

Open spaces: sports and recreation report 2011

**SHEPWAY OPEN SPACES:
SPORTS & RECREATION
REPORT 2011**

*Local Development Framework
SHEPWAY DISTRICT COUNCIL*

**OPEN SPACES: SPORTS & RECREATION REPORT
2011**

Shepway Local Development Framework

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Shepway LDF for planning, especially the Core Strategy currently under production. It does this by bringing together findings of two primary research studies undertaken by Shepway District Council on open space topics; and is complemented by other evidence base studies.

1.2 There is a complex array of plans, planning policy, guidance and legislation in relation to land that may be seen as 'open space' of any kind. This reflects the variety purposes served, often by the same piece of open land, and the extensive value placed on undeveloped land by a range of organisations and individuals with different perspectives.

1.3 Nationally the following planning documents remain in force at present:

- Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development and Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change - Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1
- Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation

The latter (PPG17) is the single most pertinent one to this report. They have all been produced over past years by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) or its predecessor departments.

1.4 These national planning policies all have various supporting documents. Additionally a 'Consultation paper on a new Planning Policy Statement: Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment' was issued but it is understood that has limited weight and moreover it will not be completed, as the new government is intending further consolidation with a single 'National Planning Policy Framework'.

1.5 National agencies such as Natural England, Sport England, and CABI Space (a unit within the former Commission for Architecture and Built Environment) have all produced their own guidance and documentation.

1.6 Additional to this, plans and studies exist at a sub-national level. In particular useful information was produced under the South East Plan regime.

1.7 Locally, relevant (but not spatial planning focused) documents produced by Shepway District Council include: *Sports & Physical Activity Strategy 2004* and *Planning for Play in Shepway 2007 – 2012*.

1.8 Moreover, spatial planning has to account for other legislative and regulatory requirements e.g. environmental protection, which sometimes originates from a supra-national level (For example Habitats Regulations).

1.9 Furthermore, open space should be looked at from all aspects, particularly through the concept of green infrastructure (GI). A significant number of documents are applicable in Shepway across the range of GI issues, as illustrated below in Figure 1:

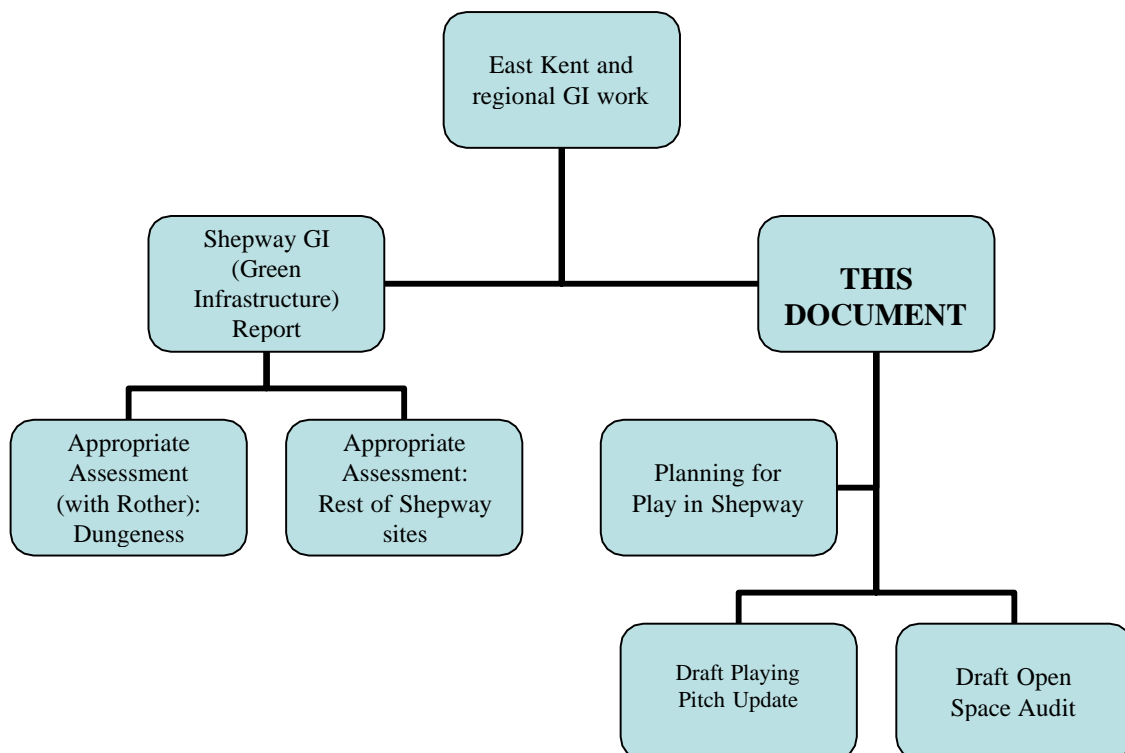


Figure 1: Selected open space and green infrastructure evidence documents

1.10 In this context, there is a need to focus on the specific requirements in the Shepway LDF Core Strategy context, on the basis of not duplicating information.

2.0 The open space focus

2.1 National policy (PPG17) provides land typologies that give a flavour of the types of open space. The inter-relationship between different types of greenspace has been taken forward at a sub-national level in the South East Plan, which although is not due to remain in place as part of the development plan, does usefully expand (policy CC8) on the PPG17 typologies as follows:

- **parks** and gardens - including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens
- natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces - including woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons and meadows) wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open land and rock areas (e.g. cliffs, quarries and pits)
- green corridors - including river and canal banks, cycleways, and rights of way
- **outdoor sports facilities** (with natural or artificial surfaces, either publicly or privately owned) - including tennis courts, bowling greens, **sports pitches**, golf courses, athletics tracks, school and other institutional playing fields, and other outdoor sports areas
- amenity greenspace (most commonly, but not exclusively, in housing areas) – including informal recreation spaces, greenspaces in and around housing, domestic gardens and village greens
- **provision for children and teenagers** - including play areas, skateboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops, and other more informal areas (e.g. 'hanging out' areas, teenage shelters)
- allotments, community gardens, and city (urban) farms
- cemeteries and churchyards
- accessible countryside in urban fringe areas
- river and canal corridors
- green roofs and walls¹

¹ Typologies/facilities in bold are discussed in more detail later in this document.

2.2 The South East Plan termed these places collectively as 'green infrastructure'. This has been comprehensively mapped in East Kent, particularly with reference to the scope for natural networks.

2.3 The consideration of Shepway's open spaces through the East Kent framework of three thematic groupings (biodiversity, linear and civic amenity GI) is outlined and subject to quantitative evaluation in the Shepway Green Infrastructure report (2011). Map 12 later in this document illustrates potential priorities. That report should be read in parallel to this document; further information is provided here about local needs for certain kinds of 'civic amenity' green infrastructure (open space).

2.4 Similarly information from other studies should be considered alongside this document. For example one outcome of the Draft Open Space Audit is a profile of the range of open/green land uses across Shepway in line with PPG17, a classification of sites which has been mapped and is available via the council's 'LDF live' mapping accessible from the homepage

2.5 Mapping is one of the best ways of considering the scope for an integrated approach, which is necessary given the range of strategic priorities that open spaces can address. PPG17 (*Annexe 2*) states:

Local authorities should also recognise that most areas of open space can perform multiple functions. They should take account of the various functions of open space when applying the policies in this document. These include:

*i. **strategic functions**: defining and separating urban areas; better linking of town and country; and providing for recreational needs over a wide area;*

*ii. **urban quality**: helping to support regeneration and improving quality of life for communities by providing visually attractive green spaces close to where people live;*

*iii. promoting **health and well-being**: providing opportunities to people of all ages for informal recreation, or to walk, cycle or ride within parks and open spaces or along paths, bridleways and canal banks. Allotments may provide physical exercise and other health benefits;*

*iv. havens and **habitats** for flora and fauna: sites may also have potential to be corridors or stepping stones from one habitat to another and may contribute towards achieving objectives set out in local biodiversity action plans;*

v. as a **community resource**: as a place for congregating and for holding community events, religious festivals, fêtes and travelling fairs; and,

vi. as a **visual amenity**: even without public access, people enjoy having open space near to them to provide an outlook, variety in the urban scene, or as a positive element in the landscape.

2.6 This report has a strategic focus on places in and around the district's larger settlements so addresses the majority of these functions (especially as noted in i to iii).

2.7 A vital statutory connected process for the LDF is the Appropriate Assessment procedures under Habitats Regulations. This considers sites designated internationally for their special biodiversity importance. Sensitive coastal environments, rivers and canals, and other water features which may perform a linear GI function are considered as part of the overall hydrological system in the Shepway Water Cycle report

2.8 These two issues are not considered here but as part of the Shepway LDF Core Strategy Proposed Submission 2011 evidence base can be accessed on the council's website.

