

Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils

**West Suffolk**  
working together



WEST SUFFOLK  
INDOOR SPORTS FACILITY STRATEGY  
2015-2031

1<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY 2016  
VERSION 16



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY WEST SUFFOLK SPORTS PROVISION ASSESSMENT

- i. St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath District Councils working together as West Suffolk Council, are looking to develop a joint approach to strategic planning including the development of an overarching vision for sport and leisure provision across the two areas, which will help to meet two of their three priorities:
  1. **Priority 1: Increased opportunities for economic growth**
  2. **Priority 2: Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active**
- ii. To deliver its priorities West Suffolk wants to facilitate the creation of a network of community sport and leisure facilities with a strategic hub at the centre, managed by one Leisure Trust. The community network of facilities and partnerships will provide local opportunities to participate in sport and leisure activities for the broadest range of customer groups.
- iii. In order to deliver these priorities, West Suffolk has commissioned an Indoor Facilities Strategy and a Playing Pitch Strategy, which when considered alongside each other, will provide a comprehensive evaluation of sport and leisure facilities across West Suffolk.

### INDOOR FACILITIES STRATEGY

- iv. The aim of developing the Indoor Facilities Strategy assessment is to:
  - **Identify the nature and quantity of facilities required in West Suffolk, given there is recognition that the existing facility portfolio alone will not cope with demand from the existing and future local population having regard to the housing growth that is planned for the area.**
  - **Identify where opportunities exist in the West Suffolk area to develop this network of community facilities.**
  - **Inform which particular sports or facilities would best compliment the developments being considered in West Suffolk's main towns, given the projected population and housing growth.**
  - **Ensure that the current and future demand for sports and recreation facilities are planned for holistically and that the needs of the current and growing population of West Suffolk can be fully understood.**
  - **Take into consideration the contribution West Suffolk's sports facilities offer neighbouring authorities and the wider region in planning for the future**
  - **Provide an evidence base to support funding bids from National Sports bodies like Sport England, and support requests for contributions from Section 106 Planning Obligations or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).**
- v. The rationale for developing a sports facilities strategy is that:
  - **West Suffolk Councils wishes to understand both the needs of its indoor existing sports facility portfolio, and future need for provision, driven by increased population, and identification of gaps in the existing facility network.**

- **The rural nature of the area, with five main towns – Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Newmarket, Mildenhall and Brandon means that the geographical location of provision is crucial to facilitating and encouraging participation.**
  - **The development of this new West Suffolk Facilities Assessment will enable West Suffolk Councils to shape its core sports facilities offer; both its direct provision and that undertaken with partners in the education, voluntary, community and private sectors.**
  - **At a strategic level the strategy will underpin the contribution that sport makes to the West Suffolk Strategic Plan and priority objectives. It will also help provide a rationale to enable National Governing Bodies to further invest and deliver their working outcomes as outlined in their Whole Sport Plans.**
- vi. The supporting document will act as an evidence base to guide and inform future investment and partnerships, develop local planning policies to future proof and increase participation opportunities to 2031.

### ST EDMUNDSBURY DISTRICT

- vii. Overall, St Edmundsbury has a very good range of existing sport and leisure facilities across the area; however, some are now ageing, and will require investment and/or replacement. This is particularly true, in the medium term, of Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre and Haverhill Leisure Centre.
- viii. The simplistic analysis of “supply versus demand” in relation to sports halls within St Edmundsbury has identified an over-supply of sports hall space, based on both current and future demand. This assumes retention of all existing community accessible facilities and development of a new 4 court sports hall at Moreton Hall School in St Edmundsbury.
- ix. In St Edmundsbury there is also sufficient swimming pool, and fitness provision to meet current and future demand.
- x. Whilst there are some facilities on education sites, which are not available for community use, these are in the minority. Proposals for new schools will incorporate formal community use arrangements for use of sports facilities.
- xi. St Edmundsbury’s population will grow significantly over the next few years, particularly in and around the main urban areas, due to the growth sites identified in the local plan (Vision 2031 documents), so there is a need to ensure sufficient provision of accessible, quality and affordable facilities to meet local need.
- xii. There is a range of facility providers in West Suffolk, and it is important that St Edmundsbury Council continues to work with these to develop and deliver facility provision, given that the Council can no longer be the provider and funder of last resort, instead adopting more of an enabling and facilitating role.

**Table A: Summary of Facility Needs in West Suffolk**

<b>FACILITY TYPE</b>	<b>FACILITY NEEDS/PRIORITIES</b>
<b>SPORTS HALLS</b>	<p>Badminton, volleyball, basketball and netball NGBs support the need for additional sports hall capacity in St Edmundsbury.</p> <p>Although there is sufficient current and future provision of sports halls in St Edmundsbury, there is a lack of sports halls capable of accommodating indoor netball, basketball, and volleyball. There is only one 8 badminton sized sports hall in St Edmundsbury (Samuel Ward and that has a tarmac floor), and only one 6 court hall (Culford Sports and Tennis Centre).</p> <p>Improvement in the quality of some ageing facilities, in the medium term, Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill Leisure Centres.</p>
<b>SWIMMING POOLS</b>	<p>There is sufficient provision to meet both current and future swimming needs in St Edmundsbury.</p> <p>There is a need to start planning now for investment in existing pool facilities, all of which are ageing. i.e. Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre and Haverhill Leisure Centre.</p>
<b>SQUASH COURTS</b>	<p>Existing squash courts should be retained where possible, to ensure public access is retained in St Edmundsbury.</p> <p>If any new facilities are developed, consideration should be given to provision of squash courts; two adjacent courts are needed to facilitate development of participation and club development.</p>
<b>CYCLING FACILITY</b>	<p>Off road track, approx. ¾ mile, closed track.</p>
<b>ARCHERY</b>	<p>Dedicated facility to facilitate increased participation by those with a disability.</p>
<b>INFORMAL FACILITIES</b>	<p>Cycling and walking routes; safe cycling routes</p>



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### RECOMMENDATION 1 (SER1)

St Edmundsbury Council will need to consider the future nature and level of provision of sports halls and swimming pools in Bury St Edmunds, given the age of the existing facility.

### RECOMMENDATION 2 (SER2)

St Edmundsbury Council will need to consider the future provision of sports halls and swimming pools in Haverhill, given the age of the existing facility.

### RECOMMENDATION 3 (SER3)

St Edmundsbury Council explore opportunities to work in partnership to enable the development of an 8 court sports hall.

### RECOMMENDATION 4 (SER4)

St Edmundsbury Council works with:

- Existing indoor bowling clubs to monitor participation increases and the need for new provision in the future, aligned to population growth in and around Bury St Edmunds.

### RECOMMENDATION 5 (R5)

St Edmundsbury Borough Council works with British Cycling and local cycling clubs to develop an off road cycle track (minimum 1.5km).

### RECOMMENDATION 6 (R6)

St Borough Edmundsbury Council works with Local groups for the retention, or replacement of existing squash courts in future facility development.

### RECOMMENDATION 7 (R7)

St Edmundsbury Borough Council works with St Edmunds Archers to review in detail the proposals for the development of a facility providing for archers with a disability in Bury St Edmunds.

### RECOMMENDATION 8 (R8)

St Edmundsbury Borough Council works closely with Suffolk County Council, and local secondary schools to review and explore the options for re-development of ageing pools and sports halls on an ongoing basis.

### RECOMMENDATION 9 (R9)

St Edmundsbury Borough Council works closely with Suffolk County Council, existing, and all new secondary schools to encourage the development of formal community use agreements for on-site sports facilities.

### RECOMMENDATION 10 (R10)

St Edmundsbury Borough Council works with Town and Parish councils to agree the strategic facilities where investment in informal space for use for fitness stations, and sports hall activities should be prioritised.

### RECOMMENDATION 11 (R11)

St Edmundsbury Borough Council uses the West Suffolk Facilities Assessment as an evidence base to secure S106/CIL contributions to future investment in open space, sport and leisure provision in the Borough.

**RECOMMENDATION 12 (R12)**

**St Edmundsbury Borough Council uses the West Suffolk Facilities Assessment as an evidence base to secure S106/CIL contributions in all new housing developments for the development of walking and cycling routes in the Borough.**

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## FOREST HEATH DISTRICT

- xiii. Although Forest Heath has a good range of facilities across the District, there are some poor quality and ageing facilities, particularly the Mildenhall Dome and Mildenhall Swimming Pool, and Brandon Leisure Centre.
- xiv. The simplistic analysis of “supply versus demand” in relation to sports halls within West Suffolk has identified an under supply in Forest Heath, based on both current and future demand. This assumes retention of all existing community accessible facilities, closure of the Mildenhall Dome and opening of the new Mildenhall Hub in Forest Heath. Sports halls in Forest Heath district are currently full in peak periods.
- xv. There is also insufficient capacity in the existing pools to accommodate future increased participation and population growth, having regard to the housing growth that is anticipated for the area, and an under-supply of fitness facilities.
- xvi. The options for future provision of facilities now need to be considered. The operation of the Mildenhall Dome, and specifically the condition of Mildenhall Swimming Pool need to be considered urgently; the proposed Mildenhall Hub development offers a critical opportunity to re-provide high quality new sports facilities (swimming pool, sports hall and fitness suite) in the town, and to address the current under-supply. Based on the assessment of need undertaken, and the analysis of all relevant factors the minimum facility mix should include:
- **6 lane x 25m pool**
  - **4 badminton court sports hall**
  - **71 Station fitness suite**
  - **Multi-purpose studio space (ideally 2)**
  - **Squash courts**
- xvii. The future provision of Brandon Leisure Centre also needs to be considered in the context of the possible demographic changes that may result from the anticipated changes at RAF Mildenhall and RAF Lakenheath over the next 5-10 years, the scale of the Mildenhall Hub development and the over supply of provision in that specific area.
- xviii. The anticipated population growth in Forest Heath to 2031 needs to be appropriately catered for in terms of demand for sports facilities – both formal facilities and informal, multi-purpose spaces. In Forest Heath this means better geographical distribution of facilities to enable more people to access facilities in the urban area by walking, and/or cycling. It also means better quality facilities, given the age and condition of existing Forest Heath provision.
- xix. In Forest Heath, addressing the needs of a growing population means both better quality provisions, but also additional facilities, to meet both current and future needs for participation.

**Table B: Summary of Facility Needs in Forest Heath**

<b>FACILITY TYPE</b>	<b>FACILITY NEEDS/PRIORITIES</b>
<b>SPORTS HALLS</b>	<p>Badminton, volleyball, basketball and netball NGBs support the need for additional sports hall capacity in West Suffolk.</p> <p>There is a lack of sports halls capable of accommodating indoor netball, basketball, and volleyball in West Suffolk. There is only one 8 badminton sized sports hall in West Suffolk, and only two 6 court halls.</p> <p>Improvement in the quality of some ageing facilities, the priorities are Mildenhall Dome, and Brandon Leisure Centre, The Mildenhall Hub development offers the opportunity to replace Mildenhall Dome.</p>
<b>SWIMMING POOLS</b>	<p>There is a current and future under-supply of swimming pool provision in Forest Heath.</p> <p>The ASA has identified the need for increased swimming pool provision in Forest Heath. In addition, there is a need to start planning now for investment in existing pool facilities, all of which are ageing.</p> <p>The priority for significant investment is Mildenhall Swimming Pool. This should be replaced; the development opportunity to achieve this is the Mildenhall Hub.</p>
<b>HEALTH AND FITNESS FACILITIES</b>	Additional 126 fitness stations by 2031
<b>GYMNASTICS FACILITIES</b>	Increased access to dedicated facilities for club use; significant potential for a dedicated hall in Newmarket.
<b>SQUASH COURTS</b>	<p>Existing squash courts should be retained where possible, to ensure public access is retained in Forest Heath.</p> <p>If any new facilities are developed, consideration should be given to provision of squash courts; two adjacent courts are needed to facilitate development of participation and club development.</p>
<b>INFORMAL FACILITIES</b>	Cycling and walking routes; safe cycling routes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### RECOMMENDATION 1 (FHR1)

Forest Heath District Council proceeds with the development of the Mildenhall Hub, but reviews the facility mix and scale of provision to reflect the need for a larger sports hall, and potentially additional swimming pool provision, plus additional fitness stations. Provision of replacement squash courts could also be considered.

### RECOMMENDATION 2 (FHR2)

Forest Heath District Council confirms the closure of the Mildenhall Pool facility once the new Mildenhall Hub is open for use.

### RECOMMENDATION 3 (R3)

Forest Heath District Council and Abbeycroft Leisure work in partnership to maximise the use of Brandon Leisure Centre.

### RECOMMENDATION 4 (R4)

Forest Heath District Council works with local gymnastics clubs to increase access to purpose-built gymnastics provision.

### RECOMMENDATION 5 (R5)

Forest Heath District Council considers the retention, or replacement of existing squash courts, where possible, in future facility development.

### RECOMMENDATION 6 (R6)

Forest Heath District Council seeks to work closely with Suffolk County Council, and local secondary schools to review and explore the options for re-development of ageing pools and sports halls on an on-going basis.

### RECOMMENDATION 7 (R7)

Forest Heath District Council works with Suffolk County Council, existing, and all new secondary schools to develop formal community use agreements for on-site sports facilities.

### RECOMMENDATION 8 (R8)

Forest Heath District Council works with town and parish councils to agree the strategic facilities where investment in informal space for use for fitness stations, and sports hall activities should be prioritised.

### RECOMMENDATION 9 (R9)

Forest Heath District Council uses the West Suffolk Facilities Assessment as an evidence base to secure S106/CIL contributions to future investment in open space, sport and leisure provision in the District.

### RECOMMENDATION 10 (R10)

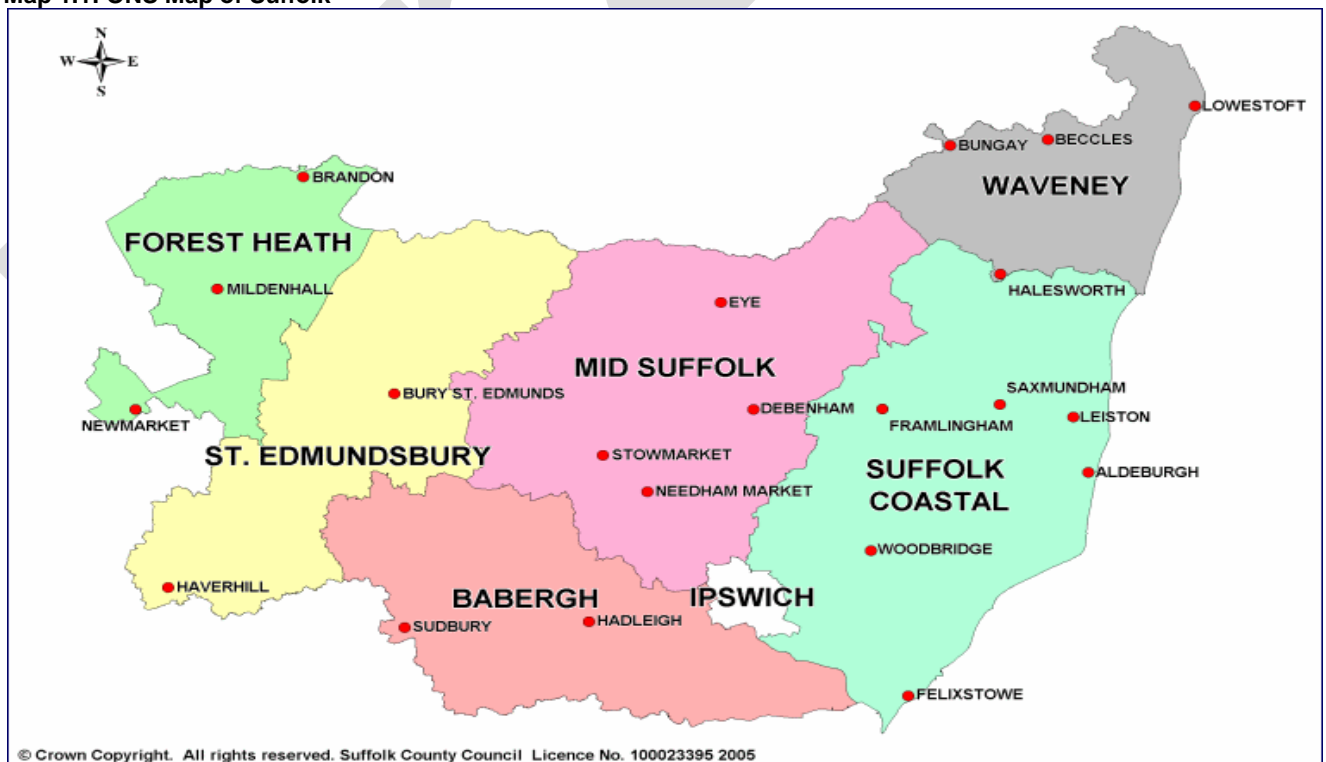
Forest Heath District Council uses the Strategy evidence base to secure S106/CIL contributions in all new housing developments for the development of walking and cycling routes in the District.

