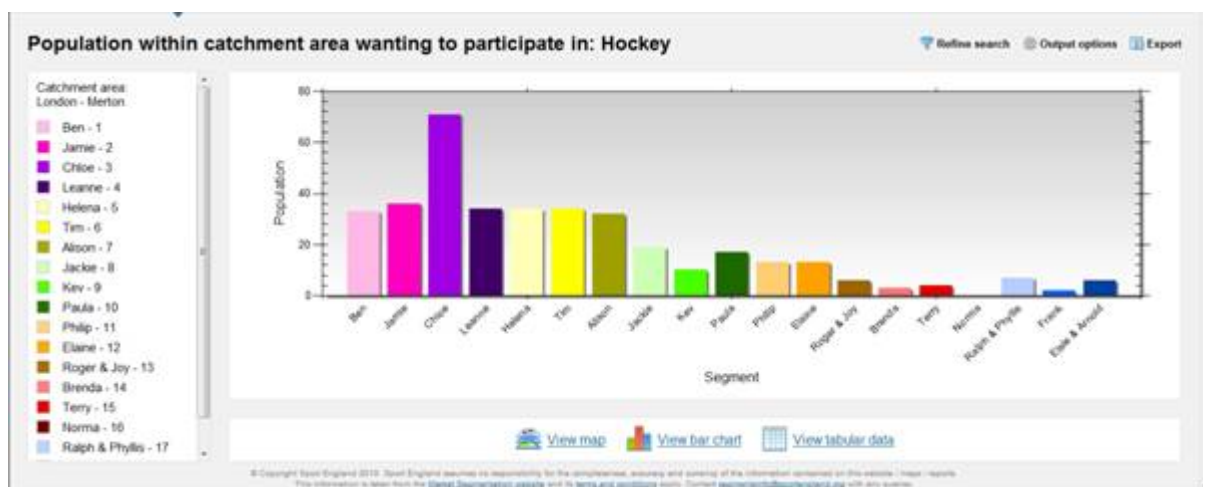


Figure 3.7 - Profile of the market segments who would like to participate in Hockey in Merton



The key findings from both the map and the bar chart are that:

- the map is showing that across the authority there is between 0.1% - 1% of the Merton adult population who would like to participate in hockey; and
- again there is a better balance among a number of segments, but the largest potential participant group is Chloe, with 75 potential players of a total of about 350.

Overall the Active People survey findings shows there is a very low latent demand for hockey of only between 0.1% – 1% of the adult population across Merton. This potential hockey population is spread quite evenly across a number of segments segments in total and across both sexes. The total latent demand for hockey across all market segments is about 280- 350 people.

Rugby Union

This same profile of current and potential participation can also be set out for rugby union. Consideration is given first to the current profile of rugby union participation in Merton and this is provided in Map 3.10 and Figure 3.8 below.

Map 3.10 - Percentage and location of the Merton adult population who play Rugby Union

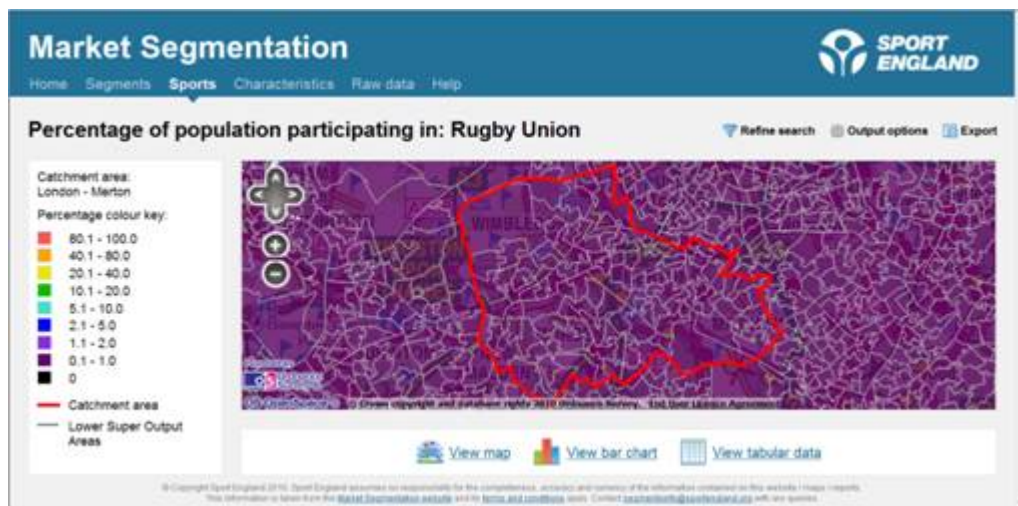
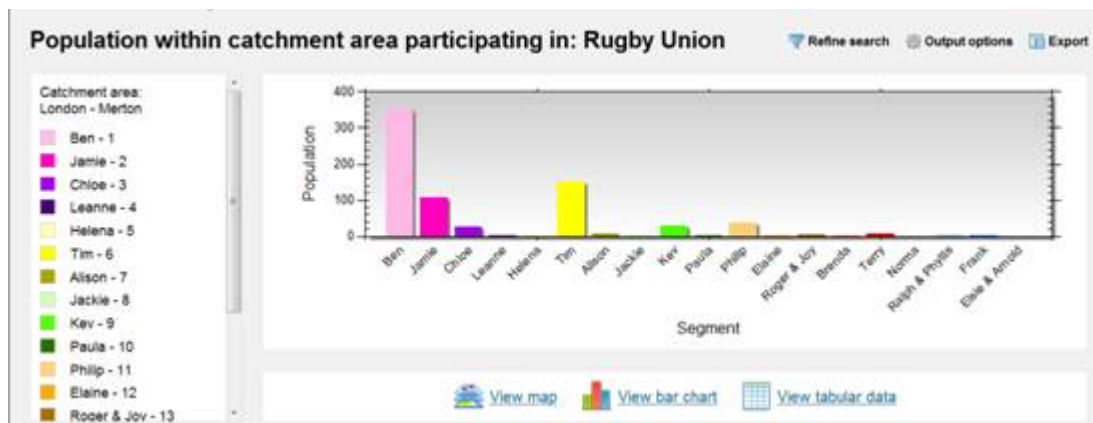


Figure 3.8 - Profile of the market segments who participate in Rugby Union in Merton



The key findings from both the map and the bar chart are that:

- across Merton without variation in any geographical area between 0.1% -1% of adults in Merton are currently participating in rugby union as measured by the Active People 4 survey; and
- in terms of which of the market segments are participating, this is again dominated by the same three segments of Ben (in particular), Tim and Jamie, with about 600 players of a total estimated participation in rugby is about 700.

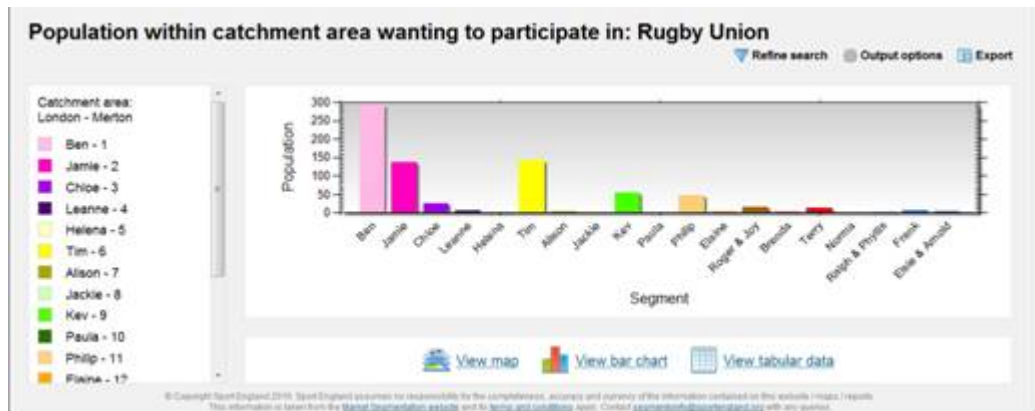
Overall, the Active People 4 survey findings are showing that the percentage of the adult population participating in rugby as a percentage of the total Merton population is between 0.1% - 1%. This is evidently a low percentage, but to put it into context the Active People survey 4 finding was that based on a once a week participation in rugby union, the England average percentage was 0.46% of the England population. So the Merton percentage is in line with the national average.

The potential rugby union market and the profile for the population who would like to play rugby union is set out in Map 3.11 and Figure 3.9 below and overleaf.

Map 3.11 - Percentage and location of the Merton adult population who would like to play Rugby Union



Figure 3.9 - Profile of the market segments who would like to participate in Rugby Union in Merton.



The key findings from both the map and the bar chart are that:

- the percentage of the population who would like to play rugby does not vary across Merton and is the same percentage of the population who do play rugby union at between 0.1% – 1%; and
- in terms of the dominant market segments who would like to play rugby it is the same three segments as above.

Overall there is very little latent demand or potential participation for adults who would like to play rugby union and this is focused on the three market segments that play rugby union for competitive team sports reasons.

Bowls

Map 3.12 - Percentage and location of the Merton adult population who play Bowls

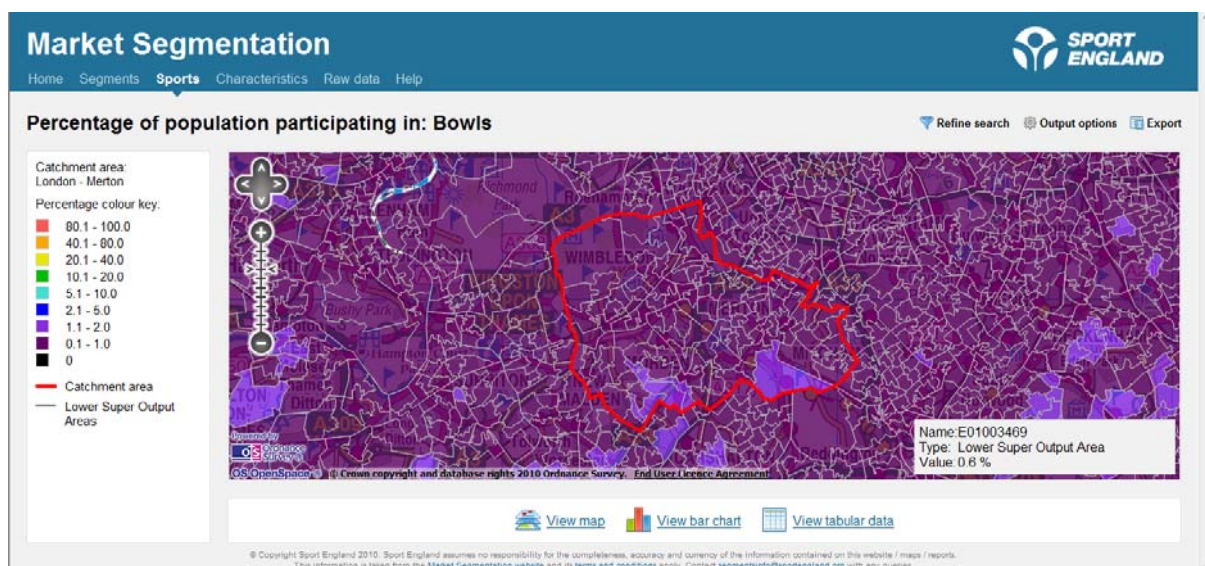
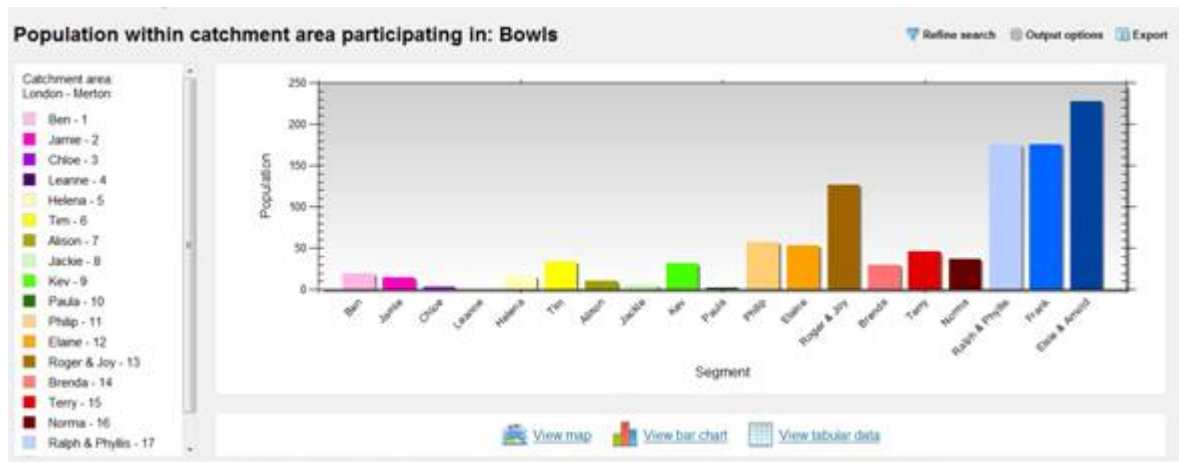


Figure 3.10 - Profile of the market segments who participate in Bowls in Merton.



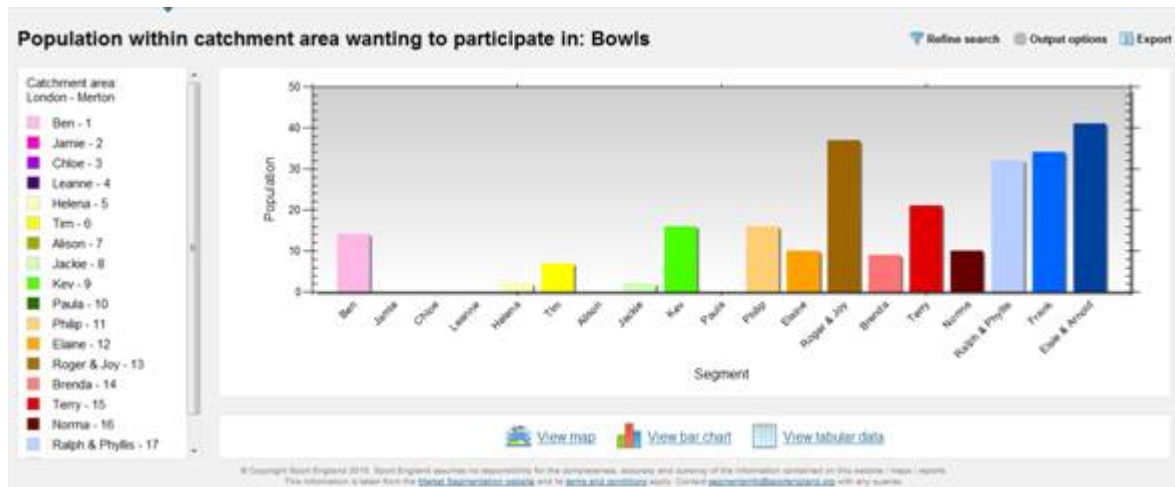
The map and chart show the following:

- existing participation in bowls in Merton is broadly 0-1% across much of the borough, though there are pockets in Morden and Mitcham where participation is 1-2%; and
- the main participants are inevitably Elsie and Arnold, Frank, Ralph and Phyllis and Roger and Joy, who are mainly older people. Total participation is about 1100 people.

Map 3.13 - Percentage and location of the Merton adult population who would like to play Bowls



Figure 3.11 - Profile of the market segments who would like to participate in Bowls in Merton



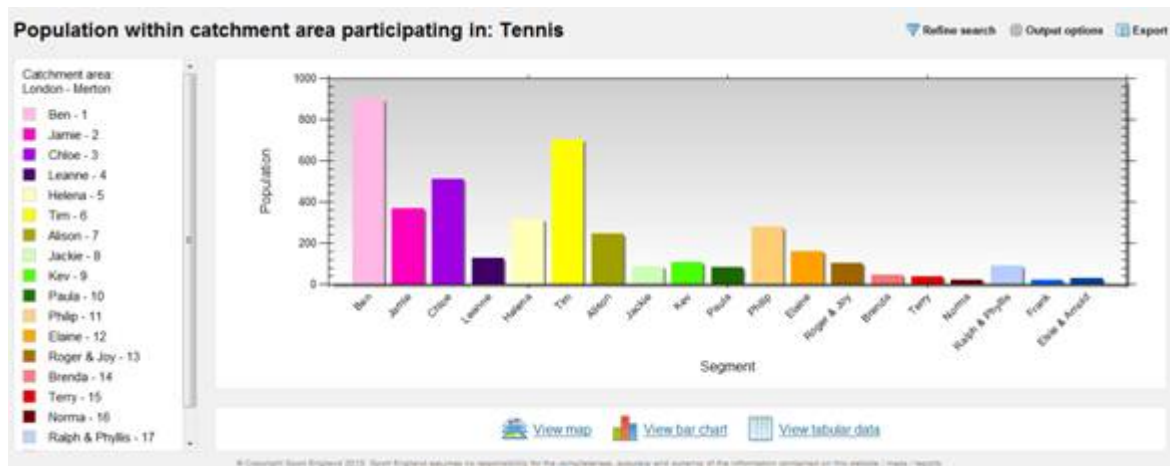
As with existing participation, potential activity is 0-1% across the whole borough, mainly from the same segments that currently play, totalling about 250 players overall. There is little latent demand for bowls.

Tennis

Map 3.14 - Percentage and location of the Merton adult population who play Tennis



Figure 3.12 - Profile of the market segments who participate in Tennis in Merton.



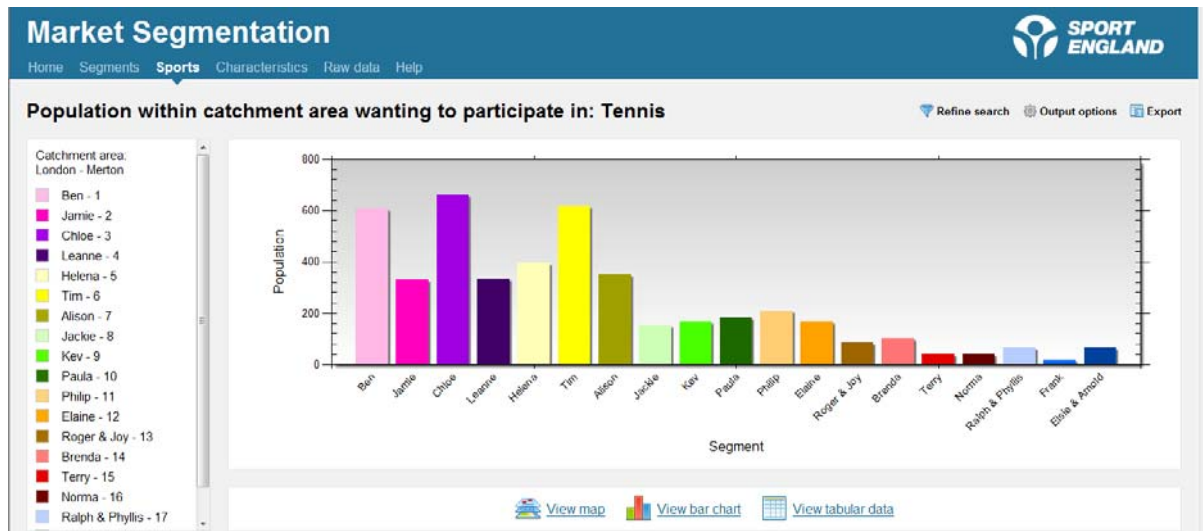
The map and chart show the following:

- existing participation in tennis in Merton is mainly between 2-5% over much of the borough, although it is lower in parts of Mitcham and Morden; and
- the main players are Ben, Tim and Chloe, and this is in line with other sports. Total participation is about 4200 players.

Map 3.15 - Percentage and location of the Merton adult population who would like to play Tennis



Figure 3.13 - Profile of the market segments who would like to participate in Tennis in Merton.



As with existing participation, potential activity is 1-2% across the whole borough, mainly from the same segments that currently play, totalling about 4200 additional players overall. There is a high level of latent demand for tennis.

Summary of population and participation findings and issues for the strategy to address

There are a number of key strategic issues emerging from the assessment of the population trends and the adult sports participation profile, as follows:

Population trends

- There is a younger than average population in Merton, with a greater propensity to take part in sport
- There will be a small increase in population between 2011 and 2026, but the proportion of the population that lies within the 'active' age groups will not increase at the same rate as the population generally ages
- There is an estimated increase in the young population from 5-19 years, with obvious implications for the demand for junior sports
- A decrease in the 20-49 age group will lead to a reduction in adult and senior sports participation unless development initiatives are undertaken
- A large increase in the elderly population (55+) will increase the need to consider outdoor sports of a more 'passive' nature, including bowls, walking and similar informal activities.

Adult sports participation

- Activity rates in sport among the adult population in Merton are about average for the surrounding area and in line with national figures. The Active People data suggest that this has not changed significantly over the past 5 years
- A large proportion of the Merton population (37%) is contained within four main market segments in the borough – Ben, Jamie, Chloe and Tim, and each of these groups are high

participants in sport, and in particular some of the pitch sports. If pitch sports are considered to be a driver for increasing adult sports participation in Merton then the profile of the "Merton sports market" matches with playing pitch sports and they have rates of adult sports participation above the national averages for other market segments

- In terms of the actual pitch sports of football, cricket, hockey and rugby union, the profile of the adult participation is dominated by football. Football is the fourth largest sport overall in the borough. Football participation is focused in three market segments whose football participation is by young adult males who play team sports on a very regular basis and for competitive sporting reasons. The casual irregular football participation where participation is spread across several of the market segments has a much lower profile in Merton
- Other outdoor sports are less popular, and there is low latent demand for additional activity. One exception is tennis where the market profile of the population indicates that there is good tennis activity and significant latent demand for additional participation
- In short the MAIN focus for pitch sports participation is narrow in age range, reasons for playing pitch sports – organised and competitive and focused on football.

(Note: this assessment is based on pitch sports participation profile as measured by Active People Market Segmentation – this does not include pitch sports participation by people aged under 16, nor does it include an assessment of participation in casual/recreational unorganized pitch sports activity.)

Merton sports development target

The Council has indicated that it is planning for a 0.33% per annum increase in overall sports participation over the period of this strategy, which means that the target for 2026 is a 5% increase overall in the numbers of people playing sport. This and the other factors need to be built into future projections for pitch and outdoor sports facility provision.

4. Strategic Context

National context

04

The policy context at national level which underpins the current study has been addressed in previous documents, and there is little advantage in reiterating this at this stage except to highlight the main contributors:

- Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation' was last revised in 2002 and sets out the Government's policy objectives for open space and sport. The main requirement is the need for local authorities to produce assessments of open space need compliant with a methodology set out in an accompanying Companion Guide. The Merton Open Space Study fulfils this purpose in Merton. The PPG also provides policy guidance on playing fields and pitches and states that a robust needs assessment of playing pitch is required, in the absence of which playing pitches must be retained unless one of four exceptions can be met.
- Sport England has been a statutory consultee on planning applications affecting playing pitches since 1996 and has a long established policy of retention, which is the precursor to the PPG17 guidance above. Sport England also advises that informed decisions on playing pitch matters require all local authorities to have an up to date (within the last three years) assessment of need and a strategy emanating from this. It has recently produced 'Fit for Purpose Guidelines' establishing the main criteria to be considered when producing such document.
- The proposed Planning Policy Statement: Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment, sets out streamlined and consolidated planning policy, including open space, sport, recreation and play (currently set out in Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG17). Policy NE5: Local planning approach to open space, sport, and recreation requires LAs to provide sufficient high quality, multifunctional open space, sports and recreational facilities and should identify priorities (NE5.2). Authorities should also include local standards in their local development frameworks for the quantity, quality and accessibility for open space, and facilities for sport, recreation and play (NE5.3) and identify opportunities to enhance existing areas or facilities, or to create new ones where deficiencies have been identified (NE5.4).

Local context

Merton Open Space Study – the original MOSS 2005 provided an assessment of community needs for open space in the borough, including the need for facilities for outdoor sport and playing pitches. This part of the study was based on a playing pitch assessment conducted by consultants in 2004, and broadly concluded that there was a surplus of facilities for senior football, cricket and rugby, and a shortfall of pitches for junior football. There was some latent demand for additional facilities, and some quality issues surrounding some facilities.

MOSS Refresh (2010/11) is intended as an update to the 2005 study and will provide a more current assessment of the spatial distribution of green spaces, sport and leisure facilities in the borough. A further playing pitch assessment was prepared by consultants in 2010 to inform the updated open space study and strategy, involving a comparison with the previous 2004 study. The study concluded that there were increased participation levels compared with previously

enhanced demand for football (particularly junior and mini), cricket and rugby, but that pitch provision over the years had decreased. The study concluded that there was sufficient capacity in pitches to meet the demand for adult football, but not junior, and spare capacity for cricket and rugby. The 2010 study was produced primarily to support a planning application for limited redevelopment of a playing field site, but incorporated pitch information for the whole borough. The study was not accepted as a robust study that met Sport England criteria.

The Moss 2010/11 study of pitches was desk based research and looked at the findings from the 2010 consultants study. This found that the majority of Merton's playing pitches are located in the north and west of the borough (only four sub-areas were used for this study, based on the 2005 MOSS). Morden and Mitcham were the sub-areas with the smallest amount of playing pitches in Merton (but with the most number of playing pitches located in schools that might be booked/ hired by the public). It found that the majority of council owned all weather pitches are also used as Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) hence, not exclusively used for one sporting activity. The demand and population forecasts for the next 15 years indicated relatively small population changes, however Merton would continue to need to have playing pitches for informal use and to accommodate the different demands for sporting activities. The MOSS concluded that the existing level and type of council owned playing pitches should be retained.

Local planning context in Merton

The **LDF Core Strategy** process began in November 2005, culminating in the pre-submission publication of the Core Strategy in July 2010. At this stage of the process, the strategy is pitched at a general level, and specific reference to sport and recreation is not expected. However, the strategy does refer to these needs in broad terms as follows:

- the spatial vision for the Core Strategy includes 'supporting local community life through education, employment opportunities, cultural and sporting assets, community services, recreational activities and other infrastructure that meets local needs';
- the strategic objectives include 'making Merton a healthier and better place for people to live and work in or visit by improving access to (nature and) leisure facilities including opportunities for sport and play' (strategic objective 5), and 'making the borough a more attractive and green place' (strategic objective 6); and
- Policy CS13 Open Space, Nature Conservation, Leisure and Culture seeks to protect and enhance public and private open space, and provide opportunities in culture, sport, recreation and play, by safeguarding existing viable facilities, supporting new and improved provision, refurbishing facilities in parks and open space, providing healthier lifestyles through indoor and outdoor sports facilities, safeguarding existing 'play' areas. It is the intention of the policy that there will be no net loss of open space.

The Core Strategy is supportive of the need to provide and retain facilities for indoor and outdoor sport, but there is no specific reference in the document of playing pitches and no statement at this stage that playing pitches and fields will be protected in the future.

A Planning Obligations SPD was published in July 2006 and supplements a policy in the adopted UDP. This is intended to 'provide a clear framework for assessing, calculating and completing planning obligations for development in the borough in order that a baseline figure for negotiation can be obtained'. The types of development that are available for developer contributions include open space – policy L8 of the UDP states that where development in an area deficient in open space leads to pressure for additional recreational open space, direct provision or a financial contribution should be made. Provision can be on or off

site and the current calculation comprises a minimum of £279 per person. The document includes children's play and general open space, but there is no specific reference to the need to include playing fields and pitches. Merton intends to prepare a revised SPD in line with the emerging Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and revised S.106 legislation.

Other local policy and strategic guidance

Community Plan - Merton's Community Plan is the overarching strategic plan of the Merton Partnership. It sets out the Partnership's long term vision and priorities for the borough. The original Community Plan was agreed in 2006, and refreshed in 2009 to ensure it remains up to date and in line with residents' priorities. The Plan covers the period 2009-19. It is also the borough's Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Plan covers a wide range of issues under five themes:

- Sustainable Communities and Transport
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Healthier Communities
- Older People
- Children and Young People.

A key link between the Community Plan and the Outdoor Sports Strategy is provided by the London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games. Merton's benefit from the London 2012 Games stems from the Olympic tennis event taking place at the All England Lawn Tennis Club in Wimbledon. In addition, the borough wishes to reflect the potential and the ideals of the Olympic and Paralympic Games through a comprehensive programme of art, cultural and sporting events in the years leading up to the Games. As a host Olympic borough, Merton, is already involved in the Cultural Olympiad, a four-year celebration which started at the handover ceremonies in Beijing in 2008 and ends at the closing ceremonies in London in 2012.

The Merton Cultural Olympiad aims to showcase Merton talent and innovation and will reflect the key themes of the London 2012 Games in:

- celebrating Merton and welcoming the world;
- inspiring and involving young people; and
- generating a positive legacy.

The aim is to promote the sporting and cultural traditions of the borough under the four strategic themes of the Cultural Strategy 'A Better Future for All'. A key element is new and improved sports and leisure facilities, parks and open spaces and increased access to facilities. The Outdoor Sports Strategy will be vital to the identifying the priorities for the sports concerned in order that the aspirations set out in the Community Plan are achieved and to deliver value for money in the resources that are available for investment.

The Olympic Games are seen as providing an excellent opportunity to enthuse Merton children and young people in sports participation. Also there will be an opportunity for Merton children and young people to contribute by volunteering. Overall the games will provide a boost to the borough and promote wider agenda's such as community cohesion.

A 'Merton Sustainable Visioning Consultation' (2006) asked children and young people what they thought were the key issues that the partnership should focus on, to improve Merton now

and in the future. Children, young people and parents responded that they would like to see more sporting activities on offer, with football and team sports as the most popular.

Local Area Agreement - Merton's Local Area Agreement (LAA) was approved by central government in June 2008, and is refreshed annually. The LAA covers three years, from 2008 to 2011, and represents the delivery plan for the Community Plan. The central theme of Merton's LAA is 'bridging the gap', which aims to narrow the inequalities between the east and the west of the borough. The development of the LAA is driven by the vision and priorities set out in the Community Plan.

Healthier Communities Strategy 2008-2012 - The Healthier Communities Strategy has been produced in partnership by Merton Council, Sutton and Merton Primary Care Trust and the Merton Partnership. Merton's ambition is to have "a well developed role in the promotion of healthier communities with a special focus on reducing the health inequalities between the eastern and western wards" by 2010. (Business Plan 2007)

It will be particularly important that the deprived areas of the borough have access to facilities for the outdoor sports and that the needs of older people and black and minority ethnic groups are considered.

The Strategic Plan sets out the Primary Care Trust's (PCT) proposals for the next five years covering specific local health issues for the PCT. Its vision is "to improve the health and quality of life of its population through focusing on prevention of ill health and the commissioning of quality services that are clinically effective and provide value for money". People will be supported to manage their own health.

A key priority in the strategy is to address the rising tide of obesity, and the general physical and mental well being of the population.

A target identified in the Local Area Agreement is the number of adults engaged in the Cultural Olympiad through sport and active recreation and the percentage of adults aged 16+ participating in at least 30 minutes moderate intensity sport and active recreation. Whilst this target includes recreational walking and cycling, outdoor sport provision can provide opportunities for people to be physically active and enable the partners to meet this target.

Targets are also included in the LAA to promote mental health within sport and leisure for vulnerable groups in the community and challenge barriers to sport and leisure with the importance of increasing access to leisure and recreational facilities highlighted and with specific mention of football coaching.

To address the wider determinants of health, emphasis is placed on promoting healthy lifestyles and choices and reducing barriers for young people so that access to services can assist them in overcoming their difficulties. Key to this will be providing quality outdoor sports facilities that children and young people enjoy.

Healthy Communities Peer Review, London Borough of Merton, 17-19 July 2007 - The Healthier Communities and Older Peoples Scrutiny Panel undertook a cross-cutting review on prevention of ill-health and early intervention, in order to highlight how preventative measures can promote well-being, reduce pressures on local health and community care services and contribute to narrowing the health inequalities gap. The focus was on a number of measures including keeping fit and well (including physical activity and leisure opportunities).

Merton's Free Play Strategy 2007-2012 - A key link between this document and the outdoor

sports strategy is the need to take account of the aims of this strategy which aims to ensure that informal sporting activities are allowed to and do take place on pitches, games areas, hard surfaces and grassed areas in open spaces where it is safe to do so. This in essence means that the management of these areas needs to take account of informal use and to encourage this to happen. This aspiration equally applies to schools sites and their playing fields where this use can be accommodated without compromising the use of these areas for education purposes.

Merton Sports, Health and Physical Activity Strategy 2006-9 was the first strategy produced by the Council's Leisure Development team. It aimed to contribute towards healthier communities, by helping all sections of the community to choose a healthier lifestyle, and narrow health inequalities, and achieve sustainable communities through among others the provision of cultural and leisure facilities that meet local needs and encourage active participation by all groups, particularly the hard to reach. The strategy is now out of date but some of the main objectives by 2009 are useful to highlight:

- more people taking part in sport 3 x 30 minutes per week;
- all schools offering 2 hours high quality PE per week;
- more adult volunteering;
- better accessibility to facilities within 20 minutes walk; and
- improved and upgraded sports facilities with community usage.

Specific details included improving facilities at Wimbledon Park including the track, increasing opportunities and facilities at Tooting Hub and working with schools and academies to enhance community access. Most of the proposals set out therein have been implemented.

Policies of neighbouring boroughs

It is evident that in a borough like Merton, with a densely built up urban area, good accessibility, relatively good provision of outdoor sports facilities and indistinct natural boundaries, there will be a significant amount of movement of participants in outdoor sports between Merton and the surrounding boroughs. It is not possible within the constraints of this study to ascertain with absolute certainty the amount of teams and participants from Merton that currently play within adjacent boroughs, though information on outside teams playing in Merton is easier to obtain. Set out below however is a summary of any strategies and studies for playing pitches and outdoor sport that currently exist in these neighbouring boroughs in an attempt to place Merton's needs in the wider context.

Croydon commissioned an outdoor needs assessment from consultants in August 2009 though this is not yet converted into a strategy. This is compliant with the recommended Sport England methodology. The assessment identifies an overall surplus of senior football pitches, a shortfall of junior and mini pitches, spare capacity for cricket, overplay of rugby pitches, sufficient AGPs for hockey, no unmet demand for bowls or tennis and potential for more community use of school outdoor facilities. This assessment is up to date and current.