2.9 This leaves a need to pull together information on the following forms of open space, sport and recreation

- **Outdoor Sports Facilities**
- **Parks and Gardens**
- **Provision for Children and Teenagers**

From hereon in, the first form of open space shall be referred to as "sports" (or "pitches"), and the latter two as "parks" and "playspace" (often collectively).

2.10 It is not considered necessary from the LDF Core Strategy proposals, nor possible in the Shepway context, to undertake a full PPG17 study across the full range of typologies in a single report. The Shepway Core Strategy is not expected to include new development standards for open space.

3.0 Sports and recreation overview

3.1 This reports examines key aspects of open space found within the district's settlements and used for recreation and leisure by residents of Shepway, whether old or young. It draws from two primary sources:

- Calculations and research refreshing the Playing Pitch Strategy produced for Shepway (Draft Playing Pitch Strategy update).
- Evaluation of open spaces through a mapping and classification exercise, with further analysis of the levels of parks and playspace provision (Draft Open Spaces Audit).

These documents are available in draft form and are expected to be finalised on the basis of feedback stimulated by the publication of LDF evidence and proposals including this document. They effectively form technical annexes to this report.

3.2 The original Playing Pitch Strategy was produced by external consultants to inform specific major proposals, however in association with Sport England methodology it provides information that can be updated and, where necessary, recalibrated to detail current and projected surpluses and shortfalls in the levels of pitch provision for specific sports. It accounts for the possible impact of development strategy (housing decisions) arising from the LDF on a sub-district level in its demographic projections.

3.3 Work on an Open Space audit commenced in 2008, and its results are largely summarised in the on-line mapping function. It summarises qualitative and quantitative issues and provides an integrated approach, revealing for example opportunities to address playspace needs through better provision within open spaces currently normally seen as parks. A short draft note is available providing further background on its specific focus.

3.4 This chapter addresses these findings in turn, examining results firstly on a district-wide level, than moving in to focus on specific local issues.

3.5 Firstly, the existing surplus/shortfall in sports pitches can be presented in graphical terms as follows:

Figure 1

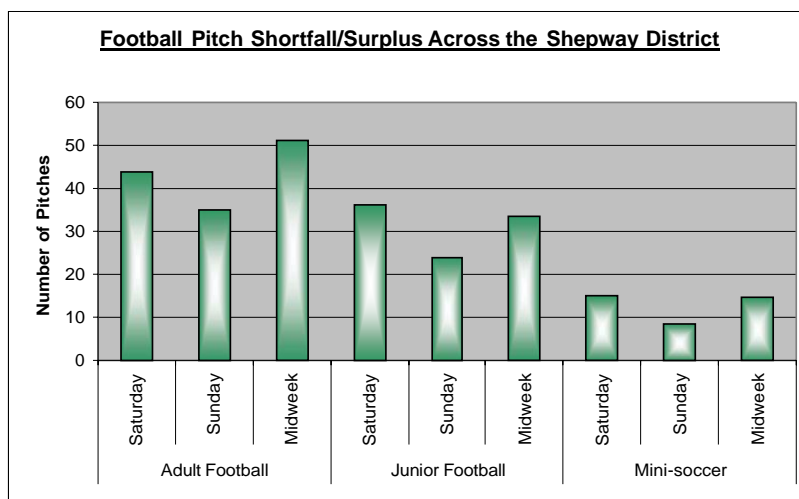


Figure 2

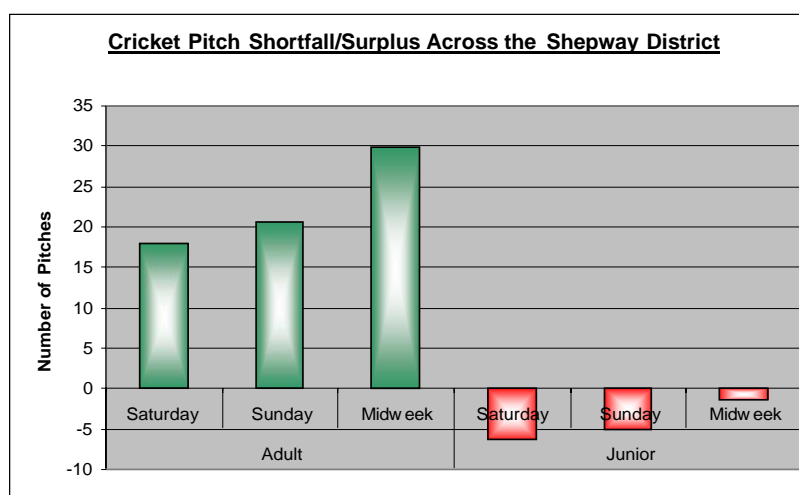


Figure 3

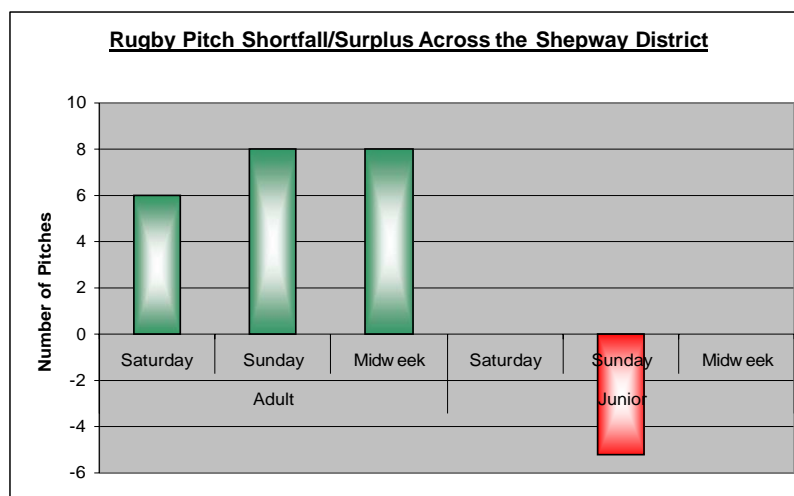
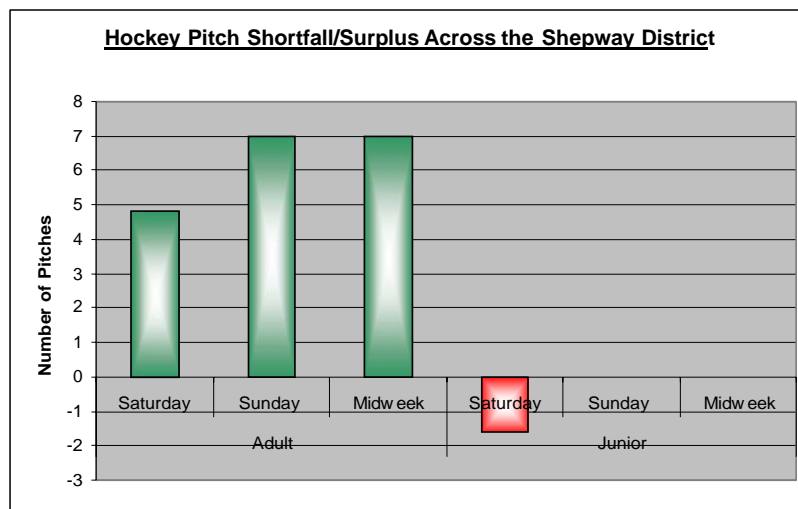


Figure 4



3.6 These four charts for Shepway as a whole reveal:

- A surplus at all times of the week for football (including juniors and mini-soccer).
- Shortfalls in cricket for juniors of a limited scale.
- A surplus at all times of the week for rugby, but a significant shortfall in junior Rugby pitches on a Sunday.
- A surplus at all times of the week for rugby, but some shortfall in junior Rugby pitches on a Saturday.

In summary, there are surpluses for all adult pitches throughout the week.

3.7 Nevertheless, junior sports provision could improve, which may be achievable through amending management or the arrangement of pitches relative to demand within Shepway. For example, the only district-wide issue with hockey is Saturday junior provision, where a major surplus of adult pitches occurs. Similarly all junior cricket shortfalls are outweighed by surplus 'adult pitches' throughout the week. Nevertheless it cannot be assumed that although junior cricket can be held on adult pitches, that supply can be simply transferred.

3.8 A 'park' is a phrase used in a variety of contexts. They vary substantially in role, importance and particularly size. Two significant open spaces that are widely recognised as performing the functions of major 'parks' are very prominent in the centre of Shepway:

The Coastal Park, Folkestone	<i>Linear park divided into three zones formal, fun and natural</i>	6.7ha
Brockhill Country Park, Hythe	<i>Country park with provision for play and café facilities</i>	6.5ha

3.9 These parks alone equate to 0.22ha (2,200sqm) per 1,000 population for the urban settlements² of high quality, varied and accessible major park space. Further evaluation of the quantity of major open/natural spaces is provided in the Green Infrastructure Report.