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

### INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council have merged their staffing structure and delivery of services to form West Suffolk Councils (WSC). As described on the WSC website (August 2015), these are two predominantly rural districts in the heart of East Anglia, well-connected with London, the rest of East Anglia and the Midlands. West Suffolk is a safe and comparatively prosperous place in which to live, with some beautiful and accessible countryside areas, including grassland, heath and forest.
- 1.2 Forest Heath has three main market towns, Newmarket, Mildenhall and Brandon. Bury St Edmunds has two: Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill.
- 1.3 Bury St Edmunds, the largest settlement in West Suffolk, has been a prosperous town for centuries, with people drawn to its market and Georgian architecture, shops, leisure and cultural facilities.
- 1.4 Newmarket is known as the 'home of horseracing'. It has more racehorses, trainers, stable staff, stud farms and racing organisations in and around the town than anywhere else in the world, with racing accounting for a significant number of local jobs.
- 1.5 Haverhill, Mildenhall and Brandon expanded significantly in the 1970s due to the construction of new housing to accommodate families moving as part of the Greater London Council's expansion programme.
- 1.6 Map 1.1 below shows the two areas of St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath, which comprise West Suffolk, and their relationship to the rest of the County.

Map 1.1: ONS Map of Suffolk



## BACKGROUND CONTEXT

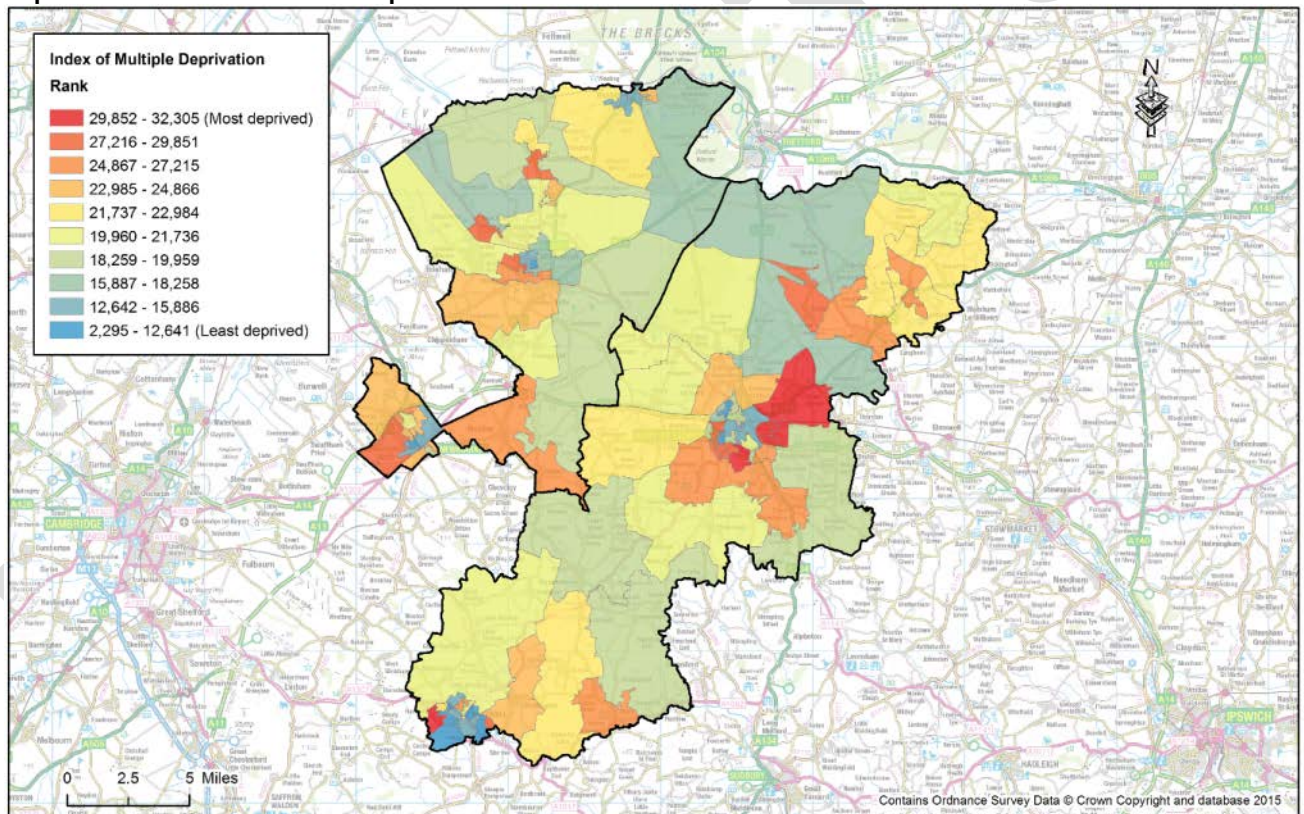
1.7 Significant population growth is anticipated in West Suffolk over the next few years; as a consequence of this, the two councils wish to see a long term i.e. 2015-2031 Strategy for the future provision and delivery of indoor sports facilities across the two local authority areas.

- It is anticipated that the majority of the population, and therefore residential development, growth will be in and around the main towns.
- St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath areas rank respectively 29 and 30 out of the 56 council areas in Suffolk, in terms of deprivation.

(Source: Sport England Local Sport Profiles March 2014)

- In general, neither area is particularly deprived, although there are specific, severe local areas of deprivation (See Map 2 overleaf). The issue of rural deprivation is however a challenge across the West Suffolk area, related to particular factors such as employment, accessibility and transport. The impact on employment of the US Airforce moving out could be significant.

Map 1.2: West Suffolk Areas of Deprivation



Index of Multiple Deprivation



1.8 The West Suffolk communities also have significant health challenges, with growing obesity, low levels of regular participation in physical activity (Active People Survey 9 (APS9) 2014/15 St Edmundsbury 29.4%, and Forest Heath 34.9%). In St Edmundsbury over two-thirds of the population are not active enough to have a positive impact on individual health and this is only slightly lower in Forest Heath.

1.9 Obesity levels in the two areas are high with two-thirds of adults in both areas, and a fifth of children (Forest Heath) categorised as obese, (St Edmundsbury adults 66% and children 12.9%; Forest Heath adults 65.1% and children 20.6%). This compares with the East of England averages of 65.1% (adults) and 17.2% (children), and England averages of 63.8% (adults) and 19.2% (children).

(Source: Sport England Local Sport Profiles August 2014)

1.10 There is high dependence on private transport across the area, given that public transport is limited, and there is a need to travel to the main urban centres for education, retail opportunities and employment.

1.11 A number of further factors inform the need for the development of this strategy:

- **Existing facilities range in age and condition**
- **Existing facilities are, in the main, located in and around the main towns,**
- **Some existing facilities are only wetside or dryside facilities e.g. Mildenhall Swimming Pool, Brandon Leisure Centre**
- **The existing facilities have been added to over the years, and are likely to need further investment in the medium term**
- **Accessibility to facilities, particularly from, and within, the more rural areas, where the population is older**
- **The role of other providers – particularly education given the rationalisation of Middle Schools**
- **The long term potential of the Airforce sites if the US Airforce leave the area (in early 2015 the US Airforce announced it is pulling out of Mildenhall, but retaining its operational base at Lakenheath)**
- **The potential impact of relocating the majority of the Forest Heath Council services, and the development potential of the former Council offices site**
- **The aspiration to develop a central HUB facility**

## **STRATEGY SCOPE**

1.12 Based on the brief, the project scope includes:

- **Sports halls**
- **Swimming/leisure pools**
- **Health and Fitness Facilities, including dance studios**
- **Stadia/Athletics venues**
- **Key sports specific indoor facilities for example netball / tennis / bowls / gymnastics / martial arts / boxing**



1.13 The key sports covered by the Strategy include:

- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Swimming (all disciplines)
- Squash
- Tennis
- Table Tennis
- Boxing
- Badminton
- Cricket
- Health and Fitness (Fitness suites and dance studios)
- Bowls
- Gymnastics / trampolining
- Martial Arts

1.14 The strategy assesses and identifies the provision of all strategic scale indoor and outdoor sports and recreation facilities i.e. facilities with 3 courts sports halls, 20m pools, full size artificial grass pitches or larger.

1.15 The Strategy focusses on key providers such as:

- Local Authority,
- Education, (school based, further and Higher Education),
- Voluntary and private sectors.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.16 The detailed requirements of each element of the study are set out below; the main stages are:

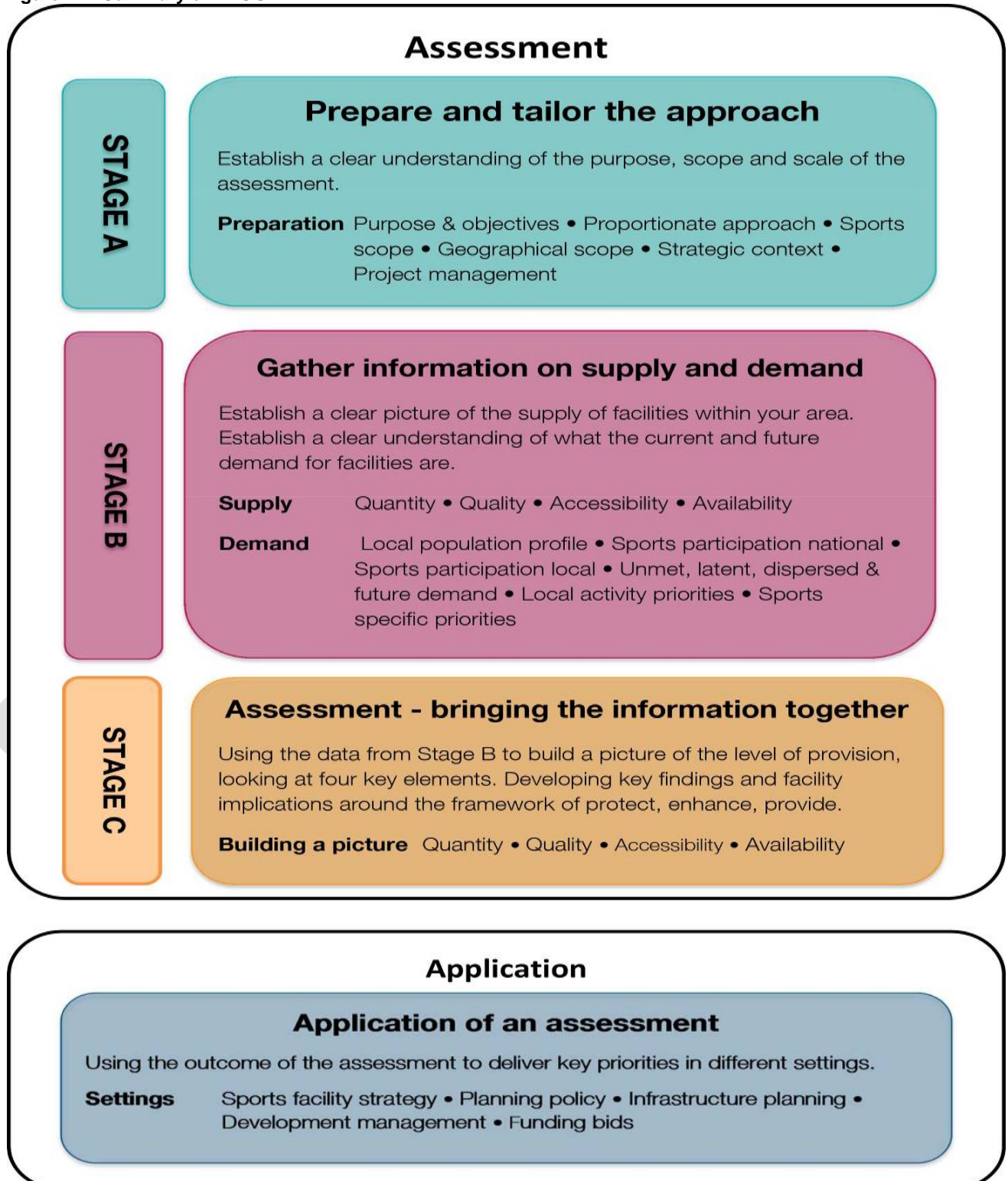
- **Audit of existing strategic scale sports and recreation facilities using existing data such as creating an active Suffolk – Suffolk’s County Sports Facilities Strategy 2009-2016.**
- **Survey and analysis of demand and need for sports and recreation facilities across West Suffolk, including projections for future years growth in population supplied by St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council.**
- **Analysis of potential surpluses and deficiencies in sports and recreation assets in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility in comparison to national data sets where relevant**
- **Review of existing national, strategic and local policies for sport and recreation to understand what this may mean for the delivery of services/outcomes in St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council.**
- **Identifying a suitable mechanism for setting targets to deliver sports and recreation across West Suffolk (can be based on locally derived quantity, quality and accessibility standards or other appropriate mechanism to be proposed by consultant).**
- **Recommendations for how shortfalls and future needs should be addressed and where new facilities should be located. The document should forecast future needs projections based on population and participation growth. Guidance should also be provided on the cost of provision, how this can be implemented and how investment can be secured including but not only through the planning obligations / CIL system. This is needed to ensure that the project methodology is robust and policy in the Local Plans accords with national planning guidance.**

## STRATEGY STRUCTURE

1.17 The Strategy has been developed using the Sport England Assessing Needs and Opportunities guidance (ANOG), published in 2014.

1.18 The Strategy structure has been developed to reflect the ANOG Guidance. The structure is detailed in the Contents section, and reflects the following ANOG stages, as set out in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1.1: Summary of ANOG



## 2. STRATEGIC POLICY AND CONTEXT

### INTRODUCTION

2.1. The policy context for this Strategy is summarised in the appendices and below.

### NATIONAL LEVEL

2.2. The national policy context is summarised in Appendix 1, National Level.

### LOCAL LEVEL

2.3. A number of current strategic policies, strategies and factors influence current and future supply and demand for sport and recreation facilities in West Suffolk. It is important to be aware that if current initial proposals for devolution in Suffolk progress, there are implications for some of these, if the existing shared agenda, funding and partnership arrangements/agreements change.

2.4. These include:

1. **Forest Heath Local Plan**
2. **St Edmundsbury Local Plan**
3. **Suffolk Community Strategy**
4. **West Suffolk Council Strategic Plan**
5. **Suffolk Health and Well-Being Strategy**
6. **Creating an Active Suffolk – Suffolk County Sports Facilities Strategy 2009 – 2016**
7. **Suffolk the most Active County**
8. **Population Profiles and Projections (summarised in Table 2.1)**
9. **Participation Trends and Rates**

### WEST SUFFOLK LOCAL PLANS

2.5. The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) was revoked in 2013, but the housing numbers for West Suffolk which it sets out, are justified, and have been reflected in the development of the Local Plans.