Kingston on Thames has a 2006 open space assessment, which was based on the GLA parks hierarchy and a general PPG17 methodology. The report produced a new standard of required provision for the PPG17 typologies but did not specifically consider outdoor sport, and is therefore not considered robust for the purposes of playing pitch assessment.

Lambeth produced an open space strategy in 2004 which was refreshed in terms of a quality audit in 2007. There was no close examination of the needs of pitch sports although the study

concluded that there was too little open space overall, of a poor standard and with limited awareness by users. A more recent facilities audit has been undertaken in 2010 a part of a sports facilities strategy for improvement but this does not represent a playing pitch assessment. Hearsay evidence from Lambeth officers suggests that there is some evidence that Lambeth residents use sports facilities in Merton, because Merton residents travel to Lambeth facilities that are cheaper, and there is no spare capacity there to accommodate local demand.

Richmond on Thames produced internally a sport, open space and recreation assessment in 2007/8, the detailed conclusion of which were that there are enough football pitches, a likely increase in the need for rugby, adequate facilities for cricket and a future demand for AGPs for hockey. Tennis courts are generally adequate in number, no new facilities are needed for bowls, and there is a need for additional netball courts and MUGAs. Overall there is considered to be enough playing pitches despite some evidence of people from outside the borough using pitches and there has been a loss of important company sports grounds. The evidence base has been tested in the Core Strategy examination and been found to be 'fit for purpose', but the methodology was not entirely consistent with Sport England guidance, there was a lack of consultation with clubs (booking records were used to assess demand), capacity was not addressed and the quality audit was subjective.

Sutton – a playing field study was produced in 2004 which concluded that there was an adequate supply of pitches for football, an under supply for mini soccer, adequate cricket pitches, an under supply for rugby and enough pitches for hockey and some minor sports. An open space study and strategy produced in 2005/7 concluded that there was an adequate provision of open space in accordance with a standard of 2.88ha/1000, but this was not specific in terms of outdoor sport and pitches.

Wandsworth commissioned an open space study in 2007 from consultants. Playing pitches were assessed as part of the overall study, but only in terms of number and quality. TaLPF guidelines were not used to assess demand which was derived from national participation assumptions, booking records, residents' surveys and other sources – club sources were not interrogated. A future requirement for playing pitches of 0.29 ha/1000 was established which is very low. The study concluded that there appeared to be sufficient pitches for the main pitch sports up to 2018 and for tennis, but that a more robust needs assessment for outdoor sport was required. A sports strategy and action plan has also recently been undertaken and this too recommends a robust pitch strategy. Discussion with Wandsworth officers suggest that pitches at Barn Elms (in Kingston but managed by Wandsworth) could be lost in the future as the result of a new mains sewer tunnel, that there is some evidence that Wandsworth's pitches are all used at peak times but that there is spare capacity at other times, that a major Saturday junior football league in Tooting takes teams from a wider area including Merton and that Wandsworth accommodates teams from inner London but also exports some demand down the A3 to Merton and other boroughs (e.g. rugby at Wimbledon).

The overall conclusions from these studies appear to confirm that there are shortfalls across the wider area in junior football and mini soccer, adequate facilities for senior football and localised deficiencies for rugby. This is not an unusual scenario in such studies. The studies and hearsay evidence associated with them suggest that the boroughs nearer London suffer the bigger shortfalls of pitches and that there is significant movement of players from inner London boroughs to their facilities and from their local residents to outer London boroughs such as Merton, Sutton and Kingston. It is impossible to quantify this accurately, but the implications need to be considered in this study and the subsequent strategy for pitches and other outdoor sports facilities in Merton

5. Overview

05

Introduction

This section provides an overview of playing pitch provision in Merton and the demand for these pitches. Sections 7-10 consider the key issues arising and the adequacy of provision to meet the needs of residents for football, cricket, rugby and hockey. Provision within the five sub areas of Merton is also evaluated within these sections.

The key priorities and recommendations are set out in the strategy chapter which follows the assessment.

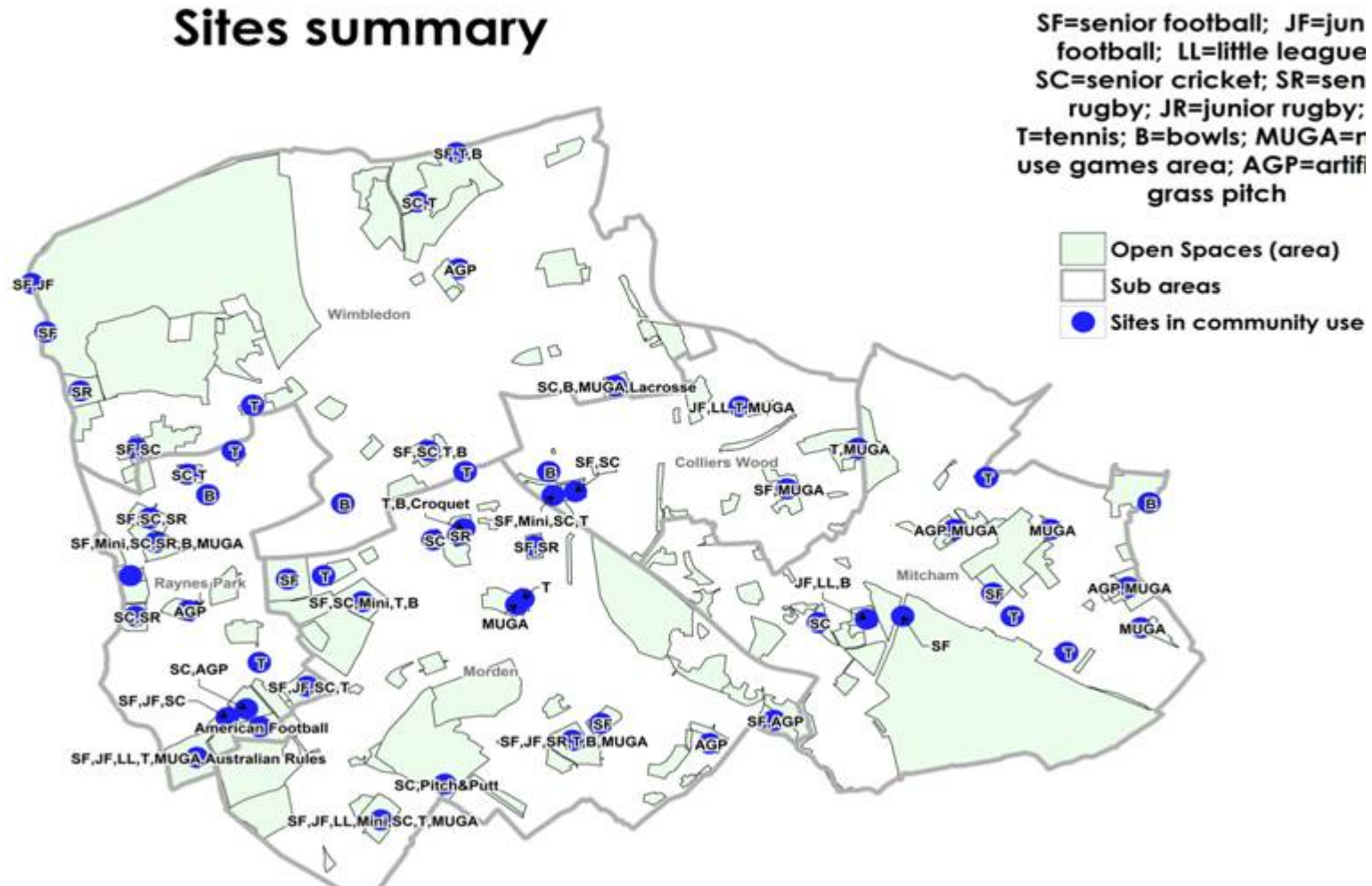
Pitch supply

There are 151 individual sports pitches across Merton, which are considered to be in community use. These pitches comprise:

- 66 adult football pitches
- 24 junior football pitches (of which 16 are used by the Little Leagues)
- 14 mini soccer pitches (of which 10 are used by the Little Leagues)
- 23 Cricket pitches
- 24 Rugby pitches

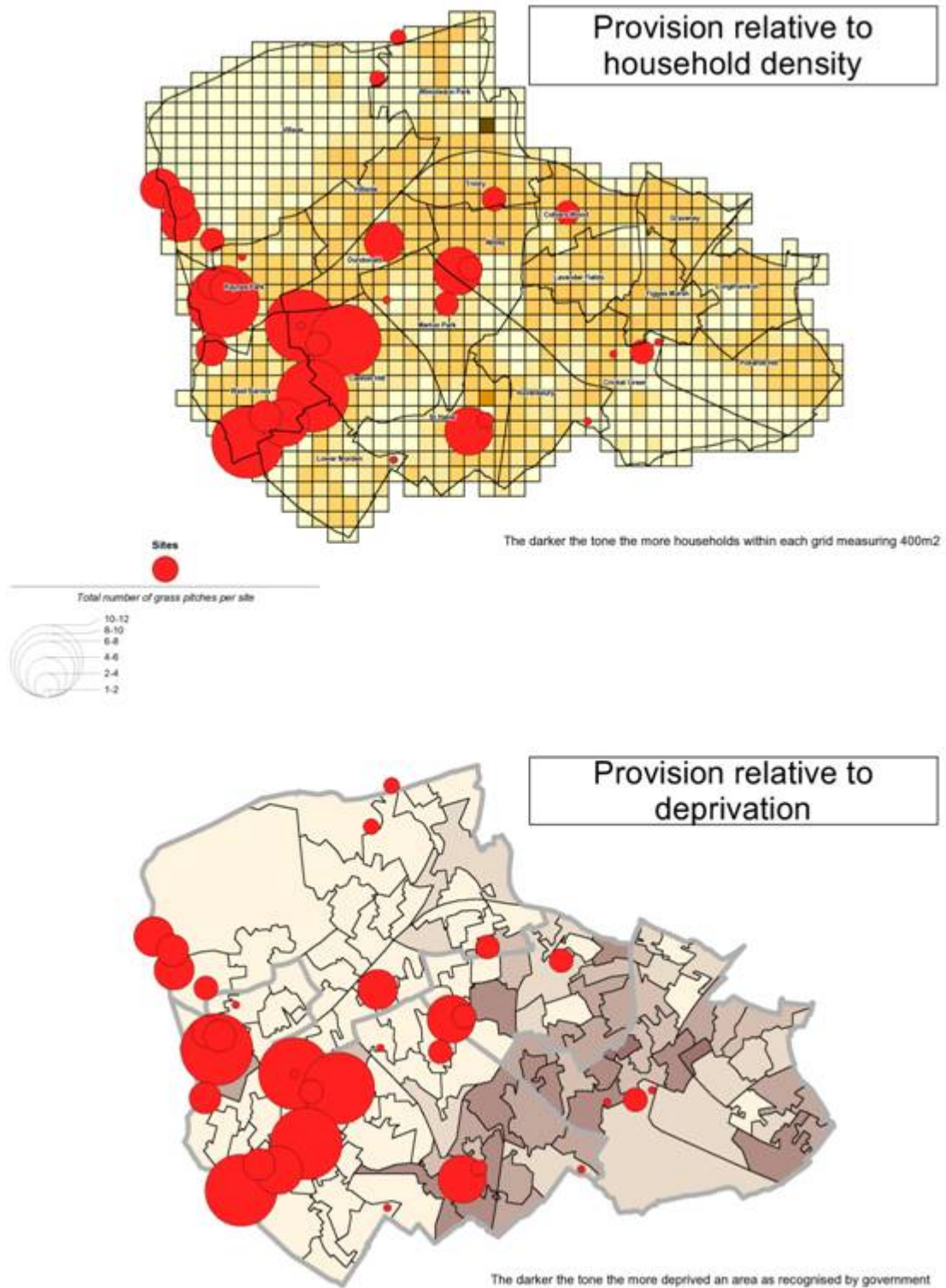
Map 5.1 - Supply of pitches and other outdoor sports facilities in Merton

Sites summary



In addition, there are occasional pitches for lacrosse (2), grass hockey (1), Australian Rules Football (1) and American Football (1).

Map 5.2 - Site provision relative to population density and deprivation levels



There are also the following built and other outdoor sports facilities in community use:

- 15 multi use games areas (MUGAs)
- 110 tennis courts
- 12 bowls greens
- 8 artificial grass pitches (AGPs)

The full audit of pitches and other outdoor facilities can be seen in Appendix 3

There are a number of other grass pitches, hard court areas and one AGP, primarily on school sites, but these are used solely by the schools themselves and their associated organisations, and are not included for the purpose of this study. Private and independent schools tend to have a wide range of outdoor sports facilities, but there are very few grass pitches on secondary schools and the two local academies, and most primary schools have only small grassed area (if at all) and hard play facilities/playgrounds. (AGPs and MUGAs on school sites available for community use are included in the figures above).

Geographically the pitches and other outdoor facilities are distributed across the borough as follows:

Table 5.1 - Distribution of outdoor sports facilities in Merton

	Sen Football	Jun Football	Mini soccer	Cricket	Rugby	AGP	Tennis	Bowls	MUGA
Colliers Wood	6	3	2	2			5	1	2
Mitcham	4	3		1		2	12	2	5
Morden	22	5	10	5	5	2	24	3	4
Raynes Park	15	11	2	10	15	3	15	2	3
Wimbledon	19	2		5	4	1	54	4	1
Total	66	24	14	23	24	8	110	12	15

The maps of pitch provision compared with population density and deprivation clearly show a skewed distribution of pitches throughout the borough, and in particular a disproportionately low supply of pitches in areas of highest deprivation and population density in Mitcham and the south eastern part of the borough.

Of the main pitch sports, their relative provision in terms of space is as follows (this includes grass pitches only – pitch sizes are taken from Sport England recommendations).

Table 5.2 – Overview of pitch provision in Merton

Area	Number of Pitches	Assumed Area	Total Area
Adult Football	66	0.9	59.4 ha
Junior Football	24	0.6	14.4 ha
Mini Football	14	0.22	3.1 ha
Cricket	23	1.60	36.8 ha
Rugby	24	1.2	28.8 ha
Total	151		142.5 ha

Almost exactly half of the pitch space is therefore occupied by football (although football pitches are two thirds by number), and cricket and rugby take up about a quarter each.

The overall current level of provision of grass pitches in community use in Merton is therefore about 0.72 ha per 1000 people.

There are a number of sites on the very edge of but outside Merton which also accommodate demand from within the borough. These include Mitcham RUFC, Poulter Park, Sutton Arena, Rosehill Recreation Ground, Reigate Avenue Recreation Ground (all in Sutton), Worcester Park Recreation Ground, Manor Park Recreation Ground, Fulham FC training ground, Beverley Park, New Malden Sports Ground (all in Kingston), Roehampton Vale Sports Ground, Southfields Sports Ground, Earlsfield Sports Ground, Furzedown Sports Ground (Wandsworth), and Norbury Hall and Croydon Boys FC Sports Ground (Croydon).

NB the Merton figures above include the sites at Wimbledon Commons Extension (which was formerly within the borough boundary and is still maintained by the Council) and the adjacent and contiguous Wibbundane PFs.

Community use

In line with 'Towards a Level Playing Field: A manual for the Production of a Playing Pitch Strategy' (Sport England and CCPR 2003), the definition of 'community pitches' in this study is those pitches with 'secured community use' – also referred to as category A pitches overleaf.

CATEGORY	Definition	Supplementary information
A1	Secured community pitches	Pitches in local authority or other public ownership or management
A2		Pitches in the voluntary, private or commercial sector which are open to members of the public#
A3		Pitches at education sites which are available for use by the public through formal community use arrangements*
B	Used by community, but not secured	Pitches not included above, that are nevertheless available for community use, e.g. school/college pitches without formal user agreements
C	Not open for community use	Pitches at establishments which are not, as a matter of policy or practice, available for hire by the public

Source: TaLPF Sport England

In most cases, it is not clear whether sites have a formal community use agreement (it is understood in fact that very few have this status). For the purposes of this study, an assumption is made that A3 represents the likely usage of most of the education sites included as in community use. Some private and independent schools clearly have extensive playing fields which for the most part are not in community use and these are not included in this study.

Ownership

The ownership of all community use playing fields in Merton is illustrated in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 - Ownership

	LBM	Education	Private club	Commercial
Senior football	37	5	15	9
Junior football	17		7	
Mini soccer	14			
Cricket	15	2	6	
Rugby	5	4	15	
Total	88 (58%)	11 (7%)	43 (28%)	9 (6%)
AGP		7		1
Tennis	58		43	9
Bowls	8		4	
MUGA	13	2		
Total	79 (55%)	9(6%)	47 (32%)	10 (7%)
Overall	57%	6%	30%	6%

Clearly the Council is the key provider of outdoor sports facilities in Merton, with 58% of pitches and 56% of other facilities (57% overall). Private clubs are the other major player with 28% of pitches and 32% of other facilities (30% overall). Education, both in the public and private sector, and commercial providers make up the remaining 12% overall.

Most playing fields within Merton are multi pitch/court/green sites, ranging from King George's Field with 24 separate facilities, Sir Joseph Hood (21), and Joseph Hood (20) to Raynes Park Sports Ground (12) and Morden Rec (13). These are all local authority sports grounds. Other large multi pitch sites in the commercial sector include Prince George's Field with 9 senior football pitches. There are relatively few single sports sites, including tennis clubs and bowls greens, while some local authority parks contain just a small ballpark or MUGA.

Maintenance

Pitches in the ownership of the Council are maintained by the Council's own Green Spaces maintenance team, who have a regular schedule of pitch marking, grass cutting and other work to a specification agreed by the Council. This includes all grass pitches for football, cricket, rugby and other minor sports, as well as bowls greens and croquet lawns. The contract also incorporates maintenance of tennis courts and MUGAs belonging to LBM.

Separate arrangements are made for the maintenance, upkeep and repair of schools sites, including AGPs for community use, private clubs which have their own grounds staff, often dedicated to the particular site, and the commercially run venues such as Prince George's Fields which are also maintained by dedicated staff.

Charges

Council facility charges are benchmarked by the Council against similar charges elsewhere in London. Pitch charges tend to vary considerably according to the type of pitch, age group catered for, whether concessions are available, season ticket discounts and other factors. The most recent charges available (2010/11 which include VAT at the previous rate of 17.5%) are set out below for a selection of different facilities.

Table 5.4 - LBM facility charges

Sports facility	Fee/charge	Rating
Bowls	Hourly fee £4.65	6 th cheapest in London of 8 available
	Club matches per game £21.75	2 nd of 4
Cricket	11 match season including changing (senior) £825	6 th of 15
	11 match season including changing (junior) £579	5 th of 19
	Casual game (senior) £88.10	4 th of 18
	Casual game (junior) £60.35	9 th of 10
Football	Casual game £85.10	19 th of 24

Sports facility	Fee/charge	Rating
	13 match season (senior) £940.50	10 th of 18
	13 match season (junior) £658.35	12 th of 16
Rugby	Casual game £94.70	13 th of 14
	13 match season (senior) £1051.90	10 th of 12
	13 match season (junior) £736.35	10 th of 11
Training areas (eg MUGAs)		Generally at expensive end

Generally Merton provides a wider range of outdoor sports facilities than many other London boroughs, but tends to be at the more expensive end for charges, particularly for bowls, casual cricket, and rugby.

Information on pitches and other facilities in other ownership is more difficult to obtain. Hearsay evidence suggest that the largest site for football pitches at Prince George's Field is relatively cheap to hire (£60 per football pitch for seniors compared with the LA equivalent of £72/75, and £30 for juniors), particularly on a casual and last minute basis when other pitches have games cancelled. Private facility costs are not known in detail, but there is some evidence that the best private pitches cost £100 per match to hire.

All weather pitch charges vary between £60 per hour and £240 for the whole pitch depending on the time of day, which is understood to compare well with the prevailing rate in the area.

Despite the relatively high cost of hiring some pitches in Merton, it is not considered that this is a deterrent to clubs and teams who wish to use pitches and other facilities in the Merton, mainly in view of the relative lack of other facilities in the wider area, although there is some evidence from club consultation that some junior clubs consider cost to be a constraint on development.

Booking system

LBM operates a well established booking system for its own pitches, which involves early e-mail contact with potential clubs at the beginning of each season, and the allocation of teams and clubs at an early stage to individual grounds and pitches. After a cut off point, pitches can then be booked on-line for casual and one-off events and clubs will be able to gain access to pitches where these remain available. There is no detailed information about the booking of private and other pitches, though there is a good deal of flexibility with some sites which accommodate late bookings when other pitches are unavailable, sometimes to the detriment of the quality of some pitches.

Quality

For all types of pitch, quality in Merton has been measured through site assessments carried out in line with the assessment matrix provided in Towards a Level Playing Field – these assessments are non-technical assessments designed to provide an overview of pitch quality and the degree to which facilities are fit for purpose. The findings of these assessments are then linked with issues raised consultation with pitch users to provide a full overview of pitch quality and issues.

Site Visits The site assessments have been used as a basis to explore the key issues arising with regards pitch quality. Table 5.5 summarises the overall pitch quality for each sport based on the TaLPF non-technical assessment matrix. It uses the following categorisations (derived from the matrix in TaLPF) to categorise the sites:

- Excellent Pitch – 90%+
- Good Pitch – 64% - 90%
- Average Pitch – 55% - 64%
- Below Average Pitch – 30% - 54%
- Poor Quality Pitch – less than 30%.

The pitch quality assessment scored Merton’s pitches as follows.

Table 5.5 – Pitch quality

Sport	Excellent (% of pitches)	Good (no. of pitches)	Average (% of pitches)	Below Average (% of pitches)	Poor (% of pitches)	Average score	Range
Football	0%	97%	3%	0%	0%	75%	56-77%
Cricket	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	74%	68-81%
Rugby	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	75%	66-81%
Grass hockey	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	73%	73%
Lacrosse	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	66%	66%

Almost all the pitches were scored ‘good’ in accordance with the PPM methodology, but this range encompasses a wide divergence of scores between 64 and 90%. Overall football and rugby scored best, although the average score in each case was in the bottom third of the range. Hockey (only 1 pitch) and cricket scored slightly lower. The lacrosse pitches are widely used and in poorer condition. The widest range was in football where the junior pitches at Mitcham SG/Cannons LC were considered only average (56%). Unusually no pitches in the borough scored ‘excellent’, and this may be a reflection of the loss in recent years of company sports grounds that have traditionally offered the best facilities.

In general, site visits concluded that:

- pitches are generally well drained and in good order, though there are individual issues on some sites (depending on the time/season surveyed);
- sites in general are perceived to be well maintained, although there is evidence of issues associated with the location of many such sites within public parks;
- there was little evidence of abuse of pitches, such as tyre tracks on pitches - although it appeared in some instances that where they did exist, they were caused by line marking and mowing machinery;

- wickets on public cricket pitches are not well protected – consultation at the time of site visits suggested that this attracts vandalism and further misuse; and
- private or commercial facilities are not appreciably better quality than Council pitches.

More specific issues raised by clubs and other consultees on pitch quality are set out below in the individual sections. The quality of non-pitch outdoor sports facilities was not assessed by using the PPM methodology, which is unsuitable for this purpose, and quality issues are based on consultation and random observation.

Changing facilities

The PPM quality methodology scores ancillary facilities (changing rooms) differently to pitches as follows.

- Excellent facility – 90%+
- Good facility – 60% - 90%
- Average facility – 40% - 59%
- Below average facility – 30% - 39%
- Poor quality facility – less than 30%.

Scores for the main sites surveyed are as follows.

Table 5.6 - Quality of changing facilities

	Number	Proportion	Range
Excellent	1	3%	93%
Good	29	91%	68-90%
Average	2	6%	56-59%
Poor		0%	
Very poor		0%	

Despite some of the issues identified with pitch provision and the challenges in adequately maintaining facilities, overall the quality of pitches is average to good. For many users, the provision and quality of changing facilities is a greater issue than the quality of the pitches themselves. The overall quality of changing rooms was considered good when judged against the PPM criteria. However the range within the 'good' category varies from 68-90% and ten facilities were within the lower half of this (30% of the total). This information is supplemented in the following chapters by club and other comments. Quality issues for non-pitch sports are based solely on club and other responses.

Teams and clubs

Table 5.7 summarises the community teams participating in each sport.

Table 5.7 – Community teams in Merton borough

Sport	Number of Teams
Adult Football	163
Junior Football	112 (including Little League)
Mini Football	92 (including Little League)
Senior Cricket	69
Junior Cricket	32
Adult Rugby	31
Junior Rugby	23
Mini/midi Rugby	35
Adult Hockey	41
Junior Hockey	16
TOTAL	614

About 60% of the total number of teams play football, cricket and rugby and also provide a significant number of players. Market Segmentation demonstrates that it is football that Merton residents have the highest propensity to take part in (of the pitch sports), and this is borne out by the statistics.

There is high demand from younger players in all sports, with 50% of all teams in Merton made up of youth/junior and mini players.

The remainder of this report builds on this overview of provision and deals with individual sports and facility types in turn. The key priorities and recommendations for the future delivery of pitches in Merton borough are set out in the strategy and action plan at the end.

6. Artificial Grass Pitches

06

Supply of pitches

AGPs are located as shown on the map and table below.

Map 6.1- AGP locations

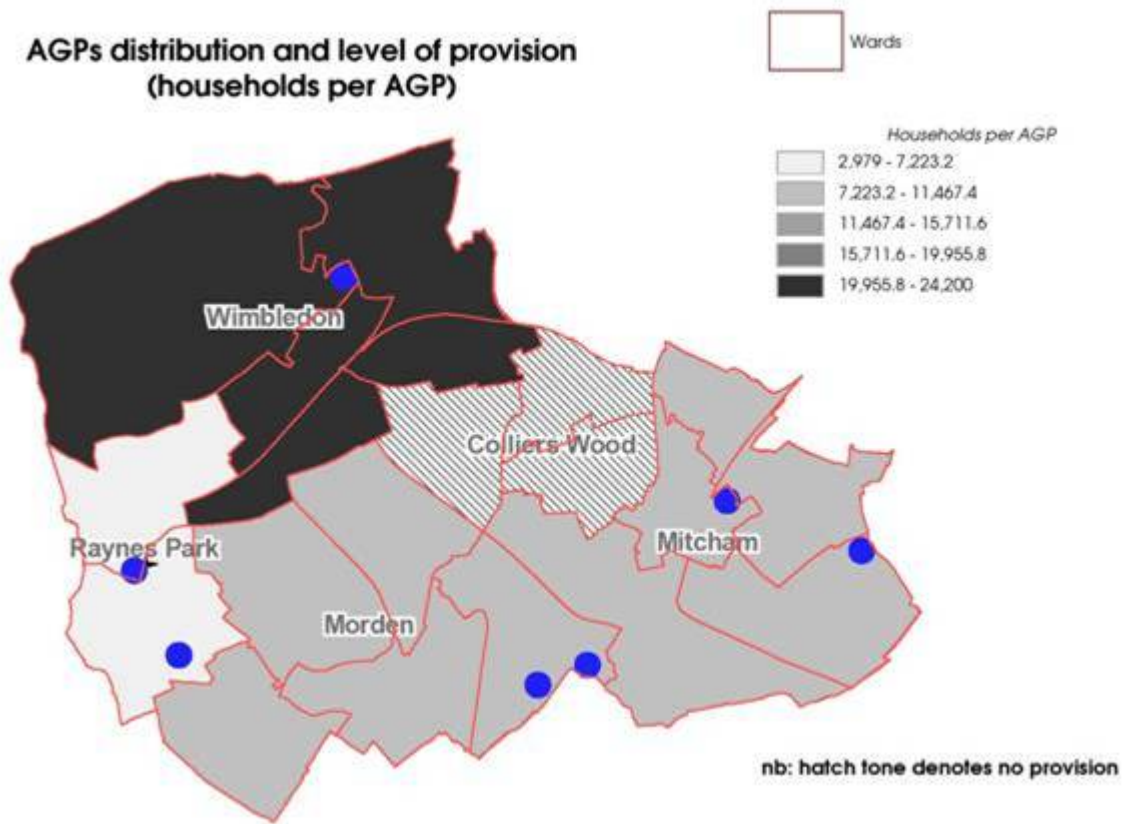


Table 6.1 - AGPs in Merton

Name	Sub area	Size(in m)	Type	Year built/refurb	Management type
BISHOPSFORD SCHOOL SPORTS HALL	Morden	100 x 60	SAND Non Floodlit	2005	Education/ sports club
HARRIS ACADEMY MERTON	Mitcham	100 x 60	SAND Floodlit	2004	Education/ sports club
KING'S COLLEGE SCHOOL SPORTS GROUND	Raynes Park	100 x 60	SAND Floodlit	2009	Indep school/sports club
KING'S COLLEGE SCHOOL SPORTS GROUND	Raynes Park	97 X 61	SAND Floodlit	1989/2000	Indep school/sports club
RAYNES PARK HIGH SCHOOL	Raynes Park	100 x 60	SAND Floodlit	2004/ 2007	Education/ sports club
RICARDS LODGE HIGH SCHOOL	Wimbledon	100 x 60	SAND Non Floodlit	2005	Education/ sports club
ST MARKS CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY	Mitcham	100 x 60	SAND Floodlit	2005	Education/ sports club
THE HUB @ TOOTING AND MITCHAM	Morden	97 x 60	SAND Floodlit	2002	Community org/pay & play
WIMBLEDON HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS GROUND	Wimbledon	100 x 60	SAND Floodlit	2000	Education/private

There are nine pitches in Merton, three of which are not floodlit and therefore do not offer the full amount of usage in the evenings. All but one is on an education site, 7 are available to clubs and others on a (block) booking system. The Hub at Tooting and Mitcham is a pay and play facility and one other pitch is in private usage. All pitches are sand based.

In addition there are 8 other pitches within a 15 minute drive of the centre of Merton (and 2 others understood to be in the planning stage). 5 of these are sand based and 3 are third generation (one of these is half sized)

Table 6.2 - Other AGPs in the wider area

Name	Sub area	Size (in m)	Type	Year built/ref urb	Management type	Time from Merton
ROSEHILL PARK	Sutton	102.5 x 60	SAND Floodlit	1998/2007	LA/pay and play	9 mins
FULHAM FC TRAINING GROUND	Kingston	100 x 60	SAND Floodlit	2001/2009	Private/some club use	11 mins
CARSHALTON BOYS SCHOOL (planned)	Sutton					11 mins
ARCHBISHOP LANFRAC SCH	Croydon	100 x 60	3G Floodlit	2010	Education/ private	11 mins
CHEAM HIGH SCH	Sutton	99 x 46	3G Not floodlit	2008	Education/ private	13 mins
CANTERBURY ROAD REC	Croydon	100 x 60	SAND Floodlit	2002	LA/sports club	14 mins
ASHCROFT TECHNICAL COLLEGE SF	Wandsworth	100 x 60	SAND Floodlit	2007	Education/spor ts club/private	15 mins
SOUTHFIELDS COMMUNITY COLL (planned)	Wandsworth					15 mins
WANDLE REC CENTRE	Wandsworth	78 x 69	3G Floodlit	2005	LA/pay and play	15 mins

Most of the Merton school AGPs were provided at around the time that secondary schools were improved as part of the PFI process (and the subsequent development of 2 academies). It is understood that all the AGPs were retained under local authority control and form no part of the subsequent management. The pitches were funded through a combination of means – Lottery, Football Foundation and New Opportunities Fund grant aid and Section 106 contributions, but were all intended to be a community resource.

In more detail the existing pitches are as follows:

- **Bishopsford Arts College** is a sand based pitch built in 2005, but owing to planning restrictions and the proximity of housing has no floodlights. There is some community use but this is restricted to daytime hours. The pitch is close to the Hub.
- **Harris Academy** was funded through the original capital for the school, with NOF grant aid, and is a sand based surface built in 2004. The pitch is considered by the Academy to be in good condition. There is a full community programme – at present Croydon Athletic FC teams play 5 hours a week on various evenings, up to 15 local football teams have one hour slots. Fulham FC Kickz project occupies 6 hours a week on Monday and Friday, and Croydon Hockey Club plays matches from 10-4 every Saturday in the winter season. Despite a full programme, the school suggests that there is some spare capacity. Community use is managed by a dedicated staff member.

- **Kings College School Sports Ground** – there are two pitches on this site in Raynes Park, both sand based and built in 1989 (refurbished in 2000) and 2009. The pitches are used by the school during the week and by Wimbledon HC most nights for training and for matches at weekends. It is understood that there is a quality issue with the original pitch because of ground conditions.
- **Raynes Park Leisure/High School** – originally built in 2000 and refurbished in 2007, this is another sand based pitch, funded by the Lottery and added after the school was improved. The site is run for the community by a Leisure Development Manager and there is extensive evening use after 5.30, particularly for football and hockey and at weekends. The current users include Mitcham Ladies HC, London Strollers HC and London Wayfarers HC.
- **Ricards Lodge High School** is another sand based pitch built in 2005 and primarily used by the school itself, as planning restrictions prevent floodlighting. Any community use is coordinated through Raynes Park Leisure - Fulham FC run community programmes on the pitch, and there is some hockey use by Mitcham Ladies, Berrylands and Wimbledon HCs. It is understood that AFC Wimbledon is also interested in future usage. There have been recent problems with moss on the surface but this is now considered solved.
- **The Hub, Tooting and Mitcham** has a sand based pitch built in 2002 and operates on a pay and play basis. It was constructed as part of a planning agreement, but some problems with the sub structure have led to quality issues. Merton HC has extensive use of the pitch, although senior teams play elsewhere, and there is widespread football training.
- **Wimbledon High School** is also a sand based pitch built in 2001. It is currently used almost solely by the school as it is built without lights, but permission has recently been granted for lights which may lead to increased usage by local clubs.

Discussion with Council staff and others has highlighted some possible additional future pitches:

- The Hub – refurbishment of the existing sand based pitch and provision of a new 3G facility, part of a wider scheme involving the owners, Sport England, Football Foundation and others;
- Raynes Park Playing Fields – provision of 1 or 2 AGPs as compensatory provision for the loss of some grass pitches to proposed housing on part of the site;
- Prince George’s PF – possible development of a floodlit 3G pitch as part of other proposals to supplement grass pitches on the site; and
- Morden Park – possible AGP to supplement other sports facilities (eg swimming pool) on the site.