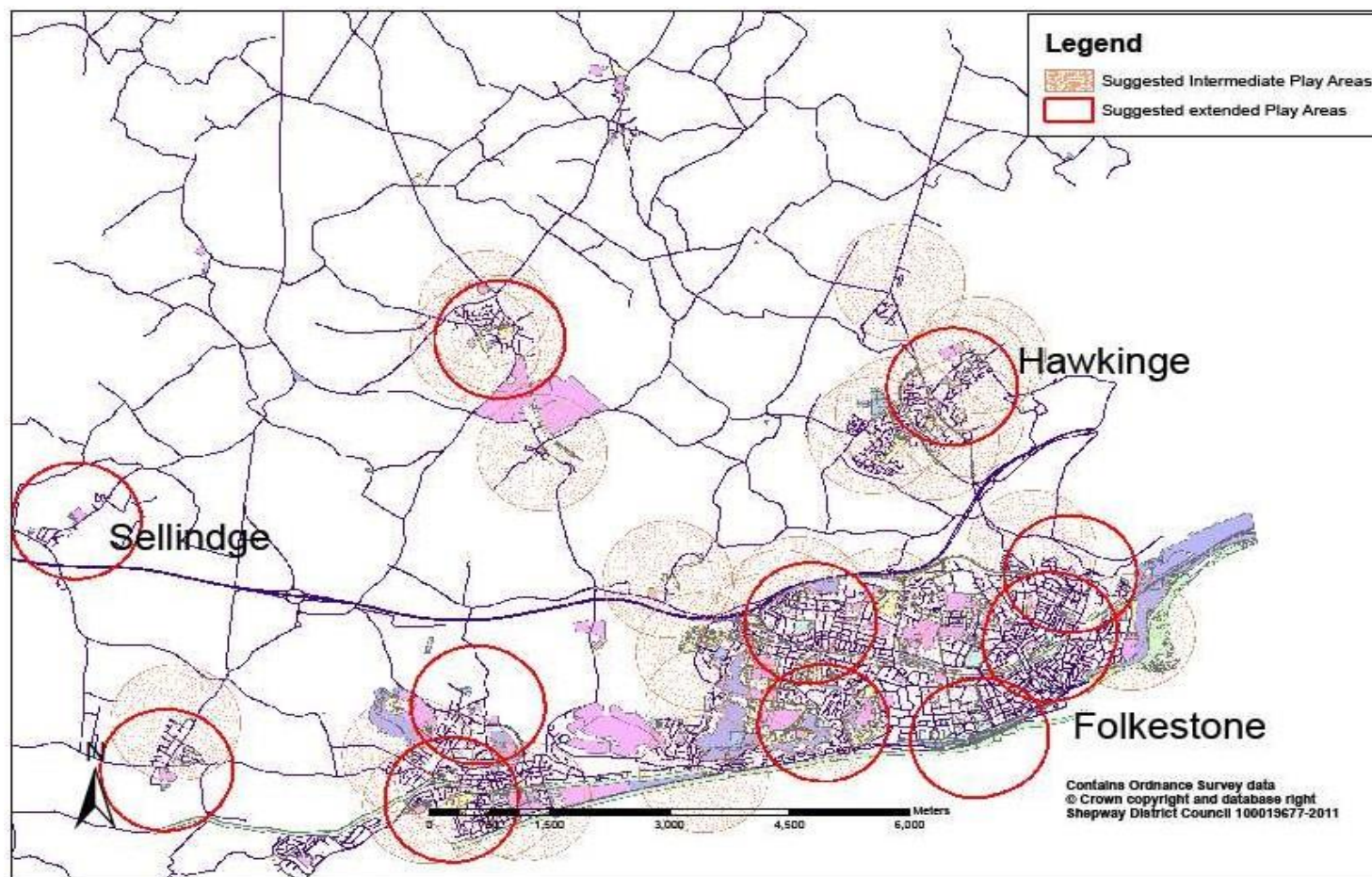
3.10 Additionally, two even larger greenspaces with distinctive natural characteristics are prominent for their appeal in Shepway and beyond (and scientific interest):

- **Dungeness National Nature Reserve:** *one of the largest shingle landscapes in the world.* Includes the RSBP Observatory, light railway, World War 2 Listening Ears, lighthouses and expansive gravel pits. Promoted by Kent County Council as Shepway's most sizeable park³.
- **The Warren, Folkestone:** *maritime coastal environment, scrub containing footpath network.* Smaller than Dungeness but still approximately 25ha is accessible (seaward side of railway line).

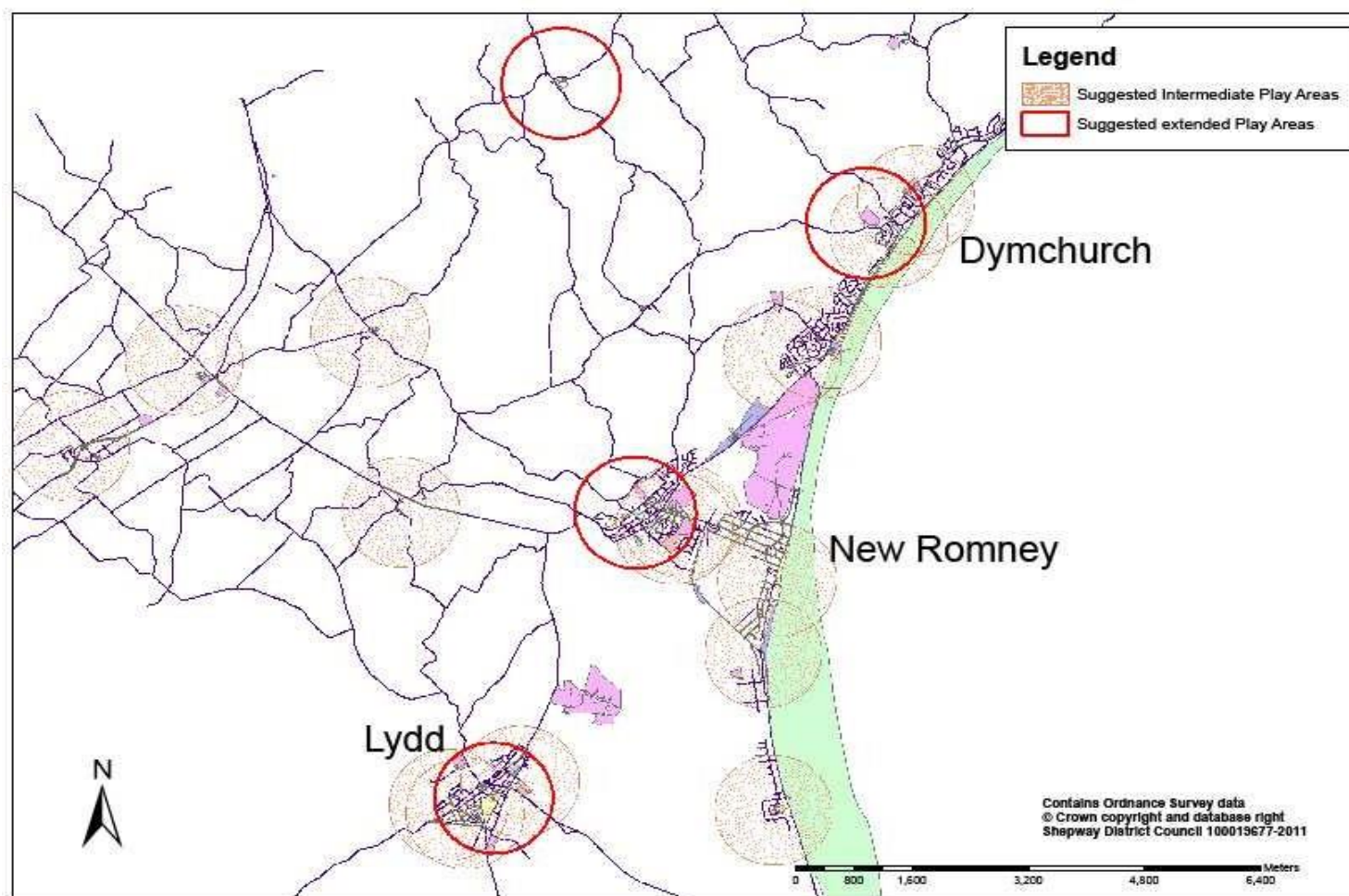
3.11 These four major open spaces are all of greater than local importance for their natural features (flora, fauna, geology, landscape) or facilities (recreational value, potential for events). With their location coinciding with coastal towns, they provide open spaces as a desirable destination for nearly all Shepway's populace. Moreover, the position and nature of The Warren and especially Dungeness draw visitors from outside Shepway. The Coastal Park in central Folkestone is highly attractive and well placed to support the town's appeal.