### ST EDMUNDSBURY LOCAL PLAN

2.6. The St Edmundsbury Local Plan sets the long term planning and land use policies within the Borough. The Local Plan includes documents previously referred to as the Local Development Framework (LDF).

2.7. The Local Plan comprises:

- **Core Strategy:** adopted on 14 December 2010, this sets out the vision, objectives, spatial strategy and overarching policies for the provision of new development in the Borough up to 2031.
  - The town will grow by at least 6360 new homes between 2009 and 2031 (now 5740 between 2012 and 2031).
  - Most new housing will be located in five strategic areas of growth located around the town.
- **Vision 2031:** this consists of three Local Plans: Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031, Haverhill Vision 2031 and Rural Vision 2031, which were adopted on 23 September 2014 and identify where growth will be allowed and what local everyday services people will need to enjoy a good quality of life.
- **St Edmundsbury Policies map:** showing the areas where the policies of the adopted Core Strategy, Vision 2031 and joint development management policies local plan documents will apply.
- **Joint Development Management Policies Document:** adopted on 27 February 2015 by Forest Heath District Council and on 24 February 2015 by St Edmundsbury Borough Council. It contains policies that form an important tool for the day to day determination of planning application in both St Edmundsbury Borough and Forest Heath District.

## VISION 2031

- 2.8. Vision 2031 comprises three documents, Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031, Haverhill Vision 2031 and Rural Vision 2031.
- 2.9. Bury St Edmunds is an ancient market town and much of its attraction lies with its historic buildings and abbey ruins, surrounded by the Abbey Gardens. The town is the main cultural and retail centre for West Suffolk.
- 2.10. The leisure centre was refurbished in 2005 and an athletics arena lies beside it that provides a high class facility for regional and national competition. The town's central location in the region means that it is well positioned to host regionally significant cultural destinations, sporting facilities and events.
- 2.11. There is an equally wide range of leisure providers. Some facilities are both owned and managed by St Edmundsbury Borough Council, which has made a huge investment in leisure and cultural facilities in recent years. Some sporting facilities, owned by the council, are managed by a trust (Abbeycroft Leisure) while the private and charitable sector offers many leisure facilities too, such as private fitness clubs, sports grounds, restaurants and accommodation.

## BURY ST EDMUNDS IN 2031

2.12. To achieve people's aspirations, in 2031 Bury St Edmunds will be a place which:

- **Has met people's need for new housing; respects its nationally important heritage; is a sub-regional centre for West Suffolk; has reduced out-commuting;**
- **Has seen an increased shift to non-car modes of travel;**
- **Retains skills and talents within the town;**
- **Has a modern health campus;**

- **Has maintained environmental capacity and placed a priority on respecting the identity of surrounding villages;**
- **Has enhanced and new green infrastructure;**
- **Has high quality streets;**
- **Has good access links connecting people with the town centre and other local and regional destinations; and**
- **Has a diverse, vibrant economy with increased jobs and prosperity.**

### KEY CHALLENGES FOR BURY ST EDMUNDS

2.13. Vision 2031 identifies ten different themes, which are closely interlinked and their aspirations taken together add up to a vision for the town.

2.14. Those specifically relevant for future provision of sports facilities are:

- **Dual use of schools:** Maximising the use of facilities is a recurrent theme in this document as it is far more cost-effective to open school facilities to community use than to build new community facilities. The use of these facilities after school hours, at weekends and during holidays will need to be explored.
- **Community facilities:** Several of the themes stress the importance of community facilities not just as places where local people can meet but also as potential hubs for delivering services in the community, as locations for leisure activities and as bases for community and voluntary groups. Community facilities can be spaces as well as buildings and do not have to be purpose-built or solely dedicated to community use.

2.15. In 2031, Bury St Edmunds will be a place where:

### ASPIRATION 15 A WIDE RANGE OF TOP QUALITY CULTURAL AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES ARE OFFERED TO RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

2.16. The actions to achieve this aspiration are:

- **Work in partnership with the private and voluntary sector to identify opportunities to maximise the use of, and safeguard, existing cultural and leisure facilities including open space and sports facilities;**
- **Maximise the use of libraries, schools and other public sector facilities as important contributors to strong, vibrant and healthy communities;**
- **Build new cultural and leisure facilities in areas of population growth;**
- **Integrate new cultural and leisure facilities with new school and community provision; and**
- **Work with other public services to deliver an inclusive service and support the ambitions of the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Strategy.**

## **ASPIRATION 16: MORE PEOPLE ACCESS CULTURAL AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES.**

2.17. The actions to achieve this aspiration are:

- **Promote active cultural and leisure participation as a way of achieving good health;**
- **Work together with partners and stakeholders to provide or promote services that better help to reduce anti-social behaviour;**
- **Deliver cultural and leisure facilities and an events programme that promotes tourism and maximises the local economic impact;**
- **Promote leisure activity that enables access to, but safeguards, the diverse range of habitats/environments; and**
- **Encourage space to be made available for children to play safely and creatively.**

## **HAVERHILL VISION 2031**

2.18. The Core Strategy has already determined the following strategic policies for Haverhill:

- **The town will grow by at least 4,260 new homes between 2009 and 2031.**
- **Most new housing will be located to the north-west and north-east of the town.**

2.19. Haverhill's position gives it a big advantage. It lies on the A1307, less than 20 miles from Cambridge. It is close to the M11 corridor, near Stansted Airport and on the cusp of three counties: Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Essex. It is in the borough of St Edmundsbury in West Suffolk but it has strong economic links to Cambridge and a large proportion of residents commute to work in Cambridgeshire and Essex.

2.20. Haverhill is surrounded by attractive countryside and has some good parks. The town has changed a great deal – and is still changing. Haverhill's market town origins can still be seen, but it evolved to become a manufacturing centre, principally for textiles, in the Victorian period. Much of the development that took place during this period survives today and forms the basis for two town centre Conservation Areas. In the 1960s Haverhill was part of the Greater London Council's town expansion scheme and grew rapidly. In the past 20 years, it has experienced an economic renaissance, helped by its proximity to Cambridge and the population increased by just under 23% between 2001 and 2011.

2.21. As a result, the town's social and economic profile has changed and it has become more prosperous. Haverhill's population is now estimated to be 27,041 and it is the fourth largest town in Suffolk, after Ipswich, Lowestoft, and Bury St Edmunds. It is the second largest town in St Edmundsbury, but its profile differs markedly from that of the rest of the borough. The population structure of Haverhill is much younger, largely as a result of people coming from London during the expansion scheme.

2.22. To achieve people's aspirations, in 2031 Haverhill will be a town that has:

- **Met people's need for new housing;**
- **An attractive retail, leisure and employment offer;**
- **A high quality town centre environment;**
- **Well-connected new development integrated into the town;**

- **Protected the identity and integrity of surrounding villages and hamlets;**
- **A diverse employment base with strong links to Cambridge and Stansted;**
- **Sustainable transport links; and**
- **Seen an increased shift to non-car modes of travel.**

### COMMUNITY FACILITIES

2.23. Several of the themes stress the importance of community facilities not just as places where local people can meet but also as potential hubs for delivering services in the community, as locations for leisure activities and as bases for community and voluntary groups.

#### ASPIRATION 15: A WIDE RANGE OF TOP QUALITY CULTURAL AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES ARE OFFERED TO RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

The actions to achieve this aspiration are:

- **Work in partnership with the private and voluntary sector to maximise the use of and safeguard existing cultural and leisure facilities including open space and sports facilities.**
- **Maximise the use of libraries, schools and other public sector facilities as important contributors to strong, vibrant and healthy communities.**
- **Secure new cultural and leisure facilities in areas of population growth.**
- **Integrate new cultural and leisure facilities with new school and community provision.**
- **Work with other public services to deliver an inclusive service and support the ambitions of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Suffolk.**

#### ASPIRATION 16: MORE PEOPLE ACCESS CULTURAL AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES

2.24. The actions to achieve this aspiration are:

- **Promote active cultural and leisure participation as a way of achieving good health.**
- **Work together with partners and stakeholders to provide or promote services that better help to reduce anti-social behaviour issues.**
- **Deliver cultural and leisure facilities and an events programme that increases visits to the town and maximises the local economic impact.**
- **Promote leisure activity that enables access to, but safeguards, the diverse range of habitats/environments.**
- **Encourage space to be made available for children to play safely.**

### RURAL AREAS VISION 2031

2.25. The Core Strategy identifies a long term strategy for the rural areas and that 1600 new homes are needed in the rural areas by 2031.

- 2.26. The rural areas provide opportunities for outdoor activities which can provide health benefits and improve quality of life.
- 2.27. Many people choose to live in the rural areas for the peace and quiet it brings; however, young people can find it difficult to take part in out-of-school activity and may feel isolated. Elderly people may also find it difficult to reach services just when they need higher levels of medical care.
- 2.28. Deprivation in Rural Suffolk (Deprivation in Rural Suffolk Report, OCSI, 2008) identified part of Barningham and Ampton and Timworth as being among the 10% most deprived areas in Suffolk. Nowhere in St Edmundsbury is categorised as being within the most deprived areas of England (Index of Multiple Deprivation (2007), as discussed in St Edmundsbury: District Profile, SCC (April 2010)).
- 2.29. The rural population is generally older than the urban population. They may also live in older houses that are difficult and expensive to heat.
- 2.30. Generally the quality of the rural environment is good, but traffic emissions are the main source of pollution.
- 2.31. In 2031, rural St Edmundsbury will be a place where:

**ASPIRATION 2: EVERY VILLAGE HAS A REAL SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY**

- 2.32. The actions to achieve this aspiration are to encourage:

- **The multi-purpose use of public sector and other buildings used by the community.**
- **The effectiveness of rural community hubs through grants and support.**
- **Work with voluntary and community sector organisations to enable and support local communities.**

**ASPIRATION 19: A WIDE RANGE OF TOP QUALITY CULTURAL AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE TO RESIDENTS AND VISITORS**

- 2.33. The key challenge in the rural areas is offering an appropriate range of leisure activities to scattered rural communities, where there are not enough people to justify building or maintaining large leisure facilities such as sports centres.

- 2.34. The actions to achieve the aspiration are:

- **Help rural communities apply for grants from other organisations towards leisure facilities and activities.**
- **Ensure better multi-use of current leisure facilities, for example schools and libraries, so that they can be easily used by the community. There is a particular opportunity for this through the moving from a three-tier to a two- tier education system and the facilitation of the redundant facilities for community use wherever possible (See Policy RV8).**
- **Work with partners and stakeholders to understand rural opportunities and to develop a range of cultural and leisure services that help to deliver strong, vibrant and healthy communities.**
- **Work with partners to safeguard existing leisure and cultural facilities and ensure new facilities, where required, are provided in appropriate locations.**



## ASPIRATION 20: MORE PEOPLE ACCESS CULTURAL AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES

2.35. More people access cultural and leisure opportunities.

2.36. The actions to achieve the aspiration are:

- **Promote active cultural and leisure participation as a way of achieving good health.**
- **Encourage, train and work alongside local groups in environmental stewardship.**
- **Work with villages and accommodation providers to identify and promote their tourism potential.**
- **Deliver cultural and leisure facilities and an events programme that promotes tourism and maximises the local economic impact.**
- **Promote leisure activity that enhances access to, but safeguards, the diverse range of habitats/environments.**
- **Encourage space to be made available for children to play safely.**
- **Work to improve access to leisure facilities in larger population centres.**

## ASPIRATION 21: DIFFERENT ORGANISATIONS ACROSS THE PUBLIC, PRIVATE AND VOLUNTARY SECTORS WORK IN PARTNERSHIP TO OFFER HIGH QUALITY CULTURAL AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES OFFERING THE BEST POSSIBLE VALUE FOR MONEY

2.37. It is particularly relevant, to promote wide access and to look at ways of providing cultural and leisure activities in the most cost-effective and efficient way.

2.38. The actions to achieve the aspiration are:

- **Work together with partners and stakeholders to understand rural opportunities and to develop innovative ways of providing leisure and cultural activities.**
- **Encourage sports clubs to enable people of all ages to keep active.**

## FOREST HEATH LOCAL PLAN

2.39. The Forest Heath Local Plan sets out the long term planning and land use policies for the District. The Local Plan includes documents previously referred to as the Local Development Framework (LDF). It comprises:

- **Core Strategy:** adopted on the 12 May 2010, this provides the overall vision for Forest Heath up to 2026 (with housing projections up to 2031)
- **Joint Development Management Policies Document:** this was adopted on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2015 by Forest Heath District Council and on 24<sup>th</sup> February by St Edmundsbury Borough Council. It contains policies that form an important tool for the day to day determination of planning applications in St Edmundsbury Borough and Forest Heath District.
- **Saved policies:** are policies from the Forest Heath Local Plan of 1995 which remain in force until superseded by the adoption of new plans

- **Forest Heath** local plan policies map February 2015: showing the areas where different policies apply.

### NEWMARKET VISION 2031

- 2.40. The key priority relating to future provision of leisure facilities in the town is the vision of schools as community hubs, with community access to on-site facilities.
- 2.41. It is important to highlight that the Core Strategy for both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath highlights the priority to be placed on future provision of walking and cycling networks and facilities (active travel) wherever possible across the area, and particularly in urban areas.

### SUFFOLK COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2008-2018

- 2.42. The Suffolk Strategic Partnership has developed 'Transforming Suffolk, Suffolk's Community Strategy 2008 to 2028'. This strategy will deliver improvements to the quality of life in Suffolk, for its people and for communities.
- 2.43. The overall ambition for the strategy is:

***'By 2028 we want Suffolk to be recognised for its outstanding environment and quality of life for all; a place where everyone can realise their potential, benefit from and contribute to Suffolk's economic prosperity, and be actively involved in their community.'***

### WEST SUFFOLK STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2016

- 2.44. West Suffolk's Strategic Plan 2014-2016 sets out what both councils aim to achieve together, with partners, local businesses, communities and residents. West Suffolk priorities are:
- **Increased opportunities for economic growth**
  - **Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active**
  - **Homes for our communities**

- 2.45. The delivery of the vision and priorities in the West Suffolk Strategic Plan is supported by the Medium term financial strategy 2014-16.

### SUFFOLK HEALTH AND WELL-BEING STRATEGY

- 2.46. The Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board aims to improve health and decrease inequalities, to ensure that those in Suffolk live long, fulfilling and healthy lives and to see a narrowing of the health inequalities between our affluent and poorer areas.
- 2.47. The Board agreed four strategic outcomes for the Joint Health and Well-Being Strategy 2012-2022, based on information from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The four priorities are:
- **Every child in Suffolk has the best start in life**
  - **Suffolk residents have access to a healthy environment and take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing**

- **Older people in Suffolk have a good quality of life**
- **People in Suffolk have the opportunity to improve their mental health and wellbeing**

2.48. Public Health Suffolk, in line with national objectives Public Health England, Everybody Active Every Day 2014, aims to keep people in the county as healthy as possible, for as long as possible. The important role and contribution of sport and physical activity to achieving these outcomes is therefore recognised. Supporting initiatives targeted at those who are inactive is critical to achieve maximum health impact, just as is changing behaviours and lifestyles to incorporate physical activity as part of daily life from an early age. Public health is targeting interventions across specific cohorts (pre-pregnancy, 0-2, 2-5, 5-11, 11-16, and 16-18), to raise awareness of the need to increase levels of physical activity for health benefits. It also advocates the benefits of increased physical activity in relation to mental health.

2.49. Suffolk Public Health outcomes can also be contributed to through the planning framework; the creation of environments, (suitable for all age groups), which encourage physical activity eg walking and cycling routes, as set out in the Vision 31 statements, and in the existing Suffolk Walking 2015-2020 and Cycling Strategies 2014. The Walking Strategy aims to increase the frequency of walking done by Suffolk residents, and the Cycling Strategy aims to make cycling a 'normal' form of transport for Suffolk residents.