Demand supply assessment using Sport England tools

An assessment of the demand for AGPs has been undertaken with the assistance of Sport England using the strategic planning tools available from them. The findings of this assessment are based on the Sport England National Analysis by the Facilities Planning Model of the supply and demand for AGPs for both football and hockey, together with some outputs from its Active Places Power website.

Overall the purpose of including this section on AGPs is to provide a supply and demand assessment on the current provision for AGPs in Merton as assessed by Sport England. This

provides additional information on this type of pitch provision and context when considering the overall findings and issues emerging through the preparation of the current study.

As this AGP assessment does not fall under the Towards a Level Playing Field Methodology set out in Section 2, it is important to set out some of the main parameters of the Sport England assessment. A full description of the methodology applied by Sport England is set out in Appendix 4. The main parameters are:

- This national assessment is undertaken annually by Sport England and for every local authority area in England, so it is a comparative assessment and uses a consistent methodology for assessing supply and demand for every full size pitch and across every local authority in England at the same time. This assessment reports the findings for the Sport England assessment in 2010.
- This national assessment does include information to supplement the current Merton study, for example, how full the pitches are estimated to be and how the supply of pitches in Merton compares with other authorities, so there are standard comparators.
- The assessment is based on the rates and frequency of sports participation drawn from national research work undertaken by Sport England and sportscotland. Participation for both football and hockey is included and the findings on the rates and frequency of participation is then applied to the Merton (and other areas') population. So the model is based upon research findings on the participation profile for these sports/pitches applied to the local population to generate locally specific findings.
- The assessment does distinguish between pitch surfaces and sports use. So it assesses the demand for football pitches based on football surfaces and the same for hockey (rugby is not included). The findings reported on here are for football and hockey combined.
- The assessment only includes full size AGPs for each sport and both floodlit and non floodlit pitches. Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) are not included.
- The assessment includes all full size pitches from all providers, local authority, club, school and commercial pitches. It does not include small sided games areas provided by commercial operators (such as the 'Goals' Centre at Raynes Park).
- The assessment includes pitches that are available for community use for all or part of the week (the model calculates demand based on the peak and off peak periods for community use) and the supply assessment is calculated on the hours of community use. Pitches that are not available for community use are not included in the assessment.

The findings reported in this section set out the Sport England assessment of the 2010 supply and demand for AGPs in Merton and surrounding authorities as an overview or context for the Merton PPS itself.

Supply/capacity – in the assessment, there are 7 artificial grass pitches in Merton, on 7 sites, (4.79 if scaled to hours available – 2 existing pitches are not floodlit and there is reduced community use). Six are on education sites, these are available to clubs and associations on block bookings, and one pitch is managed by a community association with pay and play access. All are full size and sand based. There is also one additional pitch, which is privately used, and not the subject of this assessment. Since the assessment one additional pitch has been built and is not considered here (except in the conclusions).

The total capacity in visits per week in the peak period is 3,550.

The number of pitches per 10,000 people in Merton is 0.41, compared with 0.3 in England. 0.2 in London and 0.2 in the South London sector. Local provision in Merton equals the best provision in the London region.

Demand is based on population and participation rates. The population of Merton used in the model is 197,478.

Demand expressed for AGPs in Merton is 4,700 visits per week in the peak period, or the equivalent of 6.37 pitches.

Demand is influenced by accessibility and by the mobility of local residents. Car ownership and accessibility to a car is quite low in Merton – 22% of the population has no access to a car, compared with 19% nationally and 18% in South London, though the London average is 29%.

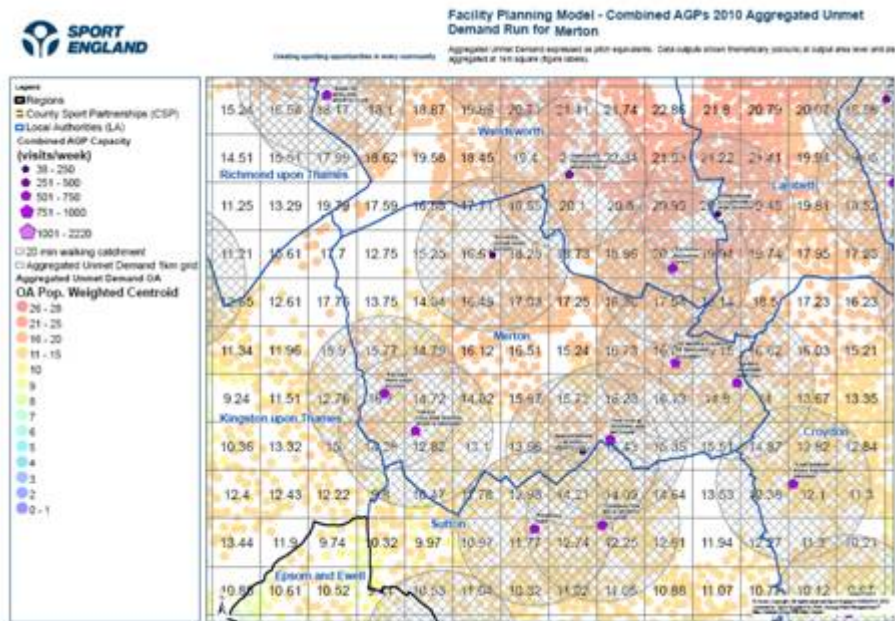
Satisfied demand (i.e. the proportion of demand met because there is spare capacity at AGPs and people live within the driving or walking catchment) is 2,250 visits per week, or 48% of total demand, much less than the national (72%), London (57%) or sub regional (62%) averages. 81% of satisfied demand is met by car, 2% by public transport and 17% on foot (less by car than the national and regional averages)

Merton is a significant net importer of demand for AGPs from neighbouring local authority areas of about 1250 visits. About 1000 visits per week are exported, while about 2250 visits are imported. This is due to the relative lack of facilities in neighbouring LAs and good accessibility from outside the borough to Merton's pitches (and indeed good access by Merton residents to pitches outside but on the edge of the borough). Only about 25% of local demand is met in Merton.

Unmet demand is for about 2450 visits per week (or about 52% of total demand). This is much higher than the national average of about 28%, and the London average of 43%, and is 10th highest in London and almost the highest of any outer London borough. In total this represents the equivalent of about 3.3 pitches.

The map of aggregated unmet demand shows the area where this is greatest – the figures represent the total number of additional pitch equivalents, and the precise figures should be treated with some caution as they include all unmet demand drawn in from throughout the catchment of each grid square. However it is clear that the areas of greatest demand are in the north of the borough (Colliers Wood, east Wimbledon and north Mitcham), partly where there are gaps in provision, and partly because of the lack of facilities and the high population density in boroughs to the north.

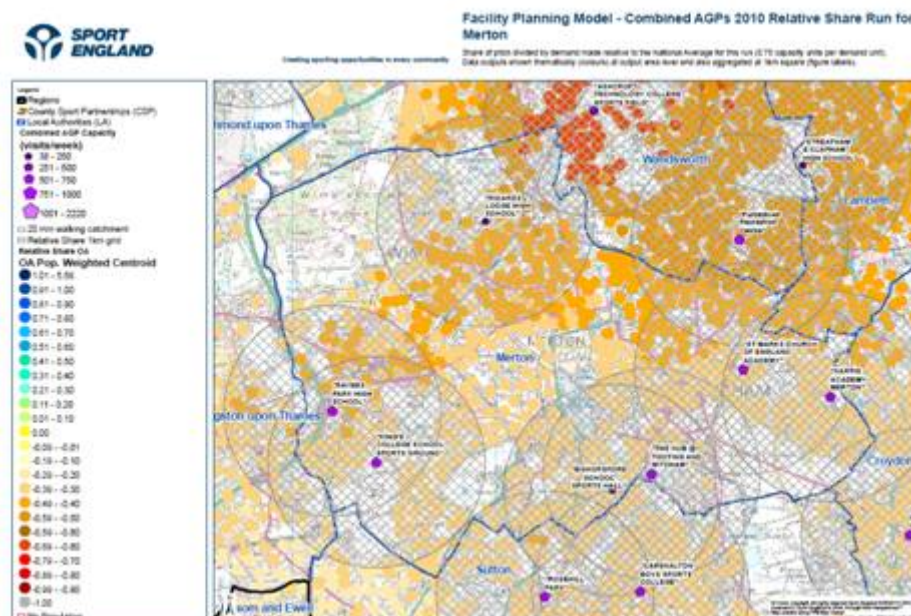
Map 6.1 - Aggregated unmet demand



Most unmet demand in Merton is due to lack of capacity at existing AGPs (98%) – very little is caused by residents living outside the catchments of existing pitches.

Relative Share - this is a more refined measure of facility provision and availability than AGPs per 10000 as it incorporates a measure of accessibility, and compares relative provision with a national average. The relative share of AGPs in Merton is 40% below the national average.

Map 6.2 - Relative share

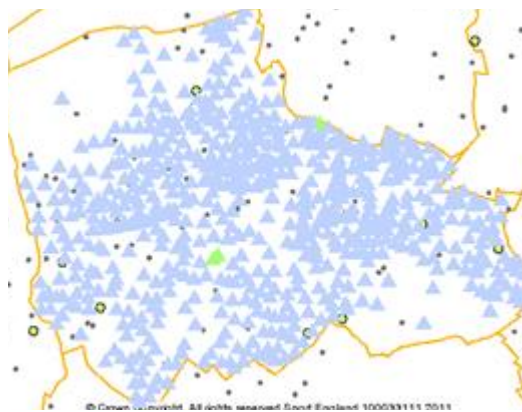


Relative share varies throughout the borough, and the map above demonstrates that it is lowest in the north of the borough where the population is densest and there are fewer pitches. Nowhere in the whole borough is relative share up to the national average.

Throughput and usage - The total number of visits to AGPs in Merton is 3,550 per week (compared with total capacity 3,550 and demand for 4,700). Overall, this equates to 100% of total capacity, similar to the London average and slightly higher than England. All pitches are operating at absolute capacity.

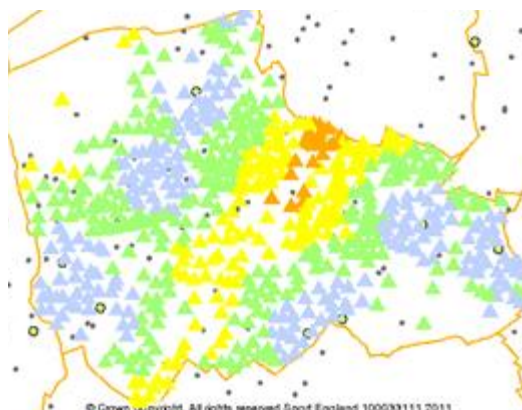
Accessibility (from Active Places Power) - More than 99% of the population of Merton lives within 10 minutes drive of one AGP, 74% within a 20 minute walk and almost 100% within 20 minutes by public transport. Accessibility to AGPs in the borough is therefore very good, particularly for those with access to a car.

Map 6.3 - Accessibility to AGPs

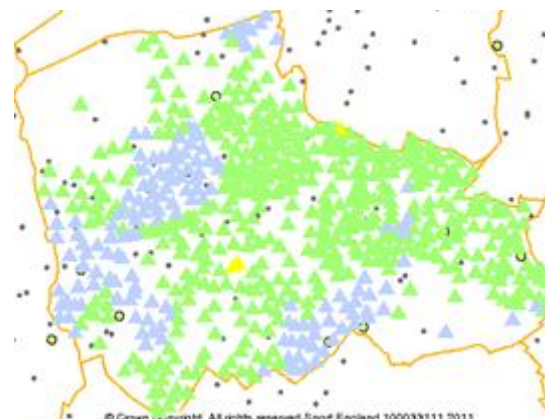


By car

Symbol	Range
▲ (Blue)	0 - 10
▲ (Green)	10.1 - 20
▲ (Yellow)	20.1 - 30
▲ (Orange)	30.1 - 45
▲ (Red)	45.1 - 60



On foot



By public transport

Summary

- There is good provision of AGPs in Merton and per capita supply is twice the London average and 33% better than the national average. However two of the pitches are not floodlit and this factor reduces their availability to community use.
- Demand within Merton exceeds capacity of pitches by over 1000 visits per week (or about 33%), and there is a local shortfall of 1.5 pitches to meet Merton's own demand.
- Satisfied demand in Merton is even lower at 48%, well below the local, London and national averages.
- Unmet demand is consequently very high and sufficient in total for an additional 3.3 pitches in Merton. This is all caused by the lack of any spare capacity at existing pitches, and is higher than the 1.5 pitches above because of the use of Merton pitches by adjacent borough residents.
- Personal share despite good supply is lower than average.
- All Merton's pitches are used to their assumed capacity, bearing in mind their availability and attractiveness.
- Merton's pitches attract significant usage from all neighbouring boroughs, because of accessibility to Merton and the relative lack of pitches elsewhere.
- Accessibility to AGPs by local residents is good – nearly all Merton residents live within a 10 minute drive or 20 minute bus/tube ride and three quarters within a 20 minute walk.

Neighbouring boroughs

The assessment was also undertaken for each of the neighboring boroughs, including Kingston, Lambeth, Richmond, Croydon, Wandsworth, Sutton and Epsom & Ewell):

- **Supply** – there are 25 AGPs in the seven neighbouring local authority areas (or 20.2 if scaled). These accommodate the equivalent of about 15,000 visits per week. Relative provision per 10,000 people ranges from 0.06 to 0.41 pitches - all but one below the Merton provision and the other is equal.
- **Demand** – total demand in the 7 boroughs equals 38,000 visits per week (or 51 pitches). The overall demand/supply ratio amounts to a shortfall of 31 pitches.
- **Satisfied demand** - satisfied demand throughout the neighbouring boroughs varies between 37% and 70% compared with 48% in Merton.
- **Unmet demand** – this varies between 30% and 63%, and in total is the equivalent of about 24 additional pitches.
- **Import/export** – there is significant export of demand from all neighbouring boroughs, and in particular Kingston, Lambeth and Sutton, where there are relatively few existing pitches.
- **Relative share** – this varies between 48% and 93% of the national average, and is a reflection of existing supply mitigated by the proximity of pitches in adjacent boroughs.
- **Utilised capacity** is 100% in all boroughs, suggesting that all pitches are fully used.

Conclusions

- There is good supply of AGPs in Merton, above the average, but a number of pitches are not fully available at times when they are required by the community, because of lack of floodlighting. There is a significant shortfall of pitches in the borough to meet its own demand.
- This local shortfall is exacerbated when the situation in adjacent boroughs is considered. All the surrounding local authorities export demand, because of the relative lack of pitches within their area. Merton accommodates a disproportionate amount of this demand, thereby increasing the levels of unmet demand within the borough.
- There is justification for the construction of more than 3 additional pitches in Merton. However this would be reduced if pitches were built elsewhere to meet the demand from neighbouring areas, thereby reducing travel into Merton.
- To meet the internal needs of Merton there is a requirement for up to 7 pitches in full community use, including evenings and weekends. Currently there are 9 pitches in total in the borough (including the new second pitch at Kings College School Sports Ground). Of these, one at Wimbledon High School is privately used, and two school pitches are not available in the evenings in winter through lack of floodlights. In effect there are 6 pitches with significant community access. There is a need for at least 1 additional pitch to meet estimated demand in the short term at current levels of participation. This might be provided:
 - By bringing existing pitches into more intensive use, although planning restrictions at Ricards Lodge and Bishopsford might preclude this there. In addition the private pitch at Wimbledon High School is not floodlit, and any plans to achieve this might be accompanied by some community usage.
 - By constructing one additional pitch in an area of the borough in greatest need (The current proposal to develop a 3G pitch at the Hub will meet this need)
- In addition there is a particular lack of 3G pitches suitable for football, rugby and training purposes. The additional pitch considered above should be built to this specification, and consideration should be given to the provision of at least 1 further 3G pitch, making 2 additional pitches in total. Optional locations include Morden Park, Raynes Park PF and Prince George's Fields).
- In the longer term, in accordance with increased participation targets, increasing propensity towards the use of artificial grass pitches by leagues and clubs, and other factors, one additional pitch can probably be justified in the period up to 2021/2026. (Location to be determined).

Issues for strategy to address

The Sport England 2010 national assessment of supply and demand for AGPs provides a contextual overview of the supply and demand for AGPs in the borough, taking into account the provision in the surrounding areas. Any assessment of how the findings can be developed in the PPS has to be considered alongside findings emanating directly from the PPS work to ensure there is integration.

That said and based on the Sport England 2010 supply and demand assessment of AGPs the key findings and issues to be considered in the context of hockey and football provision are as follows:

- most of the current pitches were constructed over a short period of time between 2002 and 2005. This means that over the next 4-5 years there is going to be a need to replace the pitch carpet and possibly undertake more remedial works (no pitch condition survey work has been undertaken). There should be a condition survey of pitch sites to establish the works required, costs and timetable to maintain at least the same level of pitch quality and public access/programme of use over the next 10 years. (Note 8 of the 9 pitches are on school sites);
- the current AGP assessment does not take into account the supply of commercial five a side centres and any public MUGA site that is used for sports development and organised play. The local Goals Centres, as well as the MUGAs, provide additional resource for clubs wishing to access artificial surfaces;
- the Sport England assessment indicates that in 2010 the supply of AGPs is insufficient to meet local demand and when coupled with adjacent boroughs, there is a need for additional pitches; and
- accessibility to pitches is good throughout the borough, but access on foot is higher than the national average. This means that in any changes in provision of pitches or in selecting new locations it will be important to consider the walk to catchment area for the site and the potential usage from a 20 minutes/1 mile radius of the site - in short one in six visits to AGP's are by walking and it is an important locational factor in selecting sites to at least ensure the walk to accessibility is maintained.

While the model therefore provides an overview of the adequacy of provision, there are a number of other drivers that could impact upon the demand for AGPs, specifically:

- changes in the playing patterns of sports and in particular the increase in junior football, the move to 9 a side games for under 11's and the approval for competitive football to be played on synthetic pitches;
- will additional (but limited) housing growth in Merton and the net inward migration of new population in itself create additional demand for AGP's and other sports facilities? Past studies have shown that population growth does not significantly increase the demand for sports facilities because of the total age range of the population and the more narrow age range which participates in sports. In very rounded terms for every four people that population is increased by this creates one new adult sports participant – and this is across all sports and facilities; and
- potential increase in pitch sports participation – this is the biggest single driver of increased demand for sports facilities. As reported under the participation profile section, Merton does not have a sporting population with a high participation in AGPs. However given the fine balance between supply and demand currently for AGPs then any increase in adult sports participation is going to increase the demand for additional AGPs.

7. Football

Introduction

07

This section summarises pitch provision for football within Merton and the surrounding area and outlines:

- the supply of pitches;
- demand for these pitches;
- the ability of the pitch stock to meet demand; and
- key issues for the strategy to address.

Pitch supply

There are 104 individual grass football pitches across Merton in secured community use, comprising:

- 66 adult football pitches;
- 24 junior/youth pitches (including 16 Little League); and
- 14 mini soccer pitches (including 10 Little League).

The full audit of pitches can be seen in Appendix 3 and Table 7.1 summarises the distribution of grass football pitches within each of the 5 analysis areas of the borough

Table 7.1 - Football pitch supply in Merton

	Adult	Junior/Youth	Mini	Total
Colliers Wood	6	3(3)	2(0)	11
Mitcham	4	3(3)	0(0)	7
Morden	22	5(4)	10(10)	37
Raynes Park	15	11(6)	2(0)	28
Wimbledon	19	2(0)	0(0)	21
Total	66	24(16)	14(10)	104

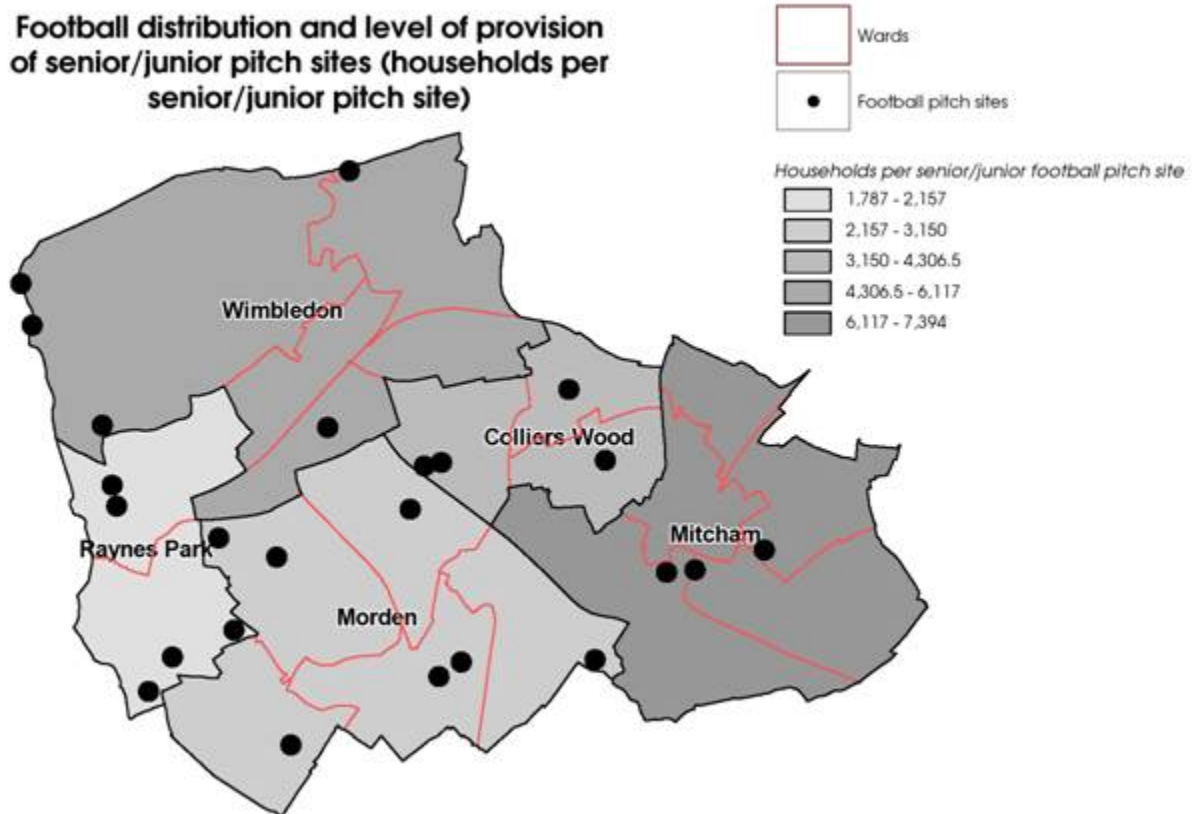
The figures in brackets indicate Little League pitches

Provision in Morden, Raynes Park and Wimbledon is the highest – there are relatively few football pitches in the south and east of the borough.

There are also pitches in the immediately surrounding areas outside Merton, including Rosehill Recreation Ground, Reigate Avenue Recreation Ground (in Sutton), Worcester Park Recreation Ground, Manor Park Recreation Ground, Fulham FC training ground, Beverley Park, New Malden Sports Ground (all in Kingston), Roehampton Vale Sports Ground, Southfields Sports Ground,

Earlsfield Sports Ground, Furzedown Sports Ground (Wandsworth), and Norbury Hall and Croydon Boys FC Sports Ground (Croydon).

Map 7.1 - Football pitch location and distribution



In addition there are football pitches on school sites, including private/independent, secondary and primary schools, but these have not been identified as providing any significant community use, and are disregarded for the purposes of this study.

These totals are not significantly different from the 2010 study, though more junior and mini pitches have been identified (mainly devoted to Little League football).

Ownership

Of all the football pitches in community use (104) 68 are owned by Merton Council (65%), 31 by clubs and other private organisations (30%) and 5 by schools (5%). Most of the local authority pitches are on large multi-pitch sites particularly King George's Field, Raynes Park Sports Ground, Sir Joseph Hood Playing Fields and Wimbledon Common Extensions, while the main sites in private/club multi pitch use are Prince George's Playing Field and Raynes Park Playing Field.

There are very few sites accommodating a single pitch – Lavender Park, Three Kings Piece Open Space, Old Rutlishians, The Hub and Raynes Park Vale FC, the latter two being the sites of senior clubs in the borough with stands, pitch enclosures and security fencing.

Other facilities providing for football

There are a number of other non turf facilities in Merton which complement the overall stock of grass football pitches which are as follows:

- artificial grass pitches at Harris Academy, St Mark's Academy, The Hub, Bishopsford Arts College, Raynes Park High School and Ricards Lodge HS (plus two others at King's College School Sports Ground mainly used for hockey). These pitches are sand based, mainly floodlit and used extensively for informal football training, although they are not suitable for competitive matches or used as such. There are no 3G AGPs as yet in the borough;
- Multi Use Games Areas at a number of locations throughout the borough – 13 on parks sites in council ownership (some of which are ball parks only) and mostly with a sand filled surface (there are 3G games areas at Raynes Park Sports Ground and Lavender Park), 2 on high school sites, all available for community use and used for informal activities and training, and a further 5 on school sites (including a 3G at Liberty School) but mainly used by the schools themselves; and
- two commercially run Goals Football Centres in the borough and immediate vicinity. Goals Wimbledon is within Merton and comprises 10 5-a-side and 1 7-a-side 3G floodlit pitches, together with ancillary pitches. Goals Sutton is in North Cheam just outside the borough boundary and supports 10 5-a-side 3G floodlit pitches. These facilities are used for organised leagues on an intensive a regular basis but also accommodate mid-week training (in the form of 5/7-a-side competitions for some clubs and groups of players). Until July 2010 there was a similar Power League venue within Merton at Turle Road, Norbury with 10 5-a-side sand based pitches, but this has now closed down.

Teams, Clubs and Leagues

Football is the most popular outdoor sport in Merton with 60% of the total number of teams. It is estimated from extensive research of websites, FA data, previous studies and local authority booking records that there are 367 football teams in the borough, and these are split down into the following sub areas (i.e. based on where teams play). This audit of teams and clubs represents a snapshot in time and is designed to provide an accurate understanding of the level of current demand. A list of current teams and clubs is included in Appendix 5.

Table 7.2 - Distribution of football teams in Merton

	Senior Men	Senior Women	Junior Youths Boys	Junior Youths Girls	Mini
Colliers Wood	13		8		6
Mitcham	12		10		10
Morden	43+2	2	57	7	51
Raynes Park	46+1	4	19	6	25
Wimbledon	31+1	5	5		
Unspecified	3				
Total	152	11	99	13	92

There is clearly a markedly poor distribution of teams throughout the borough, which effectively reflects the location of pitches – 70% of teams are in Morden and Raynes Park, over 80% in the western half of the borough, and only 20% in Mitcham and Colliers Wood. If compared with the population, the situation is as follows.

Table 7.3 - Relative formation of football teams in Merton

	Teams	Population	Ratio
Colliers Wood	27	32367	1:1198
Mitcham	32	51160	1:1598
Morden	162	47056	1:290
Raynes Park	101	19921	1:197
Wimbledon	42	48185	1:1147
Unspecified	3		
Total	367	198691	1:541

This analysis should be treated with some caution, as some clubs play wherever they can get a pitch and may play in different subareas. Moreover, this geographical spread does not reflect where participants live – it is evident that clubs/teams take in players from throughout the borough, and some teams are not even Merton based in terms of participants.

This number of teams and clubs yields an estimated 2500 senior and 2300 junior and mini players.

Analysis of the number of teams demonstrates that most clubs focus entirely on either senior, youth/junior or mini football, and there are relatively few clubs who provide a pathway through the age groups – Tooting and Mitcham and Link FC are the main clubs with this progression.

Charter standard is the FA kite mark symbolising quality, and identifies where best practice exists. Records suggest that there are 13 clubs in the borough, who have received charter standard accreditation, highlighting the quality of opportunities that exist for football in Merton.

A particular phenomenon of football in Merton is the existence of 4 Little Leagues, which together accommodates about 112 teams (see below).

In addition, there are teams playing at locations outside but on the edge of Merton, which inevitably take in players from within the borough. It is not possible to estimate precisely the quantity of import and export of demand without undertaking a full study of all neighbouring boroughs (existing playing pitch studies reviewed in a previous chapter do not carry this information), but this issue is addressed more fully below.

In (June) 2010, a major sports ground in Mitcham (formerly belonging to the NatWest) closed down at short notice, in such a haste that clubs are still listed in handbooks as playing there currently. About 10 clubs who formerly played here, comprising about 13 teams, are now forced to play elsewhere, and while these clubs were not necessarily local (from the evidence of names etc.), they could be said to represent a latent demand (see below).

Change from previous studies

The current study has used a number of sources from which to identify teams and clubs. The reliability of these and previous sources appears to be in some doubt, and it is therefore difficult to make a direct comparison in the number of teams now and in the past. For the record, the comparable figures are as follows.

- 2004 study 140 teams
- 2010 study 340 teams (excluding small sided)
- FA Local Area Data 2008/09 198 teams

- LAD 2009/10 354 teams
- LAD 2010/11 319 teams

Leagues and clubs

From FA and other data, it appears that there may be up to 26 football leagues with clubs playing in Merton. Some of these only have 1 or 2 clubs playing in Merton but the main leagues serving the borough are:

- Morden and District Sunday League;
- Wimbledon and District League;
- Sportsmen's Senior Sunday League;
- Surrey South East Combination;
- Surrey Youth League; and
- Kingston and District League.

As mentioned above, the little leagues are also a feature of football participation in Merton and South London in general.

Morden and District League – this league has 10 divisions of adult teams totalling 97 teams, plus 2 divisions of vets (over 35) with a further 13 teams. The area covered extends throughout South London. The study has identified 31 clubs from Merton with 40 teams in this league. The league has remained at the same size in recent years, but the standard of football is reported to have gone down, and it is felt that more teams will be folding at the end of the current season. Team formation and retention is notoriously ephemeral in local Sunday football.

Wimbledon and District League. This is the oldest league in Surrey with 48 teams playing in 4 divisions on Saturday afternoon. The number of teams is fairly static, but the league reports that it hopes to grow.

Kingston and District League currently has 6 divisions of 9 to 10 teams and comprises teams mainly from the neighbouring borough and wider areas of Greater London and Surrey.

Other Leagues - The Combined Counties League includes Raynes Park Vale and Colliers Wood United, 2 of the 3 senior clubs in the borough (Tooting and Mitcham being the other). At this senior level, clubs own or lease their own grounds, and look after maintenance, and ground sharing is not ideal. Both RPV and CWU would need to carry out substantial improvements to be able to proceed further up the pyramid. The size of the league fluctuates by a small amount each year. Sportsmen's Sunday League has 8 clubs in Merton with 14 teams. The league considers there is a decline in Sunday football and the league has got smaller due to the expense of running teams and the lack of efficient organisers. Surrey South East Combination has 6 divisions and 70+ teams in the wider area, but club numbers have declined in recent years.

Little Leagues - Little League football is a registered charity that provides free football for children up to about 13 years old, who would otherwise not play regularly at school and clubs. Emphasis is more on participation and enjoyment than elitism and excellence. Children under 10 play small sided football while older children play 11-a-side. Teams play on junior and mini pitches, but their dimensions differ slightly from mainstream football. Little Leagues are particularly prevalent in the South London area and there are 5 at present in Merton:

- **Wimbledon LL** has leagues from under 6 to under 11 girls and boys, and membership has grown from 280 last year to 450 now. 32 teams play on 5/6 pitches at Joseph Hood Rec on Saturdays;
- **Raynes Park LL** has 238 players from under 7 to under 13 and operates mixed age football for 28 teams, playing at Sir Joseph Hood Memorial Rec on Saturday mornings. Most players are from the immediately surrounding area. The league has been expanding for 6-7 years but is constrained from further development because of the lack of additional pitches as well as adult organisers;
- **Morden LL** has 8 sections with 52 teams, including 2 girls' sections. The league has been stable for many years. All games are played on 8 pitches at King Georges Field. Most of the participants are local to this area, however up to 20% come from outside of the borough;
- **Mitcham LL** has 234 boys playing at under 6 to under 13 level and Cannon's Wood Rec;
- **Colliers Wood LL** has 120 boys and girls playing at Colliers Wood Rec; and
- There was also formerly a Little League at Pollards Hill.

Morden Girls League is another local league with 6 teams playing at King George's Playing Field. Girls come from a wider area with about 1/3 living outside the borough.

Clubs

Clubs were consulted on their current team patterns, likely future demand and other issues affecting overall participation, and the broad results from those responding are set out below:

- 87% of clubs are fielding the same number of teams as in the previous year (only 3% had more teams);
- very few clubs are operating for the benefit of local players. Only 7% of players live within 1 mile of their club's main venue and a staggering 2/3 outside the borough itself. Clearly club responses indicate that Merton is providing teams and venues for people from an area much wider than the borough itself (it is possible that the response skews local team participation as few local one team clubs which might have more local players); and
- one third of teams and clubs responding have aspirations to run additional teams in the future, and these include mainly youth and junior sides (7), though there is also a limited additional demand for vets (1), adult male (3), women (2) and the disabled (1). Two thirds of respondents have no plans to form additional teams, the main reasons being the cost of hire of pitches, already falling membership and lack of coaches, helpers, funding and training venues.

School participation

The Merton School Sports Partnership organises a wide range of out of school activities in football. The finals of the high school (years 7-11) football in 2011 included representative teams from all schools, and was played on artificial grass at the Hub. At primary school level, there are competitions for various age groups, and the finals are usually arranged at Goals centres in the area. Most schools football is therefore played on artificial grass, mainly because of the lack of natural grass pitches on school sites, and for the purposes of this study is therefore excluded from the calculations for grass pitches.