² Using DCLG's 60,0039 population total for the Folkestone/Hythe 'conurbation' drawing from the census.

³ <http://www.kent.gov.uk/ExploreKentGIS/ParksSearch.aspx?pc=&pn=&ps=All&ds=Shepway&sg=All>



Map 1 - Shepway Play North



Map 2 - Shepway Play South

3.12 Playspace plays a more localised function than many parks, as there are more locations (which are often only of small scale) to aim for maximum accessibility for children near their home. The pattern and overall level of provision is therefore suitable for consideration by scrutinising maps of provision. This is provided for north and south Shepway in Maps 1 and 2 respectively.

3.13 The two maps show the widespread distribution of urban open space (coloured in accordance with the different typologies included in PPG 17 – see interactive map and full key on LDF live) and accessibility to playspace for north and south of the district respectively. Individual play/recreation areas are profiled on Shepway's website.⁴

3.14 Maps 1 and 2 show radii as orange/green catchments around the main playspace areas, for extended and intermediate play areas, respectively. The Shepway Transport Strategy⁵ 2011 suggests an 800m walk may take most people about 10 minutes, which may be reasonable upper threshold for visiting a main play area.

3.15 Extended Play Areas are those well placed open spaces that could meet a specific level of quality to provide for all children and young people, including the specific needs of children with disabilities and teenagers. This concept may be of utility given the increased potential scope under a new developer contributions regime (Community Infrastructure Levy) for pooling of funds collected from the private sector. Intermediate Play Areas primarily aim to cater for the requirements of 6 -12 year children on more of a local neighbourhood scale (the number and modest scale of Doorstep Play Areas for the youngest mean they are not mapped here).

3.16 The Maps reveal all Shepway's settlements⁶ apart from four are covered by main play areas. Most communities have one (or more) Extended Play Area at their heart and the general distribution provides good coverage of Shepway's settlements. In November

⁴ (Deprecated)

⁵ School, sight seeing and commuting suggested walking distances by the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation vary from 500 to 1000 to 2000m (2Km/1.2 miles) in terms of 'desirable', 'acceptable' and 'preferred maximum' levels. Other locations outside of town centres vary from 400 to 1200m, with 8000m as 'acceptable'.

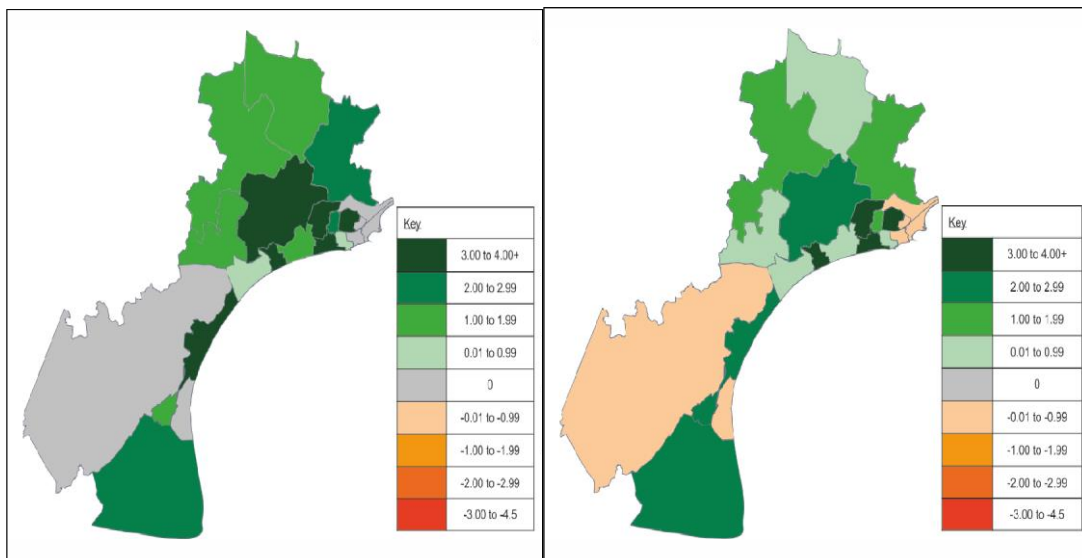
⁶ As defined in the LDF Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document 2011.

2010 a new area of play was opened at King George V playing field in Elham, one of a number of recently improved equipped areas of play in the district.⁷

3.17 It is also shown that sports grounds often complement play spaces spatially, as they lie on the edge of settlements or between them. This further supports a multi-functional approach to green infrastructure assets as play equipment at sports pitches could further expand coverage.

4.0 Further Findings

4.1 In relation to sports pitches, the district-wide perspective identified that the degree of surplus of pitches varies, by day of the week and especially the specific sport. Particular issues are generally found in relation to junior sports provision. This section focuses on identified areas of concern by examining local variations



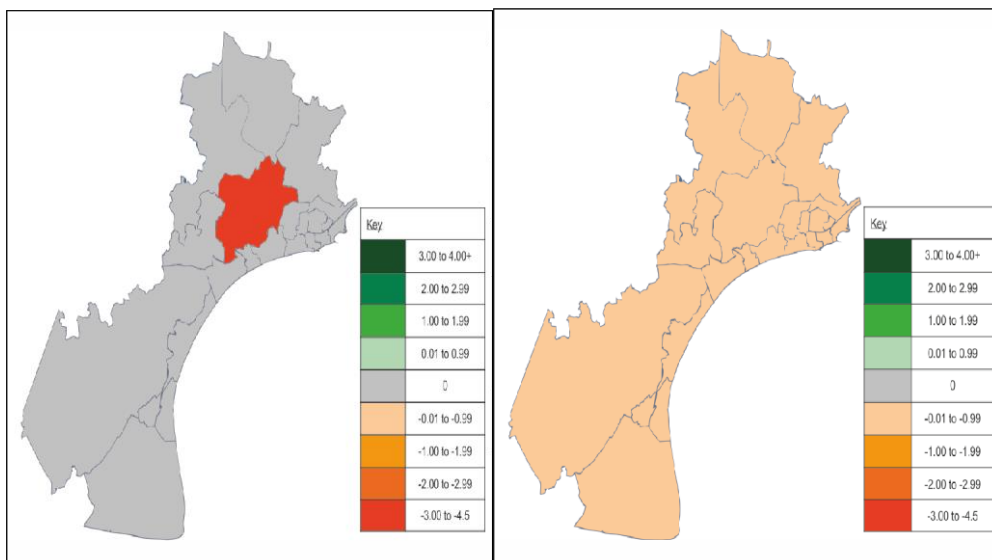
Map 3 Left: Shortfall/surplus supply of adult football pitches on a Saturday (2010)

Map 4 Right: Shortfall/surplus supply of adult football pitches on a Saturday (2016)

⁷ See example project – St Mary's Road, Dymchurch (Deprecated)

4.2 As noted football (for all ages) is relatively well provided for in Shepway. The above Maps 3 and 4 provide the example of Saturday adult availability. It shows notable current surpluses in many parts of the district (green in Map 1).

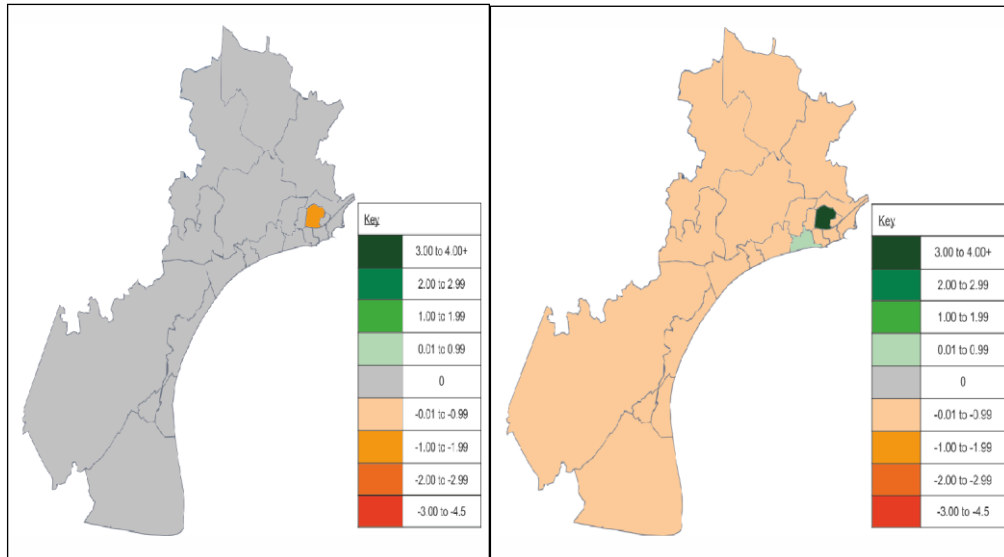
4.3 Wards shaded grey on these maps reflect a balance (including due to both no need and capacity, typically in rural areas).