2.50. Equally, integrating opportunities for those with disabilities to be more physically active is crucial to ensure the four priority outcomes can be met.

2.51. Creating environments where it is possible to be more active are critical, but it is also important in relation to sport and sports facilities, that the food and beverage offer is also healthy.

2.52. In relation to existing sports facilities, Abbeycroft Leisure is already working with Public Health Suffolk and the current Healthy Lifestyles Service, to deliver various initiatives, including 'Get Healthy, Get into Sport'.

2.53. Public Health Suffolk is undertaking an audit of physical activity in Suffolk to inform future interventions, and it is also re-procuring its Integrated Healthy Lifestyles Service (IHLS) later in 2015; the outcome of this service is that anyone in Suffolk who wants to be more active will be able to access appropriate advice/guidance/referral opportunities, to address their personal needs. The main aims of the IHLS will be to:

- **Tackle modifiable risk factors that contribute to increased morbidity and mortality; namely smoking; hypertension; obesity physical inactivity and alcohol use.**
- **Reduce health inequalities**
- **Promote prevention at scale**
- **Improve long-term health outcomes**
- **Increase health and well-being**

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES' SERVICES

2.54. In terms of local context it is worth highlighting that the recent changes in the education provision in Suffolk i.e. moving from a three tier to a two tier service, has highlighted opportunities to maximise use of school sites in terms of community use of sports facilities.

- 2.55. Suffolk County Council (SCC) is operating a Community Use Support Framework (CUSF) 2011-2017 across Suffolk; this scheme supports schools free of charge for 12 months, to develop community use, or refine their existing offer to try and make it financially viable.
- 2.56. New school facilities are developed with the concept of community use embedded in their design; this includes primary schools, many of which have external play provision, and a multi-purpose hall. Particularly in rural areas, such facilities have the potential to provide for informal sport and physical activity.
- 2.57. The provision of community use on high school sites has significant potential to increase levels of accessible provision for local communities, and extend the opportunities for participation in sport and physical activities. There is a new high school being developed in Bury St Edmunds which will have sports facilities available for community use, under a secured agreement.

### CREATING AN ACTIVE SUFFOLK – SUFFOLK COUNTY SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY 2009 – 2016

- 2.58. This strategy is one of six County Sports Facilities Strategies developed in the East of England; it sits underneath 'Creating Active Places', the Sports Facilities Strategy for the East of England, and above local district and borough sports facilities strategies. This hierarchy provides an overall context for the current and future provision of sports facilities at a county and local level. The development of the Suffolk Sports Facilities Strategy has been driven by the need to develop a prioritised and strategic framework for future sports facilities provision across Suffolk and to reflect and build upon the recommended priorities in the East of England Sports Facilities Strategy 'Creating Active Places'.
- 2.59. Ten recommendations were developed for Suffolk, to be reflected in district/borough sports facility strategies:
- R1. Invest in Facility Stock**
  - R2. Develop New Facility Provision**
  - R3. Address Unmet Demand**
  - R4. Negotiate increased Accessibility/ Availability to Existing Facilities**
  - R5. Resourcing Future Sports Facilities Provision by maximising potential opportunities through Building Schools for the Future (and Planning Framework – identified need)**
  - R6. Partnerships**
  - R7. Planning Framework**
  - R8. Retain elite athletes in the County**
  - R9. Harness Benefits of 2012**
  - R10. Multi-sport hubs**
  - R11. Sports Clubs Security of Tenure**
  - R12. Major Events**

## SUFFOLK – THE MOST ACTIVE COUNTY 2012

2.60. Most Active County was launched in February 2012 to provide a framework for partners in Suffolk to work together to create, promote and commission sport and physical activity opportunities that promote healthy, active lifestyles, shift inactive behaviours and address the barriers that communities or individuals face in accessing sport, leisure and physical activity.

2.61. It provided a catalyst to address the physical inactivity epidemic faced by Suffolk, and to make the County the 'most Active' in the UK. Key partners include Suffolk County Council, district and borough councils, NHS Suffolk, Suffolk Sport and Sport England.

2.62. There is clear evidence to demonstrate the need for the **Most Active County** initiative:

- **Over 50% of adults in Suffolk do no sport or active recreation;**
- **1,000 lives are lost every year in Suffolk due to physical inactivity;**
- **74% of people with a limiting disability in Suffolk do not undertake any sport or active recreation;**
- **55% of women in Suffolk do no sport or physical activity compared to 44.1% of men;**
- **The health cost of physical inactivity in Suffolk is £12.2 million per year;**
- **22.9% of adults and 15.7% of year 6 children in Suffolk are obese;**
- **An older person remaining active in Suffolk and independent at home defers £11,500 per year from social care costs;**
- **Reducing falls in Suffolk by 10% would realise £2million in savings annually;**
- **Physical activity reduces the risk of mental disorders including depression, cognitive decline and dementia and improves self-perception of mental well-being, increases self-esteem, lowers likelihood of sleep disorders and enables a better ability to cope with stress;**
- **51% of adult residents in Suffolk want to start playing sport or do a bit more sport.**

(Source: Suffolk the most Active county website 2015)

2.63. Many of these issues are mirrored in West Suffolk as illustrated by the low levels of participation and high levels of obesity.

## KEY AIMS OF THE MOST ACTIVE COUNTY INITIATIVE

2.64. The primary aim is to get more people in Suffolk active and raise the county's ranking in Sport England's annual Active People Survey. To achieve this we have developed a series of key objectives. They are:

- **To develop community-led participation in sport and physical activity;**
- **To improve the use of physical assets and the environment for sport and physical activity;**
- **To address sport and health inequality;**

- To deliver national governing body plans for an active lifestyle;
- To increase activity amongst children and young people; and
- To develop Suffolk as a host for mass participation sports events.

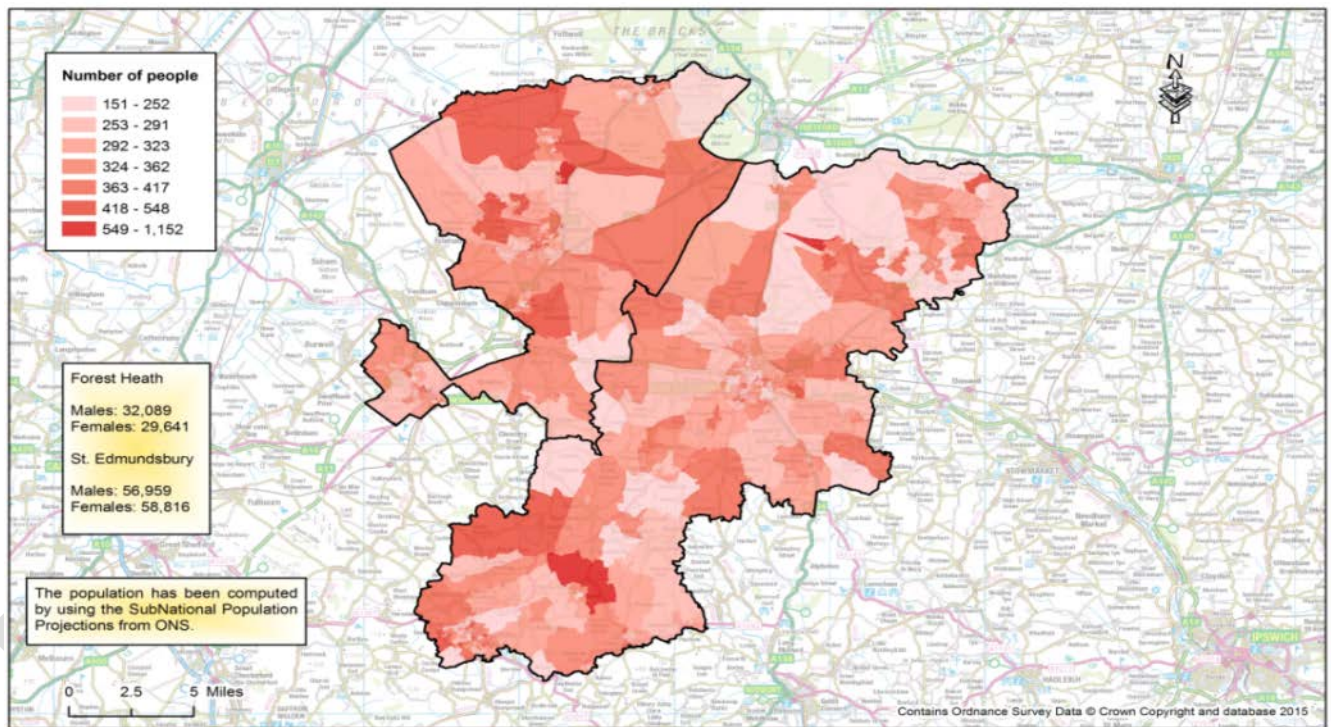
2.65. Since 2012, participation in sport and active recreation in Suffolk has grown by 2.2% (source: Sport England Active People 6 data (2011/12). This has lifted the county from the 25th (out of 27) to the 20th most active county in England.

(Source: Suffolk the most Active county website 2015)

## POPULATION PROFILES AND PROJECTIONS

2.66. The population profile of West Suffolk, the future growth projections and the locations of growth are important to understand in planning for the future provision of sports facilities. The existing population in West Suffolk is shown in Map 2.1.

Map 2.1: Existing Population West Suffolk, by the two Council areas



Population (2015)



Table 2.1: Summary of Demographic Profile St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath

KEY FACTORS	WEST SUFFOLK	ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH	FOREST HEATH DISTRICT
<b>POPULATION 2013 (ALL AGES)</b> (Office for National Statistics mid year estimates 2013)	173,000	111,800 in between 2012 and 2013, the population of St Edmundsbury grew by 0.2%	61,200 in between 2012 and 2013, the population of Forest Heath grew by 0.8%.
<b>POPULATION 2031 (ALL AGES)</b>	185,256	116,851	68,405
<b>POPULATION INCREASES PLANNED</b>		<p><b>Bury St Edmunds</b> – a minimum of 6,360 new homes between 2009 and 2031 (5,740 between 2012 and 2031), located in five strategic areas of growth around the town.</p> <p><b>Haverhill</b> – a minimum of 4,260 new homes between 2009 and 2031, located to the north-west and north-east of the town.</p> <p><b>Rural areas</b> – 1,600 new homes</p>	5,000 new homes 2011-2013; the area has already virtually achieved its allocation
<b>POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS</b>	Ageing population. In 2011, 18% of the population were aged over 65, compared to an England average of 16.3% (Census 2011).	Predominantly white; young population – 0 -13, and 25 - 49; also large 50 - 65+ group	Half population white; young population – 0 -13, and 25 - 49; also large 65+ group  Most ethnically diverse in Suffolk
<b>RURAL AREAS</b>		<p>St Edmundsbury is predominantly rural. 42,800 people or 38% of its population live in its rural area.</p> <p>The population of St Edmundsbury's rural area is increasing, whilst nationally the rural population is declining.</p>	Forest Heath also has large rural areas, including forests, and open countryside around Newmarket. Mildenhall and Brandon are smaller urban settlements close to large US army bases.

KEY FACTORS	WEST SUFFOLK	ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH	FOREST HEATH DISTRICT
		<p>There are a higher proportion of older people living in the rural areas than in the towns: nearly 25% of the rural population is 65 or over. Since 2001, this has increased from 22%.</p> <p>The majority of the rural population live in one of the borough's 80 villages.</p> <p>There are marked difference between the age profile of the rural areas and that of the towns.</p> <p>In the rural areas only 20% of the population is under 24 years old compared with 21% in St Edmundsbury and 26% in Haverhill.</p> <p>25% of the rural population is over 65, in this age group compared to only 18% in St Edmundsbury and 13% in Haverhill.</p>	
<b>DEPRIVATION</b>		<p>IMD 13.49 (29 out of 56 in East of England)</p> <p>Although St Edmundsbury is a relatively affluent area, with low unemployment and general good health, it has pockets of health inequality.</p> <p>There is a significant gap in life expectancy between those from the most affluent areas of the town compared with those from the most deprived. Moreton Hall residents, for example, have an average life expectancy of 86.3 years, compared with Eastgate ward residents with an average of 77.3 years.</p>	<p>IMD 13.28 (30 out of 56 in East of England)</p> <p>Given the relative affluence of some people and communities in the rural area, it is importance to recognise that this also masks fairly severe areas of deprivation in the more urban areas.</p>
<b>OBESITY</b>		<p>66% of adults are overweight; 12.9% of children are obese</p>	<p>65.1% of adults are overweight; 20% of children are obese</p>



KEY FACTORS	WEST SUFFOLK	ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH	FOREST HEATH DISTRICT
HEALTH COST OF INACTIVITY	£3.2m	£2.014m	£1.240m
HEALTH ISSUES		Main health problems are caused by obesity and smoking: in St Edmundsbury about 22% of the adult population smoke and about 24% are obese.	

Sources: Bury St Edmunds Local Plan, Forest Heath Local Plan, Vision 2031

Draft

2.67. The % population of the villages and outlying areas and the five market towns is:

**Table 2.2: 2013 Mid Year Estimates**

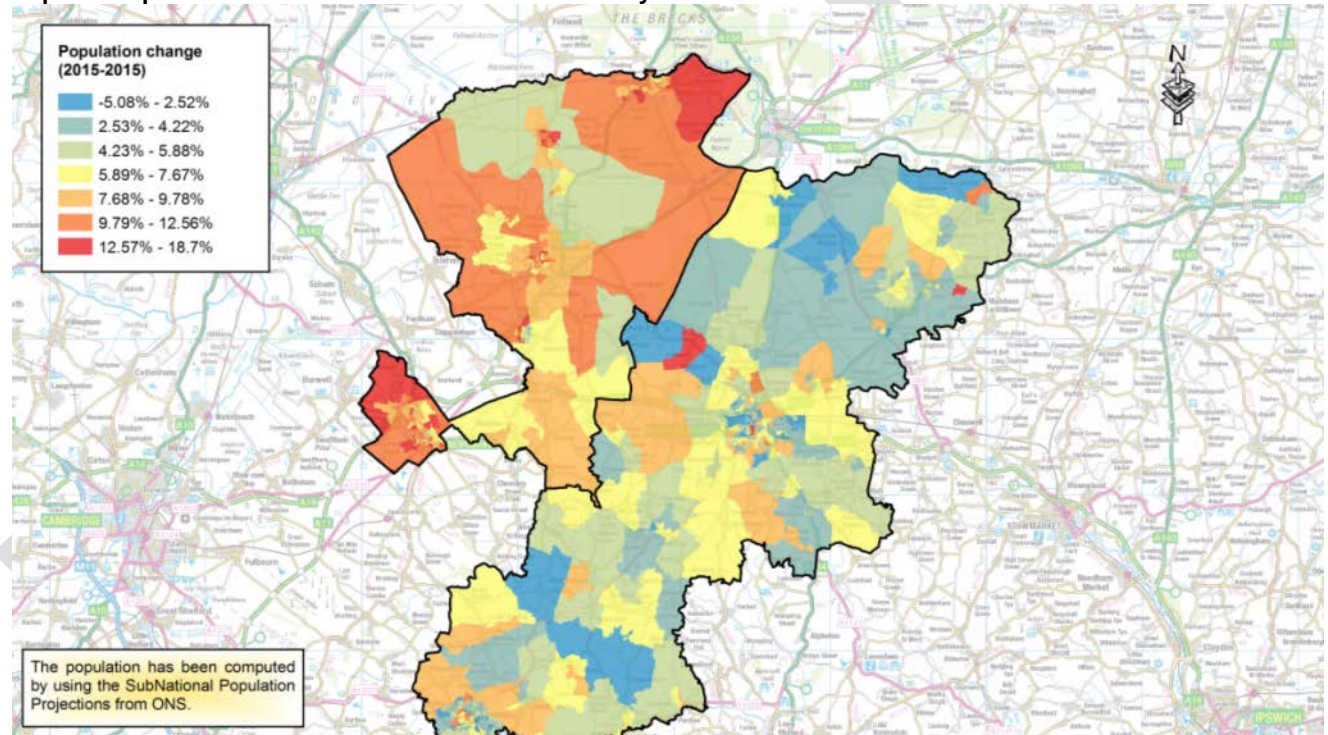
TOWN	POPULATION %
<b>VILLAGES AND OUTLYING AREAS</b>	38%
<b>BURY ST EDMUNDS</b>	25.5
<b>HAVERHILL</b>	15
<b>NEWMARKET</b>	10.5
<b>BRANDON</b>	6
<b>MILDENHALL</b>	5

Source: Suffolk Observatory Census 2011

2.68. The population of Bury St Edmunds is 37,000, (2015), but this is expected to increase to 50,000 by 2031 i.e. an increase of 13,000 people.