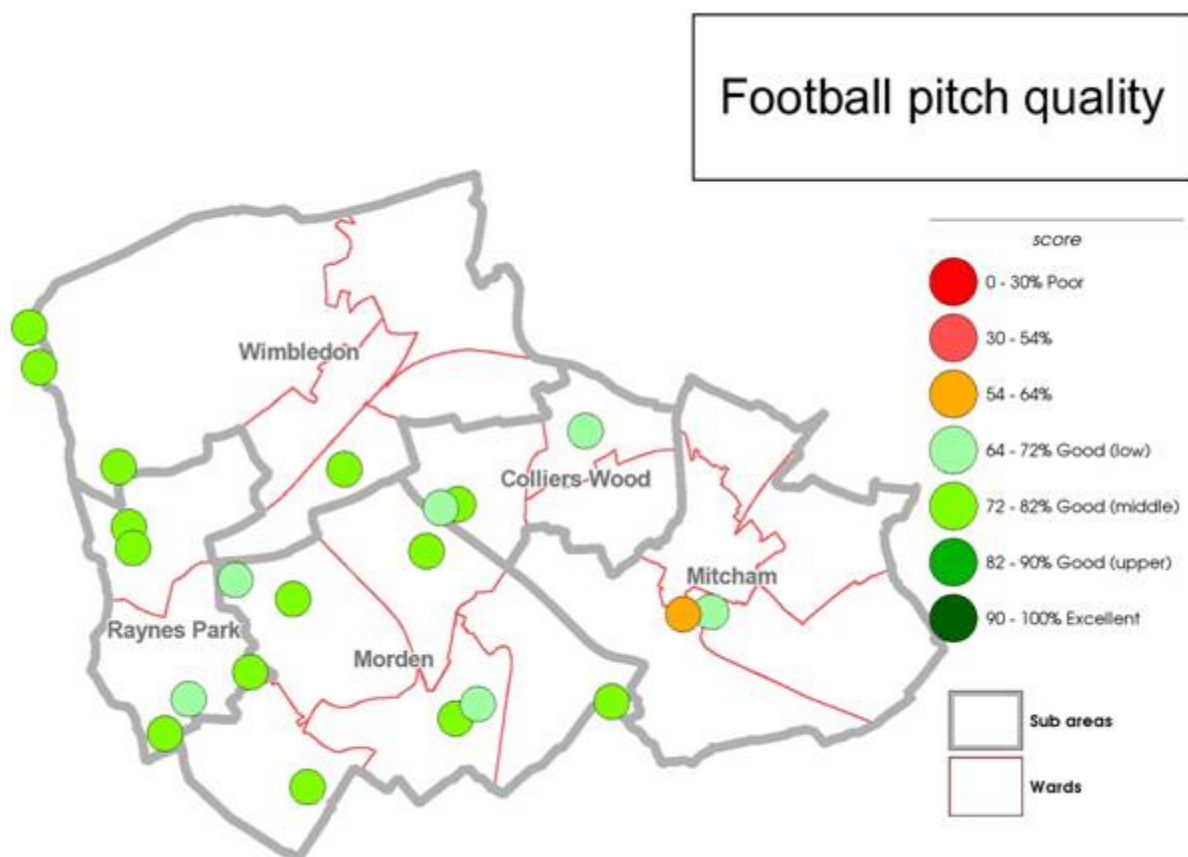
Quality of facilities

In addition to measuring the provision of pitches in quantitative terms, it is also essential to consider the quality of existing provision. Pitch quality influences the amount of matches that can be sustained and as a consequence has a significant impact on the overall adequacy of supply in the areas.

Furthermore perceived quality of pitches (and ancillary facilities) is almost as important as actual quality and can change usage patterns. Players are more likely to travel to sites that they perceive to be higher quality for better value for money. Indeed lower quality pitches may actually deter residents from participating.

As highlighted in section 5 pitch quality in Merton has been measured through site assessments carried out in line with the assessment matrix provided in Towards a Level Playing Field – these assessments are non-technical and designed to provide an overview of pitch quality and the degree to which facilities are fit for purpose. The findings of these assessments are then linked with issues raised by consultation with pitch users to provide a full overview of pitch quality and associated issues.

Map 7.2 - Football pitch quality



Using the PPM template the following scores were achieved across all the football pitches in community use in Merton

Table 7.4 - Football pitch quality

	Excellent	Good	Average	Below average	Poor	Average score	Range
Senior		100%				73%	65-77%
Junior/Youth		88%	12%			72%	56-77%
Mini		100%				73%	69-74%

Almost all the pitches were considered from visual perception to be good, the only exceptions being the well worn and used junior pitches at Cannons Recreation Ground/Mitcham Sports Ground. However most of the pitch scores lay in the lower half of the 'good' range. This shows that almost all of the sites meet with NGB criteria for minimum sizes and safety margins, and that damage to surface, quality of equipment, slope, evenness and other criteria are broadly acceptable.

In terms of pavilions and clubhouses the picture is similar

Table 7.5 - Quality of ancillary facilities

	Excellent	Good	Average	Below average	Poor	Average score	Range
Football Sites		100%				79%	68-93%

All facilities bar one were within the 'good' range, the best changing rooms being considered the facilities at Tooting and Mitcham FC's ground. Two other facilities scored 90% (Raynes Park Sports Ground and Old Rutlishians). In general the quality of the ancillary facilities was at the upper end of the range. There was little difference in quality between the private and council facilities – the worst changing rooms were at Abbey Rec, but these have now been improved as part of a major new development. King George's, Joseph Hood Rec, Morden Rec, Nursery Road, Sir Joseph Hood and Raynes Park Sports Ground were all considered quality facilities in relatively good condition. The scoring suggests that the quality of ancillary facilities as judged by the criteria recommended by Sport England is broadly acceptable and that in general showers, toilets, car parking, accessibility, segregated changing and freedom from vandalism are all acceptable.

There was little geographical variation in the quality of football pitches and ancillary pitches.

Club responses to quality

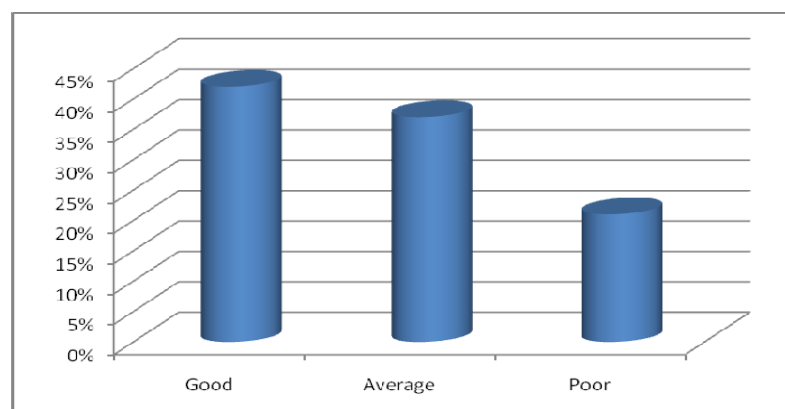
In summary club's comments on the quality of facilities (pitches and ancillary) were as follows:

Table 7.6 - Club responses on quality

	Good	Acceptable	Poor
Drainage	26%	29%	46%
Gradient	54%	46%	
Line marking	58%	42%	
Freedom from dog fouling	38%	35%	26%
Playing surface	47%	30%	23%
Pitch maintenance	39%	45%	16%
Freedom from litter	52%	48%	
Overall pitch quality	43%	36%	21%
Changing facilities	30%	33%	36%
Showers	16%	42%	42%
Car parking	43%	27%	30%
Ease of booking	67%	33%	
Overall VfM	37%	39%	24%
Overall score	42%	37%	21%

Club responses tended to reflect the scoring system above, with 79% of facilities overall considered good or acceptable and only 21% poor. The biggest negative features were poor drainage, changing facilities and showers.

Figure 7.1 - Quality



Detailed comments were elicited from clubs and these are summarised below:

- Nursery Road is one of the best pitches in the area though there is a temporary lack of changing due to burst pipe;
- changing facilities at Westminster City School are good but insufficient for all teams;
- Nursery Road pitch is good but required a higher fence next to adjacent woodland;
- drainage and quality of changing at Prince George's require improvements;
- King George playing field showers a big problem;

- Merton pitches are not provided until well after the start of the football season;
- excellent facilities at Lavender Park except for dog fouling;
- Commons Extension, changing and showers are unacceptable for hiring charge, though pitches are good;
- Commons Extension ancillary facilities (showers and car park) are a 'disgrace' although pitch quality is good;
- up-front payment for council pitches is prohibitive;
- Prince George's playing field pitches are often unplayable;
- car parking is always an issue with little league football;
- quality of Morden Rec pitch and occasionally showers is poor;
- Abbey Rec changing too small for two pitches particularly when Nursery Road changing is not in use;
- security for cars etc at Commons Extension is poor;
- Commons Extension pitches have deteriorated over the years and changing has not been updated for many years – inadequate for the number of players on Sundays;
- Raynes Park sports Ground – one pitch was waterlogged and unplayable for two months and there are problems with dog walkers;
- Dundonald Rec – drainage is not good, pitches bumpy and showers poor;
- Oberon playing fields drainage is poor in wet weather;
- expensive pitch hire and lack of communication when matches are postponed; and
- Joseph Hood pitches built on clay and poorly drained, with high likelihood of postponement when wet. Changing rooms good and adequate. More maintenance required but LA staff obliging though under pressure. Booking arrangements not sufficiently flexible.

Clubs were given the opportunity to comment on whether they were broadly satisfied with pitch provision for football in Merton, and 55% said yes, 45% no. About 20% of the matches played by the clubs responding to the questionnaire were postponed in the previous season because of ground and pitch conditions. This is about average.

Other consultation

Leagues

Morden and District League considers that all teams are finding it difficult to find a good quality pitch to play on. Some teams hire pitches from private sector clubs at high prices (£100 per game) because council pitches and facilities are poor quality. The general comment about council (not specifically Merton) run pitches were with regard to their use of private contractors to run their football pitches and concerns about the profit motive. The league has raised specific concerns about the lack of adult football pitches provided by the council in the Mitcham area of the borough.

Specific concerns were raised regarding pitches not being maintained to a satisfactory standard especially if it rains, e.g. the pitches are not rolled sufficiently or grass cut. Changing rooms are considered to be basic and in some cases insufficient to meet demand and showers often do not work. In some cases there is insufficient car parking space available (these comments relate to all boroughs and are not specific to Merton). Abbey Rec was considered the best pitch in terms of playing surface but not for parking or changing facilities. The worst pitches were felt to be King George's playing field where 3 pitches are on a plateau which holds the water and does not drain properly. It was generally considered that the charges levied by councils for pitches do not give value for money. A key issue was the lack of floodlit training facilities which means that most teams travel out of the borough for mid week winter training.

Wimbledon and District League Merton pitches are generally considered to be good and few problems are reported. The cost of pitches is a problem and the council booking procedure causes issues. Teams lose money if they cancel pitches within 14 days and there is a no sub letting rule which is a constraint.

Abbey Rec has issues because although the two pitches are good quality, only two teams can be accommodated in the changing accommodation. Nursery Road are very good pitches but are often shut because of vandalism to the changing accommodation. Few teams train in the borough because of the lack of floodlit training areas.

Other Leagues More senior leagues require better facilities and some clubs are only able to compete at higher level by ground sharing which is a concern for some league secretaries. More senior clubs, e.g. Raynes Park Vale, tend to maintain their own facilities.

Southern Sunday League – there are no issues with Merton pitches but a major concern is the pricing of pitches and the cost of playing in general

Surrey South East Combination - Merton has a very short season which makes it difficult for teams to fulfil fixtures. Cost is generally a considerable problem together with the coordination of facilities in some locations. Dundonald is considered the best ground and Nursery and Abbey Recs the worst. Changing room conditions are a general issue to be addressed

Unsurprisingly all of the leagues aspire to having better facilities and have issues with the quality of pitches and declining standards of maintenance. Although most of those leagues which responded felt they had sufficient pitches to meet their needs, quality was an issue and they were always on the lookout for better pitches.

Little Leagues

Wimbledon Little League plays at Joseph Hood Rec where the pitches are considered good, but with some drainage problems in wet weather, with very good changing.

Raynes Park Little League is happy with its facilities at Sir Joseph Hood memorial Rec, although there are some issues with drainage, quality of showers and car parking (which they acknowledge cannot easily be overcome).

Morden Little League is happy with its pitches but again cites car parking problems.

Morden Girls League plays at King George's Playing Fields but there are greater concerns about pitch quality, cancellations and car parking. Pitch hire costs are considered to constrain the opportunity to grow participation.

NGB consultation

The Football Association – many of the comments from the league contacts are echoed by the FA Development Officer who has indicated the need to consider the opportunity to play the 9v9 small sided games following demand from local clubs and in accordance with FA policy. There are concerns about the length of the season and ensuring some pitches are available from the start of September until at least May where there is no cricket being played. The issue of lack of pitches in the east of Merton is reinforced by the governing body along with drainage issues and excess demand at some sites.

Training

Because of the proportion of small one team clubs, there is relatively little training taking place for football in Merton. Most training occurs at existing AGPs at the Hub, Harris Academy, St Mark's Academy and Raynes Park HS AGPs, and other similar facilities outside the borough, and there is some indoor training at sports halls. Goals Soccer centres have indicated that some teams use their venues for competition and training. There is some use of existing floodlit multi-games areas at Colliers Wood, Lavender Park, Morden Rec and Raynes Park Sports Ground. There is very little training done on grass, except pre-season, although some private clubs do use their own floodlit grass areas midweek. Of all the clubs responding, only 5 identified a problem with finding suitable training venues and this was variously due to a lack of availability within their area (actually Central London), problems with existing facilities at Morden Rec, Dundonald and Colliers Wood hard courts, and timing issues within their own club.

Small sided football

There are two commercially run small sided football centres in the Merton area, and one that closed down in 2010. Goals Wimbledon is located in the Raynes Park sub area on the edge of Merton. It comprises a standard layout centre with 11 5- and 7 – side floodlit 3G pitches, sports bar and changing for up to 200 players. Usage is intensive – managers have said that there may be 6-700 participants in the centre during an evening, and 200,000 participants over a year, 70% of whom are players. The profile of users is mostly male, average age 26 and there are currently 256 teams playing at the centre. These are all adult leagues, though juniors do play casually. There are some veterans' teams. 70% of usage is within organised leagues, the remainder casual. Some regular weekend teams may use the centre for training. The facility has been in this location for 8 years – pitches are expected to have a 10 year life cycle, but have as yet not needed to be refurbished, although ancillary facilities have been upgraded twice. Trends in usage suggest that the number of league teams has remained fairly constant for 5 years, though casual usage has diminished (possibly due to the economic recession).

The centre attracts players from a wide area, including Central London and Guildford, and is a well established centre considered to be the premier venue in the area. The main users are however from the KP and SW postcodes. Other centres are located in Sutton and Wandsworth.

The cost of playing is £50 per team for 1 hour, and there are no concessions. The centre has no involvement with local authority sports development sections, but community programmes are organised with AFC Wimbledon and Crystal Palace FCs. Schools in the area have free daytime use. The centre works closely with Surrey FA and all players have to be registered.

Commercial small sided centres have an important role to play in providing opportunities for football. They are a relatively recent phenomenon, and undoubtedly attract players who might otherwise play on natural grass at the weekend, though there is no precise information about the amount of displacement of players from conventional football to the shorter version of the game in Merton. The centre considers that many Goals users also play weekend football, but

that there is a perception that the standard of pitches and changing facilities at parks and local playing fields is poor and acts as a deterrent to some potential users.

Comparing supply and demand

Current demand The playing pitch methodology is a peak day model, which determines the adequacy of pitch supply to meet peak time demand. It is also necessary to evaluate demand over the remainder of the week, to ensure that pitches are not overplayed. The calculations undertaken should provide a starting point only and be used to drive and guide strategy development and action planning. Using this methodology, a summary for the whole borough is set out in the attached table (this calculation excludes Little Leagues).

- Stage 1 Teams Adults 163
 - Junior 54
 - Mini 14
 - Total 231
- Stage 2 Home games per week 0.5

- Stage 3 Total home games per week
 - Adult 82
 - Junior 27
 - Mini 7
 - Total 116

- Stage 4 Temporal demand

	Sat am	Sat pm	Sun am	Sun pm
Adult	0	49%	45%	6%
Junior/youth	13%	0	73%	13%
Mini	0	0	100%	0

- Stage 5 Pitches required

	Sat am	Sat pm	Sun am	Sun pm
Adult	0	40	37	5
Junior/youth	4	0	20	4
Mini	0	0	7	0

- Stage 6 Pitches available in CU

Adult	66
Junior/youth	8
Mini	4
Total	80

- Stage 7 Under use or shortfall

	Total pitches	Peak demand	+/-
Adult	66	40	+26
Junior/youth	8	20	-12
Mini	4	7	-3
Total	80	67	+9

This suggests that there are sufficient football pitches overall in the borough to meet current demand but that within this total picture there is a shortage of junior and mini pitches to meet peak demand (senior/adult Saturday, junior Sunday)

There are some provisos and assumptions within the calculations:

- because the quality of facilities is generally good, each pitch is assumed to have a carrying capacity of 2 games per week; and
- team equivalents have not been established as all pitches have their own user type, and there is no indication of significant training take place on pitches throughout the season.

If an element of spare capacity is built into the calculations (10% in accordance with TaLPF recommendations), the revised current situation is that there is a potential surplus of 22 senior football pitches, a shortfall of 14 junior and a shortfall of 4 mini, giving an overall surplus of about 4 pitches.

Little League matches which are played on smaller and specifically marked out pitches are excluded from the calculations above. At present there are 26 Little League pitches (mini and junior) to meet a peak demand for 72 matches per week. This is sufficient to allow for an average of 3 games per week on each pitch including a 10% allowance. The Little Leagues have for the most part responded that existing pitches are sufficient.

Sub area analysis

It is possible to extrapolate the individual pitch requirements by the chosen sub areas from the PPM (though some allowance has to be made for the Little League pitches and the figures may not tally with the accompanying spreadsheet) as follows:

Table 7.7 - Sub area analysis for football

Sub area	Senior football	Junior football	Mini soccer
Colliers Wood	+5	-5	0
Mitcham	+1	-1	-1
Morden	+2	-7	-1
Raynes Park	+2	-6	-1
Wimbledon	+12	+5	-1
Total	+22	-14	-4

To some extent the sub area requirements are self fulfilling, because the teams play where the pitches exist and do not necessarily represent a true picture of demand, because of the uneven distribution of pitches and teams around the borough. A more realistic assessment of sub area deficiencies will take into account the distribution of population in comparison with pitch provision and this is addressed below in the issues and strategy section.

Latent/displaced demand

- Because of the closure of the NatWest ground in Norbury in 2010, it can be assumed that some of the displaced clubs require a ground in Merton. These clubs comprise more than 3 Saturday pm teams, more than 3 Sunday am teams and it is reasonable to build in an additional requirement for 2 senior pitches on the peak Saturday afternoon.
- Little League football is constrained in Raynes Park by the lack of available pitches, according to the league organisers.
- Team Generation Rates (TGRs) indicate how many people in a specified age group are required to generate one team, thus enabling analysis of participation. TGRs are derived by dividing the appropriate population age band in the area by the number of teams playing within that area in that age band. The comparison of TGRs with national averages should however be treated with some caution, as the Sport England database from which these national averages are derived has not been updated in recent years.

Table 7.8 - Future TGRs for football

	Merton TGR	England TGR
Senior Male	1:303	1:452
Senior Female	1:4418	1:19647
Youth Junior Male	1:69	1:195
Youth Junior Females	1:486	1:4038
Mini	1:102	1:431

In every type of football therefore, TGRs are lower (i.e. better) than the national average, although in the junior age groups, these statistics are undoubtedly affected by high participation in Little League football. This suggests that (apart from the above) there is likely to be little latent demand, although the whole team/pitch relationship is affected heavily by import (and export) of demand between Merton and the surrounding boroughs.

Future demand

Future demand can be estimated in a number of ways:

- applying current TGRs to the future population gives the following future requirements based on current participation rates by 2026:

Adult male	- 8 teams
Adult female	-1 team
Junior/youth male	+16 teams
Junior/youth female	+2 teams
Mini	+14 teams
Overall	+23 teams
- the short term plans and aspirations of clubs to form additional teams as identified in the consultation. About 14 additional teams were identified by clubs (7 junior/youth, 3 adult male, 2 adult female and 1 disabled) and this could increase the peak demand in the short term for 3 junior and 2 senior pitches;
- increased participation rates in connection with Merton Council targets of 5% by 2026 across the broad gives a requirement for a further 19 teams in various age groups, the equivalent of up to additional 10 pitches;
- changing fads and fashions – the introduction of 9 v 9 pitches as a transition between mini and junior/youth football reduces the pressure on junior pitches, replaced by a new 9 v 9 pitch (include sizes);
- diminishing demand for adult and junior football in the face of competition from commercial/Goals/Power League type 5/7 a side centres; and
- the construction of 3G pitches and their use for competitive matches.

Summary of demand

- **Current** – there are adequate pitches to meet current demand with a surplus of 4 overall, despite a shortfall of 14 junior and 4 mini. Little League pitches are adequate in number. The total requirement to meet current need is therefore 100 pitches.
- **Latent** – there is a perceived latent demand for 2 additional senior pitches to replace those lost at Norbury and 2 additional Little League pitches.
- **Future** – in the future the requirement is likely to be as follows:
 - based on TGRs a further 5 junior, and 4 mini pitches (and a further 3 fewer senior pitches)
 - 3 junior and 2 senior pitches to meet the short term needs of clubs
 - up to a further 10 pitches to meet Merton’s participation targets (some of this can be absorbed within the above)
 - demand for 9v9 pitches which may well reduce the demand for some mini and junior pitches.

Up to 2026 therefore it is reasonable to make provision for 121 pitches in total, including the current requirement for 100, 4 to meet latent demand and 17 pitches for future needs. This is broken down as follows:

- Senior 48 pitches
- Junior/youth (including LL) 50 pitches
- Mini (including LL) 23 pitches

This could be mitigated by the impact of new 3G pitches which might accommodate competitive football and the development of the small sided game (commercial soccer centres, etc) which could reduce demand for 11 a side

Issues for strategy to address

The key issues for the strategy to consider are as follows:

- the amount and mix of pitches provided – the current and future shortfalls in mini soccer and pressures on junior pitches coupled with adequate supply of adult pitches;
- quality issues at pitch sites including the improvements to pitches and changing facilities where necessary and the future maintenance of sites in the context of the economic environment;
- the implications of changing demand in participation with the introduction of 9v9 pitches as well as the push for the use of 3G pitches for match play;
- the pitch booking system and obtaining a more strategic approach to pitch provision;
- training facilities particularly hard surfaced and floodlit; and
- the particular issues regarding Little League football.

8. Cricket

08

Introduction

This section evaluates the adequacy of facilities for cricket within Merton and the surrounding area and outlines:

- The supply of pitches
- Demand for these pitches
- The ability of the pitch stock to meet demand
- Key issues to address.

Pitch Supply

There are 23 cricket pitches in community use across Merton borough, together with a number of school sites not used by local clubs and others as set out in the following table.

Table 8.1 - Cricket pitches in Merton

Site name	Usage	Sub area	No of pitches
Abbey Recreation Ground	A1	CW	1
Nursery Road Playing Fields	A1	CW	1
Cricket Green	A1	Mi	1
John Innes Recreation Ground	A1	Mo	1
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground	A1	Mo	1
King Georges Field	A1	Mo	1
Morden Park	A1	Mo	1
Old Rutlishians Sports Club	A2	Mo	1
Archbishop Tenison's Sports Ground	A2	RP	1
Civil Service Sports Ground/ Old Wimbledonians	A2	RP	2
Cottenham Park	A1	RP	1
Emmanuel School Playing Fields (Blagdons PF)	A3	RP	1
Kings College Sports Ground	A3	RP	1
Raynes Park Playing Fields	A2	RP	1
Raynes Park Sports Ground	A1	RP	3
Haydons Road Recreation Ground	A1	W	1
Oberon Playing Fields	A1	W	1
The Wimbledon Club	A2	W	1
Dundonald Recreation Ground	A1	W	2
Total			23
Rutlish School	C	Mo	1
Wimbledon College PF	C	W	1
Drax Playing Fields	C	W	1

There are no artificial cricket pitches on 'public' sites in the borough, though some schools do have such facilities, but not available for wider community use.

15 pitches are in local authority ownership (65%), 6 belong to local clubs and other private/commercial organisations (26%) and 2 are on education sites but used by clubs mainly associated with the school (9%).

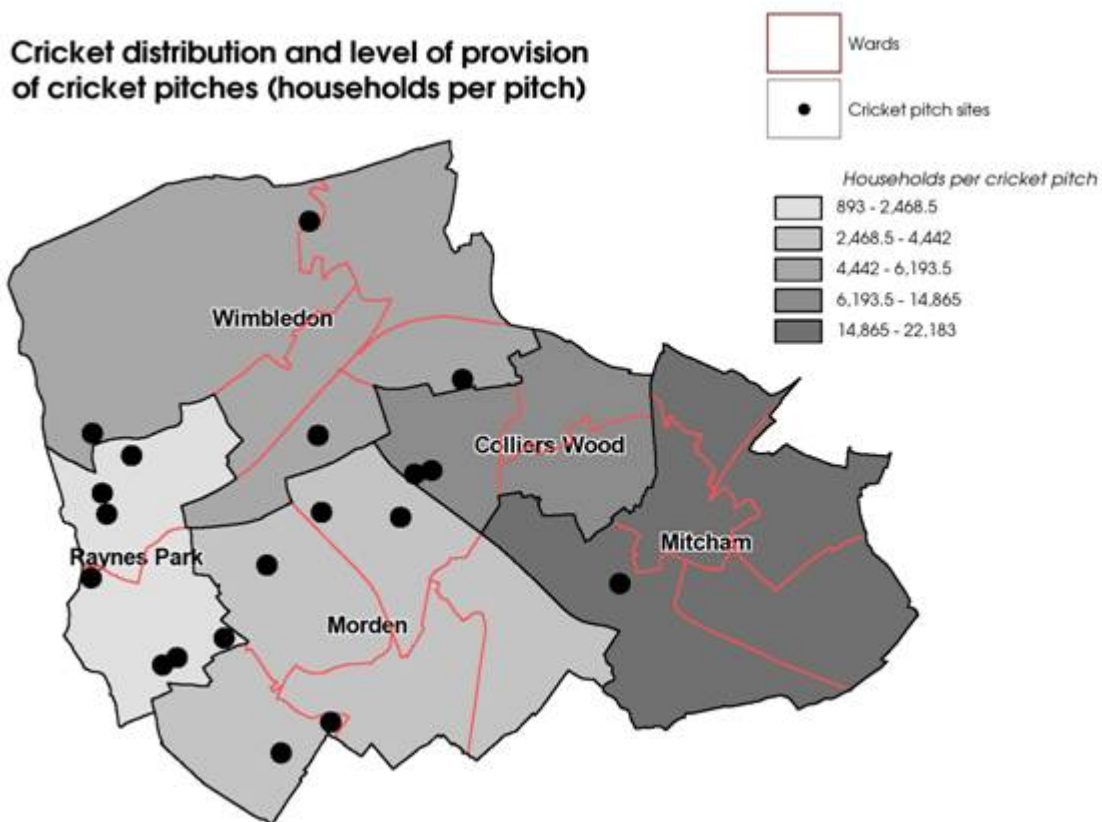
In terms of location, they are distributed as follows:

Table 8.2 - Location of pitches in Merton

Sub area	No of pitches
Colliers Wood	2
Mitcham	1
Morden	5
Raynes Park	10
Wimbledon	5

There is clearly better provision (as with most types of pitch in Merton) in the western half of the borough, and very little provision in Colliers Wood and Mitcham, and the population per pitch by sub area compounds the inequitable distribution.

Map 8.1 - Cricket pitch location and distribution



Clubs and teams

Comprehensive investigation of club and league records, previous studies and other sources has identified an estimated total of 28 cricket clubs playing in Merton, comprising 44 senior Saturday teams, 24 senior Sunday teams, 1 midweek team and 32 colts and junior teams (total 101 teams). Most of the cricket takes place within clubs affiliated to the Surrey CCB and the main leagues (Surrey Championship, Fullers league and Surrey Cricket League), but there is a steady involvement by casual clubs playing social or friendly fixtures throughout the season. Some clubs based outside Merton do play some lower team fixtures in the borough, because of lack of pitches elsewhere, and there are a number of other clubs just outside the boundary of Merton which inevitably take in players from the borough. Junior participation is limited to a small number of clubs – half the local junior teams are based at Wimbledon CC, and Old Wimbledonians and Old Rutlishians also have significant junior sections.

This number of teams and clubs yields an estimated 1500 senior and junior players.

A full list of clubs and teams is set out in Appendix 6.

The distribution of teams clearly reflects the availability of pitches and grounds.

Table 8.3 - Distribution of cricket teams

	Adult Saturday	Adult Sunday	Adult midweek	Junior	Total	Population	Ratio
Colliers Wood	4	2			6	32367	1:5395
Mitcham	3	1		1	5	51160	1:10232
Morden	13	8	1	7	29	47056	1:1623
Raynes Park	16	8		8	32	19921	1:623
Wimbledon	6	5		16	27	48185	1:1785
Unspecified	2				2		
Total	44	24	1	32	101	198691	1:1967

The best ratio of teams is found in Morden, Raynes Park and Wimbledon, with very few teams playing in Colliers Wood and Mitcham. As with other sports, however, this analysis must be treated with caution if it is intended to reflect local opportunities to play, as teams play where they can, where pitches exist and their location may not necessarily relate to where they live.

Teams also play in locations on the edge of but outside Merton, where teams inevitably accommodate Merton residents. Without a full assessment of all neighbouring boroughs, it is not possible to be precise about the actual levels of imported and exported demand, but the issue is addressed below.

Change from previous studies – the current study has used a number of sources from which to gauge participation. The previous 2010 study identified 22 clubs with 85 teams (71 senior and 14 junior) while a previous study in 2004 estimated 62 teams. There is sometimes a doubt about precisely where individual teams from a club actually play, and indeed this may change throughout the season, and this may account for the differences. The current estimate is based on information available at the time of this study including consultation with clubs.

Trends in participation

The consultation with local clubs has provided the following background information regarding current and future trends in activity:

- since the previous season there has been a slight increase in the number of teams playing – 4 clubs have more teams, 1 fewer, and the remaining 13 responding have stayed at the same level;
- in terms of where players live, there is an equal split between Merton residents and those living outside the borough, suggesting that clubs have a wide catchment for their players. Very few players (<15%) live within a mile of their own club's venue, so clubs do not necessarily cater as local facilities. This depends to a great extent on the level of seniority of each club and their standard of play;
- two clubs (Wimbledon and Old Wimbledonians) have Charter Mark/Clubmark accreditation and Old Emanuel are working towards ECB Clubmark, so there are relatively few clubs recognised as examples of good practice by the NGB;
- 9/14 clubs responding have qualified coaches ranging from 1 per club to 11 in one club. Wimbledon CC has an unspecified number;
- future trends – 9 clubs expressed a wish to develop additional teams in the future, mainly colts and juniors and development teams comprising adults and juniors. 7 clubs have no plans for expansion and no club expressed the desire to promote girls and women's cricket;
- there is an apparent demand from minority ethnic groups for cricket, especially in the Sri Lankan and Bangladeshi community, particularly midweek and on Sunday;
- there are insufficient grounds to accommodate some of the 'peripatetic' clubs looking for a venue; and
- Last Man Standing, a relatively new social 8-a-side T20 cricket game which lasts about 2 hours, originating from Australia, but now spreading all over the cricket world. There are currently 1000 teams and 20000 players in the UK and one franchise (Wimbledon Super Sunday League) exists in Merton in 2011 where 6 teams play regular fixtures during the summer (May to August) at Old Emanuel CC.

School participation

There is limited information about school participation in cricket, though it is a major activity at some of the independent schools in Merton. There are few facilities for cricket at the borough's high schools.

The Merton Schools Sports Partnership is involved in a variety of cricket initiatives within the borough. There is a full programme of hard ball and Kwik Cricket at high and primary school level. In May 2011 activities included the year 9-10 hard ball cricket competition which took place on established cricket wickets at Rutlish School and John Innes Rec, while qualifiers for the borough wide Kwik Cricket primary schools competition took place at Figges Marsh open space and Hillcrest PS. There is also understood to be a good deal of cricket at the independent schools within the borough.

Any school activity is based largely at school facilities which are not used by the community. School participation will not impact on pitch provision at present, though there may be a longer term demand for cricket resulting in future pitch requirement.

Quality of Cricket facilities

Perceived quality of pitches (and ancillary facilities) is almost as important as actual quality and can change usage patterns. Indeed, lower quality pitches may actually deter people from participating. Particularly for cricket, poorer quality pitches can be dangerous, and can lead to injuries due to the fast speed of the ball as it is bowled and lower quality facilities can therefore deter people from playing.

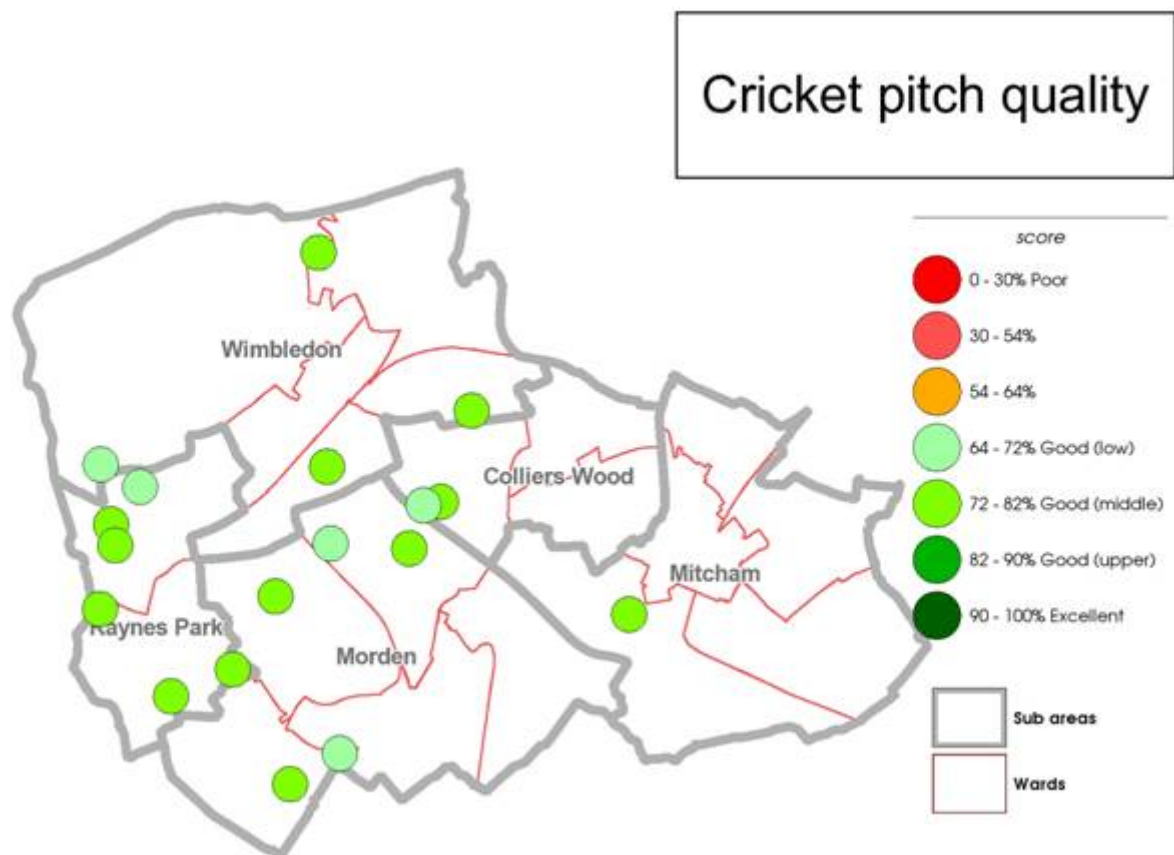
As with the other sports, the quality of both pitches and clubhouses was assessed by use of the PPM template together with the comments of clubs through consultation.