Map 5 Left: Shortfall/surplus supply of junior rugby pitches on a Sunday (2010)

Map 6 Right: Shortfall/surplus supply of junior rugby pitches on a Sunday (2016)

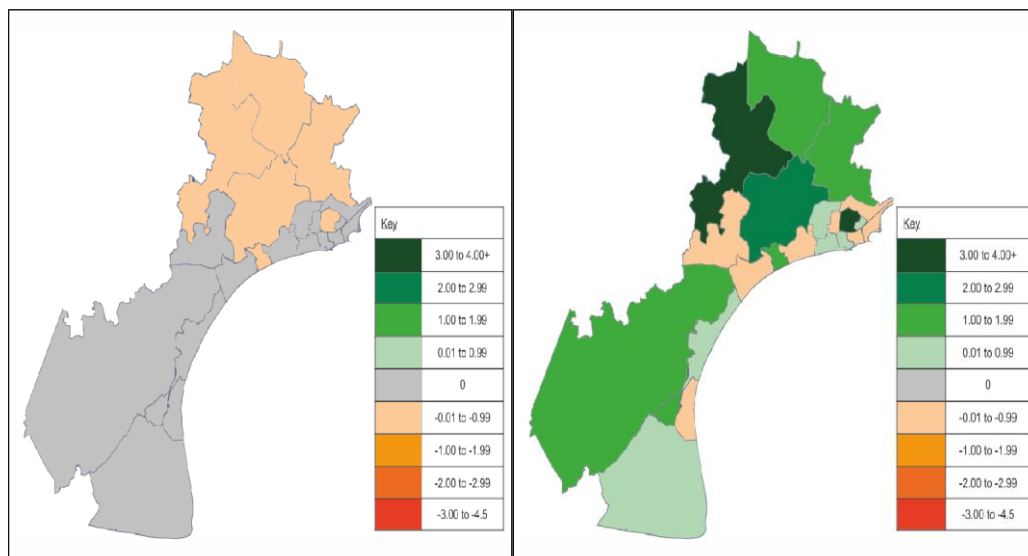
4.4 The identified issue with rugby is Sunday junior provision. There is a significant shortfall, but Map 5 shows this currently derives from Tolsford Ward North of the urban area (largest village Etchinghill). All parts of Shepway are expected to be in an almost equilibrium in future, on this measure (Map 6) with a slight shortfall very evenly spread.



Map 7 Left: Shortfall/surplus supply of junior hockey pitches on a Saturday (2010)

Map 8 Right: Shortfall/surplus supply of junior hockey pitches on a Saturday (2016)

4.5 The possible concern in relation to hockey is junior provision on a Saturday. This is currently focused on Folkestone Foord Ward, as seen in Map 7, which is easily the most densely populated part of the district.⁸ Map 8 above shows it is likely to shift towards surplus in Folkestone in the future.



Map 9 Left: Shortfall/surplus supply of junior cricket pitches midweek (2010)

Map 10 Right: Shortfall/surplus supply of junior cricket pitches midweek (2016)

⁸ See AMR 2010, para. 3.5.

4.6 There are three potential illustrations of the shortfall in junior cricket, as it occurs throughout the week to some extent. The pattern is similar for all, but the above maps provide an example from midweek.

4.7 Map 9 shows a current surplus spread across northern Shepway, including both the countryside – for example villages such as Lyminge and Sellindge - and inner parts of the large towns (Hythe Central and Folkestone Foord wards). The future map (10) shows variations between areas growing for junior cricket, with the situation improving in most rural areas but with relative availability generally increasing in the towns.

4.9 Shepway is a large district of varying environments and features, covering both significant towns and countryside. For a more fine-grained look at parks and playspace provision, Shepway is examined with reference to the three *District Character Areas* identified in the LDF. These are illustrated below.



Map 11: District Character Areas of Shepway

- **The Urban Area:**

4.10 The majority of the approximately 20 parks and major open spaces of Shepway⁹ are within this area; predominantly Folkestone. The coastal environment provides several parks, including the high quality constituent elements making up the whole Coastal Park. Inland, the Victorian west end of Folkestone has several planned gardens and parks; many are notable for their appeal or setting such as the formal Kingsnorth Gardens. The most prominent is the Radnor Parks.

4.11 Larger 'area parks', are detailed below:

Upper Radnor Park, Folkestone	Open 'flexible' park land surrounded by mature trees, provision for play and active recreation. Contains herbaceous and annual borders and fishing pool. Quality= FAIR (~60%)	5.8ha
Weymouth Road Recreation Ground, Cheriton	Open area with popular play area. Quality= FAIR or HIGH (>52% – Undergone complete renovation and improvement since scoring).	4ha

4.12 Central facilities are complemented by recreation grounds serving communities on the edge of Folkestone, which were considered as performing at a medium or lower quality level (such as Cheriton Rec. when scored). The small scale of pockets parks in inner Folkestone that formed most of the lower quality parks (<50%), offer realistic opportunities for significant improvement by the public or private (developer contributions/ voluntary) sectors.

4.13 The main traditional open space in Hythe is Oaklands: public gardens enclosed by trees and borders, with open grass. A bandstand and children's play area are located to south of park. It is just under one hectare in size, but of fair quality overall (~60%). The Royal Military Canal is another significant feature (also extending into the northern Romney Marsh), addressed in the Green Infrastructure Report and Water Cycle Report

⁹ See Draft Open Space Audit mapping on LDF live website.

as a key linear feature of Shepway's environment. It is of high quality (~70%) and a good example of multifunctional physical infrastructure.

4.11 Other open spaces within the urban area not detailed in this analysis may also be significant for their potential, in particular designated open spaces that are currently in private ownership and not used for recreational purposes. It should be noted that these spaces, as scarce greenspace in an urban environment may still contribute to green infrastructure objectives e.g. for biodiversity and visual amenity (and other aesthetic grounds).

4.14 Map 1 shows the influence of several playspaces in Folkestone and Hythe. This reveals the main gap in provision is a modest zone within western Folkestone (to the east of Sandgate area). There are some open spaces within this neighbourhood, so consideration could be given to their specific utilisation and provision of play facilities. Appendix 2 shows lower scoring playspaces on the qualitative evaluation, and they are not concentrated in the urban area of Shepway. Stanley Road play area in Cheriton is an example of a better-rated playspace. However the lowest ranking in the district is Sir John Moore Avenue in Hythe.

4.15 Brabner Close, Folkestone is a further example of a recent play space upgrades, (improved its score from Appendix 2) whereas Southern Way, Folkestone is a new facility. Canterbury Road improvements are pending.

- **Romney Marsh Area:**

4.16 New Romney hosts many of the parks in Shepway that are not located in the urban area. These are all generally of fair quality (65-55%) but in total they serve the New Romney/Littlestone area well. For example the adjacent St Martin's Field and Fairfield Road Recreation Ground total 1.5ha and one has been developed to provide play facilities; and the other has the potential to provide for a variety of activities. It may also be relevant to coastal communities to consider the recreational and amenity value of the beach given its vast extent in this part of Shepway.

4.17 No other places in this area approach the government's population threshold typically used to define larger/urban settlements (10,000); and it is unsurprising that no other large parks are found in the area. Dymchurch however benefits from Country's Field, a fair quality park (~60%). The town of Lydd includes the central Rype open space, which is relatively large (including new playspace equipment) but was not categorised specifically as a park.

4.18 Map 2 shows a wide distribution of playspaces, and the potential for upgrades to create extended play areas in all the main settlements (and the village of Newchurch too). However it also reveals that due to the coastal strip pattern of post-war development, the northern/southern ends of some settlements are not within an easy walking distance of a play area (intermediate or extended). This impacts on a small number of residents, especially narrowing down to focus on those of a typical age range to bring up children, but is perhaps of some relevance to some neighbourhoods, for example people living on the coast north of Dymchurch. Although some of the better play spaces are found in Romney Marsh, there were a number of lower ranked playspaces e.g. in Dymchurch/St Mary's Bay (which have been a focus for recent/current upgrades) and inland (for instance Moore Close Brenzett).