2.69. Map 2.2 illustrates the population growth forecast for West Suffolk, and the locations in which it will occur. The darker the colour shade, the higher the population growth in that specific area. The areas of densest population growth are in the north, west and northwest (red and orange) of West Suffolk, but there are clearly pocket of growth (yellow) across the area.

**Map 2.2: Population Growth forecast for West Suffolk by 2031**



2.70. In addition to population growth in West Suffolk, it is important to highlight that there will also be significant employment growth in the area, and particularly around Bury St Edmunds at the Suffolk Business Park. There is very likely to be demand from organisations based here for access to sport and leisure facilities for employees during the working day, before or after work, particularly with the drive for improved health and well-being. Corporate memberships could also provide a source of additional revenue for the facilities used.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND PARTICIPATION

### THE VALUE OF PARTICIPATION

2.71. The value of participation in sport and physical activity is significant, and its contribution to individual and community quality of life should not be under-estimated. This is true for both younger and older people; participation in sport and physical activity delivers:

- **Opportunities for physical activity, and therefore more 'active living'**
- **Health benefits - cardio-vascular, stronger bones, mobility**
- **Health improvement**
- **Mental health benefits**
- **Social benefits – socialisation, communication, inter-action, regular contact, stimulating**

2.72. In addition, participation in sport and physical activity can facilitate the learning of new skills, development of individual and team ability/performance, and provide a 'disciplined' environment in which participants can 'grow' and develop.

2.73. The benefits of regular and active participation in sport and physical activity will be important to promote in relation to future provision of sport, leisure and physical activity in West Suffolk; critically there is an existing audience in the Borough, who already recognise the advantages of participating, and a latent community who are inclined to take part.

### PARTICIPATION TRENDS AND RATES

#### CURRENT PARTICIPATION RATES

2.74. The Active People Survey (APS) 9 (2014/15 Q2) highlights the following trends:

Table 2.3 Active People Survey Participation Trends

APS 9 MEASUREMENT	YEAR	ST EDMUNDSBURY	FOREST HEATH	EAST OF ENGLAND	ENGLAND	COMMENT
<b>16+ participation in sport at least once a week</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	30.9%	37.2%	35.2%	34.6 %	<p>Only 29.4% i.e. in St Edmundsbury under a third of the adult population, and 34.9% in Forest Heath (just over a third of the adult population) participates once a week in sport; this level in St Edmundsbury is lower than the Suffolk (32.6%), East (34.6%) and England average (35.%), and is lower than previous levels of participation in the Borough in APS 1 2005/06 (30.9%).</p> <p>The Forest Heath APS9 level is higher than that of the Suffolk and East averages, but lower than that of England, and previous levels in APS 1 2005/06 (37.2%). This means that 65% - 70% of West Suffolk residents are not physically active at least once a week. This statistic is of significant concern, given the corporate priority and objectives for health and well-being in West Suffolk.</p>
	<b>2014/2015</b>	29.4%	34.9%	35.6 %	35.5 %	
<b>16+ 1-2 x 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity per week</b>	<b>2014/2015</b>	20.9%	25.2%	24.8%	24.8%	Rates in the two areas are lower than regional and England averages.
<b>16+ 30 minutes moderate intensity activity 3 times a week</b>	<b>2014/2015</b>	15.9%	18.3%	23.4%	23.3%	The proportion of people taking part in 30 minutes moderate intensity activity 3 times a week is only 15.9% in St Edmundsbury and 18.3% in Forest Heath, and is lower in St Edmundsbury than the regional (East 16.8%) and England (17.5%) average. Forest Heath has above the East and England average of residents taking part in 30 minutes moderate intensity activity 3 times a week.

APS 9 MEASUREMENT	YEAR	ST EDMUNDSBURY	FOREST HEATH	EAST OF ENGLAND	ENGLAND	COMMENT
						The proportion of people in St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath taking part in 30 minutes moderate intensity activity 3 times a week has increased since APS 2005/06, and since APS 8 2014/15 Q1

(Source: APS 9 2014/15 Q2)

Draft

2.75. Overall, participation rates are higher for males than females in West Suffolk. The top 5 participation sports in the local area are:

TOP PARTICIPATION SPORTS	ST EDMUNDSBURY	FOREST HEATH
	Cycling Athletics Swimming Gym Fitness	Cycling Swimming Fitness Athletics Gym

2.76. APS 9 Q2 also identifies that:

- In terms of Latent Demand, 58.8% of all adults in St Edmundsbury, and 54.4% in Forest Heath want to do more sport;
- 7.9% of the identified latent demand in 2012/13 in Forest Heath was for swimming, and for cycling 5.9%. In St Edmundsbury latent demand in 2012/13 for swimming was 10.9%. (APS7; Local Sports Profile updated March 2014);
- 26.3% of adults in St Edmundsbury, and 29.2% of adults in Forest Heath, who are already physically active, want to do more sport;
- 34.4% of those who are physically inactive in St Edmundsbury, and 31.4% in Forest Heath, want to do more sport; and
- Satisfaction with existing sports facilities has decreased from 75.8% to 65% in St Edmundsbury, and from 73.8% to 61.2% in Forest Heath over the last 5 years.

(Source: SE Local Sport Profile updated March 2014, and Active People Survey 9 2014/15 Q2)

### SPORT ENGLAND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

2.77. Sport England, the Government's agency for sport, measures 5 key areas in relation to sport activity. Tables 2.4 and 2.5 overleaf set out the performance of St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath, compared to the East region and England.

(Source: APS 7, 2012/13 from Local Sports Profile March 2014).

Table 2.4: Comparison with Sport England KPIs - St Edmundsbury

KPI1 3x30 – PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PER WEEK	YEAR	ST EDMUNDSBURY			EAST			ENGLAND		
		ALL	MALE	FEMALE	ALL	MALE	FEMALE	ALL	MALE	FEMALE
	2005/06	19.4%	20.9%	17.8%	20.8%	22.8%	18.9%	21.3%	24.0%	18.7%
2012/13	23.5%	29.5%	17.9%	23.8%	26.5%	21.1%	24.7%	28.3%	21.3%	

INDICATOR	ST EDMUNDSBURY				EAST				ENGLAND			
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
KPI2 * - Volunteering at least one hour a week	3.8%	7.2%	*	4.2%	4.8%	8.0%	7.4%	6.8%	4.5%	7.2%	7.6%	6.0%
KPI3 - Club Membership in the last 4 weeks	29.7%	22.3%	21.5%	18.4%	24.3%	23.6%	23.7%	22.2%	23.9%	23.3%	22.8%	21.0%
KPI4 - Received tuition / coaching in last 12 months	17.2%	17.0%	15.2%	11.5%	18.3%	16.8%	17.4%	16.7%	17.5%	16.2%	16.8%	15.8%
KPI5 - Took part in organised competition in last 12 months	18.2%	15.0%	16.2%	12.1%	15.3%	14.5%	15.1%	13.6%	14.4%	14.3%	14.4%	11.2%
KPI6 - Satisfaction with local provision	75.8%	~	~	65.0%	70.2%	~	~	62.5%	69.0%	~	~	60.3%

Source: Local Sports Profile, August 2015, Active People Survey, Year: 2009/10-2011/13, Measure: Key Performance Indicators 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

2.78. It can be seen from Table 2.4 that in 2012/13, St Edmundsbury was below all KPIs in comparison to the England averages except satisfaction with sports facilities, and participation levels in organised competition. It is critical that regular participation opportunities continue to be provided, given their health benefits, and are both accessible and affordable, as KPIs 2-8 evidence such a low participation level, despite an increase, since the initial APS survey in 2005/06.

Table 2.5: Comparison with Sport England KPIs – Forest Heath

KPI1 3x30 – PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PER WEEK	YEAR	FOREST HEATH			EAST			ENGLAND		
		ALL	MALE	FEMALE	ALL	MALE	FEMALE	ALL	MALE	FEMALE
	2005/06	24.9%	26.0%	23.7%	20.8%	22.8%	18.9%	21.3%	24.0%	18.7%
2012/13	27.4%	30.0%	24.7%	23.8%	26.5%	21.1%	24.7%	28.3%	21.3%	

INDICATOR	FOREST HEATH				EAST				ENGLAND			
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
KPI2 * - Volunteering at least one hour a week	4.7%	9.8%	*	6.5%	4.8%	8.0%	7.4%	6.8%	4.5%	7.2%	7.6%	6.0%
KPI3 - Club Membership in the last 4 weeks	19.8%	16.5%	19.3%	14.9%	24.3%	23.6%	23.7%	22.2%	23.9%	23.3%	22.8%	21.0%
KPI4 - Received tuition / coaching in last 12 months	16.8%	12.9%	*	10.8%	18.3%	16.8%	17.4%	16.7%	17.5%	16.2%	16.8%	15.8%
KPI5 - Took part in organised competition in last 12 months	17.6%	12.0%	*	18.3%	15.3%	14.5%	15.1%	13.6%	14.4%	14.3%	14.4%	11.2%
KPI6 - Satisfaction with local provision	73.8%	~	~	61.2%	70.2%	~	~	62.5%	69.0%	~	~	60.3%

Source: Active People Survey, Year: 2009/10-2011/13, Measure: Key Performance Indicators 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

2.79. It can be seen from Table 2.5 that in 2012/13, Forest Heath has higher average levels of participation in physical activity once a week than both the East region and England. However, there is lower club membership and participation in coaching in Forest Heath than both the East region average, and the England average. Levels of satisfaction with sports facilities are lower in Forest Heath than the East, but higher than the England average. It is critical that regular participation opportunities continue to be provided, given their health benefits, and are both accessible and affordable, as KPIs 2-8 still evidence low participation levels, although they have increased since the initial APS survey in 2005/06.



**Table 2.6: Summary of Participation Factors West Suffolk**

<b>KEY FACTORS</b>	<b>ST EDMUNDSBURY</b>	<b>FOREST HEATH DISTRICT</b>
<b>PARTICIPATION</b>	34.2% (16+, once a week); has been as high as 39%, declined and is now increasing again)	33% (16+, once a week); has been as high as 41%)
	APS 8 30.7% (Oct 2014)	APS 8 35.4% (Oct 2014)
<b>PARTICIPATION IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT 5 X 30 MINUTES PER WEEK</b>	23.5%	16.2%
<b>PARTICIPATION IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT 1-2 X 30 MINUTES PER WEEK</b>	27.5%	28%
<b>LATENT DEMAND TO DO MORE SPORTS</b>	49.4% of all adults; 31% of active adults; 18.4% of inactive adults	54.1% of all adults; 32.7% of active adults; 21.4% of inactive adults
<b>SPECIFIC : SPORTS ADULTS WANT TO DO MORE OF</b>	Swimming	Swimming, cycling
<b>TOP PARTICIPATION SPORTS</b>	Cycling Athletics Swimming Gym Fitness	Cycling Swimming Fitness Athletics Gym
<b>SATISFACTION WITH LOCAL PROVISION</b>	Declining	Declining

## MARKET SEGMENTATION

2.80. Sport England's market segmentation model comprises 19 'sporting' segments. It is designed to assist understanding of attitudes, motivations and perceived barriers to sports participation and to assist agencies involved in delivery of sport and recreation to develop tailored interventions, communicate more effectively with the target market and to better understand participation in the context of life stage and lifecycles. Across St Edmundsbury, Market Segmentation data indicates higher proportions of Philips, Tims, Elsie and Arnolds and Roger and Joys across West Suffolk, as summarised below.

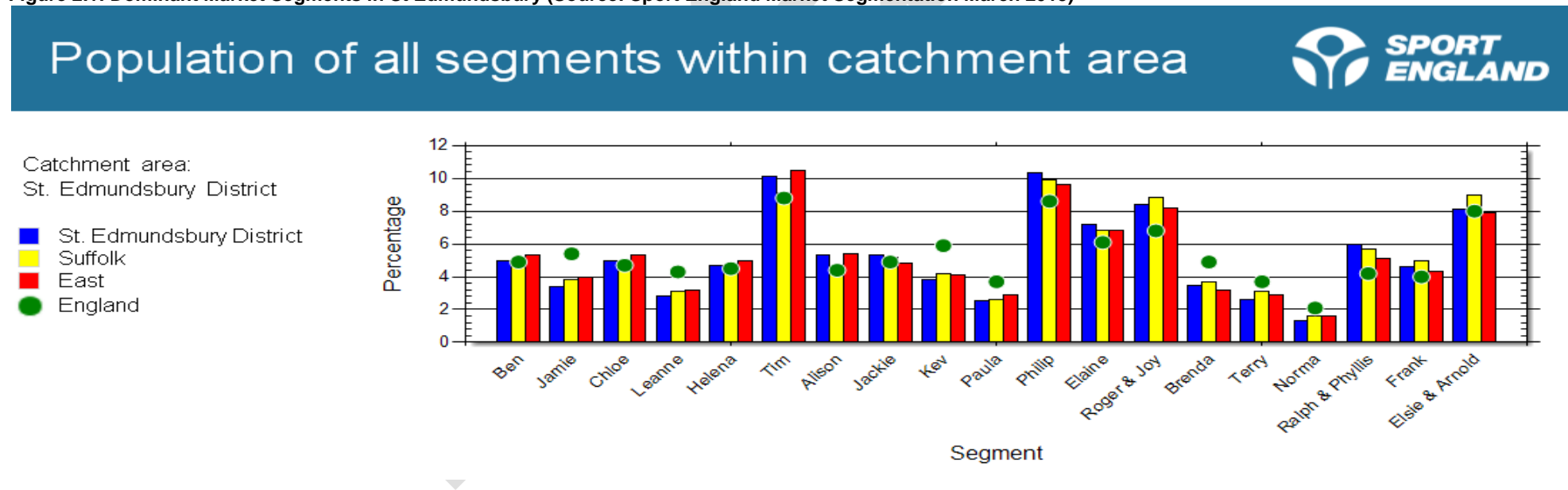
**Table 2.7: Market Segmentation Summary – St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath**

MARKET SEGMENT	KEY CHARACTERISTICS	% OF ST EDMUNDSBURY POPULATION	% OF FOREST HEATH POPULATION	ACTIVITIES / SPORTS THAT APPEAL TO SEGMENT
Philip, Comfortable Mid-Life Males	Philip also enjoys keep fit/gym, swimming, football, golf and athletics (running). His participation in most of his top sports is above the national average, which is indicative of the priority he places on sport.	10.1	9.8	Cycling, keep fit / gym, swimming and football
Tim, Settling Down Males	Tim is an active type that takes part in sport on a regular basis. He is aged 26 – 35, may be married or single, is a career professional, and may or may not have children. Tim participates in very active, technical sports, skiing, water sports, team games, individual activities, personal fitness and likely to have private gym membership.	10	8.4%	Cycling keep fit/gym, swimming, football and athletics or running, also football and athletics.
Elsie and Arnold Retirement home singles	Lowest participation rates of the 19 segments. Poor health and disability are major inhibitors. Participation mainly in low intensity activity.  Safer neighbourhoods or people to go with would encourage participation. Organised, low-impact, low intensity events would be welcomed.	8	8.6	Walking, bowls and dancing

MARKET SEGMENT	KEY CHARACTERISTICS	% OF ST EDMUNDSBURY POPULATION	% OF FOREST HEATH POPULATION	ACTIVITIES / SPORTS THAT APPEAL TO SEGMENT
Roger and Joy Early Retirement Couples	Typically aged 56 – 65 this couple may be in employment, but nearing the end of their careers, or already have taken early retirement. They are slightly less active than the average adult population.	8.2	8.2	Walking, swimming, table tennis, golf and keep fit classes

2.81. There are also quite large groups of: Alison, Jackie, Chloe, Elaine, and Frank across West Suffolk.

Figure 2.1: Dominant Market Segments in St Edmundsbury (Source: Sport England Market Segmentation March 2015)



2.82. The implications of the above analysis is that there is a need to ensure provision of quality facilities for cycling, fitness, keep fit/gym, swimming, football and athletics or running, table tennis and golf at local level. There is also a need to ensure opportunities exist for walking and dancing.