Table 8.4 - Quality of cricket pitches

	Excellent	Good	Average	Below average	Poor	Average score	Range
Cricket	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	74%	68-81%

All the grounds and pitches were therefore considered to be good in quality though the broad band allocated to this score does hide a variation within. Most of the pitches were within the lower range of good and only 4 in the higher range.

Map 8.2 - Cricket pitch quality



In terms of pavilions (where they exist) the picture is similar.

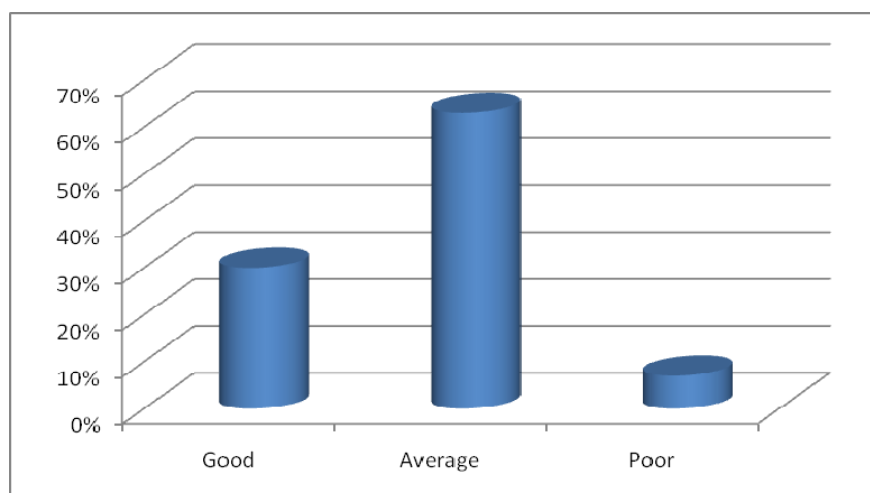
Table 8.5 - Quality of ancillary facilities

	Excellent	Good	Average	Below average	Poor	Average score	Range
Cricket	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	74%	56-90%

Most of the pavilions were within the upper range of good and only 4 in the lower range.

Clubs were also asked to comment on the quality of their pitch and other facilities, including drainage and gradient of pitch, quality of playing surface, maintenance, changing, showers and overall value for money when they rented pitches. In general facilities are considered to be good to average – 30% of all categories were classed as ‘good’, 7% poor and the vast majority average (63%).

Figure 8.1 - Facility quality



Individual comments on quality were submitted by clubs as follows:

- while pitches in Merton have historically been excellent, standards at LA grounds have declined in recent years;
- access to some pitches is restricted;
- quality of LA pitches is variable and depends on individual groundsmen. Changes to the maintenance regime (e.g. mobile teams) may be detrimental;
- the quality of some changing rooms is poor (e.g. Haydon’s Rec and Cottenham Park);
- where cricket pitches overlap with winter pitches, outfielders are often poor;
- some pitches are not adequately;
- the quality of some LA pitches has declined steadily and there is a danger that fewer clubs and teams will exist as facilities fail to meet league requirements; and
- the lack of sightscreens and scoreboard at some LA grounds is undesirable.

Capacity

Cricket can accommodate more 'game days' per season than winter pitch sports, for a variety of reasons:

- individual wickets can be rotated – most cricket squares in the borough contain up to 10 or more separate strips. In total these pitches accommodate more than 200 separate wickets;
- pitches are less susceptible to wear and tear as ground conditions in summer are better;
- artificial wickets where they exist can sustain more usage; and
- most local matches are played on a limited-overs basis and pitches can often absorb more than one match per day, especially if one of these is a junior match.

Capacity coupled with existing quality is not considered to be a current major issue at club level.

General comments from clubs were also received on a range of quality and other issues:

- there was a generally positive feedback from clubs;
- the block booking system for Council pitches was criticised as lacking flexibility, with bookings not taken until almost the start of the season which causes difficulties in confirming fixtures, printing fixture lists etc;
- block booking is not effective – there is an issue about subletting pitches if games are called off for any reason;
- some overlap with the football season can cause difficulties;
- the increased cost of hiring LA pitches was noted;
- there is a general lack of security of tenure for cricket; and
- some clubs are suffering from a lack of players.

Training

Of the clubs responding to the consultation, the majority at least during the winter months train at indoor nets at local sports centres, cricket schools and other suitable venues. The larger clubs train at their match grounds during the season largely on artificial wickets in nets. Usage of the facilities for training is off peak (i.e. midweek), and does not limit their ability to accommodate matches on the main pitch. There may be some minor wear and tear to the outfield but this is not considered a problem in any instance.

Clubs indicate that on average they train 1-2 times per week.

Other consultation

Surrey Cricket Board - SCB the charitable arm of Surrey CCC has the responsibility for the delivery of school and club cricket across the county including Merton and other boroughs in London. Its remit includes the development of the game at all levels including pavilions, changing rooms, pitches, practice facilities and machinery.

The Board has a proactive Facilities Working Group consisting of specialist in facility development and the County Groundsmen's Association.

In 2008 work began on developing a Facilities Strategy to aid long term planning and development. A questionnaire was issued to all Focus Clubs and centres for County Age Groups and District Cricket in the county, and the audit thus undertaken identified 6 key elements and each club was marked according to various criteria. The 6 elements were:

- fine turf provision;
- practice facilities;
- changing facilities;
- indoor provision;
- ancillary cricket facilities; and
- security of tenure.

The Facilities Management Group is now responsible for delivering the key projects emanating from the initial audit, in conjunction with the other objectives of the CCB, such as coach development, Chance2 Shine and the roll out of Clubmark and Focus clubs.

The 2 focus clubs based in Merton are Old Rutlishians and Wimbledon CC, and the audit concluded that across the six elements Wimbledon scored very highly and the Old Rutlishians slightly less so. Other non-focus clubs had a more variable range of the key elements - Old Emanuel, Old Tennysonians, Mitcham, Merton, Old Thorntonians, Old Wimbledonians and Raynes Park FP CCs. The main issues across the board were lack of security of tenure, though changing and practice facilities were only considered average (more information is available from Surrey CB)

Pavilion improvements have also been identified across the county including Old Rutlishians CC.

The CCB recently organised a meeting of all LAs in the county to discuss the implications of the recent Comprehensive Spending Review on LA provision, both of cricket facilities and development of the sport. The broad conclusions were:

- cuts affecting LAs are likely to influence the continued provision of LA pitches and levels of ongoing maintenance;
- after 2012 it is likely that any LA sports development initiatives will be reduced by budgetary constraints;
- at the same time LAs are experiencing an increase in demand for cricket from various initiatives there is a need to do 'more for less' and some asset disposal will be inevitable;
- there is a risk that if clubs are not able to take on LA pitches they may be lost altogether;
- there is an increasing demand for junior development but additional junior use impacts on weekend competitive cricket;
- the quality of some LA pitches is not meeting the approval of some senior leagues; and

- there is some scope in allowing 'lower standard teams to play on artificial surfaces

Chance to Shine was launched in May 2005 by the Cricket Foundation (a charity) as a means of bringing competitive cricket and its educational benefits back to at least a third of the country's state schools initially over a 10-year period. Its main aim is 'development through cricket', not necessarily identifying the country's future cricket stars. The scheme is delivered through individual projects working with CCBs throughout England and Wales – each project provides a structured coaching and competition programme for a group of up to 8 primary and secondary schools. The Foundation also provides equipment, facilities (including playground markings and non-turf pitches) and training for teachers and coaches. Each project lasts in the first instance 5 years with the aim of long term sustainability

Comparing supply and demand

Current demand

The PPM calculations undertaken provide a starting point only, and have been used to drive and guide strategy development and action planning. For cricket, calculations are perhaps less relevant than for other sports, as the pitch quality and amount of play on the wicket are as important as the number of grounds that are available – as suggested above cricket can accommodate more 'game days' per season than winter pitch sports.

The results of the application of the PPM to cricket are set out below (full calculations are set out in a separate document):

- Stage 1 Teams Adults 69
 - Junior 32
 - Total 101
- Stage 2 Home games per week 0.5
- Stage 3 Total home games per week
 - Adult 35
 - Junior 16
- Stage 4 Temporal demand

	Sat	Sun am	Midweek
Adult	64%	35%	1%
Junior			100%

- Stage 5 Pitches required

	Sat	Sun am	Midweek
Adult	22	13	3
Junior			16

- Stage 6 Pitches available in CU

Total 23

- Stage 7 Under use or shortfall

	Total pitches	Peak demand	+/-
Adult	23	22	+1
Junior/youth	23	16	+7

This calculation suggests that there are just sufficient cricket pitches available to meet the needs of community teams at peak times and that existing senior pitches are sufficient for junior use in the week.

Because all pitches have a number of wickets, and clubs and others consider that there is not a quality issue in Merton, capacity is not further constrained.

If however an element of spare capacity is built into the calculations as a strategic reserve (10% in accordance with TaLPF recommendations), there is a small shortfall of about 1 senior pitch (and a smaller surplus of 6 pitches for junior use)

Sub area analysis

It is possible to extrapolate the individual pitch requirements by the chosen sub areas from the PPM as follows:

Table 8.6 - Sub area analysis for cricket

Sub area	Cricket pitches
Colliers Wood	0
Mitcham	+1
Morden	-2
Raynes Park	+3
Wimbledon	-3
Total	-1

As with football, to some extent the sub area requirements are self fulfilling, because the teams play where the pitches exist and do not necessarily represent a true picture of demand, because of the uneven distribution of pitches and teams around the borough. A more realistic assessment of sub area deficiencies will take into account the distribution of population in comparison with pitch provision and this is addressed below in the issues and strategy section.

Latent demand

- **Team Generation Rates**, as with football, indicate how many people in a specified age group are required to generate one team, thus enabling analysis of participation. TGRs are derived by dividing the appropriate population age band in the area by the number of teams playing within that area in that age band. Table 8.7 summarises the TGRs for Merton.

Table 8.7 - TGRs for Merton

Age Group	Merton TGR	Average (from Sport England Database)
Senior Male	1:816	1:452
Senior Female	0	1:19,647
Junior Male	1:246	1:195
Junior Female	0	1:4038

The table above indicates that there is a smaller level of participation in cricket in Merton compared with the average, across all team types and age groups.

These figures should however be treated with caution, as the national TGR database, which has been used for comparative purposes, has not been updated for some time. The comparatively low levels of participation demonstrate that there is potentially some latent demand in Merton.

- Clubs, the Council and the NGB have indicated that there may be insufficient grounds and pitches to accommodate some 'travelling' teams looking for a venue, new teams currently forming (such as a local Tamil league) or one off events such as Twenty 20 tournaments, although these may not necessarily be Merton based and might only use pitches in Merton if they were available there. Booking records provided by the Council for the current season confirm that there is potential for a significant amount of additional casual cricket in the borough. Overall, therefore, it is considered reasonable to plan for an additional 1-2 pitches to meet this potential latent demand.

Future demand can be assessed in a number of ways:

- Application of TGRs to the 2026 population.

Table 8.8 - Future TGRs for cricket

Age group	TGR	Population 2026	No of teams
Senior Male	1:816	54548	-2
Senior Female	0	57333	0
Junior Male	1:246	9269	+6
Junior Female	0	8470	0

- taking into account the plans and aspirations of clubs in the short term, 9 clubs expressed a wish to develop more teams mainly in junior cricket, resulting in a need up to 2 additional pitches;
- new fashions and trends in cricket – e.g. Last Man Standing, the growth of interest in 20/20 cricket. 20/20 leagues can be played at existing clubs sites on off peak days, and appeal more to recreational cricketers and families. However this may impact on existing patterns of cricket usage;
- meeting LBM's participation targets across the board – a 5% increase in players would result in the need for 1 additional pitch on the peak day;
- new groups of the community requiring access to cricket facilities e.g. Asian community in the borough;
- school and other initiatives, such as 'Chance to Shine' and Kwik cricket; and
- there is no current participation among girls and women in cricket in Merton and while no clubs have expressed a particular ambition to stimulate this, an allowance should be made in future plans.

Summary of demand

- **Current** – there is a shortfall of 1 pitch to meet current demand including a contingency, requiring 24 pitches at present
- **Latent** – there is a perceived latent demand for a further 1-2 pitches to accommodate peripatetic teams
- **Future** – there is an estimated demand in the future to 2026 for a further 3 pitches to accommodate population change, increased participation and changing forms of the game.

Up to 2026 therefore it is reasonable to make provision for 29 pitches in total, compared with 23 at present

Issues for strategy to address:

The key issues for the strategy are therefore to address:

- the role of public sites in providing for cricket in the longer term, particularly in view of their predominance in total numbers;
- the need to provide high quality pitches to meet with League requirements;
- the increasing participation in cricket and the potential impact that this will have on the demand for cricket;
- future maintenance regimes at LA sites in view of the challenging LA financial environment;
- new forms of the game increasing participation;
- accommodating new groups in the community wishing to play cricket in its various forms;
- more female involvement – there is none/little at present; and
- better links with schools leading to increased junior participation.

9. Rugby

09

This section evaluates the adequacy of facilities for rugby in Merton and the surrounding area and outlines:

- The supply of pitches
- Demand for these pitches
- The ability of the pitch stock to meet demand
- Key issues to address.

Pitch Supply

There are 24 rugby pitches within Merton in community use in addition to a number of others on school sites used primarily by the schools.

Table 9.1 - Rugby pitches in Merton

Site Name	Usage	Sub area	SR	JR
Morden Recreation Ground	A1	Mo	3	
Old Rutlishians Sports Club	A2	Mo	1	
Rutlish School	A3	Mo	1	
Raynes Park Sports Ground	A1	RP	2	
Old Blues Football Rugby Ground	A2	RP	6	
Emmanuel School Playing Fields (Blagdons PF)	A3	RP	3	
Civil Service/Old Wimbledonians	A3	RP	4	
Beverley Meads/Wimbledon Meads	A2	W	4	
Total			24	0
Westminster City School Playing Fields	C	Mi	4	
Messines (Lycee Francais)	C	Mo	1	
Drax Playing Fields	C	W	4	
Wimbledon College PF	C	W	1	2
Wimbledon College PF	C	W	3	

All of the 'public' pitches are full size and there are no junior pitches (except at schools).

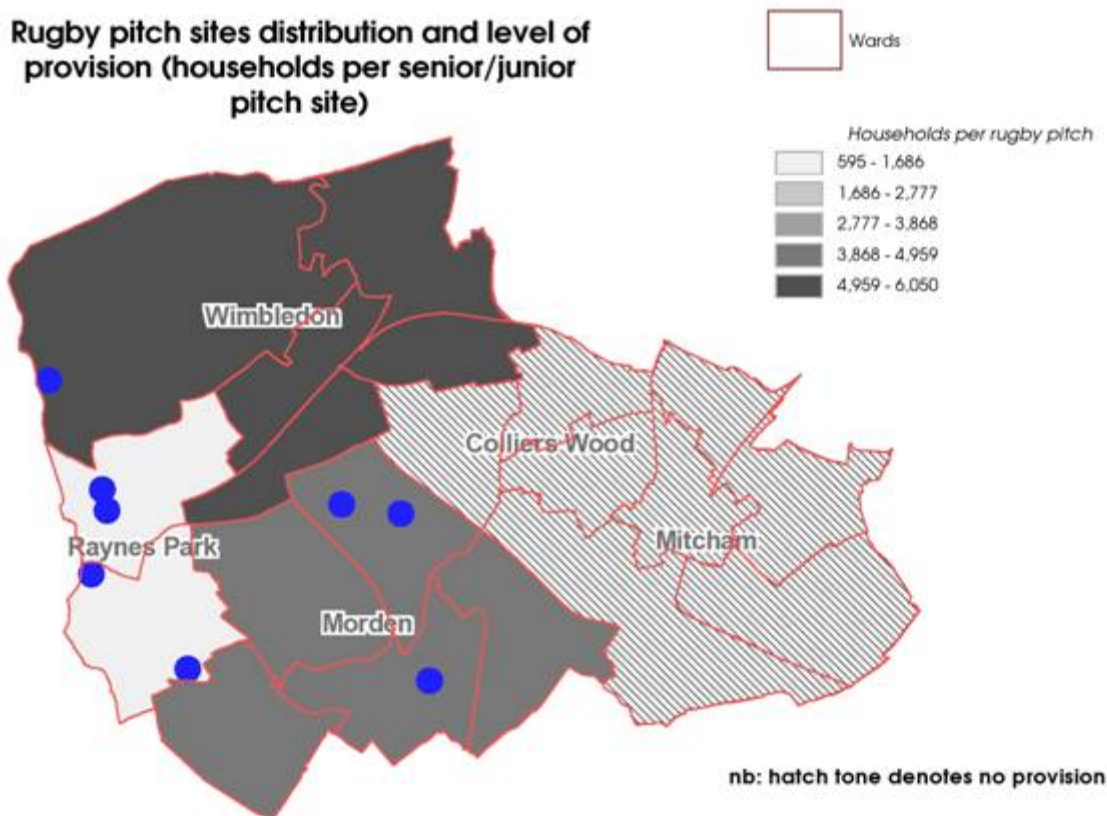
The distribution of 'public' pitches within the borough is as follows:

Table 9.2 - Distribution of rugby pitches in Merton

Sub area	No of pitches
Morden	5 (21%)
Raynes Park	15 (63%)
Wimbledon	4 (17%)

As with most other outdoor sports facilities, best provision is in the north and west of the borough – there are no rugby pitches in Mitcham and Colliers Wood. Population per pitch therefore varies considerably within the sub areas.

Map 9.1- Rugby pitch location and distribution



Other rugby facilities are located on the edge of but outside the borough at Poulter Park, Sutton and Kings College Sports Ground, New Malden

The previous 2010 study identified 26 senior and 2 junior rugby pitches, but some of these are not considered to provide for community use at the present time.

Ownership

Five of the pitches (two sites) are in local authority ownership (21%), 11 in club ownership (46%) and 8 on school sites (33%). There is thus a much lower reliance on the public sector to provide pitches than for other sports.

Clubs, teams and leagues

Rugby is a popular sport in Merton and there is a good range of clubs. The audit of clubs and teams has identified 8 clubs with 24 adult teams, four vets, 23 youth and junior, 35 mini/midi rugby teams and three women's/girls teams (89 teams in all). The senior team at each club plays in a variety of leagues within the national framework ranging from Wimbledon in London 1

South to teams in Surrey 3. This number of teams yields an estimated 600 senior players and 1200 juniors and mini/midi players.

Table 9.3 – Rugby teams in Merton

Club	Venue	Adult Teams	Vets teams	League	Junior/youth teams	Mini teams	Women's/ girls teams
KCS Old Boys	Arthur Road	3	1	London 2SW	6	8	
Merton RC	Morden Rec	3		Surrey 3			
Old Emanuel	Blagdon's	3	1	Surrey 2	3	6	1
Old Blues	Arthur Road	3	1	Surrey 1			
Old Rutlishians	Poplar Road	2		Surrey 3	6	6	
Old Wimbledonians	Coombe Lane	3	1	London 3SW		8	
Raynes Park	Raynes Park SG	3		Surrey 2			
Wimbledon	Beverley Meads	4		London 1S	8	7	2
		24	4		23	35	3

In addition 2 clubs play outside but on the edge of Merton as follows:

Mitcham	Poulter Park, Sutton	3		Surrey 3	2	7	2
Wandsworthians	Kings College School New Malden	2		Surrey 4			

The 2010 study identified 55 teams in 11 clubs in Merton, similar to a previous 2004 study (36 men's adult, 14 boys' junior and 5 mini). The current total includes slightly fewer adult teams but significantly more junior and mini.

Pelhamians RUFC (previously considered in 2010) do not appear to play any longer (formerly at Raynes Park SG), while London South Africa, although they train at Wimbledon Park Athletics Stadium, play their fixtures at East Molesey and Imber Court outside the borough.

In total therefore there are 89 teams playing at present in Merton from 8 clubs, though some of the vets, women, youth/junior and mini teams play less frequently than the senior sides. Senior

men's rugby is all played on Saturday afternoon with junior and mini on Sunday morning. The peak demand is from mini teams and players though this tends to be accommodated across senior pitches and outside the main playing areas. The two other clubs on the edge of the borough bring the number of teams playing in the wider area to about 105 teams comprising 29 senior men, 4 vets, 5 women and girls, 25 youth/junior and 42 mini teams or age groups.

The distribution of teams reflects the location of pitches – 24% play in Wimbledon, 19% in Morden, and 57% in Raynes Park, and there are no teams in Colliers Wood or Mitcham.

Schools participation

The two main independent schools in Merton have a very extensive school programme for rugby as follows:

- Wimbledon College – rugby has been the main winter sport since 1922, and is still the College's largest sport, with over 300 pupils representing the school each year. The main season runs from September to mid February, and the remainder of that term is devoted to 7-a-side. Recently the fewer than 13 and under 16 teams have been particularly strong, and the former are currently the national 7's champions. Matches are played at the College ground on Coombes Lane, which is not available for wider use, and therefore has few implications for community provision.
- Kings College School, Wimbledon – the school has 4 main teams and a large number of age group teams totalling 45 teams in all, playing 169 fixtures in a season. There are also 2 rugby sevens teams. The school plays on the school site and at the KCS sports ground in Raynes Park

The School Sports Partnership provides coaching and tag rugby for schools and rugby is delivered at some high schools including Rutlish.

Trends in participation

Consultation with local clubs provided background information on current and future activity trends:

- two thirds of clubs responding were fielding more teams than in the previous season;
- teams/clubs tend to provide for players from a wide catchment – about 40% of players live in Merton more than a mile away from their home ground and 40% from outside the borough. Only 20% live in the immediate vicinity of their club venue;
- few clubs were accredited with Club Mark, although two had the RFU Seal of Approval (or were working towards it);
- there was a variation in the number of coaches at clubs – some even suggested they had up to 60 (!); and
- 4 clubs were planning to field more teams in future seasons, across the board from adult men to colts and juniors and women.

Quality of Rugby facilities

Site visits

As highlighted in Section 3, pitch quality in Merton has been measured through site assessments carried out in line with the assessment matrix provided in Towards a Level Playing Field – these

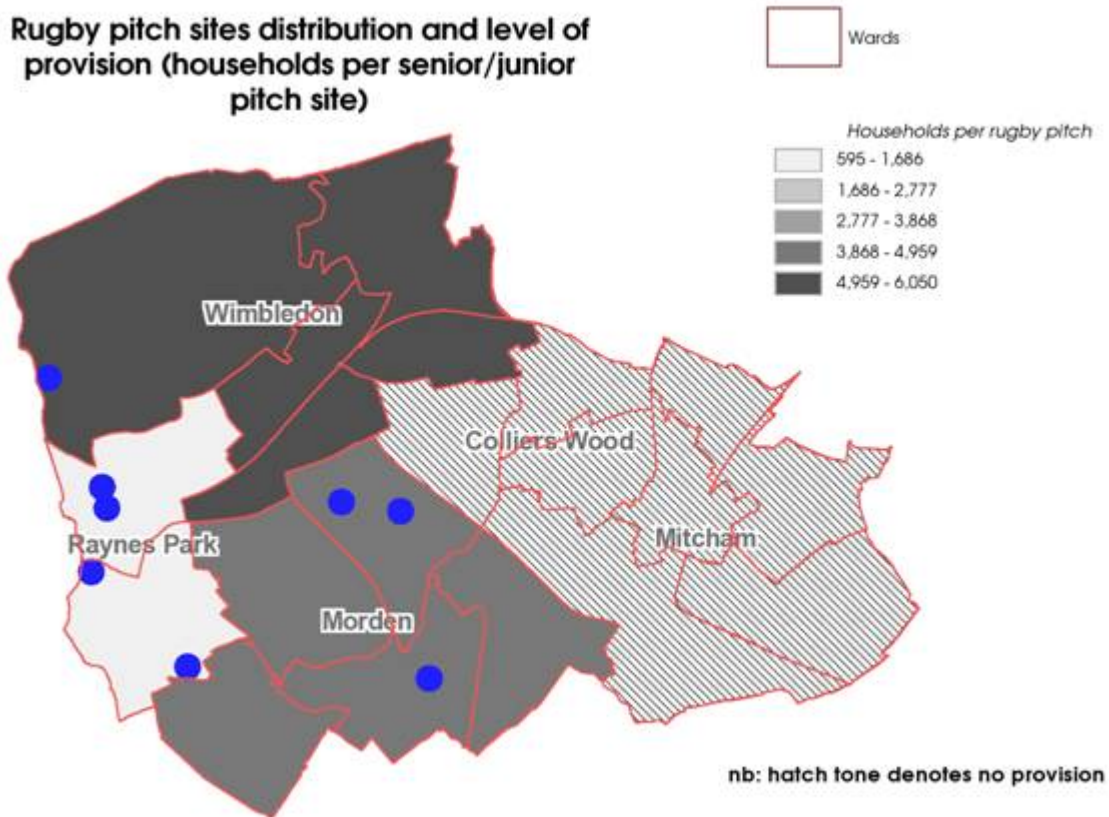
assessments are non-technical assessments designed to provide an overview of pitch quality and the degree to which facilities are fit for purpose. The findings of these assessments are then linked with issues raised by clubs and the National Governing Body to provide a full overview of the current issues.

Table 9.4- Rugby pitch quality

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Average Score	Range
Rugby	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	75%	65-81%

The non technical site assessments reveal the quality of rugby pitches to be high, with all the borough’s pitches rated as ‘good’. The audit revealed few issues with regard to the quality of pitches, and all sites have access to changing accommodation.

Map 9.2 - Rugby pitch quality



The visual inspection gave similar results for club houses.

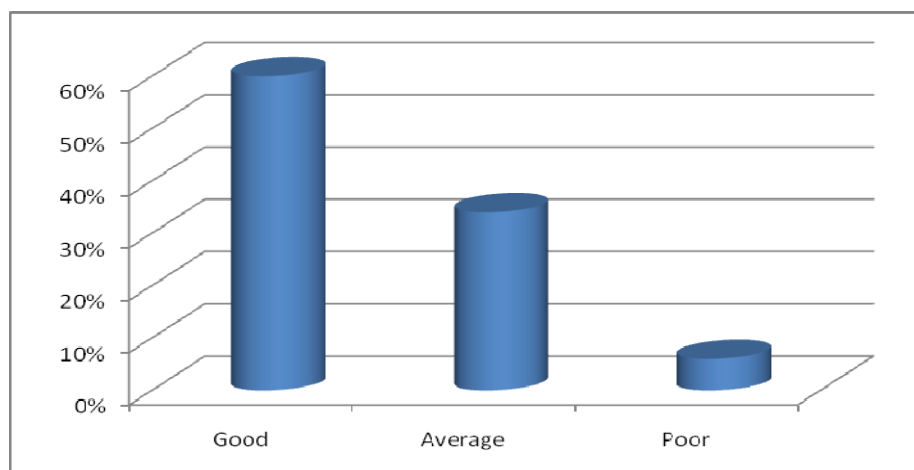
Table 9.5 - Quality of ancillary facilities

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Average Score	Range
Rugby	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	88%	83-90%

All club houses were in the upper end of the 'good' range, three on the cusp of 'excellent'.

Clubs were also asked to comment themselves on the quality of their pitches and other facilities (using the same criteria as for football and cricket). 60% of responses rated these 'good overall', 34% average and 6% poor (the main problems being drainage at two sites).

Figure 9.1 - Quality



Individual comments were also received by clubs as follows:

- KCS Old Boys – pitches are poorly drained;
- Merton RC – changing rooms are sub-standard;
- Old Blues – facilities are generally considered good;
- Old Emmanuel – good facilities but the pitches are overplayed, constraining the aspiration to develop the club further;
- Old Rutlishians – over usage of pitches, good facilities but overplayed;
- Old Wimbledonians – on private ground so no quality issues; and
- Beverley Meads – public access available to ground and problems associated with dog walking.

National Governing Body Perspective

For a rugby club, the facilities are one of the most important components. They drive the club ethos and spirit and facilitate high quality participation and development. The key priorities of the RFU are to:

- assist clubs to become sustainable;
- improve the amount in integrated changing;
- increase the quality and amount of floodlighting for both community use and competition;
- create a safe environment for play;
- provide central venues for clubs; and
- encourage the development of multi sports clubs.

No specific comments were received for Merton

Training

Most or all local clubs use their home venue for training and this places additional demands on the pitches as they are required to sustain higher levels of use. Old Wimbledonians has a separate floodlit training area, Beverley Meads has 1 pitch with full floodlights, and an additional (unmarked) training pitch with floodlights.

Comparing supply and demand

Current demand- The Playing Pitch Methodology is a peak day model, which assesses the adequacy of pitch supply to meet peak time demand. In this instance it has been applied to the borough as a whole, given that rugby is restricted to only three sub areas. The assessment takes into account only those pitches which are known to be used by the community and clubs. There are no junior or mini/midi pitches in Merton, so it assumes that mini/midi teams play on half an adult pitch, and that two such matches are therefore equivalent to one adult match.

Full calculation are set out in the appendix but are summarised below.

- Stage 1 Teams Adults 31
 - Junior 23
 - Mini/midi 35
 - Total 89
- Stage 2 Home games per week 0.5
- Stage 3 Total home games per week
 - Adult 16
 - Junior 12
 - Mini/midi 18

- Stage 4 Temporal demand

	Sat pm	Sun am
Adult	100%	
Junior		100%
Mini/midi		100%

- Stage 5 Pitches required

	Sat pm	Sun am
Adult	16	
Junior		12
Mini/midi		9

- Stage 6 Pitches available in CU

Total 24 senior – 0 mini/midi, junior

- Stage 7 Under use or shortfall

	Total pitches	Peak demand	+/-
Adult	24	16	+8
Junior/youth	0	12	-12
Mini/midi	0	9	-9

This table suggests that there are broadly enough rugby pitches available to meet the needs of adult rugby on Saturdays, and junior/midi/mini on Sundays on the same pitch. Pitch quality is generally considered good and there are therefore no implications for capacity and pitch usage. 24 pitches are considered adequate for the number of games currently played.

Training currently takes place on existing grounds, in some cases on pitches specifically dedicated to training but sometimes on the main playing surface. There is considered sufficient slack in peak time demand to permit this though this will have implications for ongoing quality.

The supply of pitches is considered sufficient to take into account a 10% strategic reserve to allow some spare capacity.

Sub area analysis

As with football and cricket, to some extent the sub area requirements are self fulfilling, because the teams play where the pitches exist and do not necessarily represent a true picture of demand, because of the uneven distribution of pitches and teams around the borough. The

sub area assessment highlights that there are surpluses of senior pitches in most sub areas, but that where junior teams exist (mainly in the Wimbledon, Raynes Park and Morden areas) the shortfall in junior pitches cancels out these apparent surpluses in senior pitches. A more realistic assessment of sub area deficiencies will take into account the distribution of population in comparison with pitch provision and this is addressed below in the issues and strategy section.

Latent Demand can be estimated from a variety of sources:

- Team generation rates - Table 9.6 summarises TGRs for rugby in Merton. It demonstrates that participation is significantly above average for Merton for all categories of play. It should however be treated with caution as databases have not recently been updated by Sport England.

Table 9.6 – TGRs for Rugby

Age Group	Merton TGR	Average (extracted from Sport England Database)
Senior Male	1:1826	1:7032
Senior Female	1:15503	1:43770
Junior Male	1:242	1:2105
Junior Female	0	0
Mini Male	1:316	1:2639

There is little indication therefore of any unmet or latent demand though Merton's location on the edge of London with plentiful availability of pitches may well attract higher participation than average.

- No clubs identified a latent demand for teams not currently being met.

Future Demand can be estimated in a number of ways:

- Application of TGRs to the 2026 population. At current participation rates the number of teams required would be:

Table 9.7 Future TGRs for rugby

Age Group	Merton TGR	Population	Number of additional teams
Senior Male	1:1826	40738	-2
Senior Female	1:15503	42562	0
Junior Male	1:242	6597	+4

Junior Female	0	6025	0
Mini/midi mixed	1:316	13015	+6

This results at similar TGRs in a further 8 teams overall, mainly in junior/mini/midi requiring at most one additional pitch.

- Additional club and team formation – it is unlikely that new clubs will form but existing clubs have indicated a desire in the short term to form six new teams, across all age and gender groups, resulting in the need for one additional pitch in the short term.
- Meeting LBM's targets for increased participation across the board – a 5% increase in players would result in the need for 1-2 additional pitches.
- School and other development initiatives – unlikely to require additional pitches.
- There is little participation by girls and women, but TGRs are already above average so no increase in pitches is likely.
- The RFU currently measures participation increases through the affiliation process, looking at the number of participants, matches etc. They target increases in adult participation, as generally junior participants are easily generated. The conversion of junior participants to adults (thus avoiding the drop off) is also a key target. If this target is worked back to a club level, an increase of one team per club is realistic. If this is achieved in Merton, an additional 8 teams would be created by 2026 requiring up to 4 additional pitches. However this can be absorbed in the figures above, giving an overall future demand for 4 additional pitches

Summary of demand

Current – sufficient pitches at present including 10% contingency

Latent – no additional pitches required

Future (up to 2026) – 4 additional pitches to meet various requirements. By 2026 therefore there is a need for up to 28 senior rugby pitches compared with 24 at present.