- **North Downs Area:**

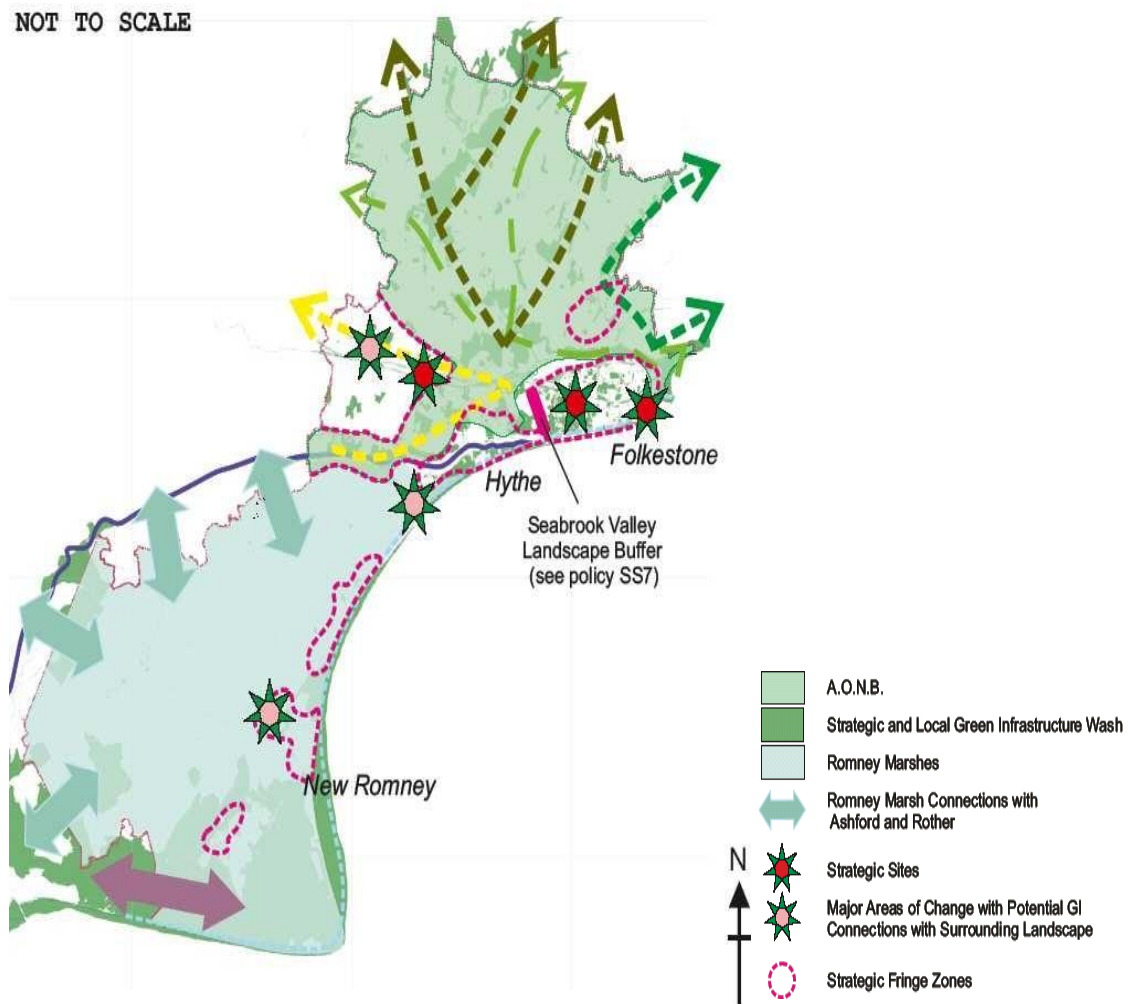
4.19 This part of the district has a varied and interesting green infrastructure, but this does not include many 'parks'. Many of the larger settlements have central open spaces whether in the form of planned focal areas at Hawkinge, open greenspaces such as Tayne Field, Lympne or in the common land that defines Stelling Minnis; although it is keenly felt where such provision not present or formalised e.g. Sellindge/Lympne. Within the North Downs Area are a number of more informal areas of play, such as exercise trails in Hawkinge and Lympne that provide equipment for teenagers and adults within a natural woodland setting.

4.20 Settlements featuring play facilities in the North Downs are either established at a decent standard (Lympne's play/recreation grounds in particular) or hold potential e.g. via existing collected s106 financial contributions at Hawkinge/ possible extended play areas at places like Sellindge. Some of the most rural or smallest villages have very

limited open space, and no (intermediate) play areas. Other larger villages have benefited in recent years by investment (examples at Lyminge and Elham).

5.0 Way Forward

5.1 The potential of open spaces in Shepway should be sustainably managed and maximised. The best way to do this is to explore suitable opportunities for diversifying the functions that any individual open/green space offers, whilst ensuring it remains a recognisable open space. The green infrastructure approach offers a strategic framework to this end, partially depicted by this map.



Map 12: Green infrastructure potential policy illustration

5.2 The rest of this section offers opportunities for multifunctional green spaces to be enhanced with a focus on additional recreational activities. The major areas of change

(six highlighted in the above diagram) may offer particular opportunities on a site-by-site basis but guidance is needed on priorities district-wide.

5.3 Firstly, whilst various recent improvements have been noted; other committed schemes should be acknowledged where significant to addressing deficits in outdoor recreation in Shepway.

5.4 In terms of sports pitches, one of the most significant recent improvements has been the delivery of a new sports pavilion at South Road by Hythe Town Council. This has provided a much needed upgrade for the cricketers and other sports users at South Road. However other investment has occurred at places like Sellindge sports ground.

5.5 Further major qualitative and quantitative gains will be realised in the urban area to the benefit of the whole of the district with the delivery a completely revised set of sports and outdoor facilities at Cheriton Road in the middle of Folkestone¹⁰.

5.6 The new facilities at Cheriton Road Sports Ground, Folkestone, are under construction to provide considerable expansion in the availability of Cricket, Hockey, Football, Basketball and Netball facilities for all age groups within the district at a central location. The development includes the replacement of the existing poor quality ATP and pavilion building with a two storey pavilion building, providing changing and treatment rooms, a members gym, members bar, games room, club room, function space, external terrace areas and viewing gallery, A multi-use sports hall, providing 6 cricket net lanes and opportunity for indoor hockey and cricket matches and training, netball, badminton, football and tennis, Improvements to 1st XI cricket seating, 2 new artificial turf pitches, hockey practise pitch, replacement floodlighting, 1 multi use games area (MUGA) and 2 hard surfaced courts.

5.7 This scheme has been developed by a local charitable organisation working in close association with Shepway District Council. See Appendix 3 for a plan of the scheme.

¹⁰ See planning permission **Y10/0075/SH** for *Erection of sports pavilion and sports hall, reconfiguration of car park following removal of existing cricket pavilion, construction of 2 all terrain pitches (ATP), 2 outdoor netball courts and 1 Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), refurbishment of cricket stands, construction of cricket nets and other associated operational development, landscaping and external works* granted July 2011.

5.8 As part of the planning applications process, access to additional open space is currently being agreed in west Folkestone. The transfer of the playing fields of the former (independent) St Marys Westbrook School - which has been fenced off for several years - to Shepway District Council will open up a new park of approximately 0.8 ha. Moreover it is ideally placed to address a gap in playspace provision identified in Map 1/ paragraph 4.14.

5.9 Local dialogue has established widespread demand for additional parks and greenspace in a number of communities, including in the rural areas. Most prominent of these is Sellindge in the west of Shepway's North Downs area. Here, popular interest in re-establishing the former common lands as public open space lead to ideas for a 'village green' to provide a central focus to the village.

5.10 Development options to achieve this have been studied in detail. This has lead to a specific site being identified to host a village green, although further land may be necessary to financially enable it to come forward. This potential solution is illustrated below in Figure 5, from the Sellindge Rural Masterplan shaped by the village:



Figure 5: Extracts from Urban Initiatives (2011) Sellindge Rural Masterplan

5.11 This central public open space would complement the range of parks found in Shepway's towns and villages. The Shepway LDF Core Strategy proposed submission document sets out that it should be of 1.5/2ha or larger, provide a range of facilities and landscaping, is of the highest quality (incorporating durable/attractive lighting and furniture, and provides new habitats for priority conservation species. The Rural

Masterplanning project confirmed the identified need for improvements to the play facilities at the sports ground, which is some distance north from the site.

5.12 The LDF Core Strategy Proposed submission document includes three policies to allocate strategic sites; and all have the potential to improve sports and recreation in Shepway:

- Extensive beach and water sports will be provided by the Folkestone Seafront landowner, continuing the zone of recreation from the Coastal Park to the west.
- The proposals for MoD land at Shorncliffe will contribute a significant increase in public open space. The largest single element of this will be changing the management of Seabrook Valley land for nature conservation and 'county park' recreation purposes. The MoD has used some land previously for sports purposes, and two sites have been let to Shepway District Council for public use. Development offers an opportunity to secure qualitative upgrades to facilities.
- Folkestone Racecourse proposes development to secure a new high quality horse-racing track for the district and county.

Moreover one other future major area of change is the mixed-use site at Nickolls Quarry which has planning permission; this will feature extensive green infrastructure in the form sports using the extensive existing areas of open water and landscaping.

5.13 Outdoor water-based activity is one aspect of active recreation which is growing in Shepway, particularly through proposals utilising the district's extensive coastline.