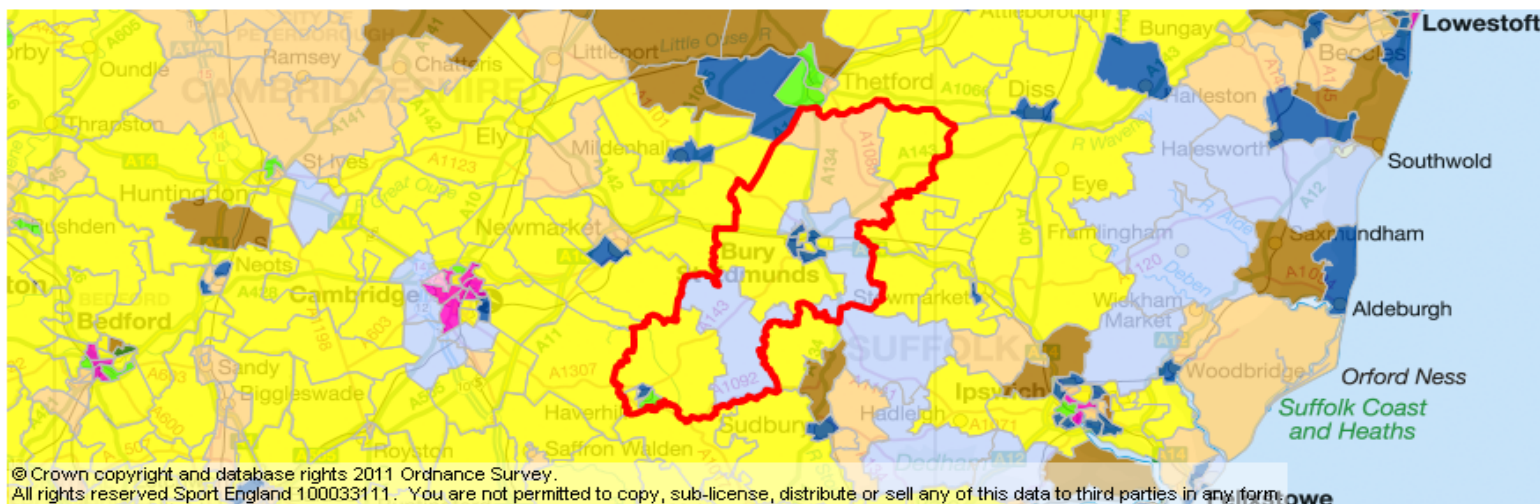
Map 2.3: Dominant Market Segments St Edmundsbury

# Dominant market segment by population



Catchment area:  
St. Edmundsbury District

- Ben - 1
  - Jamie - 2
  - Chloe - 3
  - Leanne - 4
  - Helena - 5
  - Tim - 6
  - Alison - 7
  - Jackie - 8
  - Kev - 9
  - Paula - 10
  - Philip - 11
  - Elaine - 12
  - Roger & Joy - 13
  - Brenda - 14
  - Terry - 15
  - Norma - 16
  - Ralph & Phyllis - 17
  - Frank - 18
  - Elsie & Arnold - 19
- Catchment area
- Middle Super Output Areas



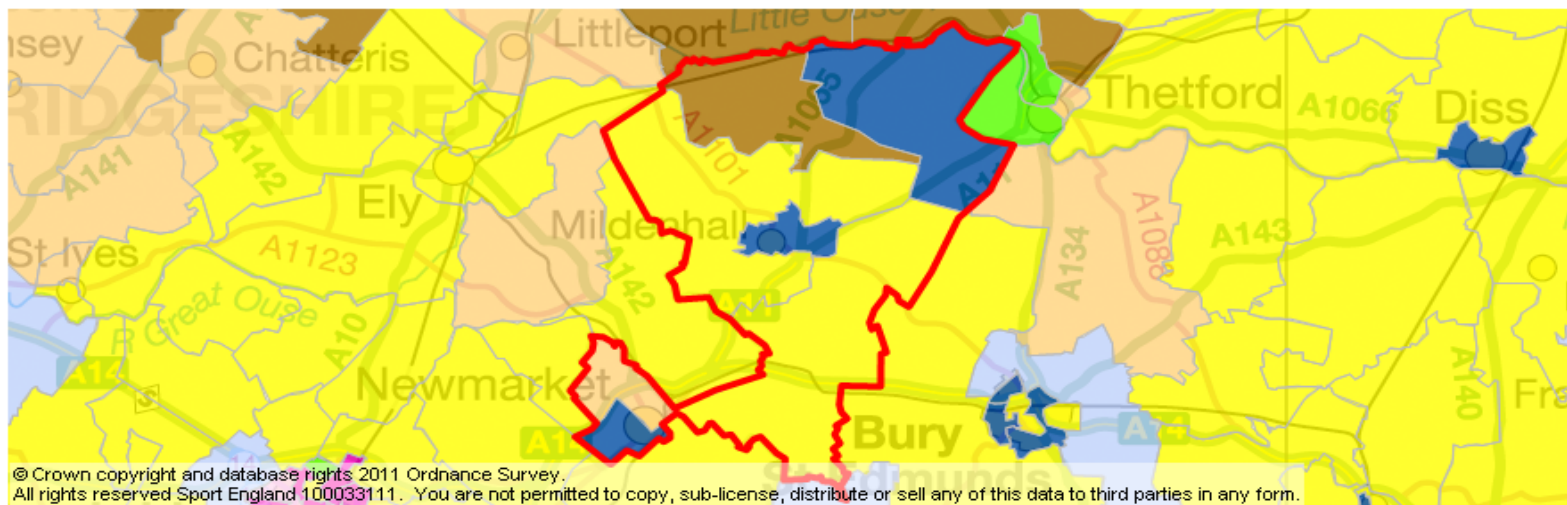
Map 2.4: Dominant Market Segments Forest Heath

# Dominant market segment by population



Catchment area:  
Forest Heath District

- Ben - 1
  - Jamie - 2
  - Chloe - 3
  - Leanne - 4
  - Helena - 5
  - Tim - 6
  - Alison - 7
  - Jackie - 8
  - Kev - 9
  - Paula - 10
  - Philip - 11
  - Elaine - 12
  - Roger & Joy - 13
  - Brenda - 14
  - Terry - 15
  - Norma - 16
  - Ralph & Phyllis - 17
  - Frank - 18
  - Elsie & Arnold - 19
- Catchment area
- Middle Super Output Areas



2.83. The distribution of the most dominant market segments in St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath are shown above in Maps 2.3 and 2.4. These maps show that in St Edmundsbury, the majority of 'Phillips' are in the north of the area, with 'Tims' in the south and in and around Bury St Edmunds. In Forest Heath, the majority of 'Elsie and Arnolds' are in the north, middle and south of the area, whilst 'Rogers and Joys' are in the north, and 'Tims' are in the middle and south of the area. This type of local intelligence should be used to develop and drive programmes to maximise participation opportunities at local level, by providing activities in which people want to take part.



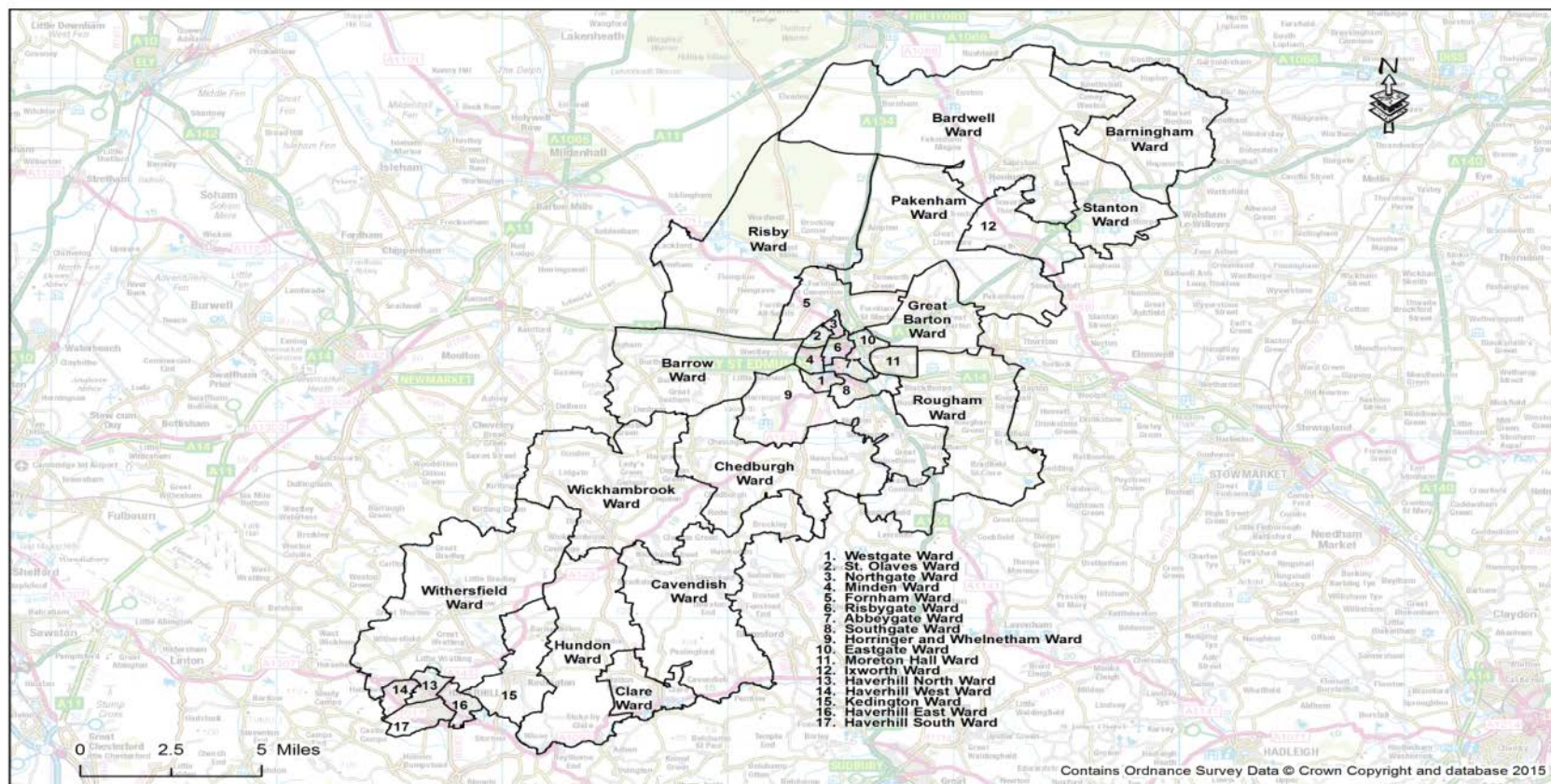
ST EDMUNDSBURY DISTRICT

### 3. EXISTING FACILITY PROVISION

#### INTRODUCTION

3.1. The current level and nature of facility provision in West Suffolk, has been assessed overall, and on the basis of the two council areas. Map 3.1 below shows the St Edmundsbury main towns and wards .

Map 3.1: St Edmundsbury District showing Main Towns and Wards



St Edmundsbury wards



3.2 The four main sub areas for St Edmundsbury, and the wards comprising them are shown below in Table 3.1

Table 3.1: St Edmundsbury Sub Areas

AUTHORITY AREA	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	ELECTORAL AREA	PARISH/WARD AREA	
ST EDMUNDSBURY DC	BURY ST EDMUNDS	Abbeygate	Abbeygate	
		Eastgate	Eastgate	
		Minden	Minden	
		Morton Hall	Morton Hall	
		Nothgate	Nothgate	
		Risbygate	Risbygate	
		Southgate	Southgate	
		St. Olaves	St. Olaves	
		Westgate	Westgate	
	RURAL AREAS NORTH	Bardwell		Bardwell
				Barnham
				Coney Weston
				Euston (Parish Meeting only)
				Fakenham Magna
				Honington cum Sapiston
		Barningham		Barningham
				Hopton cum Knettishall
				Market Weston
				Thelnetham
		Stanton	Stanton	
		Ixworth	Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe	
		Pakenham		Ampton, Little Livermere and Timworth (Parish Meeting only)
				Great Livermere
				Pakenham
				Troston
		Risby		Culford
				Flempton cum Hengrave
				Ingham
				Lackford
				Risby
			West Stow and Wordwell	
		Fornham		Fornham All Saints
				Fornham St Genevieve and St Martin
		Great Barton	Great Barton	
		Rougham		Bradfield Combust with Stanningfield
				Bradfield St Clare
	Bradfield St George			
	Brockley			
	Rushbrooke with Rougham			
	Rougham			



ST EDMUNDSBURY DISTRICT  
INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY 2015 - 2031

AUTHORITY AREA	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	ELECTORAL AREA	PARISH/WARD AREA
		Horringer and Whelnetham	Great Whelnetham and Little Whelnetham
			Horringer cum Ickworth
			Nowton
		Barrow	Barrow
			The Saxhams
			Westley
		Wickhambrook	Cowlinge
			Depden
			Hargrave
			Lidgate
			Ousden
			Wickhambrook
		Chedborough	Chedborough
			Hawstead
			Rede (Parish Meeting only)
			Whepstead
	HAVERHILL	Haverhill North	Haverhill North
		Haverhill East	Haverhill East
		Haverhill South	Haverhill South
		Haverhill West	Haverhill West
	RURAL SOUTH	Withersfield	Great Bradley
			Great Thurlow
			Great Wratting
			Little Bradley (Parish Meeting only)
			Little Thurlow
			Little Wratting (Parish Meeting only)
			Withersfield
		Kedington	Kedington
		Hundon	Barnardiston
			Hundon
			Stoke-by-Clare
Wixoe (Parish Meeting only)			
Clare		Clare	
Cavendish		Cavendish	
		Denston (Parish Meeting only)	
	Hawkedon		
	Poslingford		
	Stansfield		
		Stradishall	

## SUPPLY OF SPORT AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN ST EDMUNDSBURY

3.3 Table 3.2 summarises the existing indoor sports facilities in St Edmundsbury:

**Table 3.2: Existing Indoor Sports Facilities – St Edmundsbury**

FACILITIES	BURY ST EDMUNDS
HEALTH & FITNESS SUITE	20
ICE RINKS	0
INDOOR BOWLS	1
INDOOR TENNIS CENTRE	1
SKI SLOPES	0
SPORTS HALL (TOTAL)	14
ACTIVITY HALLS	21
SQUASH COURTS	14
SWIMMING POOL (TOTAL)	18

N.B Outdoor facilities (with the exception of athletics (1 track in each district), and cycling) are covered in the 2015 West Suffolk Playing Pitch Strategy i.e. grass pitches, All Weather Pitches, tennis courts

- 3.4 Based on the West Suffolk audit of facilities (2015), the Active Places database, and the local sports profile data (Sport England March 2014), the maps used in the following facility assessments show the extent of existing sport and leisure built facility provision in St Edmundsbury.
- 3.5 Active Places allows sports facilities in an area to be identified. Nationally, it contains information about over 50,000 facilities, across eleven facility types.
- 3.6 Users of sport and recreation facilities do not recognise administrative boundaries and will use facilities that are convenient and/or provide a quality/value for money experience. Ownership and management are, in this context, a minor consideration for most users.
- 3.7 The availability of facilities in neighbouring areas can and does influence sports facility usage patterns; however, in the two districts comprising West Suffolk, usage patterns are more affected by accessibility, given the rurality of the area.