Issues for strategy to address

The key issues for the strategy to address are therefore:

- The need to maintain the current level of pitch provision at existing grounds and clubs to meet current demand.
- The needs to accommodate training at existing clubs.
- The need for qualitative improvements at rugby clubs, including upgrades to both club houses and pitches to ensure that the required amount of games can be sustained
- The implications of increasing participation on demand for pitches as well as changing patterns of participation in rugby (midweek etc).

- The possible role of 3G pitches in reducing demands on grass pitches and providing opportunities for training and mini/midi competition.

10. Hockey

This section evaluates the adequacy of facilities for hockey within Merton and the surrounding area and outlines:

- The supply of pitches
- Demand for these pitches
- The ability of the pitch stock to meet demand
- Key priorities.

Pitch supply

Hockey is now exclusively played on Artificial Grass Pitches. Although some schools still have grass hockey pitches, and there is a grass pitch also at the Wimbledon Club, these are largely obsolete for competitive forms of the game. The recently published guidance on AGPs (Sport England 2010) indicates the following surfaces to be suitable for hockey:

- Water Based (suitable for high level hockey)
- Sand Filled (preferred surface for hockey)
- Sand Dressed (acceptable surface for hockey)
- Short Pile 3G (acceptable surface for hockey).

As summarised in section 6, which examined the provision of AGPs across the borough, there are nine AGPs that meet with one of the above definitions. These are summarised below. As a club based sport, the club environment, particularly the availability of changing facilities, storage facilities and social facilities is as important as the existence and quality of the pitch itself.

Many facilities have been built within the last five years and the quality of provision is therefore fairly high, although there is a need to ensure that surfaces are maintained and fit for purpose.

AGPs in Merton

Although there are 9 pitches in the borough on 8 sites (see Map 6.1 on page 52), only the following currently accommodate clubs:

- Raynes Park Leisure/HS
- Kings College School (2)
- Ricards Lodge School
- Harris Academy
- The Hub

All other pitches are unsuitable for community use for hockey by virtue of their access type or a lack of floodlighting. It is understood however that hockey within school is played on the other pitches.

There are other pitches on the edge of but outside the borough where hockey is also played - including Rosehill Park, Sutton, Canterbury Road, Croydon, and Ashcroft Technical College, Wandsworth.

Clubs, teams and leagues

The following hockey clubs are known to play in Merton:

- **Wimbledon HC** – the club currently runs 8 men’s teams, 6 women’s, and 1 mixed, together with 8 boys and 8 girls teams. The men play in the England Hockey League Men’s Conference East and various divisions of the Higgins Group London HL (Premier to Division 6) and the Wessex and London Vets’ League. Women’s teams play in the South Clubs Ladies League (Division 2) and various divisions of the Surrey Ladies League (Divisions 1-10). The mixed team plays friendlies. The junior teams (from under 9 to under 16) play in local tournaments and league competitions. The club is based at the Wimbledon Club, where the clubhouse is situated, and plays most of its games at the Kings College School pitches in Raynes Park and some at Raynes Park Leisure and Ricards Lodge School. Training takes place at the KCS pitch most evenings of the week and on Sunday morning for juniors.
- **Merton HC** currently runs 4 men’s, 2 women’s and a mixed team. The men play in the Surrey League Divisions 1-3 and the Surrey Open HL, and the women in the Surrey Ladies League (divisions 2 and 8). A mixed team plays friendlies. Training is on Wednesday evenings at the Hub. There is no junior section.
- **Croydon HC** runs 4 men’s, 2 women’s, a mixed friendly team and junior activities. The men play in the Surrey Open League (Premier to division 8) and the women in the Surrey Ladies L (Premier to Division 9). The teams play mainly at Harris Academy, which was until recently also used for evening training. The club now trains in Croydon. The men’s 4th and mixed teams play on grass at Wallington HS where the clubhouse (shared with Old Whitgiftians) is located. Juniors also train at Harris Academy on Monday evenings from 4.30 – 5.30.
- **Mitcham Ladies HC** runs 2 teams – the first XI is in the Surrey Ladies League Division 6 and the second team in Division 10. Home matches are played at Ricards Lodge HS and training takes place outside the borough at Tiffin Girls School in Kingston on Thursdays. A women’s team also plays in the Surrey Summer HL at Tiffin GS. Pitches at Raynes Park Leisure and Ricards Lodge HS are also understood to have been used in recent times. There is no junior section.
- **Berrylands Ladies HC** is based at Ricards Lodge HS and the club has one team playing in Division 8 of the Surrey Ladies HL.
- **London Strollers HC** is a friendly mixed hockey club that plays social hockey in London and in particular in Merton. The club has 4 regular sides and plays its home fixtures in the Raynes Park Mixed HL at Raynes Park Leisure. Players are drawn from the local area and further afield. The league itself has 9 teams in the current season. The league was formed about 10 years ago to give ‘competitive’ opportunities to local teams who were previously playing friendly fixtures. During the current season the Strollers will play 80 games between them, involving 40 matches at Raynes Park. This number of games is likely to remain steady in coming years. The club also plays summer hockey but at pitches outside Merton.
- **London Wayfarers HC** is base in Battersea but plays a number of fixtures in Merton. The club has 7 men’s and 6 women’s teams, playing in the South HL and Higgins London L (men) and South Clubs and Surrey Ladies league (women). The men’s first and second teams and

women's first 3 teams (and occasionally some lower teams) play at Raynes Park Leisure and there is occasional use by some teams of the KCS pitch. The more senior teams from the club train at Raynes Park on Mondays and Wednesdays from 7.30 to 9.30. The club's other venues are currently Battersea Park, Kennington Park and Tiffin GS.

- The total number of teams that these clubs currently field is therefore estimated at 57 in total, comprising 41 adult/senior teams (men, women and mixed) and 16 junior.

School and other participation

Many schools within Merton play hockey, and hockey is one of the sports delivered by the Merton School Sports Partnership. There is no impact on peak demand of this usage, and few implications for pitch capacity, as this takes place largely on all weather facilities. The levels of engagement with the sport at a school age however may impact upon demand for club-based sport.

Three schools are affiliated to the Surrey Hockey Association – Kings College, Wimbledon HS and Ursuline Prep School.

Governing Body initiatives

As part of English Hockey's development programme, there is a network of Junior Development Centres throughout Surrey which are local training centres for u13-u17 year olds, for players nominated by schools, clubs and coaches. None of these centres is in Merton. There is also a system of Junior Academy Centres which cater for elite performers. Training venues exist in 5 locations throughout Surrey but again none is in Merton. Clubfirst is an accreditation scheme being promoted by England Hockey as part of the wider Sport England Clubmark programme, and is intended to help provide a safe, effective and club friendly hockey environment for participants. One accredited club exists in Merton – Wimbledon HC.

Quality

A detailed quality assessment using the TaLPF template is not appropriate for artificial grass pitches used for hockey, but it is possible to correlate the overall quality of pitches with the age of the pitch and whether it has been refurbished (the information is taken from Sport England's Active Places website). Of the 9 pitches currently existing, 1 was built more than 10 years ago (and has been refurbished albeit also more than 10 years ago), 7 were constructed between 5-10 years ago (one of which has since been refurbished) and 1 pitch has been built in the last five years (actually in 2009). Given that the life of a pitch carpet is generally regarded as 10 years, it is likely that at least 7 pitches will require significant work over the next 4 years.

Club issues

During consultation with clubs a number of issues have been highlighted:

- Clubs are playing in Merton not necessarily because this is their preferred location but because pitches are available here and not within their natural catchment. There is a generally perceived shortage of AGPs in South London.
- Some facilities (particularly the Hub) are in need of renovation and re-carpeting and there is a concern about the amount of sand on the pitch at Harris Academy.
- Lack of training venues is seen as an issue in some cases – while pitches exist, at least 3 have no floodlights thereby negating their availability for winter training. There is also a high demand for midweek training by other sports for artificial grass, particularly in the absence

of a 3G pitch suitable for football and many hockey clubs are unable to access their preferred location at the required time.

- None of the available pitches has an associated clubhouse, and clubs therefore have to travel back to their home base after matches, in some cases some distance away
- Some pitches are considered too expensive - £100 per match is charged in many cases.

Comparing supply and demand

Current demand

As summarised in Section 6, the Sport England FPM model makes the following conclusions for AGPs in Merton borough:

- while there is a relatively good provision of AGPs in Merton, demand exceeds capacity within the borough by about one third;
- satisfied demand in Merton (taking into account access to and from adjacent boroughs) is very low (less than half) and there is sufficient unmet demand for more than 3 pitches, because all pitches are considered to be at capacity; and
- Merton's pitches attract significant usage from all parts of South London because of high accessibility and poor relative provision elsewhere.

Towards a Level Playing Field Calculations

The current distribution of participation in hockey in the wider area means that it is difficult to be precise about the actual demand for hockey in Merton. Existing pitches are used by some clubs and teams with no particular need to be in Merton, but are located here because pitches are available. (e.g. Croydon HC, London Wayfarers HC).

The specialised nature of hockey and its relatively low activity rates mean that it is not appropriate to undertake a full assessment of demand using the TaLPF methodology certainly on a ward basis, and indeed there is a need for caution when attempting this borough-wide. The following however is a summary of the current situation:

No of sand based pitches	9
No of pitches of appropriate standard and accessibility	6
Capacity of pitches on peak days (x4)	24
Main match day	Saturdays
Peak demand for teams	35
Home games per week	0.5
Peak demand for matches	17.5

On the basis that each pitch is available for 4 matches each Saturday, there is adequate supply of pitches to meet peak demand on Saturday overall in the borough, although there may well

be capacity issues at pitches accommodating the bigger clubs. If three matches only are possible, adequacy of pitches is only just achieved.

Latent demand - Again it is difficult to estimate the precise levels of latent demand because of the sub regional nature of hockey activity in the area. If anything Merton imports more demand than is exported or met outside the borough. With the use of team generation rates, it is possible to benchmark local activity rates with national comparators as follows.

Table 10.1 - TGRs for Hockey

Age group	Merton	England
Senior men	1:2554	1:7595
Senior women	1:3037	1:10292
Junior boys	1:713	1:4239
Junior girls	1:657	1:5115

In all cases TGRs in Merton are much lower than the national average (i.e. more teams are formed per capita) and this is a reflection probably of the supply led demand from existing pitches, accessibility to Merton's facilities from a wide surrounding area, the lack of pitches in neighbouring boroughs and the existence of one club in particular with high numbers of both senior and junior players. Overall it can be concluded that there is little demand in the area that cannot be met in Merton.

Future demand

- There is no evidence from existing clubs that they wish in the short term to develop additional teams.
- Merton's target for increased activity levels overall is 5% over 15 years.
- Future growth can be estimated by applying existing TGRs to the future population. By 2026 the following might be anticipated:
 - Decline in men's teams -1
 - Decline in women's teams -1
 - Increase in boys' teams +1-2
 - Increase in girls' teams +1-2.

Overall with all these future changes considered there is likely to be an increase by 2026 of no more than 5 teams, mostly junior, with little impact on future pitch provision as junior matches take place outside peak times.

Overall conclusions and key issues for the strategy to address

- Demand for hockey in Merton is determined as much by the existence of suitable venues as by the needs of individual clubs. TGRs in the borough exceed the national average by a

considerable amount and suggest that Merton accommodates much demand from outside.

- At the same time there are active and important local clubs offering hockey to local residents including significant junior development at one major club.
- There is a comprehensive network of social hockey clubs, demand from whom is met in Merton.
- Overall the existence of 6 AGPs currently available for hockey (5 with floodlights) is considered sufficient to meet existing demand, although there may be capacity issues at some venues and clubs. No additional pitches are required for hockey at the present time to meet unmet demand, although improvements to other sites (e.g. provision of floodlights or improved community usage) would offer some spare capacity. It is more likely that the provision of additional AGRs in adjacent boroughs would be more likely to absorb some demand currently being met in Merton.
- In the future, it is unlikely that demand will increase markedly, because of a relatively static population and already high existing participation levels. Any future demand can be absorbed by the measures suggested above.
- The provision of 3G pitches as suggested elsewhere in this study for football in particular would release some spare capacity during the week for additional hockey training, which is not currently being met.
- There is an ongoing need to ensure that surfaces are managed and maintained to a high level to ensure that pitches remain fit for purpose.
- There is some merit in considering the provision of clubhouse and other ancillary facilities at existing pitches to avoid the need for clubs to travel after matches, though the difficulties of achieving this on existing school sites is acknowledged.

11. Bowls

Introduction and background

Surrey County Bowling Association, formed 100 years ago, is the County governing body for outdoor bowls in the wider area, including Merton, and is in membership of the NGB, Bowls England. The County Association governs 150 clubs with 5,500 members. Surrey County Women's Association is more recent, and has 126 clubs and over 3,000 members. Overall Surrey is the third largest county (of 35) in terms of clubs in England. Most clubs in Merton are affiliated to the county governing bodies, though a few are recreational and casual clubs.

The bowls season outdoors runs during the summer, and clubs in the area play in a number of local leagues. Clubs also affiliate to more local associations, including Wimbledon, including Kingston and District Association who organise competition among members clubs.

Clubs and venues

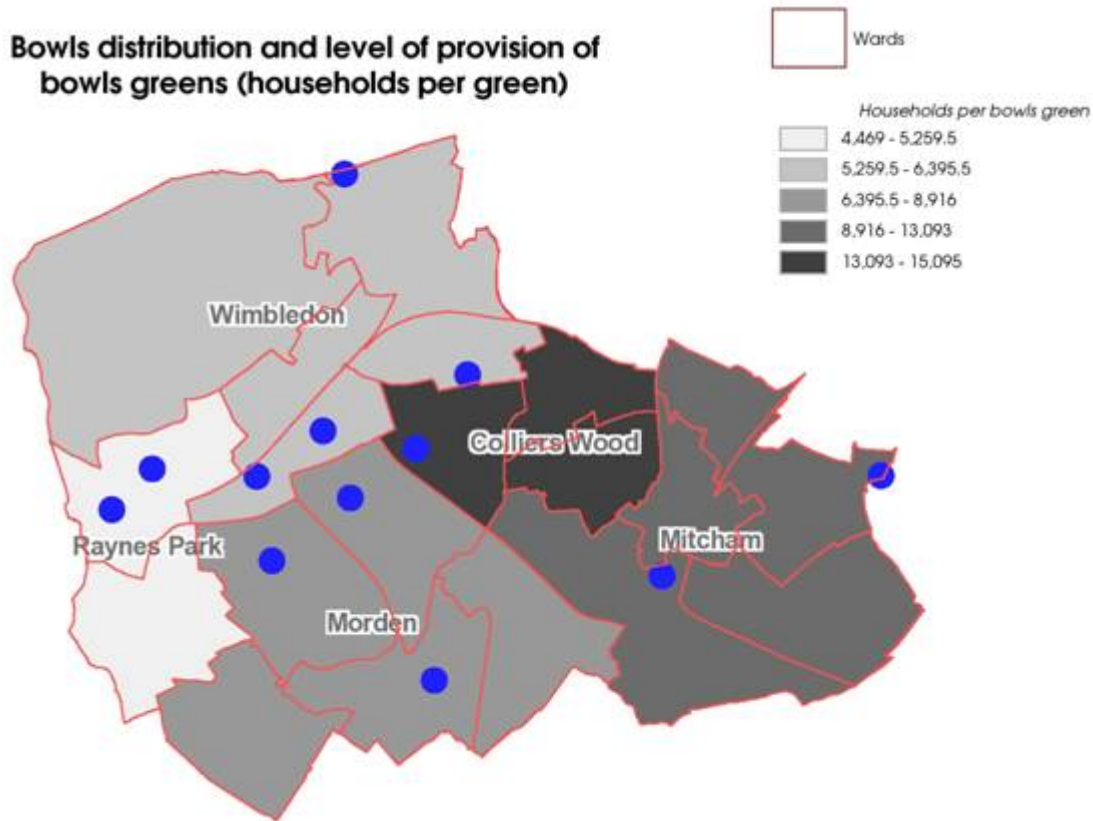
Clubs known to be based in Merton, together with bowls venues, are set out below.

Table 11.1 - Bowls greens in Merton

Venue	Sub area	Greens	Clubs	Ownership/ management	Availability
Cannons Rec Grd	Mitcham	1	Mitcham BC/LBC	LBM	A1
Dundonald Rec	Wimbledon	1	Wandgas BC	LBM	A1
Haydons Road Rec	Wimbledon	1	Colliers Wood BC/LBC	Private club	A2
John Innes Rec	Morden	1	Merton Park BC/LBC	LBM	A1
Joseph Hood Rec	Morden	1	Merton BC/LBC	LBM	A1
76 Kingston Road, Merton Park	Colliers Wood	1	Merton Manor BC,	Private club	A2
Morden Rec	Morden	1	Morden BC	LBM	A1
Turle Road, Norbury	Mitcham	1	Norbury BC/LBC	Private club	A2
Raynes Sports Grd	Raynes Park	1	Raynes Park BC/LBC	LBM	A1
Southey Bowls Club	Wimbledon	1	Southey BC/LBC	Private club	A2
Wimbledon Park	Wimbledon	1	Wimbledon Park BC/LBC	LBM	A1
West Wimbledon BC Durham Road	Wimbledon	1	West Wimbledon BC/LBC	Private club	A2

Total		12			
-------	--	----	--	--	--

Map 11.1 - Bowls green location and distribution



There are therefore 12 bowls greens. All sites have one flat, mostly six-rink, green, together with ancillary facilities, such as changing rooms/pavilion, parking and equipment store. Clubs and teams play variously in the Shepherd Neame, Spitfire, RTS, Wimbledon and District, Kingston and District, New Surrey Bowls, Cristal, Croydon and District leagues and more local competitions. Wandgas is a smaller club which is unaffiliated and plays friendly competitions.

Club feedback

Clubs were contacted by questionnaire and telephone, and there was a 66% response, so the conclusions below have been extrapolated:

- it is estimated that there are 770 members of bowls clubs in Merton, of which 570 are playing members. 70% of these are men;
- there are few if any junior players (under 16);
- the average membership size of most clubs is very small – mainly less than 50, in some cases much less;
- hearsay evidence suggests that membership continues to decline;

- the number of matches played by each club varies considerably – some clubs play over 100 matches during a 20-25 week season. There is also considerable recreational and casual play, and internal club competitions;
- the number of matches played over the last 2 seasons has stayed substantially the same;
- clubs and venues tend to cater for a relatively wide catchment, though this varies between clubs. Overall about 50% of club members live outside the borough, 25% in Merton but more than one mile from the club, and 25% locally;
- all but one responding club cater for disabled bowlers, though some experience problems with suitable wheelchairs, access to the green and associated parking;
- there are very few clubs with their own coach enabling teaching, development and improvement of players; and
- all but one responding club are trying to attract additional members, as existing membership declines, through advertising, posters and publicity and open evenings, though none appears to work closely with sports development agencies, local authority or governing body. The main factors inhibiting additional membership include car parking inadequacies, shortage of good ancillary facilities, shortage of coaches and volunteers, lack of finance and the cost of membership.

Accessibility

Eight of the greens in the borough are owned by the council. Each of these is available on a pay and play basis (though public take up is low), while some clubs have to reserve one rink for casual usage while being used, though again with low or non-existent casual take up. Some private clubs permit outside usage by other clubs, functions etc when not required by the host club.

Quality of facilities

The quality of existing playing and ancillary facilities was investigated by club questionnaires and informed by visual inspection. The general conclusions are as follows:

- for the most part, drainage, playing surface, green maintenance, overall quality and upkeep were scored as 'good'. Characteristics of some greens were considered only average (e.g. Raynes Park and Norbury playing surface and green maintenance, dog fouling at Southey), but none was considered poor. Local authority and private facilities scored equally well;
- ancillary facilities are more variable (poor car park at West Wimbledon, changing and car park at Joseph Hood, showers at Raines Park, car park at Norbury). Local authority and private ancillary facilities did not differ greatly;
- very few matches were called off in the previous season due to the condition of the green (four at Joseph Hood); and
- overall levels of satisfaction with greens in the borough varied.

Specific issues raised by clubs

Clubs were given the opportunity to comment in general on issues affecting their activities or suitable enhancements as follows:

- parking concerns in the area of West Wimbledon BC are restricting matches and competitions with other clubs;
- ageing membership is affecting overall interest, with no apparent involvement from younger people;
- council green fees are too high for only 5 months use;
- pathway is required around the green at Joseph Hood to overcome potential safety risks;
- the potential closure of 'public' greens is leading to the loss of more clubs;
- there is uncertainty about the future of the Norbury Green, because of the administration of the freeholders and the vacation by leaseholders who are responsible for maintaining the green; and
- improvements required to John Innes bowls pavilion, including additional car parking spaces.

Governing Body views

Contact was made with the Surrey Bowls Association, and the following summarises their overall views:

- there are currently 147 men's clubs affiliated, but since 2006 10 clubs have folded for a variety of reasons and it is known that in 2012 a further 12 clubs will be lost due mainly to cutbacks in local authority funding. The biggest factor in the loss of clubs over the last 10 years has been the closure of clubs associated with large companies (banks, utilities, etc);
- loss of a club normally results in a reduction of 40% of their players overall, particularly at local authority greens where fees have been kept artificially low. The remainder of members tend to join other existing clubs;
- the average numbers of members per club in Surrey is only about 50. The largest clubs have 180 members with considerable turnover. Smaller clubs have lower fees, which inhibits their ability to develop facilities and membership;
- the main issue for boroughs surrounding Merton is the potential loss of local authority greens as a result of local government cuts and the impact on clubs and teams;
- green quality varies greatly in Surrey, depending on the weather, ownership and management regime;
- private clubs have better playing facilities because of longer maintenance – 4-5 hours per day on 3-4 days per week, compared with twice a week x 1.5 hours at local authority greens. Southey BC is still used for county competitions in Merton, though the quality of West Wimbledon BC has declined. If local authority greens are subject to closure, it is usually cost prohibitive for clubs to take over maintenance;
- club houses and pavilions are often in need of some upgrading, although members tend to look after these to the best of their ability. Private clubhouses are usually in better condition;

- Bowls England is the 'new' governing body and works as part of a bowls development alliance with other organisations to improve governance. One funding target is to attract 12,000 new bowlers over 65 within 2 years. The governing body has recently employed a development manager with a remit to widen participation, but the governing body is often seen as not relevant to clubs; and
- the main challenges to the sport in Surrey are seen by the County Governing Body as:
 - local authority cutbacks and their impact on club retention and team formation;
 - the quality of green and ancillary facilities, particularly at council grounds;
 - the cost of maintaining facilities, declining membership and lack of funding to effect improvements;
 - increasing age of bowls club members, and particularly the lack of 20-50 year olds and young people;
 - lack of voluntary help for clubs – coaches and administrators;
 - the need to promote new 'short' forms of the games (e.g. New age bowls, sets play) to attract new players with less spare time; and
 - the need for closer involvement with schools and local authority sports development staff.

Comparing supply and demand

It is not appropriate to assess demand by applying the methodology used by other sports or by the use of TGRs. Adoption of an historic Sports Council 'standard' of 10 greens per 60000 people ('Planning for Sport' 1970) would give a requirement in excess of 30 greens and this is clearly unrealistic.

Current participation is low but there appears to be a broad balance between the 12 existing greens and 14 clubs. The loss of even one of the existing greens would be likely to lead to the loss of one or more clubs and players would be unlikely to join another club in line with the GB comment above. However there is little competitive use of the Dundonald green, and the retention of this green may be difficult to justify in terms of value for money.

Latent demand – none was identified by existing clubs, and the Market Segmentation data highlights little unmet demand for bowls in the borough.

Future participation in bowls is only likely to grow if a more aggressive approach to recruitment is taken by clubs and governing bodies. However population changes up to 2016/2021/2026 are estimated to show an increase in the 50-70 age group (within which a large proportion of existing participants lie) of between 9 and 19% which in numerical terms represents an additional 3-7,000 people.

At the same time governing bodies and clubs are acutely aware of the need to widen the age base of participants. Indeed at elite level bowls is very much a younger persons' domain. No clubs in the area have taken positive steps to attract younger players quoting the difficulty of attracting them to a sport which has an image problem and in the face of competition from other sports and activities. However all clubs recognise this is a crucial requirement.

On the basis of the existing level of provision, which is considered adequate and despite the potential increases in demand arising from development initiatives and demographic changes, it is considered unlikely that the further provision of new bowls greens will be required in Merton

up to 2021/2026. Nevertheless if participation does increase additional pressures will be exerted on the current range of facilities.

Summary and conclusions

- There are 12 bowls greens distributed across Merton which currently accommodate 14 clubs.
- Bowls participation in the borough is relatively low. Participation is dominated by older people and there is very little junior activity. All clubs wish to attract younger players.
- Membership levels have declined over the years and the number of clubs has decreased.
- Greens and pavilions, including LA venues are generally good in quality, but private clubs are able to maintain slightly higher standards.
- There is considered to be a broad balance between supply and demand at present. If development initiatives and demographic changes occur as anticipated, most existing greens should be retained up to 2026 though there is no identified need for additional greens.
- Innovative improvements to facilities and to marketing the sport would be likely to raise participation.

Issues for the strategy to address

The key issues for the strategy to address are therefore:

- retention of greens to meet the current and future needs of clubs, but minor rationalisation in terms of overall value for money;
- necessary maintenance of and improvement to greens to ensure they remain fit for purpose;
- improvements to ancillary facilities to maintain and enhance their attractiveness to existing and potential new users, including young people, women and the disabled;
- improved opportunities for casual play and play by stricter enforcement of club management of hired greens and better access to private clubs;
- development measures to encourage greater participation;
- provision of at least one synthetic surfaces green with floodlights to facilitate year round play; and
- consideration of an indoor centre in Merton subject to full feasibility (this is not part of the remit of this study and is recommended in response to consultation).

12. Tennis

12

Introduction

The County Governing Body for tennis for the Merton area is Surrey LTA. It is responsible for the administration of tennis across the county, including youth and other development and employs a county-wide Development Manager. As might be expected in a strong tennis area there is a good range of clubs in Merton affiliated to the GB, each with their own courts, and there is also an extensive variety of school and 'parks' courts. Teams play in the Surrey senior and junior leagues

Courts and clubs

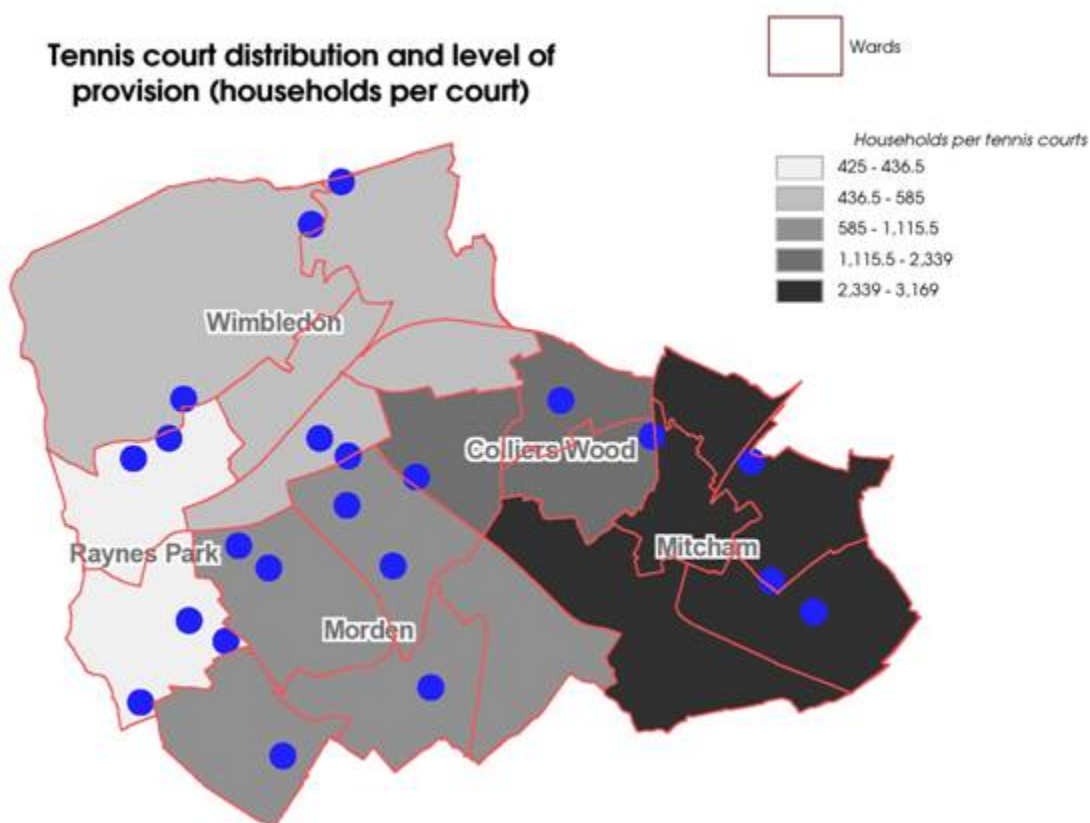
There are estimated to be 110 tennis courts in community use in Merton, together with at least 30 courts on school sites and 52 at the All England Club. There are also 6 grass courts at Raynes Park Playing Fields which until recently were used in conjunction with the Wimbledon Championships

Table 12.1 - Tennis courts in Merton

Site Name	Usage	Sub area	Courts	Notes
Colliers Wood Recreation Ground	A1	CW	2	2 tarmac
Oakleigh Way Rec	A1	Mi	2	2 tarmac
Sherwood Park Rec OS	A1	Mi	2	2 tarmac
Holland Gardens OS	A1	RP	2	2 tarmac, 1T = boules/TT
Dundonald Recreation Ground	A1	W	2	2 tarmac no FL
Nursery Road Playing Fields	A1	CW	3	3 tarmac
Joseph Hood Memorial Recreation Ground	A1	Mo	3	3 tarmac (plus 2T and 2 mini T on separate area)
King Georges Field	A1	Mo	3	3 tarmac no FL
John Innes Park	A1	Mo	4	4 tarmac no FL
Sir Joseph Hood PF	A1	RP	4	3 tarmac no FL
Tamworth Farm Rec	A1	Mi	5	5 tarmac no FL
Cottenham Park	A1	RP	6	6 tarmac not FL
Wimbledon Park	A1	W	20	10 art grass, 10 tarmac, 10 FL
Elmwood LTC	A2	Mi	3	3 tarmac not FL
Raynes Park Residents LTC	A2	RP	3	3 tarmac, 2 FL
Cranleigh LTC	A2	Mo	5	5 tarmac FL
Wilton Grove TC	A2	W	5	4 tarmac FL, 1 mini red not FL, plus 12 indoor/2 temp indoor
David Lloyd Club Raynes Park	A2	Mo	9	4 acrylic, 2 textile, 1 art grass (all FL), 2 art grass not FL

Site Name	Usage	Sub area	Courts	Notes
The Wimbledon Club	A2	W	15	1 acrylic, 1 clay, 3 art grass all FL, 2 acrylic, 8 grass not FL, plus 1 indoor
Westside LTC	A2	W	12	2 acrylic, 3 art grass, 5 tarmac all FL, 1 acrylic, 1 tarmac not FL
Total			110	
Bishopsford Arts College		Mo	3	
Harris Academy Merton		Mi	4	
Raynes Park High School		RP	3	
Ricards Lodge High School		W	5	
Ursuline High School		RP	4	
Kings College School PF		W	6	Plus 12 T on AGP
Wimbledon HS GDST		RP	5	
Raynes Park Playing Fields		RP	6	Tennis not used?
All England LTC		W	52	Plus 5 indoor T

Map 12.1- Tennis court location and distribution



52 courts are available at tennis clubs (of which 33 are floodlit) and 58 at public parks (mostly not floodlit). There is a range of surfaces catering for a wide variety of demand. Most/all of the LA courts are tarmac and not floodlit, while club sites include acrylic, grass, tarmac, textile, artificial grass and clay services (mostly lit). The school courts are mainly unlit though the (temporary) courts at King's College School PF are laid out on the AGP. Other AGPs may also have seasonal courts available.

Accessibility

At most LBM courts the facilities are available on a pay and play basis, and at Joseph Hood Recreation Ground there is no need to book as courts are free to use. At most venues the cost for an adult is £5.40 per hour (reductions for concessions and Gold Card holders). Wimbledon Park costs £7.75 adults for evenings and weekends (plus concessions). There is a small reduction for members. A commercial rate is available for coaching and similar activities.

Private clubs tend to have an open access policy for players and this is a prerequisite at those clubs with Club Mark Accreditation (Westside, The Wimbledon Club, Raynes Park Residents and David Lloyd Centre). All clubs accept junior members. There is generally a welcoming attitude to new participants on their website and low cost membership exists at some clubs.

Specific issues raised by clubs

Clubs contributed their own comments on other issues concerning their facilities:

- Cranleigh LTC are concerned about falling membership, caused in part by their 'tucked away' location near Mostyn Gardens, and while they encourage new members and rely on voluntary efforts they require better promotion through the council.

Quality

The quality of existing playing and ancillary facilities was evaluated with the use of club questionnaires and visual inspection. The general conclusions are:

- parks courts in Merton are generally to a very high standard, with new surfaces, clear line markings, good nets and strong fencing. There are no apparent drainage problems;
- ancillary facilities where they exist are more variable; and
- club courts are also generally good though some improvements are necessary to some clubhouses.

Governing Body views

Contact was made with the Surrey LTA Tennis Development Manager and the following summarises her overview of tennis facilities and development in Merton:

- Merton has a number of very strong clubs, including three 'satellite' clubs (clubs identified to provide quality coaching and competitive opportunities for performance players in particular those aged 12 and under), out of 8 in total in Surrey. These clubs are David Lloyd centre, Westside and WJTI (see below).
- There are plentiful park sites, but a lack of significant tennis development. Coaches have to 'buy' time at commercial rates at Wimbledon Park, and this and other venues could sustain a larger tennis programme. In principle parks courts offer good opportunities for junior development, being cheaper, but require the presence of motivators and development

officers. (Beacon sites are sites that provide free and affordable tennis for the community – typically a park site with a programme on it. Once accredited these sites are promoted by the LTA and also given access to capital and revenue funding pots. They are a key focus for the LTA to drive up participation levels as they cater for different market to private member clubs. Merton does not have any of these are present but King George’s and Wandsworth Common are good examples of Beacon sites in adjacent boroughs).