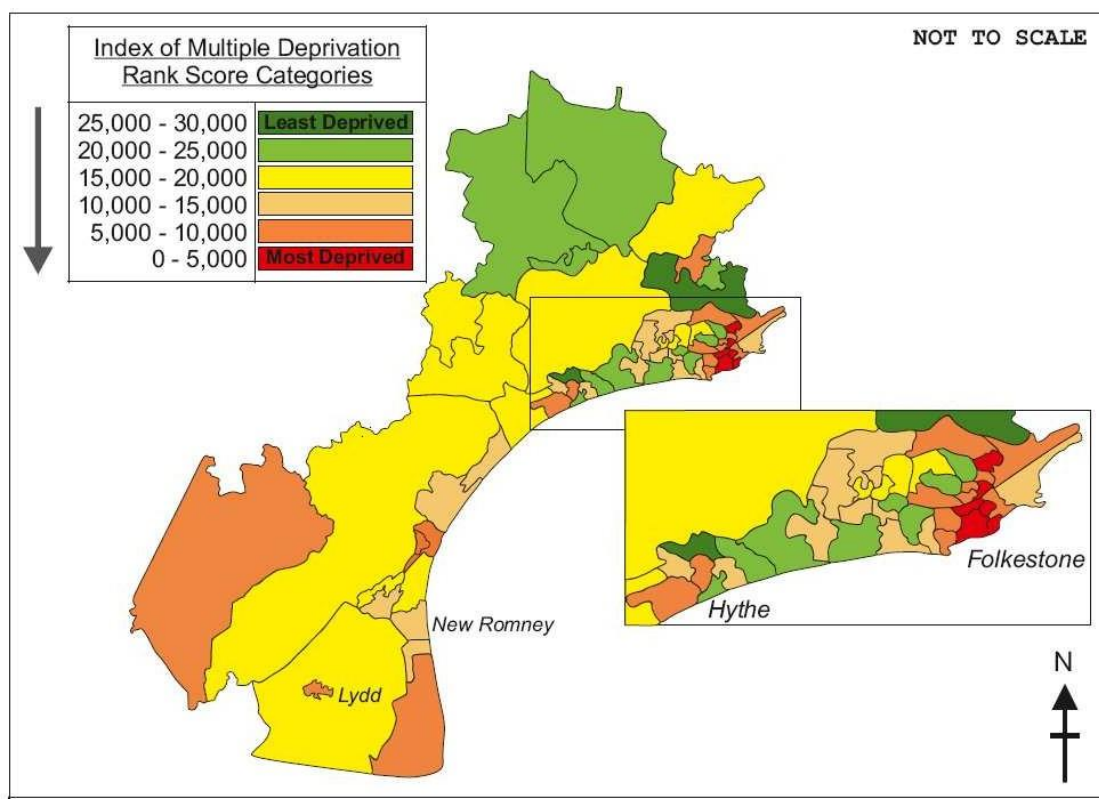
5.14 To ensure the delivery of these open space proposals, and generate further investment to meet local recreation, open space and green infrastructure needs, key principles and issues to address are now set out.

5.15. In conclusion, an increased emphasis is needed - especially in a time of limited resources - on:

- *Better use and management of open spaces to deliver qualitative upgrades.* This should draw from the multifunctional theme of green infrastructure to get the best out of the many open and greenspaces in Shepway.
- *Developer contributions to recreation.* Most notably, if modest sums can be pooled (e.g. from small/medium sized residential sites where provision is not

directly made) then specific open spaces with currently limited amenity can be improved relatively simply. Provision should be made for management arrangements.

- *Places where environmental upgrades are most critical.* This could include prominent areas, such as the centre of towns or villages that help define Shepway's locales. Alternatively it could focus on areas where quality of life is most in need of improvement, which is often in neighbourhoods across the district facing structural socio-economic challenges. It is recommended the new indices of deprivation are used to this end.



Map 13: Indices of Deprivation in 2010

5.16 Deprivation statistics in Map 13 highlight Folkestone town centre, and communities to the north, west of Hythe town centre, Lydd and St Mary's Bay of the larger settlements.

5.17 To re-cap on research on need, Shepway has a good quantity of sports pitches, parkland and playspaces. However for certain types of open space/recreation, the following priority issues remain in 2011 and with forthcoming committed improvements.

5.18 *Sports pitches*: At present there are few deficits other than when focusing exclusively on youth sports demand. This may be less of a land issue other than particular management matters, instead requiring agencies to explore how to support increased youth sports oversight capacity.

5.19 Even to secure qualitative gains, the permanent loss of pitches on the basis of current over supplies should not occur without examination of future need. This can be seen in the Playing Pitch update mapping, e.g. maps 4, 6, 8 & 10 but a broad overview is summarised here:

- *Cricket*: there is expected to be a consistency of areas with a (very modest) future deficit - for both adult and junior and throughout the week - wards in east Folkestone, Morehall Ward, outer wards of Hythe, New Romney Coast and (apart from midweek) Lympne/Stanford.
- *Football*: the pattern is complex. The main areas with deficiencies for different kinds of football/varying days of the week are- wards in east Folkestone and New Romney Coast.
- *Hockey*: the outlook is often neutral or marginal over much of the district. There is little spatial variation but Folkestone Morehall and Sandgate do not have any deficits. Other wards may have slight deficits on occasions i.e. on a Saturday.
- *Rugby*: There are no shortfalls projected other than for juniors on a Sunday, when it is district-wide.

There are only very isolated occasions of more significant deficits, and most places have surplus pitches, sometimes significantly so. The situation for football is expected to get 'tighter' (especially adult provision at weekends); than the overall picture charted in Figure 1 for Shepway at present and many areas will have a slight deficit of hockey pitches on a Saturday.

5.20 The implications of improvements should be reviewed, especially the Cheriton Road initiative (Folkestone Morehall Ward). However the most places where possible future shortfalls may be most widespread are many of the most urban areas e.g. east Folkestone, where land for new pitches is very scarce. This reiterates the need for efficient use of pitches e.g. helping sports land be more usable for juniors.

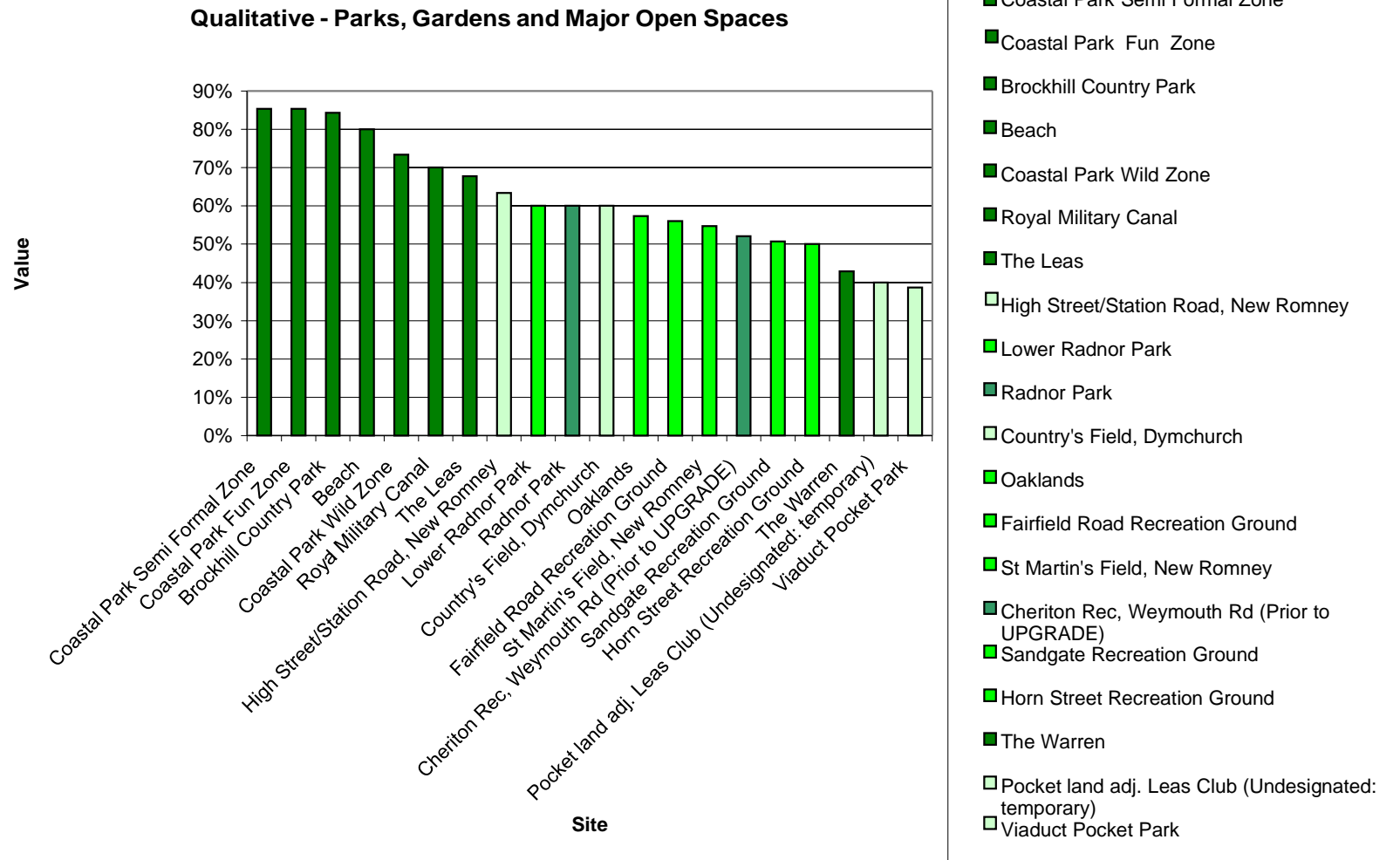
5.21 *Parks:* Shepway boasts the award-winning Coastal Park at Folkestone, but it cannot be assumed that the essential funding streams that enabled this showcase project will be available in future. Parks may present the greatest opportunities for open space upgrades, and the greatest challenge to deliver. Major new facilities (for instance at Seabrook Valley or Sellindge) would be beneficial but improvements in many situations may not require the acquisition of much, or any, new land. It is more likely to mean improvements to existing open spaces so that they can provide for a wider cross section of the community. Larger spaces lend themselves to improvements to target increased multifunctionality. Yet this requires careful consideration and resources to maximise their potential.