### CATCHMENT AREAS

- 3.8 Catchment areas for different types of provision provide a means of identifying areas currently not served by existing indoor sports facilities. It is however, recognised that catchment areas vary from person to person, day to day, hour to hour, and are also very different in rural and urban areas. This problem is overcome by accepting the concept of 'effective catchment', defined as the distance travelled by around 75-80% of users. The maps in Section 3 demonstrate catchment areas for facility provision in St Edmundsbury, based on this approach.

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- 3.9 The 2011 Census identified that there is high car ownership across the area, due to its rural nature. However, there is a proportion of West Suffolk's population in the rural area (around 10%) that does not have access to private transport. Equally in the more urban areas, around 20% of the population does not have access to private transport. It is not always easy (or indeed possible in some cases) to use public transport to get to and from some sport and recreation facilities. In St Edmundsbury, 20% of the population do not have access to private transport
- 3.10 In light of aspirations to reduce private car journeys, improved links with the public transport network could improve access to sport and recreation facilities. Establishing or improving links with existing or proposed public transport networks should therefore be a key consideration in the development of new sports facilities in West Suffolk.. It is however recognised that in rural areas this can present more of a challenge than in more urban communities.

3.11 This approach is clearly supported in Local Plan policy, and the Vision 31 statements, which positively support the development of additional opportunities for walking and cycling (within existing communities and those that will be developed), both on an informal basis, and as a means of accessing community facilities, and thereby reducing the number of car journeys and contributing to West Suffolk's health and well-being agenda. This approach also reflects the fact that there is growing interest and participation in walking and cycling at local level.

### ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING SPORTS FACILITY PROVISION IN ST EDMUNDSBURY

3.12 Given the range of facilities in St Edmundsbury each type is summarised below and assessed separately, to provide a more detailed picture of the current supply and demand, and critically future need.

3.13 The facility types assessed are:

- **Sports Halls**
- **Swimming Pools**
- **Health and Fitness**
- **Squash Courts**
- **Gymnastics**
- **Table Tennis**
- **Indoor facilities for Tennis/Netball/Bowls**
- **Athletics tracks**
- **Cycling**

3.14 The quality assessments of the St Edmundsbury facilities are summarised in Table 3.3; they will also be referenced in subsequent sections as they clearly impact on sports halls, swimming pools, health and fitness facilities etc.

3.15 Abbeycroft Leisure is responsible for the operation and management of the main sports facilities in St Edmundsbury:

- **Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre**
- **Haverhill Leisure Centre**

3.16 Abbeycroft Leisure (formed 1 April 2015), now the largest trust in geographical terms operating local authority facilities in Suffolk, has a long-term contract (to 2020) for the management of the sports facilities for West Suffolk on behalf of the Council. The subsidy required to operate the existing facilities will be reduced over the life of the contract.

**Table 3.3: Summary of West Suffolk Facilities – Quality Audits**

<b>FACILITY</b>	<b>QUALITY AUDIT SCORE</b>	<b>NEED FOR INVESTMENT</b>
<b>BURY ST EDMUNDS LEISURE CENTRE</b>	Good (69%)	Moderate
<b>HAVERHILL LEISURE CENTRE</b>	Good (64%)	Moderate

## SPORTS HALLS

### EXISTING PROVISION - SUPPLY

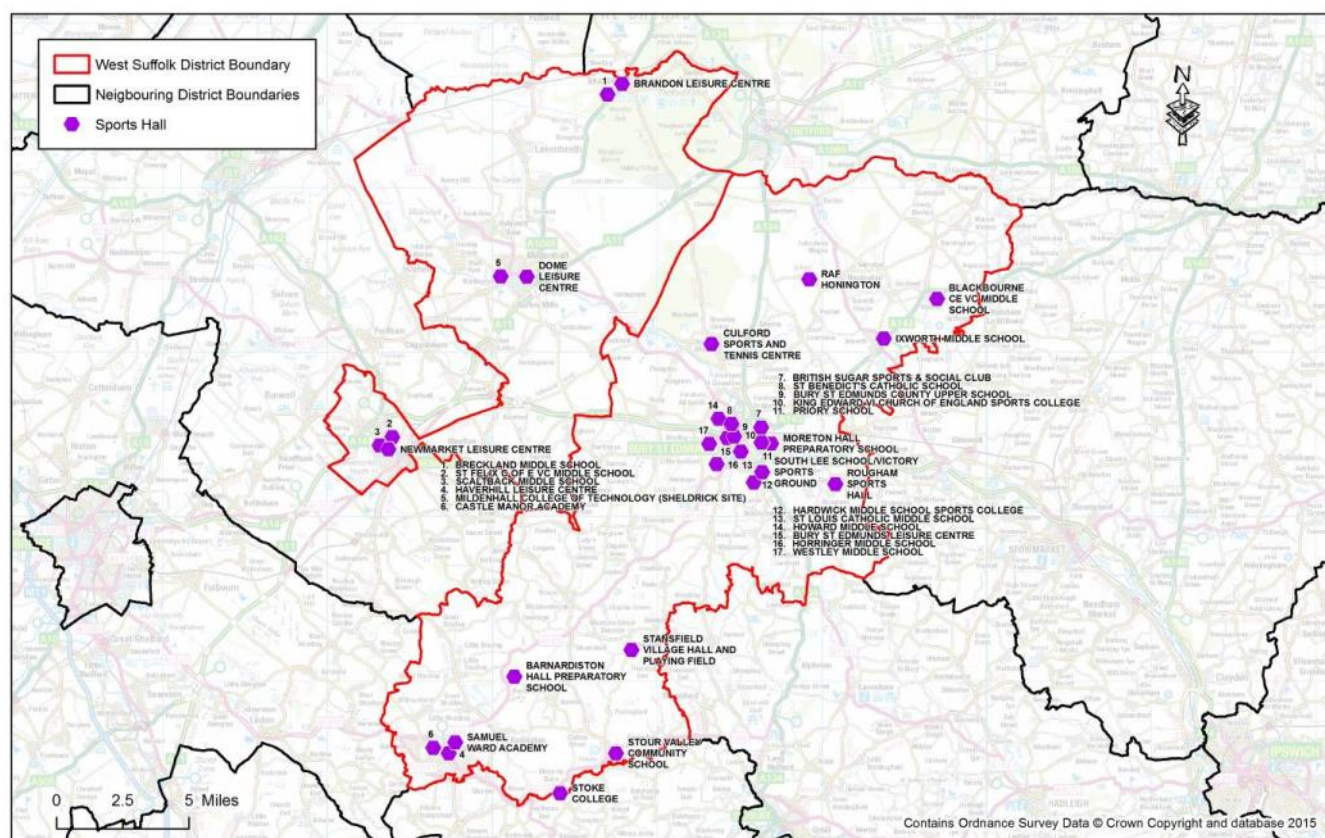
3.17 Indoor multi-sports halls are defined as areas where a range of sport and recreational activities are carried out. They are at least 10m x 18m (e.g., the size of one badminton court including surrounding safety area) and include specifically designed venues such as leisure centres and school sports halls. The definition also applies to halls where activities can take place, such as school assembly halls, community buildings and community centres (the main ones are included in the table below). Specialist centres, e.g. dance centres, are not included.

### SPORTS HALL SUPPLY IN ST EDMUNDSBURY

3.18 The supply analysis identifies that West Suffolk has a total of 44 sports halls (sports halls/activity halls) across 29 sites in St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath Districts (West Suffolk Audit of Built Facilities August 2015; also informed by Active Places). These sports halls are listed in Appendix 3.

3.19 Map 3.2 shows all the sports halls in West Suffolk and their location. In St Edmundsbury, sports halls are primarily located on education sites and in St Edmundsbury's leisure centres e.g. Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre, Haverhill Leisure Centre, Map 3.2 also illustrates the proximity of sports halls in neighbouring local authority areas.

**Map 3.2: Sports Halls in West Suffolk**



**All Sports Halls**



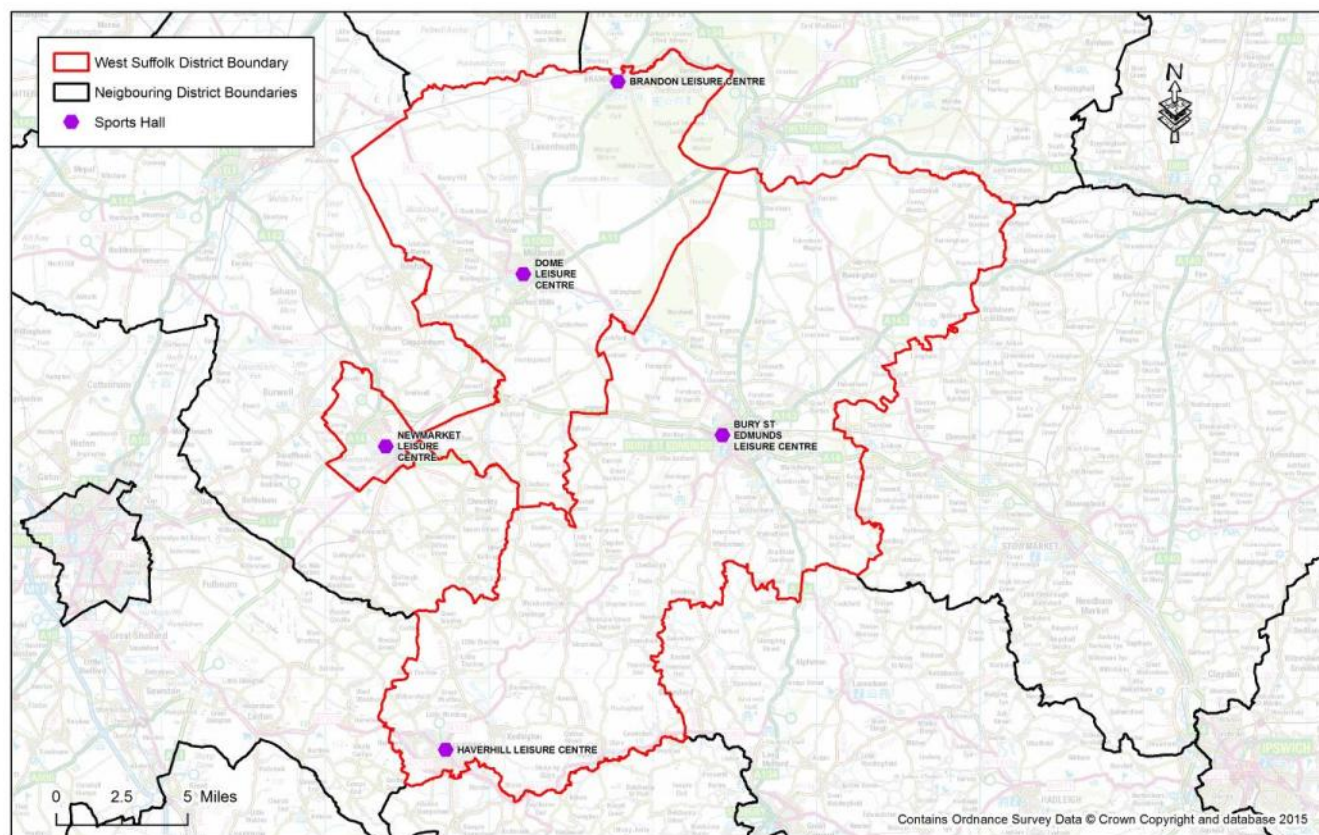
3.20 The analysis of the overall hall supply in the area, (based on Appendix 3) is set out in Table 3.4:

**Table 3.4 Analysis of Sports Hall Supply in St Edmundsbury**

	<b>ST EDMUNDSBURY</b>
<b>TOTAL BADMINTON COURTS</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>TOTAL SPORTS HALLS</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>TOTAL COMMUNITY ACCESSIBLE SPORTS HALLS 3+ COURTS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>TOTAL COMMUNITY ACCESSIBLE BADMINTON COURTS</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>COMMUNITY ACCESSIBLE 4+ COURT HALLS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>COMMUNITY ACCESSIBLE 5+ COURT HALLS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>COMMUNITY ACCESSIBLE 6 COURT HALLS</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>COMMUNITY ACCESSIBLE 8 COURT HALLS</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>ACTIVITY HALLS 1 OR 2 COURTS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>TOTAL ACTIVITY HALLS</b>	<b>21</b>

3.21 Table 3.4 and Appendix 3 highlight that there is currently only one 8 badminton court in St Edmundsbury; this is at Samuel Ward Academy, St Edmundsbury; this facility has a tarmacadam floor. Of the overall 14 sports halls, 2 are only available for private use; these are the RAF Honnigton base and Ixworth Middle School. Culford Sports and Tennis Centre is available for registered membership use. 9 of the 14 sports halls are on education sites; these all provide access for community associations/sports club use, except Ixworth Middle School. Only 2 sites provide for pay and play access, and a further 9 provide for sports club/community association use; these are the facilities operated by Abbeycroft Leisure, schools and a community organisation. The majority (8) of the existing accessible sports halls are a minimum 4 badminton court size; there are two 5 court sports halls (Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre and Haverhill Leisure Centre, St Edmundsbury), and one 6 court sports hall at Culford Sports and Tennis Centre, St Edmundsbury.