- Merton does not have a system in place which would allow the management of parks courts to be undertaken by coaching operators, or private coaches, which could increase activities (examples nearby include King George’s Park and Wandsworth Common).
- Support from the LTA is available (funding etc) if clubs are registered and affiliated.
- Local Authority and club sites are generally considered to be of good quality.
- There is a strong involvement with schools in the borough, through the LTA, SSP and the All England Club Initiative (see below).
- The LTA has launched a ‘Places to Play’ Strategy which aims to increase participation, particularly among juniors and access to coaching. To achieve this funding is prioritised towards low cost quality indoor structures, floodlighting outdoor courts and renewing parks courts. A particular priority in Merton is considered to be a 2/3 court indoor (temporary bubble) facility with lighting.

School and other development activities

Merton Council operates a tennis development programme for 8-17 year olds. Trials take place in September and training runs from September to July. Players train weekly and take part in tournaments and events throughout the year. In 2010/11 sessions took place at the David Lloyd Centre in Raynes Park, on Mondays and Tuesdays. The sessions are runs by the Merton Community Tennis Coach who also works in Merton schools. There is an elite squad that operates from Harris Academy. The Merton Secondary Schools Sports Association holds annual tennis championships at Wimbledon Park’s courts.

Tennis For Free is a charity established in 2005 to address the barriers for participation in Tennis (i.e. court charges) and to bring the benefits of playing tennis and becoming actively engaged in sport to as many young people as possible. The charity has profiled on its website every free public tennis court in the country and also runs weekly free coaching for children, young people and adults, showing that tennis is a game that can be played by and benefit everyone, regardless of ability or social background. Tennis For Free works in partnership with local schools, tennis clubs and local authorities throughout the UK, providing free access to community tennis courts, free coaching/participation sessions and free usage of equipment. Its goal is to establish vibrant tennis communities throughout the UK

The charity works extensively in Merton. After its initial involvement at the Joseph Hood Recreation Ground in Morden, which was TFF’s first free coaching site, the charity and council agreed on opening a second site in the area, namely the courts at Tamworth Farm Recreation Ground in Mitcham.

Promotion

The All England Club and the Wimbledon Championships maintain an extensive community investment programme of donations, charitable contributions and other benefits directed mainly at helping the local community, particularly in Wandsworth and Merton.

- The Road to Wimbledon is a combined local and national junior tennis initiative aimed at giving young people the chance to play tennis at the home of the championships.
- Playing for Success Study Support Centre is a joint initiative with LBM and DCSF providing an after school programme for Merton pupils in numeracy, literacy and IT, involving two thirds of Merton primary and secondary schools with over 2350 participants in the last 5 years.
- Wimbledon Park Tennis Courts – the All England Club paid for the resurfacing of 10 artificial grass courts in 2003, having renewed 15 other courts previously.
- The WJTI, started in 2001, is a community tennis initiative run by the All England Club with the London Boroughs of Merton and Wandsworth, giving school children their first experience of tennis (450 plus schools, 100,000 school children). Each week one school in Merton and Wandsworth receives a full day's coaching and teachers are shown how to deliver school tennis. Six children from each school are invited back to the club at weekends on scholarships until they are 16, there is a talent identification programme which selects the most talented for mid-week coaching (currently 40 squad players all of whom have won an age group event in Surrey). There is also a top level performance squad.

The existence of this initiative encourages more participation at grass roots, which may have an implication for court provision in Merton, although at the performance end All England Club facilities are utilised.

Comparing supply and demand

As with bowls the assessment of tennis facilities does not lend itself to the estimation of demand used in other sports or the use of TGRs.

Current demand- Because of the presence of the All England Club and some of the initiatives set out and with the presence of 7 named private clubs, participation in tennis in Merton is relatively high. There is no evidence that the existing network of club and parks courts, with the backup of courts at school sites, is insufficient to meet current demand, and an equilibrium is therefore assumed to exist between current supply and demand. It is known that Raynes Park Residents LTC is considering the option of taking on 5 courts and a new clubhouse at the former LESSA site as part of the overall development there, though it is not certain whether this will mean that existing courts are relinquished.

Latent demand- the Market Segmentation data identified a population profile in Merton which lends itself to potential additional demand.

Future participation in tennis is likely to grow as a result of the small population increase and development initiatives from the LTA and All England Club. Encouragement for juniors to take up the sport and the development of players up to performance levels is likely to find its way through to adult participation. However overall it is considered likely that the existing numbers of courts at club sites and local parks will be sufficient to meet demand up to 2021/2026.

Summary and conclusions

- There are 114 tennis courts in community use in Merton on club and park sites, together with at least 42 courts at secondary schools.
- There are 7 affiliated clubs in the borough.

- Quality is generally good.
- There are considered to be sufficient courts to meet demand now and in the future.
- Improvements to courts and ancillary facilities including floodlight provision are needed in certain locations.
- LBM needs to consider ways to generate additional usage of parks courts.

Issues for the strategy to address

The strategy should ensure the following:

- The retention of all existing club courts to meet the needs of members clubs.
- The retention of all parks courts, and consideration to alternative forms of management to ensure that any increased demand for playing, coaching, training and recreation can be met.
- Improvements to ancillary facilities (club house, parking, etc) where necessary.
- The provision of a 2/3 court indoor centre (either permanent or of a bubble structure) in the short to medium term (this is not however part of the remit of this study).
- The provision of floodlights on those park courts where these can be accommodated within planning policy.

13. Other Outdoor Sports

13

NETBALL

Facilities

There are netball courts at five of the high schools in Merton as follows:

Ricards Lodge	4
Harris Academy	2
Ursuline	3
Wimbledon HS	5
St Marks Academy	1
Total	15

In addition some of these schools accommodate netball in sports halls. There are also a number of hard play areas at primary schools where a netball court is marked out. There is limited use of these courts by local clubs and the wider community, though it is understood that there is extensive school and after school use.

There are also marked out courts on some of the Council's hard court/tennis areas, particularly at Wimbledon Park (6 courts on the un floodlit area), Morden Rec (floodlit), King Georges PF and Dundonald Rec.

Teams, clubs and leagues

There is very little activity in netball by clubs affiliated to the County governing body, Surrey Netball. From league records it is apparent that the only clubs currently playing in Merton are:

Karisma NC A & B (Kingston Netball League) Raynes Park High School

Wandsworth NC (Kingston Netball League) Raynes Park HS

Pleiades NC A & B (Surrey netball League) Harris Academy

These clubs play on Saturday during the daytime

Merton Merlins is a friendly junior club (under 14 and 11) which has access to courts at Ursuline HS.

Merton College use the Wimbledon Park courts several times per week and there is other school usage at other times.

There is however a good deal of activity in unaffiliated, social netball in South London operated by commercial providers. One Netball has venues in Camden Town, Pimlico, Waterloo and two sites in Wimbledon – Ricards Lodge HS with 4 outdoor courts purpose built for netball and an indoor hall, and Wimbledon College with a sports hall. The company formed in 2008 offers 'social netball at good venues with high quality courts, facilities and transport links'. There is a coaching and development programme and a range of participants, including those from South Africa, New Zealand and Australia (i.e. the clientele is not solely local). As an example the current leagues operating in Wimbledon are:

Wimbledon College – January to April, 1 league, 6 teams
Ricards Lodge, February to April, 4 leagues, 28 teams in total

Other companies such as Top Corner and Go Mammoth also offer social netball though they do not play in Merton.

Consultation

Consultation with the Surrey Netball Development Manager and School Sports Partnership suggest the following:

- there is limited involvement by affiliated netball clubs in Merton;
- the affiliated netball that does occur is primarily outdoors on a Saturday morning, with training during the week;
- most schools have netball courts (including some primary schools) and some are floodlit offering year round availability;
- further development is constrained by a lack of volunteers and a paucity of affordable floodlit courts; and
- netball is a priority activity of the SSP and is delivered in many schools in Merton.

Comparing supply and demand

While there are active leagues promoted within the 'official' sector, there is very little competitive netball taking place in Merton. At the same time commercial social netball is well developed though much of this takes place indoors. School netball may increase the demand for adult clubs in the future though the lack of a strong infrastructure may mitigate this. The existence of a number of indoor halls, particularly at schools, and of 15 or so outdoor courts at secondary school (and other courts on Council sites) is likely to be sufficient to accommodate any small increase in demand in the future. Additional floodlighting (subject to planning considerations) may be an effective way of increasing capacity.

ATHLETICS

Facilities

There is one athletics track in Merton at Wimbledon Park. This is a 6-lane (8-lane straight) synthetic track originally built in 1953 and refurbished in 2006 with floodlights installed in 2000. The track is managed by LBM and is available on a pay and play basis.

There are other tracks within a 20-minute drive of the centre of Merton as follows:

- Sutton Arena LC (10 minutes) – 8-lane synthetic track with floodlights
- Tooting Bec Athletics Track (14 mins) - 8-lane synthetic track with floodlights
- Kingsmeadow Athletics Centre (15 mins) - 8-lane synthetic track with floodlights

- Ewell Athletics Track (19 mins) - 6-lane synthetic track with floodlights.

Clubs

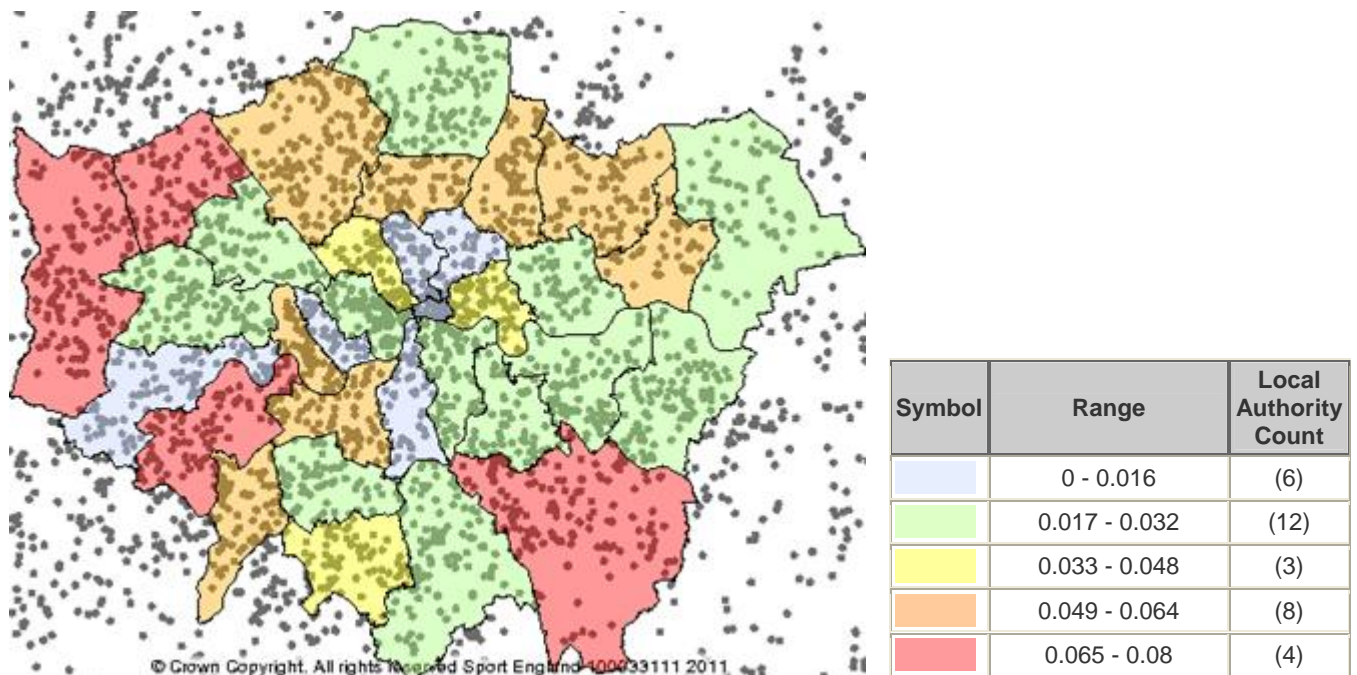
Two athletics clubs are based in Merton, Hercules AC are a track and field club which also takes part in road running, cross country and other types of running and compete in the Southern Leagues and other competitions. Wimbledon Windmilers are London's second biggest running club with 700 members and are primarily involved in cross country and road running. They are based at Wimbledon Common

Active Places Power assessment

Sport England's strategic planning tool Active Places Power has been used to provide an overview of the current supply of athletics facilities in the borough.

Facilities per 1000 – Merton has 0.032 lanes per 1000 people compared with 0.05 in England and 0.04 in London. Best provision in London is 0.082. 17 boroughs have better provision per capita than Merton, and 15 worse, so Merton provision is around average for London

Map 13.1- Athletics tracks per 1000 population in London



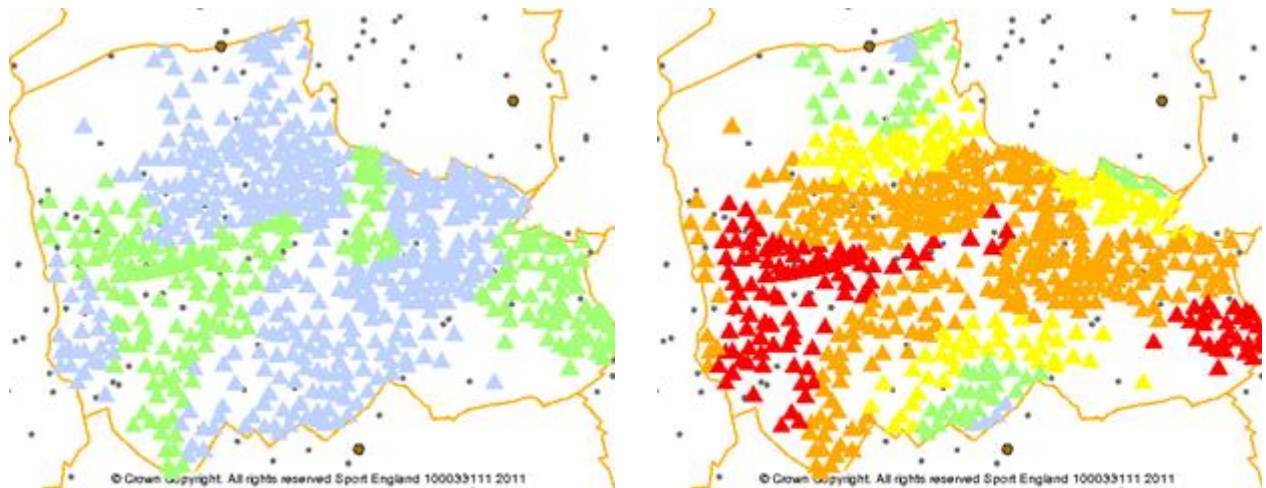
Accessibility

The whole population can gain access to an existing track within a 20 minute drive, though this is as likely to be Sutton or Tooting Bec as Wimbledon. Only 12% of local residents can walk to a track within 20 minutes and 64% by public transport. The main disadvantaged areas are across the centre of the borough. Accessibility to athletics is therefore quite limited

Table 13.1- Accessibility to athletics tracks in Merton

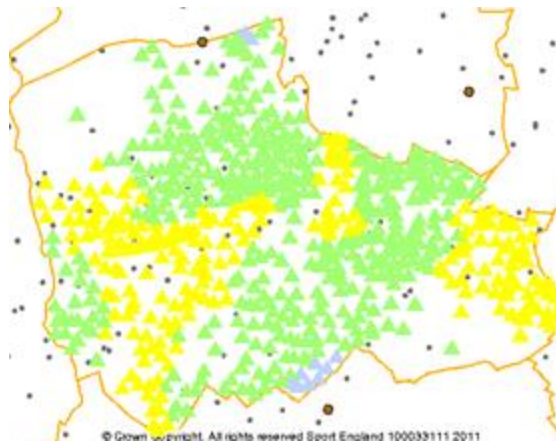
	0-10 mins	10-20 mins	20-30 mins	30-45 mins	45+ mins
Car	64%	36%			
Walk	2%	10%	19%	49%	21%
Public transport	2%	62%	36%		

Map 13.2 - Accessibility



By car

On foot



By public transport

Symbol	Range
▲ (Blue)	0 - 10
▲ (Green)	10.1 - 20
▲ (Yellow)	20.1 - 30
▲ (Orange)	30.1 - 45
▲ (Red)	45.1 - 60

Comparing supply and demand

While facility provision is at or below the average, it is unlikely that an additional track could be justified even if activity rates and population within the relevant age groups increases, unless a local sports development need can be identified. However in view of the inaccessibility across the middle of the borough especially for those without access to a car, a small training track/J track on a school sites (where feasible) should be considered in this part of the borough, to be managed in conjunction with the main track.

CROQUET

There are two existing croquet clubs in Merton and the assessment below is based on consultation with each of these.

Merton Croquet Club - the club has been in existence for more than 20 years and currently has 36 members with a waiting list of a further 8. The profile of members is mainly retired people over 50. With a slight predominance of women. Membership has increased in recent years.

The club plays on one lawn at John Innes Park, which is hired from the Council. The season runs from April to October and the club plays every day (except Wednesday when maintenance takes place) from 210.00 am to dusk.

The club considers there is sufficient latent demand for one additional lawn to meet the needs of existing members and those on the waiting list. The club currently has to divide the lawn into two for recreational use – games can last 1-2 hours and there is little slack time. Teams representing the club play 20 matches a season (10 at home) in All England and other competitions. Their opponents are usually elsewhere in the south east, though they do play in national competitions.

The club considers its facilities as generally good and is satisfied with the service it receives on grounds maintenance. The quality of the lawn is good though there are some problems with foxes digging holes in the lawn around post holes. Ancillary facilities (changing rooms) are in good condition, but relatively lacking in amenities – they include only part of the whole building on the site, veranda, small room and washbasin, but no toilets. Parking is available at John Innes Park but members have to use on-street meters (particularly when the bowls club is also playing).

The club has 2 coaches among its members and is able to develop skills in croquet.

All England Tennis and Croquet Club - the club is a section of the private club best known for tennis based at the Wimbledon facilities and has the use of one lawn.

- The croquet section has 25 members, both men and women, mostly 45+ in age.
- The club plays friendly matches and organises small tournaments.
- The club has indicated a need for one additional lawn, though it is not possible to accommodate this on the existing site.

Conclusions

Croquet is a relatively minor sport though two clubs do exist. Total participation in Merton involves no more than about 80 players though there is a waiting list and a desire for additional lawns to meet peak demand. It is not feasible to assess future demand in any detailed way, but the two clubs do suggest that 2 additional lawns could be justified. In the short to medium term therefore two additional full size lawns should be considered in the borough.

LACROSSE

There are two existing lacrosse clubs in Merton:

- Hillcroft Lacrosse Club, a men's club based at Hayden's Recreation Ground, which also trains at Lavender Park AGP (and formerly played here). Teams play in the Southern Premiership and East Division 3 leagues of the SE Men's Lacrosse Association from October to March on Saturdays. The club also collaborates with Clapham Ladies Lacrosse Club which also plays at Hayden's Rec, having vacated pitches at Clapham Common. Clapham Ladies has one team which plays on Sunday. The existing pitches at Hayden's Rec are generally acceptable – the men usually play on one of the two pitches available, the women on the other except when 2 men's teams play at home on Saturday), but there is significant wear in poor weather conditions.
- Putney Lacrosse Club a women's club based at Wibbundane SG/Colliers Wood Utd FC, Robin's Hood Way just outside the borough in the north west. The club fields two teams playing in the South East Lacrosse League, Rosebowl competition and club ad colleges tournaments at the weekends (Saturday and Sunday). The club trains outside the borough at Elliot School Putney. (Since undertaking the research on lacrosse, it has become apparent that the Wibbundane site is no longer available for lacrosse).

Future demand

Hillcroft/Clapham Ladies have the potential to accommodate additional teams. The clubs have three coaches and are keen to developed junior activities and teams. An ambition is to play on a dedicated site with 3 pitches (2 senior and 1 junior) with their own clubhouse, segregated changing, showers, social and other facilities. Ideally the clubs desire access to a full size 3G surface within Merton

Conclusions

In order to allow the development of this relatively minor sport in Merton, it is desirable to consider the development of facilities (2 senior and 1 junior pitch) plus ancillary accommodation for the Hillcroft club, or as an alternative access to a new 3G surface in the borough. The Putney club is not based in Merton and no longer uses pitches there, so no proposals are necessary in the future.

AUSTRALIAN RULES FOOTBALL

One Aussie Rules club plays in Merton, Wimbledon Hawks. The club started as the London Hawks in 1990, and as most of the players lived in Wimbledon found a permanent home in the borough in the late 1990s. After using good facilities at KCS Old Blues rugby ground, the club now plays at St Joseph Hood Memorial PF.

The club plays fixtures during the summer season in the AFL London League (Premiership and Social Divisions). In 2010 77 players were registered and the club considers its ground and facilities the best in the competition.

Conclusions/future pitch needs. The existing club is well established in Merton, and is likely to continue to require a pitch in the future. Additional facilities would be relatively easy to provide in view of the seasonal nature of the sport.

GAELIC FOOTBALL

There are a number of Gaelic Football clubs and teams in London, but none has been identified in Merton. Round Towers GFC plays and trains just outside the borough at Mitcham RFC, Poulter Park, Sutton. The club runs a senior team and 5 minor/junior teams from under 12 to under 21. Given the distribution of existing clubs it is unlikely that additional pitches are required in Merton in the short term.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

The BAFA Community League is the primary American football competition in the UK, and was formed in 2010 to replace the BAFL which went into liquidation. The Premier Division for 2011 comprises 6 teams including 2 teams in London (London Blitz playing at Finsbury Park, and London Warriors at Boston Manor). There are 18 teams in 3 regional Divisions 1, and 27 in 4 regional Divisions 2. At present there is no evidence of a demand for American Football in Merton.

BASEBALL/SOFTBALL

No baseball teams or clubs in or near Merton were identified from the BSUK website. In softball one club exists in Merton, Barnes Badgers and they play in the GLSML Majors Division 3 at Colliers Wood Rec. The club is 'socially led', and classed as a recreational club. It is unlikely that additional softball facilities are required in Merton over the period of the study, but if so pitches can be marked in most areas of recreational space.

TOUCH RUGBY

Premiership Touch Rugby is organised by Premier Rugby Ltd, premiership rugby clubs and the RFU and is a minimal contact recreational sport, safe to play, easy to learn and good for overall fitness. The organisation is affiliated to the international governing body which was established in Australia in 1985. In London the game is played at 6 venues at present – Clapham Common, Putney, Hammersmith, Surrey Quays, Tonbridge and Wimbledon Park. The sport is suitable for beginners and experienced players – venues host mixed sex leagues, as well as men's, women's and vets' leagues on demand. The leagues are run on a commercial basis and are primarily for adult players, generally drawn from groups of friends or businesses. Wimbledon Park has accommodated leagues for the last three years. In 2011 Wimbledon is hosting 2 'seasons' of 8 weeks on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, culminating on 18 June and 20 August. The 16

teams use 4 pitches marked out at Wimbledon Park each of which is about half the size of a rugby pitch. Six players are on the field at any one time but each squad usually comprises 10-14 players, totalling about 200 players in all. The organising body suggest that this is a growing activity, and that additional pitches at existing and new venues (where there is space) could be needed in the future. Consideration therefore should be given to the ongoing need for 4-8 pitches during the summer at Wimbledon Park in the future.

PITCH AND PUTT

There is an existing 9-hole pitch and putt course at Morden Park which is open for casual pay and play from 1 April to 31 October each year. The public can use the facility for a small fee, with concessions and Gold Card reductions.

There are also crazy golf courses at Wimbledon Park and Sir Joseph Hood Memorial Rec. No demand assessment has been undertaken of this activity, and it is likely that the existing facilities will be retained to meet a recreational need.

FRISBEE GOLF

Frisbee or Disc golf is a game in which individual players throw a Frisbee into a basket or at a target – the aim as with golf is to complete the course in the fewest throws. It is primarily played in the US, though there are clubs in more than 20 other countries. The 33rd national/British) championships were recently held at Essex University in Colchester. The game is governed in the UK by the British Disc Golf Association. According to the GB website there are 18 courses in the country, the nearest to Merton being Lloyd Park in Croydon, where an 18-hole course is set out. The game is suitable for all sections of the community and participation ranges from 8 to 70 year olds. It is estimated that there are about 3-400 participants nationally, and that 60-70 regularly play on the 'British Tour'. It is suitable for those who do not regularly play 'major' sports and is easy to teach.

The requirements for a disc golf course based on the Lloyd Park layout are:

- room for 18 holes each of about 70-150 m in length (total area about 4.5 ha);
- variety of landscapes, with trees, hedges and rough grassland (though mown);
- ideally some height variation;
- (permanent) siting of 18 baskets and tee posts; and
- shared use with other park users (e.g. joggers, dog walkers) is acceptable, but not more intensive crowds, such as regular sports teams.

The governing body is looking to promote the sport as widely as possible while at the same time acknowledging that it will never become 'mainstream'. The Croydon club received Lottery funding to establish its own course and currently has funds available to develop further facilities. A location on Wimbledon Common is likely to meet their needs.

Consideration should therefore be given to the establishment of a Frisbee/disc golf course in Merton, in response to NGB demand and a site be identified which meets the sport's criteria.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

As the result of local initiatives, and the legacy of the 2012 Olympics, and particularly because of the location of Merton in the wider sub region, it is likely that there will be a demand for a range of other sports which could be accommodated on outdoor venues. These include handball and dodgeball (which are primarily indoor sports but can be played outdoors), beach volleyball and others. Easter activities including dodgeball have been organised by voluntary organisations in Mitcham in recent years. The availability of ample recreational open space in Merton suggests that the borough is well placed to be able to accommodate demand for such activities, but it is impossible to be precise about the levels of demand for these in the future. Consideration should however be given to such sports over the period of the strategy.

Issues for consideration in the strategy

- The provision of additional facilities for netball and enhancement of existing hard court areas.
- Consideration of enhanced provision for athletics, with the provision of a smaller training track.
- The feasibility of additional lawns for croquet.
- The development of existing lacrosse clubs, and improved facilities, including a home base and clubhouse.
- Continuation of the provision for Aussie Rules football.
- Consideration of the needs of minority outdoor sports of a more casual/informal nature (e.g. Frisbee golf), to broaden activity levels among the less competitive sections of the population.

14. Multi Use Games Areas

14

Multi use games areas, especially when floodlit, have an important role to play both for formal sport (particularly training) and for casual play, and when planned as part of an overall strategy can fulfil and invaluable recreational and developmental function.

Supply

There is limited provision for multi-use hard court and games areas throughout the borough. The following MUGAs have been identified (other facilities similar to MUGAs have been included in the separate section on tennis to avoid double counting).

Table 14.1 - MUGAs in Merton

Site Name	Usage	Sub area	MUGA	Floodlit	Notes
Colliers Wood Recreation Ground	A1	CW	1	Yes	Sand filled artificial grass, 40x40m
Lavender Park	A1	CW	1		3G, 48x36m
Donnelly Drive OS	A1	Mi	1		Tarmac
Rowan Road Rec	A1	Mi	1	No	Ball park
Tamworth Rec	A1	Mi	1		Ball park
Harris Academy	A3	Mi	1	Yes	Tarmac
St Mark's Academy	A3	Mi	1		
King Georges Field	A1	Mo	1	No	Ball park
Mostyn Gdns	A1	Mo	1	No	Ball park
Morden Recreation Ground	A1	Mo	2	Yes	Sand filled artificial grass, 38x37m
Sir Joseph Hood PF	A1	RP	1	No	Ball park/BB
Raynes Park Sports Ground	A1	RP	2	Yes	3G
Haydons Road Recreation Ground	A1	W	1	Yes	Tarmac
Total			15		
Aragon PS			1		
Haslemere PS			1		
Liberty PS			1		Small 3G AGP
Melrose Sch			1		
New school (ex Risley SG)			1		Sand filled artificial grass

Other facilities exist on primary and special school sites, but are available mainly for school use.

MUGAs are therefore widely distributed throughout the borough and all sub areas are served by at least one such facility, but there is significantly better provision in Mitcham and Colliers Wood than other parts of the borough. Map 14.1 indicates those parts of the borough which are outside a defined catchment and where these areas are.

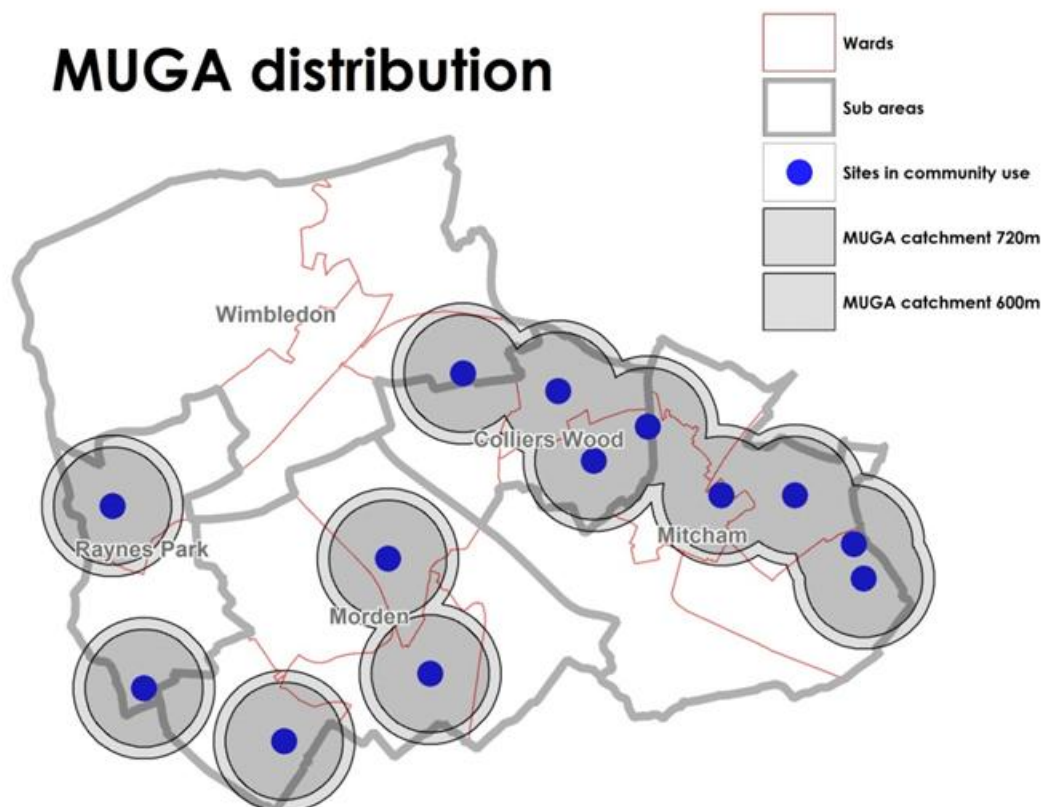
The current level of provision equates to one single court facility per 14,000 people.

Demand

There is no established methodology for determining the levels of demand for MUGAs, and it has not been possible within the time and cost constraints of this study to undertake local surveys of usage and therefore demand. This might be addressed as part of the ongoing MOSS study. In some similar reports, levels of provision have been based on rather smaller population catchments, but this is generally in rural areas, where more facilities per head of population are necessary, because of accessibility constraints. This is not a realistic option in Merton.

The current and future adequacy of MUGAs in Merton may best be determined by accessibility criteria. In accordance with accepted standards, it is appropriate to assume that all the population of Merton should be served by one single or double court MUGA within a 15 minute walk – on the map below a range from 600m (as recommended by Fields in Trust) to 720m (as used in similar studies undertaken by NAA in the recent past) illustrates which parts of Merton are currently deficient, and consideration should be given to additional provision in the Wimbledon sub area, the southern part of Mitcham and Colliers Wood, mid Raynes Park and either side of Morden.

Map 14.1- MUGA location and distribution



Future role

MUGAs can be provided for casual usage, and this is the case with most of Merton's facilities. In some cases, there is merit in positive management and promotion of games areas, to ensure widespread usage for semi formal activities (eg. training), and to deter and prevent vandalism. Such areas are then suitable for a range of sports activities, including tennis, basketball, netball and five aside football.

Issues for strategy

- There is a need to ensure a widespread and equitable distribution of MUGAs throughout the borough.
- Some facilities are not floodlit which prevents their use at certain times, and consideration should be given to this, where planning considerations allow.
- Access by the wider community to some school facilities would widen participation – there is an ongoing demand for football training facilities throughout the winter.

15. Strategy and Recommended Actions

15

Summary of issues identified and recommendations

The key recommendations for the delivery of the strategy are set out in the pages that follow. Each recommendation will contribute to the achievement of the Strategy Vision, which is:

'An accessible, high quality and sustainable network of sports pitches and other outdoor sports facilities, which provides opportunities for participation by all residents of the borough at all levels of play from grassroots to elite'.

Recommendations are derived from a detailed programme of analysis of the existing situation and consultations, as well as calculations using the methodology set out in 'Towards a Level Playing Field', a guide to the preparation of playing pitch strategies. All contribute to the achievement of the key objectives of the study and seek to address the issues identified.

Together, these priorities and recommendations guide decision making on the future delivery of playing fields and outdoor sports facilities across the borough.

FOOTBALL

Issues for strategy to address

The key issues for the strategy to consider are as follows:

- the amount and mix of pitches provided – the current and future shortfalls in mini soccer and pressures on junior pitches coupled with adequate supply of adult pitches;
- quality issues at pitch sites including the improvements to pitches and changing facilities where necessary and the future maintenance of sites in the context of the economic environment;
- the implications of changing demand in participation with the introduction of 9v9 pitches as well as the push for the use of 3G pitches for match play;
- the pitch booking system and obtaining a more strategic approach to pitch provision;
- training facilities particularly hard surfaced and floodlit; and
- the particular issues regarding Little League football.

Recommendations

Recommendation F1 - To respond to existing pressures on junior and mini pitches, and given the surplus in adult/senior pitches, redesignate some senior pitches for adult and junior use, to be undertaken in conjunction with clubs, in appropriate locations in all areas of the borough

Recommendation F2 - Secure the provision of up to 17 additional football pitches:

- in the short term in the Mitcham and Colliers Wood areas (e.g. Three Kings Piece OS) and the community usage of the proposed new junior pitches being provided as part of the LESSA development;
- in the longer term throughout the borough in accordance with identified need, in potential locations to include Morden Park, Mitcham Common and Wimbledon Park;
- community use of some education pitches (e.g. the former Sun Alliance ground to be taken on by Raynes Park HS); and
- ensure that any new facilities include changing facilities.