5.22 As a precursor to expanding parks utility by encouraging other open space or green infrastructure uses, there should be a focus on opening-up open spaces without access; especially where land and space availability is most precious i.e. inner urban areas. It is these locations also where resources could be efficiently directed to investing in rejuvenating pocket parks and enhancing the local sense of pride and place.

5.23 *Playspaces:* Improvements have occurred in several places under the auspices of strategy in Planning for Play in Shepway, and there is not expected to be any major gaps in the network of provision. It identified a focus required on provision in rural and deprived areas, which as a general approach remains a relevant principle.

5.24 Qualitative standards are shown in this report to be still variable with issues remaining at places such as Hythe (Sir John Moore Avenue) and Sellindge (Swan Lane), and strategic needs for further development of fixed play areas and inclusive provision can be explored in these localities. Moreover the requirement for provision for teenagers should be addressed through focusing on deliverable opportunities to roll out Extended Play Areas in all the identified locations of Shepway where it has been found to be feasible.

APPENDIX 1: Quality ranking of Shepway's main parks



APPENDIX 2: Quality of Shepway's playspaces

Key (See para. 3.15 for background)

- Intermediate: gold
- Extended: orange.

Ranking below (from top left to bottom right) of columns reflects scores shown overleaf in bar chart left to right.

Highest

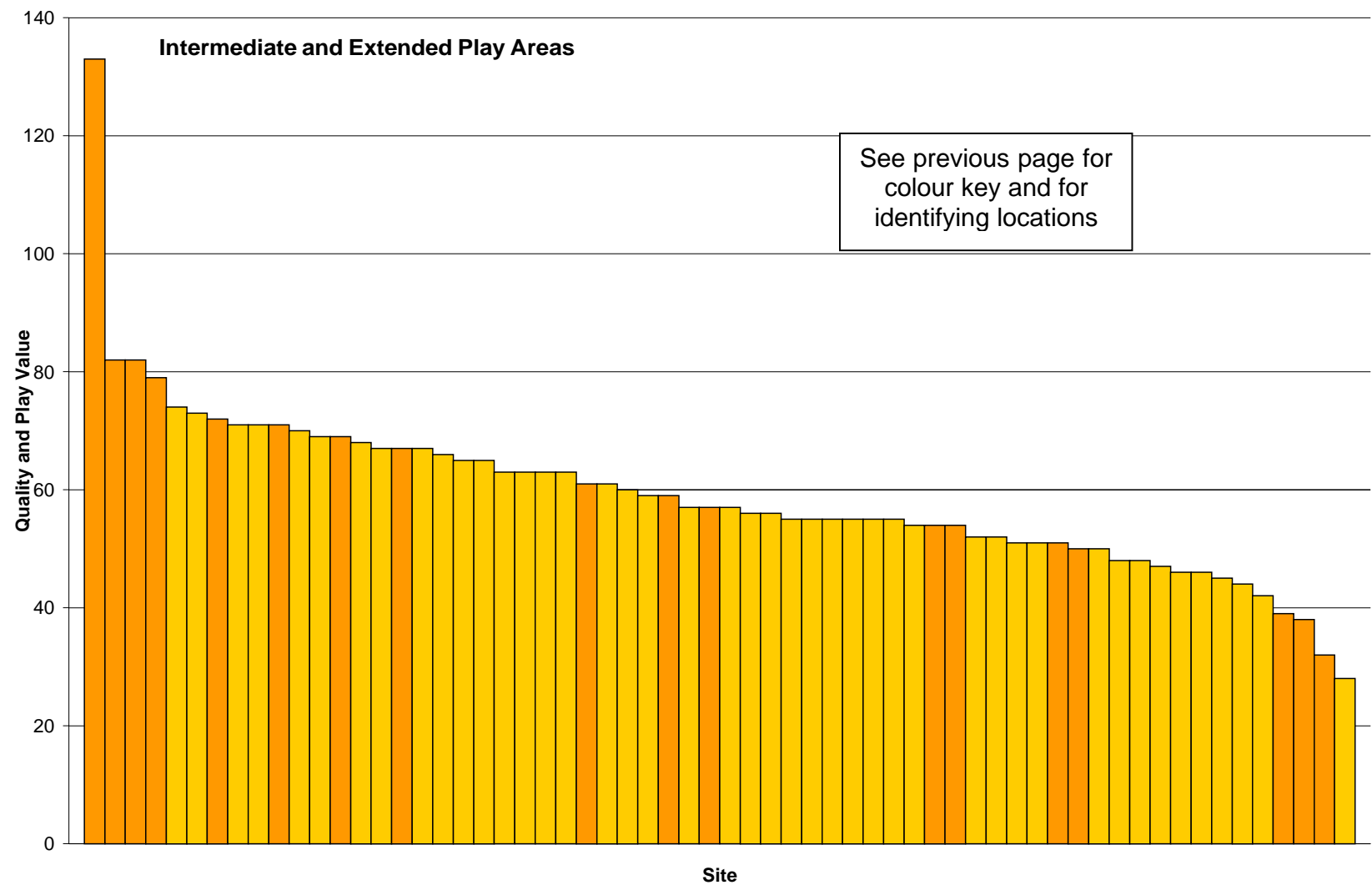
Coastal Park Adventure Playground
Stanley Road
Recreation Ground, Lympne
Fairfield Road Recreation Ground
Royal Military Canal, Seabrook
Manor Farm Close, Lympne
Grange Road Play Area
Elm Field Road, Old Romney
St Mary's Close, Etchinghill
The Rype, Lydd (Prior to UPGRADE)
Oaklands, Hythe
Harvest Way, Hawkinge
Newchurch Play Area
Jubilee Field, Lyminge
Upper Radnor Park
Kettle Drive, Hawkinge
Proctor Walk, Hawkinge
Fremantle Road
Oak Drive, St Marys Bay
Heron Forstal Play Area, Hawkinge
Lower Radnor Park
The Derings, Lydd

Mid

Station Road, adjacent clinic, New Romney
Oakham Drive, Lydd
Sandgate Recreation Ground
The Green, Lydd
The Greens, Grand Parade
Firs Lane
Ivychurch Road
Millfield
Brabner Close (Prior to UPGRADE)
Churchlands (Daglish Close)
Densole Way
Mount Pleasant, Lyminge
Roman Villa, East Cliff
Country's Field, Dymchurch
Lade Fort, Lydd on Sea
Shorncliffe (Cromwell Park Place)
Roman Way
The Street, Newington
Salthouse Close, Brookland
Canterbury Road Recreation Ground
The Green, Hythe
Turnpike Hill Play Area

Bufs Avenue
Morehall Recreation Ground
Pine Way
Tayne Field, Lyminge Enclosed
Moore Close, Brenzett
Horn Street
Rear of Meads Way St Mary's Bay
Reachfields
Jolly Fisherman Car Park MUGA
Seabourne Way
George Gurr Crescent
South Road Skate Park
Mackenzie Drive
Stombers Lane Play Area, Hawkinge
Dymchurch Rec. (Prior to UPGRADE)
Tayne Field, Lyminge Old (Prior to UPGRADE)
Swan Lane, Sellindge
Sir John Moore Avenue

Lowest



APPENDIX 3: Major improvements underway at Cheriton Road Sports ground, Folkestone