Recommendation F3 – In view of the longer term shortage of football pitches, retain and enhance where required all existing sites providing football pitches, and incorporate a presumption against their loss to other uses.

Recommendation F4 - Support the development of 1 3G AGP to accommodate football in the short term at the Hub, and 1 additional pitch in the longer term, at Morden Park/Prince George's Fields/Raynes Park PF, and ensure that widespread community use is available by formal agreement.

Recommendation F5 - Work in partnership with Surrey FA to promote the use of 3G pitches for use for competitive football for adults and juniors.

Recommendation F6 – Work with Surrey FA and local leagues to promote the availability of pitches in appropriate locations for 9v9 football for juniors.

Recommendation F7 - Seek to maintain and improve the quality of all pitches, especially those in the 'public' sector (Raynes Park SG drainage, Oberon PF drainage, Joseph Hood drainage, Morden Rec) or sites with the greatest use (e.g. Prince George's Fields), by investing in appropriate maintenance regimes including new machinery where necessary

Recommendation F8 - Promote a forum of users of LBM pitches to improve pitch provision in Merton and understand and discuss the main issues involved.

Recommendation F9 - Carry out necessary improvements to ancillary and changing facilities at key LBM and other sites including Common s Extension changing, Morden Rec showers, Westminster School changing to ensure that all facilities incorporate segregated changing, good quality showers, and other essential facilities.

Recommendation F10 - Review pitch booking methods to ensure a strategic approach is taken to all pitch bookings. This should ensure that pitches are rotated, and set a maximum allowance (suggestion of 2 games per pitch/week) to promote more consistent use of all pitches.

Recommendation F11 – Improve the existing paper based booking system for LBM pitches with an on-line tool enabling clubs to book pitches and pay for pitches electronically. This will improve monitoring of pitch usage trends, as well as cancellations and other issues and ensure the strategic management of the overall pitch stock.

Recommendation F12 - Establish a strategy for booking that promotes the development of club bases (i.e. all teams in a club playing at one site). This may involve the relocation of some teams.

Recommendation F13 – Consider a review of pricing policy, including a reduction of concessionary rates for Charter Standard clubs, to encourage the development of high quality club environments, a key priority of the FA moving forward.

Recommendation F14 - The Council should adopt a policy on asset transfer of sites. The policy should set out the circumstances in which this should be considered and the overall benefit to the community and club.

Little Leagues

Recommendation F15 – Continue to support the promotion of Little League football for juniors and mini soccer across the borough as a means of introducing more young people to football.

Recommendation F16 – Continue to provide LL pitches to their own specification in strategic central locations across the borough.

Recommendation F17 – Revitalise the Pollards Hill LL or establish a league in Mitcham.

Recommendation F18 – Develop and agree a charging structure for LL football pitches which maintains and enhances leagues, teams and pitches in an equitable and sustainable way for all, while at the same time representing value for money for pitch providers, and not prejudicing other football pitch provision in Merton.

CRICKET

Issues for strategy to address:

The key issues for the strategy to consider are as follows:

- the role of public sites in providing for cricket in the longer term, particularly in view of their predominance in total numbers;
- the need to provide high quality pitches to meet with League requirements;
- the increasing participation in cricket and the potential impact that this will have on the demand for cricket;
- future maintenance regimes at LA sites in view of the challenging LA financial environment;
- new forms of the game increasing participation;
- accommodating new groups in the community wishing to play cricket in its various forms;
- more female involvement – there is none/little at present; and
- better links with schools leading to increased junior participation

Recommendations

Recommendation C1 - Secure the retention and enhancement (where necessary) of all pitches in Council, private and club ownership to meet current and future need.

Recommendation C2 – Retain all LA pitches as a base primarily for casual and recreational cricket and support teams requiring a location within the borough.

Recommendation C3 – Seek the provision in the longer term of up to 6 new/additional pitches, and consider the following locations – Sir Joseph Hood, Commons Extensions, Morden Rec, as well as securing community use of education pitches at the former Sun Alliance sports ground, other school sites where appropriate and the new junior pitch proposed as part of the LESSA development.

Recommendation C4 - In partnership with the ECB, support clubs in obtaining satellite facilities of appropriate quality when demand exceeds supply at the club base. This may include the improvement of existing school facilities to meet club requirements (as well as negotiation of access arrangements) or the creation of new sites. This may be a particular priority for clubs in the centre and south of the borough.

Recommendation C5 – New cricket pitches should mainly be created in partnership with existing clubs and not be developed in isolation. There are some opportunities to link with other sports, as well as with the education sector in the provision of cricket facilities.

Recommendation C6 – Ensure that future maintenance of LA pitches results in adequate quality 'public' pitches, in the face of LA financial cuts.

Recommendation C7 – Consider new ways to maintain and manage public pitches, including asset transfer to existing and future clubs.

Recommendation C8 – Work in partnership with the ECB to support existing clubs in improving the quality of pitches, and in accessing funding from ECB and other sources, and the Pitch Advisory Scheme.

Recommendation C9 – Secure improvement to changing rooms and other ancillary facilities at some locations, including Haydon's Rec, Cottenham Park and Old Rutlishians.

RUGBY

Issues for strategy to address

The key issues for the strategy to address are therefore:

- the need to maintain the current level of pitch provision at existing grounds and clubs to meet current demand;
- the needs to accommodate training at existing clubs;
- the need for qualitative improvements at rugby clubs, including upgrades to both club houses and pitches to ensure that the required amount of games can be sustained;
- the implications of increasing participation on demand for pitches as well as changing patterns of participation in rugby (midweek etc); and
- the possible role of 3G pitches in reducing demands on grass pitches and providing opportunities for training and mini/midi competition.

Recommendations

Recommendation R1 - Secure the retention and enhancement where necessary of all pitches in Council, private and club ownership to meet current and future need.

Recommendation R2 – Seek the provision in the longer term of up to 4 new or additional pitches preferably (where feasible) in conjunction with existing clubs in appropriate locations within the borough (e.g. Drax PF).

Recommendation R3 – Support proposals by any club to relocate/provide additional pitches at club sites where they fit in with overall club development. Develop better community access to school sites where these exist and where feasible.

Recommendation R4 – Consider the use of one additional/new 3G AGP for rugby training and mini and junior competition.

Recommendation R5 – Encourage and permit improvements to the pitches, clubhouses and ancillary facilities at KCS OBs (drainage improvements), Beverley Meads (manage public access and dog fouling) and Merton RC (changing improvements).

HOCKEY

Issues for strategy to address

- Demand for hockey in Merton is determined as much by the existence of suitable venues as by the needs of individual clubs. At the same time there are active and important local clubs offering hockey to local residents including significant junior development at one major club.
- There is a comprehensive network of social hockey clubs, demand from whom is met in Merton.
- Overall the existence of 6 AGPs currently available for hockey (5 with floodlights) is considered sufficient to meet existing demand, although there may be capacity issues at some venues and clubs.
- In the future, it is unlikely that demand will increase markedly, because of a relatively static population and already high existing participation levels. Future demand can be absorbed by the measures suggested above.
- The provision of 3G pitches as suggested elsewhere in this study for football in particular would release some spare capacity during the week for additional hockey training, which is not currently being met.
- There is an ongoing need to ensure that surfaces are managed and maintained to a high level to ensure that pitches remain fit for purpose.
- There is some merit in considering the provision of clubhouse and other ancillary facilities at existing pitches to avoid the need for clubs to travel after matches, though the difficulties of achieving this on existing school sites are acknowledged.

Recommendations

Recommendation H1 – Retain the current level and distribution of sand based AGPs for hockey within the borough.

Recommendation H2 – Support the increased community use of school pitches where none currently exists, and the provision of floodlighting of unlit pitches where appropriate in planning terms (e.g. Bishopsford, Ricards Lodge, Wimbledon College).

Recommendation H3 – Encourage and permit improvements to existing pitches, particularly renovation and re-carpeting at The Hub.

Recommendation H4 – Ensure the ongoing maintenance and refurbishment of the surface of all pitches (in the short term particularly of those built before 2005).

Recommendation H5 – Ensure that all existing and new pitches have established a sinking fund to ensure that facilities (particularly carpet) are maintained to a high standard.

Recommendation H6 – Where appropriate and feasible, seek to accommodate clubhouse facilities in conjunction with existing pitches, to assist the development and progression of hockey clubs on a playing and social basis.

AGPs

Issues for strategy to address

- Most of the current pitches were constructed over a short period of time between 2002 and 2005. This means that over the next 4-5 years there is going to be a need to replace the pitch carpet and possibly undertake more remedial works (no pitch condition survey work has been undertaken).
- The supply of commercial five a side centres and any public MUGA site that is used for sports development and organised play need to be considered in any strategy.
- The Sport England assessment indicates that in 2010 the supply of AGPs is insufficient to meet local demand and when coupled with adjacent boroughs, there is a need for additional pitches. It will be important to consider the walk to catchment area for the site and the potential usage from a 20 minutes/1 mile radius of the site.
- Changes in the playing patterns of sports and in particular the increase in junior football, the move to 9 a side games for under 11s and the approval for competitive football to be played on synthetic pitches.
- Additional (but limited) housing growth in Merton and the net inward migration of new population in itself will create additional demand for AGPs and other sports facilities?
- Potential increase in pitch sports participation is the biggest single driver of increased demand for sports facilities. Any increase in adult sports participation is going to increase the demand for additional AGPs.

Recommendations

Recommendation AGP1 – Retain the current level and distribution of AGPs within the borough.

Recommendation AGP2 – Support the increased community use of school pitches where none currently exists, and the provision of floodlighting of unlit pitches where appropriate in planning terms (Wimbledon HS, Bishopsford Arts College).

Recommendation AGP3 – Consider the provision of 2 additional 3G AGPs in the following optional locations - The Hub/Raynes Park SG/Morden Park/Prince George's Fields, in particular to ensure that walking access to AGPs is maintained and improved.

Recommendation AGP4 – Support the continuing provision of small sided commercial football facilities in addition to AGPs and grass pitches to permit the development of alternative forms of football.

Recommendation AGP5 – Undertake a condition survey of pitch sites to establish the works required, costs and timetable to maintain at least the same level of pitch quality and public access/programme of use over the next 10 years, and ensure that all existing and new pitches have established a sinking fund to ensure that facilities (particularly carpet) are maintained to a high standard.

MUGAs

Issues for strategy to address

- There is a need to ensure a widespread and equitable distribution of MUGAs throughout the borough.
- Some facilities are not floodlit which prevents their use at certain times, and consideration should be given to this, where planning considerations allow.
- Access by the wider community to some school facilities would widen participation – there is an ongoing demand for football training facilities throughout the winter.

Recommendations

Recommendation MUGA1 – Retain the current level and distribution of MUGAs within the borough.

Recommendation MUGA2 – Consider the provision of up to 8 additional MUGAs in the Wimbledon sub area, southern part of Mitcham and Colliers Wood, mid Raynes Park and either side of Morden, in particular to ensure that walking access is maintained and improved.

Recommendation MUGA3 – Support the increased community use of school games areas where none currently exists, and the provision of floodlighting of unlit courts where appropriate in planning terms.

Recommendation MUGA4 – Maintain and improve as required the condition of existing MUGAs at Raynes Park SG, Morden Rec and other LA sites.

BOWLS

Issues for strategy to address

The key issues for the strategy to address are therefore:

- retention of greens to meet the current and future needs of clubs;
- necessary maintenance of and improvement to greens to ensure they remain fit for purpose;
- improvements to ancillary facilities to maintain and enhance their attractiveness to existing and potential new users, including young people, women and the disabled;
- improved opportunities for casual play and play by stricter enforcement of club management of hired greens and better access to private clubs;

- development measures to encourage greater participation;
- provision of a synthetic green with floodlights to facilitate year round play; and
- consideration of an indoor centre in Merton subject to full feasibility (this is not part of the remit of this study and is recommended in response to consultation).

Recommendations

Recommendation B1 – Retain the current level and distribution of bowls greens to meet current and future demand within the borough, with the exception of 1 green at Dundonald where there is a case for closure in terms of overall value for money.

Recommendation B2 – Ensure all greens continue to be maintained to a high standard for casual play and competitions.

Recommendation B3 – secure the improvement of the quality of greens and clubhouses at Raynes Park and Norbury (improvements to playing surface), Southey (prevention of dog fouling), Norbury and West Wimbledon (parking improvements), Joseph Hood (changing improvements and new pathway), Raynes Park (better showers) and John Innes Park (improvements to parking and clubhouse).

Recommendation B4 – Consider the provision of a synthetic surfaced and floodlit green at Dundonald or another central location on a Council site to ensure year round usage and availability of facilities for outdoor bowls.

Recommendation B5 – Promote increased participation in conjunction with all existing bowls clubs, and by stricter enforcement of casual access at LA sites.

Recommendation B6 – Consider the transfer of the management and maintenance of public greens where clubs and others are in a position to undertake this.

TENNIS

Issues for strategy to address

The strategy should ensure the following:

- the retention of all existing club courts to meet the needs of members clubs;
- the retention of all parks courts, and consideration to alternative forms of management to ensure that any increased demand for playing, coaching, training and recreation can be met;
- improvements to ancillary facilities (club house, parking, etc) where necessary;
- the provision of a 2/3 court indoor centre (either permanent or of a bubble structure) in the short to medium term (this is not however part of the remit of this study; and
- the provision of floodlights on those park courts where these can be accommodated within planning policy.

Recommendations

Recommendation T1 – Retain the current level and distribution of tennis courts to meet current and future demand within the borough, and enhance provision where appropriate by the provision of floodlighting.

Recommendation T2 – Consider alternative forms of management of some ‘public’ courts to ensure better participation in tennis by the wider community (e.g. lease to commercial coaches, better promotion).

Recommendation T3 – Maintain and improve where required the quality of all courts.

Recommendation T4 – Secure improvements to courts, clubhouses and other facilities at some private clubs where required.

Recommendation T5 – Consider the provision of a 2/3 court bubble/temporary indoor centre in conjunction with the LTA at an appropriate LA or private club site.

OTHER SPORTS

Issues for strategy to address

- The provision of additional facilities for netball and enhancement of existing hard court areas.
- Consideration of enhanced provision for athletics, with the provision of a smaller training track.
- The feasibility of additional lawns for croquet.
- The development of existing lacrosse clubs, and improved facilities, including a home base and clubhouse.
- Continuation of the provision for Aussie Rules football.
- Consideration of the needs of minority outdoor sports of a more casual/informal nature (e.g. Frisbee golf), to broaden activity levels among the less competitive sections of the population.

Recommendations

Recommendation O1 – Secure the usage, and maintain the quality of existing netball courts, particularly at school sites and work with the NGB to promote additional activities.

Recommendation O2 – Discuss the feasibility of developing a satellite/training athletics track in the south or centre of the borough to improve opportunities for additional participation.

Recommendation O3 – Consider the provision of 2 additional croquet lawns, preferably in conjunction with existing clubs.

Recommendation O4 – Work with the existing lacrosse clubs to develop a home club site with 2 pitches, clubhouse, parking and other ancillary facilities, possibly in connection with other outdoor sports clubs in the borough.

Recommendation O5 – Continue to provide pitches and ancillary facilities for Aussie Rules and American Football, and consider additional pitches where demand arises.

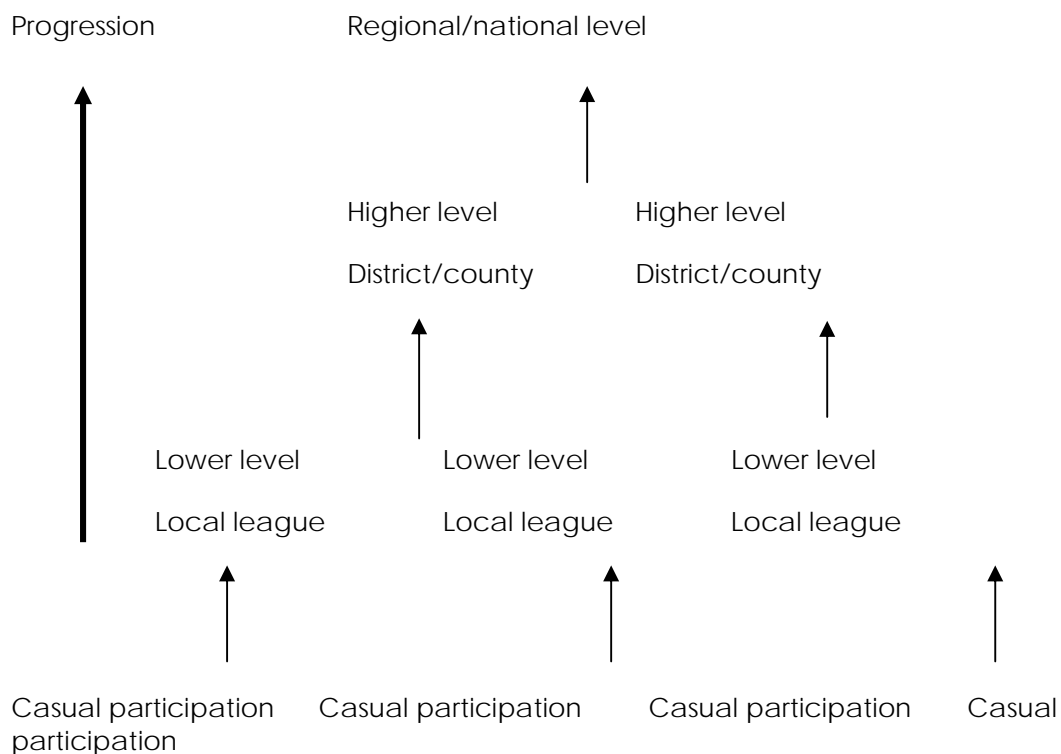
Recommendation O6 – Work with other clubs, governing bodies and related organisations to develop facilities at existing parks and other open spaces (e.g. Wimbledon Common, Mitcham Common) for additional sports (such as Frisbee golf).

General recommendations

Recommendation G1 – Develop a conceptual hierarchy to guide future investment in pitches and attract funding from other sources.

The study has made it clear that it is not simply the overall quantity of pitches that is critical in meeting demand, but also the quality of both pitches and ancillary facilities. Teams will always prefer, costs permitting, to use good facilities in preference to poorer ones, and may be unable to develop and improve if they are constrained by poor facilities. Many facilities will therefore require considerable enhancement and overhaul.

There may be a benefit in developing a conceptual hierarchy to guide future investment in pitches and attract funding from other sources including the Lottery, Football Foundation, regeneration funds and the like. This would also provide the link with overall sports development objectives. This hierarchy could look as follows:



Within this diagram:

- the casual (foundation) level would include practice areas, kick-about areas, FMGAs and rough pitches for casual play, encouraging initial participation. In Merton this could comprise small grass areas available within walking distance of all communities, together with a network of MUGAs throughout the borough;

- the local league (participation) level would include pitches for regular competitive play, adequately drained with a flat playing surface, and normally including changing accommodation. This would correspond with most of the pitches currently available within the borough, but would involve some improvement to pitches and especially changing and other facilities; and
- District/County/Regional (performance/excellence) level, where teams have reached the higher standard of play and require enhanced facilities, would include spectator areas, floodlights and higher standard pitches. At this level clubs and the private sector are likely to be more important in provision.

Recommendation G2 – Plan for the cycle of demand and remarking pitches

Demand for pitches fluctuates over time, and it is imperative that sufficient pitches are available to meet peak demand in the foreseeable future, through the availability of land. Comparative demand for adult and junior pitches, especially football and rugby, will change. Although in practice many junior (i.e. 10-14) football teams play on adult pitches with full sized goals this is clearly unacceptable in terms of the development of individual skills and the enjoyment of the young people concerned. The same is true of rugby and other sports. Any future pitch provision should ensure that there is the possibility of flexibility in playing field layout to ensure that junior and adult pitches are interchangeable according to fluctuating demand.

Recommendation G3 – consider the implications of any identified over capacity

This is not the overall conclusion of the study, but monitoring of the situation over the period of the study may reveal some unused or under-used pitches. A number of policy options are available if over capacity is identified:

- further promotion of individual sports can be undertaken where it is evident that participation rates are low;
- pitches can be kept in reserve to take account of unforeseeable circumstances, to reduce wear and tear or to permit usage while improvements are being made to other sites. This is the situation currently in Preston where other parks pitches are accommodating teams displaced from Moor Park while the pitches there are being upgraded;
- the number of pitches on sites can be reduced to ease pressure on ancillary facilities such as changing or parking, or permit realignment or increases in pitch size;
- pitches can be converted for some other sports use; and
- pitches can be converted to some other type of recreational activity, or informal outdoor use, such as urban park or nature reserve.

Except in very limited circumstances the disposal of sites currently incorporating playing pitches should be resisted in the short and long term. Once lost, playing pitches and open space in general are difficult to reinstate, and the local plan should include a policy that adopts a presumption against the loss of playing pitches.

Recommendation G4 – ensure that playing surfaces are protected

There is some evidence that the quality of pitches can be affected by unhindered access to public areas, which allows other users, such as cyclists, to adversely affect pitch surfaces, and results in the fouling of pitches by dogs. Suitable solutions can include physical barriers to (wheeled and other) access (by for example the construction of knee-rails), ensuring adequate

access around pitches for other casual activities, different management arrangements ensuring clubs have more say on the use of pitches and the ability to remove posts and other hardware when matches are not in progress. The zoning of parks to exclude unhindered access to sports pitches can also be considered.

Recommendation G5 – protect and enhance ancillary facilities. Facilities such as changing rooms, training areas, floodlights, social accommodation and parking all play a crucial role in developing opportunities to play sport. At the most basic level, changing and shower areas for both players and officials, are prerequisites, though many clubs and teams have become accustomed to even this basic level of provision being lacking.

There are some venues in particular need of overhaul, although Merton is fortunate that all playing fields used by the community have at least a basic level of ancillary accommodation. Investment in such facilities is expensive and providers need to be assured that such facilities will be used. However, it is appropriate at this time to ensure clubs and players actually enjoy the experience of playing sport and developing further opportunities, without having to 'make do and mend'. The recommendations include suggestions for the most urgent improvements on the basis that the minimum provision is for home and away changing areas for each pitch, showers and officials' accommodation.

Recommendation G6 - work with all sports clubs and providers to develop 'multi sports hubs', where these are appropriate, to ensure that there are economies of scale in outdoor sports provision, that clubs benefit from shared and jointly provided and managed facilities, and that facility provision can be coordinated with other associated services such as sports medicine.

Partnership working

While each sport is considered separately within this strategy, implementation of key recommendations and the delivery of pitches across Merton should be looked at strategically, considering opportunities for partnerships between sports, as well as in isolation.

In addition to proactive improvement of pitches, this should also link to the allocation of S106 funding, which should consider the strategic need for playing pitches and other outdoor sports facilities.

Sport England has recently launched a 'Protection of Playing Fields programme' which will fund new, under threat, disused playing fields and pitch improvement schemes. Successful applicants will be required to demonstrate a strategic need, partnership working and positive impacts for sports participation. This scheme may provide opportunities for the further improvement of pitches across the borough.

Planning issues

The identified deficiencies of certain pitch types (and pressures on the stock of pitch sports in other areas) emphasise the importance of protecting many of the existing areas of playing pitch land and open space in public, private and educational ownership, as playing pitches can be under threat from other, non sport development.

Policies should therefore protect all playing fields from development, unless it can be proven that the site is surplus to requirements, which is considered unlikely given the results of this study. Sport England are a statutory consultee on playing field assessments. In 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England: Policy on Planning Applications for Development on Playing Fields' (Sport England, 1997), it is indicated that Sport England will oppose any developments that will result in the loss of playing field space in all but exceptional circumstances, whether the land is

in public, private or educational use. Sport England considers the definition of a playing field to be "the whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch".

Sport England will not object to the loss of playing fields where one or more of the following exception criteria are met:

- an assessment of current and future needs has demonstrated that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment, and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport;
- the proposed development is ancillary to the principal use of the site as a playing field or playing fields, and does not affect the quantity or quality of pitches or adversely affect their use;
- the proposed development affects only land incapable of forming, or forming part of, a playing pitch, and does not result in the loss of or inability to make use of any playing pitch;
- lost playing fields would be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development; and
- the proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field or playing fields.

Due to the current levels of demand and the pressures on pitches to cope with this demand, all known playing fields sites should therefore be afforded protection within specific policies in the emerging LDF and Core Strategy that benefit sport and physical activity in Merton, drawing upon the above criteria, and the key recommendations within this strategy for decision making.

Local standards

PPG17 recommends that local standards should include:

- quantitative elements (how much new provision may be needed);
- a qualitative component (against which to measure the need for the enhancement of existing facilities); and
- accessibility criteria (including distance thresholds and consideration of the cost of using a facility).

Local standards will:

- underpin negotiations with developers over their contributions towards new pitch provision to meet the needs of new residential developments;
- provide an additional overview of the general supply of pitches/level of provision;
- assist in protecting land in playing field use; and
- assist in benchmarking with other areas/authorities.

Such standards can be used to determine the requirements of new developments, as well as to evaluate improvements required to the existing facility stock. Limited housing development is envisaged in Merton, but ensuring appropriate contributions from any new developments that do occur will be essential if the facility stock is to meet the needs of the population.

Quantity standards

A Fields in Trust (the former National Playing Fields Association) Standard for pitch provision states that for every 1,000 people, 1.6 to 1.8 hectares of outdoor sports space (including pitches, courts, greens and similar facilities) should be provided. However, this is a national benchmark and it is important to also consider the local context and local variations that may cause this.

The findings of this study have been used to inform the development of a revised local quantity standard for pitches and other outdoor facilities which will reflect local demand and supersede any standard used in the past.

The PPM outlines where current shortfalls and surpluses exist for each type of sport and suggests potential solutions to ensure that provision meets the needs of the community. It takes into account the additional pitches needed (or surplus pitches identified) to meet demand and calculates the area of this required level of provision. Given that it is derived directly from a robust calculation of local need, it is compliant with the principles of PPG17.

The existing supply per 1000 population of community use pitches, plus the additional pitches required are set out in Table 15.1 below.

Table 15.1 – Local standards calculations

	No of pitches required 2026	Space requirement including margins	Total space required 2026
Senior football	48	0.9 ha	43.2 ha
Junior football	50	0.75 ha	37.5 ha
Mini soccer	23	0.22 ha	5.1 ha
Cricket	29	1.6 ha	46.4 ha
Rugby	28	1.2 ha	33.6 ha
Hockey/AGPs	10	0.9ha	9 ha
Bowls	12	0.24 ha	2.88 ha
Tennis	114	0.3 ha/4 courts	8.55 ha
MUGAs	20	0.11 ha	2.2 ha
Other sports*	4	0.9 ha	3.6 ha
Total			192.03 ha

*2 lacrosse, 1 Aussie Rules, 1 American Football

The overall figure of 192.03 ha is the equivalent of 0.93ha/1000 for a 2026 population of 206,263. The figure includes a strategic reserve of 10%:

- to accommodate latent and future demand for existing pitch sport teams;
- to enable the development of new clubs and teams;
- for the development / expansion of new pitch sports (such as mini-soccer and 'tag' rugby); and
- to accommodate backlogs and for rest and recovery periods.

In addition there is a need to make an allowance for changing and other ancillary provision, such as landscaping, parking and other outdoor space and a site multiplier of 15% is therefore included to account for this. The overall recommended standard of future provision is therefore 1.07 ha of outdoor sports space per 1000 population.

Quality standards

When determining the required quality of pitches, it is important to consider

- the standard of play at the site and expectations of users(including league requirements);
- the demand on the site (the number of games played per week);
- the need to facilitate concurrent usage by young people, women and other;
- target groups through appropriate ancillary facilities; and
- facility specifications from National Governing Body (NGB) strategies.

Reflecting this, PPG17 highlights that there are several factors integral to the successful delivery of a network of high sports facilities, stating that:

"Quality depends on two things: the needs and expectations of users, on the one hand, and design, management and maintenance on the other".

Given that many pitches in Merton are multi pitch sites, as a minimum, all sites should include:

- a high standard of maintenance, enabling the pitch to be played at least twice per week without detrimental impact;
- adequate changing facilities that:
 - are flexible, fit for a variety of purposes;
 - fully comply with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act;
 - provide for a number of different groups to use the facility at the same time, in safety and comfort; and
 - meet current standards - Sport England & NGB guidelines
- managed community access;

- easy accessibility by public transport and by car;
- sufficient car parking;
- size of pitches and run offs must meet NGB specification;
- located in a no flood zone;
- security of tenure (at least 10 years) if a club is to be based at the site; and
- for rugby clubs in particular, sites should include floodlit training facilities.

Each NGB provides detailed guidance on the design of facilities and changing accommodation as follows:

Rugby Pitches -

<http://www.rfu.com/ManagingRugby/ClubDevelopment/FacilitiesAndEquipment.aspx>

Football Pitches -

http://www.thefa.com/GetIntoFootball/~/_/link.aspx?id=2B126098B0014E32A550A5560117734E&z=z (currently being updated)

Cricket Pitches - <http://www.ecb.co.uk/development/facilities-funding/technical-specifications/>

Artificial Grass Pitches -

http://www.sportengland.org/facilities_planning/design_guidance_notes.asp

All new sites within Merton and any modifications to existing facilities should be undertaken in line with this guidance.

Accessibility

The MOSS study set an accessibility standard of a 15 minute walk time to a grass pitch, equivalent to 600m, and this is recommended as the overall accessibility standard for grass pitches and other local facilities such as MUGAs.

Built facilities such as AGPs are more strategic, and a desirable accessibility standard is 20 minute walk (800m) though it is accepted that this standard would be onerous in Merton.

Consultation undertaken as part of this strategy demonstrates that:

- football pitches are normally expected to be relatively local to the home, particularly for juniors, though because of the distribution of pitches in Merton, this may not necessarily be the case;
- cricket is more club-based, and people travel from slightly further afield;
- like cricket, rugby is club based and residents travel from further afield; and
- members of many clubs travel across and into the borough to reach the club home ground.

This suggests that when planning new facilities, particularly as part of new developments, while football facilities are required locally, there is a need to ensure that the club base of cricket and rugby grounds is maintained. New provision should therefore be located either off site, or in conjunction with the development of a new club, or satellite club to an existing facility.

Developers' contributions

The method of establishing developers' contributions involves dividing the established costs of the required facility by the number of eligible dwellings. More detailed guidance is set out in Sport England's Good Practice Guide 'Providing for Sport and Recreation through New Housing Developments'.

Actual contributions will depend on a range of local factors, including ground conditions, land ownership, fee levels, and regional economic circumstances. As an example, the following illustrates the methodology for assessing the level of contribution:

Typical playing field development (costs from Sport England, Q2 2011)

Cricket Pitch, with 8 pitch square and 2 winter sport pitches	£200,000
4 team changing room	£575,000
Parking, other ancillary accommodation and contingencies	£100,000
Total	£875,000

Area of site 2.1 ha, the equivalent of £446,000 per 1.07 ha (recommended local standard per 1000 people)

Total cost per person £446 x 2.5 (average occupancy rate) = £1115 per house.

This is an illustration only and should not be used as a precise requirement for Merton where a more detailed local calculation is required.

16. Monitoring and Review

Introduction

16

The recommendations draw out the key priorities for the future delivery of playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities in Merton.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the strategy is as important as the creation of the initial strategy and is essential if the strategy is to successfully deliver improved playing fields over the longer term.

This 2011 study draws upon participation data collected at a point in time. While this provides a robust basis on which to evaluate current and future issues, it is essential to keep this under review and to monitor changes, and the implications of these changes. Priorities will change over time as new technologies are introduced and patterns of demand alter. Furthermore, it is essential to evaluate the implications of actions taken and the knock on effect on the overall strategy and its associated priorities. While the strategy vision should therefore remain consistent over the defined period, the action plan should be dynamic and responsive to change.

Monitoring and review strategy

Monitoring and review of this strategy should be undertaken as follows;

- ongoing monitoring of changes to the pitch stock in the borough both qualitative and quantitative, using the tools provided as part of this assessment;
- annual review of participation, with support from National Governing bodies, to identify any key changes to participation trends in the borough, and the likely implications of these changes for the strategy;
- creation of a steering group to review progress on the strategy delivery and to identify additional priorities, drawing on the data collated as part of the above two actions, to ensure the strategy remains relevant and current;
- the success of planning issues related to playing fields will be monitored through an Annual Monitoring Report; and
- periodical full refresh of the strategy (every three years).

Glossary

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

3G	Third generation artificial grass pitch
AC	Athletics club
AFL	Australian Rules Football
AGP	Artificial grass pitch
AP	Active People (Sport England participation data)
APP	Active Places Power (Sport England facilities and strategic planning tool)
BC	Bowls club
CCB	County Cricket Board
CCPR	Central Council of Physical Recreation
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
GLSML	Greater London Softball Mixed League
CW	Colliers Wood
CWU	Colliers Wood United FC
EH	England Hockey
FA	Football Association
FC	Football club
FPM	Facilities Planning Model (Sport England strategic planning tool)
GLA	Greater London Authority
HC	Hockey club
HL	Hockey league
HS	High School
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LAD	Local Area Data from Football Association

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

LBM	London Borough of Merton
LC	Leisure centre
LDF	Local Development Framework
LESSA	London Electricity Sports and Social Association
LL	Little League
LTA	Lawn Tennis Association
LTC	Lawn tennis club
Mi	Mitcham sub area
Mo	Morden sub area
MOSS	Merton Open Space Study
MS	Market Segmentation (Sport England participation data)
MUGA	Multi use games area
NC	Netball club
NGB	National Governing Body (of sport)
NI8	National Indicator 8
NOF	New Opportunities Fund
OS	Open space
PF	Playing field(s)
PPG17	Planning Policy Guidance Note 17
PPM	Playing Pitch Methodology
RC	Rugby club
Rec	Recreation ground
RFU	Rugby Football Union
RP	Raynes Park sub area
RPV	Raynes Park Vale Football Club
RUFC	Rugby Union football club

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

SG	Sports ground
SLAA	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SSP	School Sports Partnership
T20	Twenty Twenty cricket
Tap	'Towards a Level Playing Field' (Sport England guidance document)
TGR	Team generation rate
UDP	Unitary Development Plan
W	Wimbledon sub area