**Map 3.3 Community Accessible Sports Halls in St Edmundsbury**



**Community accessible Sports Halls**



## EXISTING SUPPLY - GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND QUALITY

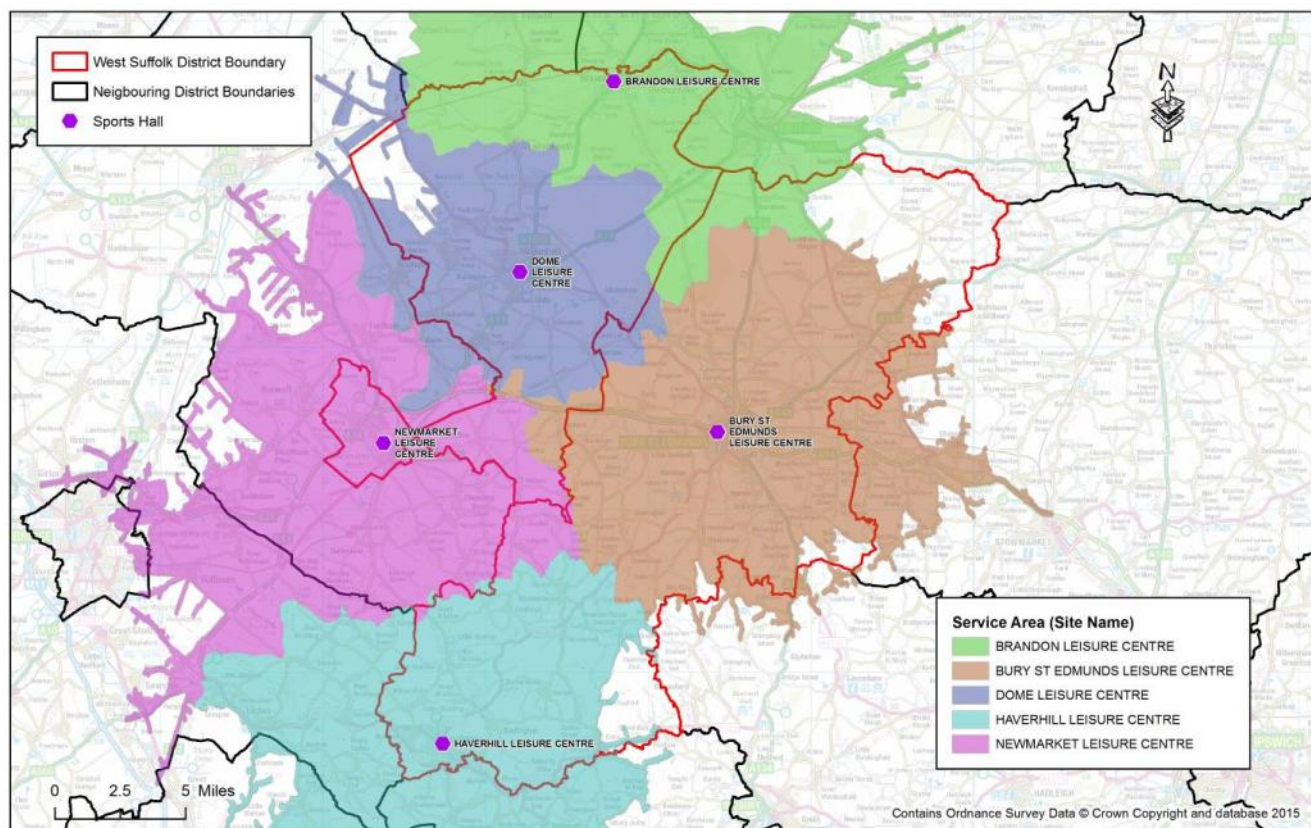
### QUALITY

- 3.22 Detailed quality assessments have been undertaken on all West Suffolk facilities. These are provided in Appendix 2 (2a-2f), and summarised in Table 3.3 above.
- 3.23 Of the two St Edmundsbury sports hall facilities, both have been refurbished within the last 10 years. However, given that the two facilities were originally built between fifty-five and twenty-six years ago (Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre 1960, Haverhill 1971, there is a need to plan for their replacement in the medium to long term.
- 3.24 Of the eleven community accessible sports halls (3 courts+) eight were built well over 10 years ago i.e. pre 2005. While most sports halls were built in the 1970s or mid 1980s (and 2 are 1950s/60s), this still makes them 30-45 years old. Only 2 community accessible sports halls sports halls have been built since 2005, and the majority of these (education-based and those funded by St Edmundsbury), were built in the last 5 years. Although refurbishments have been undertaken throughout the last 16 years, the most recent one was in 2012.
- 3.25 The quality of the existing facilities is therefore extremely variable, despite refurbishments undertaken in the last sixteen years. Whilst all the pay and play facilities have been refurbished to modern day standards, most of the community accessible facilities on education sites are older. Although some have been refurbished significant investment will be required to upgrade/refurbish many of the existing sports halls in the next few years, given their age, current condition and quality.

### EXISTING SUPPLY - ACCESSIBILITY

- 3.26 Geographical distribution of sports hall provision is generally based around the more urban areas of West Suffolk. Whilst the facilities in the urban areas are within walking distance of a large number of residents in those towns, walking catchment areas are not really an appropriate means of determining accessibility for those in the more rural areas. The rural roads are not, generally, particularly safe for either walking or cycling, so use of private transport tends to be the norm to access leisure facilities.
- 3.27 As illustrated in Map 3.4, virtually the whole of St Edmundsbury falls within the identified service area (up to a 20 minute drive time) for the Council's pay and play facilities, operated by Abbeycroft Leisure.

Map 3.4: Sports Halls in St Edmundsbury – Service Areas



Service areas (up to a 20 minute drive time) - Sports Halls



- 3.28 Map 3.3 shows the catchment area of the main sports halls in St Edmundsbury, based on a 20 minute drivetime. Residents in the north, north east and south east of St Edmundsbury are currently outside the catchment area of a St Edmundsbury pay and play sports hall.
- 3.29 Given that the majority of existing community accessible sports halls are 4 badminton court size, communities in St Edmundsbury generally have reasonable access to a sports hall within their local area. Given the proximity of some sports halls outside St Edmundsbury boundaries, some communities may find it easier to access these facilities e.g. close to boundary with Mid Suffolk, close to boundary with East Cambs district.
- 3.30 The challenge in St Edmundsbury is that whilst around 40% of the community live in the rural areas, the majority of the sports facility provision is in the urban areas. This is where the provision of informal activity halls, or sports halls on education sites becomes even more important, as this type of facility increases the level of local provision available for local people.
- 3.31 Given the planned population increases in the north and north east of St Edmundsbury, it will be important to ensure there is adequate provision of, and access to, sports hall and other leisure facilities.
- 3.32 A significant proportion of schools and colleges offer their sports hall facilities for community use although the nature, extent, practical arrangements surrounding this and ‘usefulness’ of said use varies considerably. This is critical in terms of both future accessibility and participation. Those education facilities with a formal community use arrangement provide community access and use based on this formal agreement e.g. times and types of use; education facilities which are not subject to a formal community use arrangement may withdraw community access at any time.

- 3.33 Some of the newest sports halls have been developed on education sites as a result of investment in education provision; these sites tend to have at least a form of formal community usage agreed, even if it is use by community sports clubs and associations.
- 3.34 Maintaining and indeed developing increased community access to education-based sports facilities is critical in ensuring locally available access, and facilitating increased participation in sport and physical activity for health benefits. An example of where community use of new sports facilities could be developed is the new Castle Manor Academy School, Haverhill.

## SUPPLY AND DEMAND ANALYSIS

### SPORT ENGLAND'S FACILITIES PLANNING MODEL

- 3.35 Strategic Leisure was provided with the Sport England's Facilities Planning Model National Run (August 2014; data from April 2014 report) for sports hall provision in St Edmundsbury.

### ST EDMUNDSBURY

- 3.36 The report sets out an assessment of the current situation regarding sports hall supply, based on 2015 population (112,884), and then looks forward to 2025, to test different scenarios in terms of provision changes in West Suffolk, and also in the surrounding authorities of Forest Heath DC, Breckland DC, Mid Suffolk DC, Babergh DC, Braintree DC, South Cambridgeshire DC, East Cambridgeshire DC, King's Lynn and West Norfolk BC, Uttlesford DC, South Norfolk DC. The full report can be accessed at Appendix 8A.

### SUPPLY

- 3.37 The Facilities Planning Model analysis for St Edmundsbury identifies 20 sports halls across 11 sites in the District (sports halls and activity halls) with a total supply of 48.77 marked out courts. The hall space provides a capacity for approximately 13,314 visits per week during the peak period.
- 3.38 The halls modelled are those identified as being community accessible, and take into account court availability. This explains the small difference in the overall number of halls between the Facility Planning Model (FPM) and the earlier assessment (see Table 3.3).
- 3.39 There are 20 sports halls in the Borough: this means that St Edmundsbury residents have a higher share of sports hall facilities in the Borough than the East and England averages. St Edmundsbury also has a lower level of provision per 10,000 population at 7.27 than the East and England averages, and its neighbouring authorities, (Forest Heath of 3.52 courts, though it is higher than the figures for King's Lynn and West Norfolk (2.37) and Breckland (2.41). East Cambs has 5.44 courts per 10,000 population). Overall, St Edmundsbury is well supplied with sports halls.
- 3.40 King Edward IV School facility has the greatest capacity of sports hall provision, given there are three associated activity halls on this site. There is however no formal Community Use Agreement covering this site.

### DEMAND

- 3.41 The Facilities Planning Model analysis identifies that the 2015 population generates a demand for 33.82 courts and 7,386 visits per week. This equates to a current over supply of 14.95 courts. By 2025 the population is likely to demand 34.15 courts for 7,458 visits per week per peak period (vpwpp). Clearly, with current provision at 48.77 courts, and proposed provision at 51.89 courts (new 4 court hall at Moreton Hall School), there is an over supply in the provision of sports halls in the Borough of around 17.74 courts by 2025, taking into account proposed changes in provision at Moreton Hall School and increased population.



- 3.42 The provision of the additional sports hall at Moreton Hall School does however improve overall accessibility to provision, as currently circa 50% of the St Edmundsbury population are outside the 20 minute catchment area for a sports hall.
- 3.43 There is slightly lower demand for sports hall provision in St Edmundsbury than both the East and England average.
- 3.44 Currently, 91.7% of all demand for sports hall provision is met in the Borough; this is a higher figure than both the East and England average. 59.5% of all available capacity in the existing and available community accessible provision is used during peak periods.
- 3.45 The percentage of demand satisfied by car users (82.1%) is much higher than the national average (75.3%) and the regional average (82.2%), reflecting the rural nature of the district.
- 3.46 Generally unmet demand is dispersed around the District.
- 3.47 8.3% of demand is unmet with current provision of community accessible sports halls. This demand is unmet predominantly due to people living outside the catchment area of an existing sports hall.
- 3.48 It is also interesting to note that there is little exported demand from St Edmundsbury to other sports halls in neighbouring districts. Exported demand is mainly to Mid Suffolk and equates to 5.5% or 372 vpwpp.
- 3.49 Opening the new sports hall (4 court) at Moreton Hall School will see levels of satisfied demand increase to 92.1%, due to increased capacity, and accessibility. However, given the age of many of the borough's sports halls their attractiveness rating declines over time, leading to lower satisfied demand.
- 3.50 Essentially, based on both current and future demand, there is an over-supply of sports hall provision in the Borough, even without the Moreton Hall proposal. It is important, however to note that within this context, both Haverhill Leisure Centre sports hall, and the one at Stour Valley School have 100% used capacity. As population increases South Lees School sports hall is also used more. The development of the new Moreton Hall School sports hall takes pressure off the existing sports hall at Moreton Hall Preparatory School, with the effect of realising 100% used capacity in the new hall on opening. It should also be part of the drive for the review of provision at Bury Leisure Centre; any review will, however need to reflect that 95% of the sports hall use is from the West Suffolk College.

## CONSULTATION

- 3.51 Consultation with relevant National Governing Bodies (NGBs), and local clubs, highlights local factors in relation to supply and demand for sports halls in the future.
- 3.52 A specific comment from a netball club in St Edmundsbury is: *Jetts Netball Club – I would welcome any discussion on the facilities for netball in West Suffolk for the clubs in our area. Our summer league has around 70 teams competing and suitable venues are very hard to find to accommodate such a growing league. This season we have had to reject two teams wanting to join our leagues.*

Table 3.5: Summary of National Governing Body Consultation – Sports Hall Sports

NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY	CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FURTHER COMMENTS
<p><b>BADMINTON ENGLAND</b></p>	<p>Focus Young People 13-26 years</p> <p>Casual Market</p> <p>Club engagement</p> <p>Badminton as a whole aims to improve the profile of the sport.</p>	<p>Abbeycroft Leisure wants to start a junior club.</p> <p>The area would benefit from more courts.</p> <p>The long-term aim would be to have a big sports centre with a hall for the entire county. This could host county tournaments but this would be very expensive. The badminton association has already looked into this but decided against it. The major issue was that it would be too expensive to upkeep and run this facility.</p> <p>Overall the major issue is the price of a badminton court. The average of £9 an hour is too much for clubs to pay and as a result is forcing them to fold.</p>	<p>The participation trends within the area are very similar to the national trend via APD. Suffolk has a high average age population, which helps with participation. As a whole the participation trends in Suffolk have remained unchanged.</p> <p>A community badminton network has recently been formed; this is a group of people from a variety of clubs that aim to get more people playing badminton. This does however, put facilities under strain.</p> <p>There are also school initiatives that are being run by CBN (community badminton network).</p> <p>At Haverhill they are trying to use CBN but this is not yet used in schools. So far the programme has managed to get 15 ex badminton players playing badminton again with the aim to get them to join clubs in the future.</p> <p>The major club in the area is the Abbygate Premier Club. They play at King Edwards's VI school, Bury St. Edmunds. The club has a hall with four courts and was refurbished for badminton. The club has senior and junior teams. The multipurpose areas at King Edward's are also used by a church group, which can impact on accessibility to the facilities. The Newmarket Badminton Association has its own league across Suffolk, which involves a variety of clubs.</p>

NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY	CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FURTHER COMMENTS
<b>ENGLAND BASKETBALL</b>	<p>Focus Satellite Clubs, school and club competitions – national perspective. AP9 – shows that basketball participation has increased even though Sport England funding was cut from Basketball England in 2014 due to them not hitting their previous Active People targets. The AP9 increase could be legacy of Ball Again and IM basketball programmes that Basketball England used to promote. Mixed economy model now being used through alternative organisations to deliver basketball that are receiving Sport England funding e.g. British Basketball Foundation, Reach and Teach. Basketball England still received some funding from Sport England for Satellite clubs programme, which is one of the most successful Satellite programmes amongst NGBs, and is currently working on a higher education specific satellite clubs model.</p> <p>Urban conurbations have the greatest potential and therefore are the main focus for Basketball England.</p>	<p>Main issues from NGB that they receive from clubs are: the cost of a basketball court, size of the courts not being appropriate for national league competition (small halls). Competition with other sports e.g. Badminton.</p> <p>There is unmet demand. There needs to be better access to school sites. Currently working with Sport England on this.</p>	<p>£1.8m pot for the last 4 years (2009-13) is all Basketball England have.</p>
<b>BOXING ENGLAND</b>	<p>Boxing since London 2012 has continued to grow throughout England.</p> <p>St Helens boxing club.</p>	<p>'Creating an Active Suffolk- where boxing is involved.</p>	<p>No funding available from NGB. Not targeted as a Whole Sport.</p>

NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY	CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FURTHER COMMENTS
	Astley V.I.P Amateur Boxing club	The Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (AASE) programme is running across the country aims at boxers who have the realistic potential to achieve excellence in boxing and are seeking to perform at the highest level.	
<b>ENGLAND NETBALL</b>	<p>West Suffolk has been a major priority area especially in relation to the Junior section.</p> <p>Within the last year netball has seen an increase in participation rates. There are now more than 150,000 netballers across the country who are playing the sport for at least half an hour every week.</p> <p>Junior netball in West Suffolk has seen a massive increase in participation rates compared to other areas. Adult participation levels are still slightly above the national average.</p> <p>There is the 'Back to Netball' initiative, which is being run to encourage people to get back into playing the game.</p>	<p>A major issue would be that many outdoor courts do not have floodlights. This means that sessions cannot be run in the evening; this results in a lack of supply to cater for the amount of demand.</p> <p>There is not enough after school clubs across Suffolk. There is also limited junior club provision.</p> <p>There is a lack of coaching opportunities for students of the University.</p> <p>They want to increase participation rates in Suffolk through intramural sport delivered by UNO or partner university/programmes.</p> <p>There is a target to deliver accessible and affordable pay and play sessions throughout the county.</p> <p>In the process of investigating a central venue.</p>	<p>There is currently not a central venue in Suffolk due to the landscape but all regional matches are now being played at Suffolk One in Ipswich.</p> <p>Within Suffolk there are minimal indoor courts and most new courts have to put down astro turf carpets. Often other sports take the indoor court time.</p> <p>Within Suffolk there is one University who have one team entered into BUCS. They have facilities but these are not on campus so have to travel 15 minutes by car to access these.</p> <p>The High 5 tournament will be run in Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds. They aim to deliver 2 holiday camps for High 5 age group attracting 30 participants at Bury St Edmunds.</p>

NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY	CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FURTHER COMMENTS
	<p>Sessions provide qualified coaches lead a gentle re-introduction into the game for women who are over 16 and the sessions. There is the aim to deliver 4 B2N local festivals engaging 80 participants across the county.</p>	<p>Disability facilities would be a key priority.</p> <p>Suffolk Netball doesn't receive direct funding to help with facility development so this is an area that is seen as a problem.</p> <p>Only 12 primary schools in Suffolk are affiliated to EN, which represents a small percentage of the schools across the county this can be increased. Communication from EN to schools needs to improve. There needs to be more volunteers and umpires to help cater for the demand.</p> <p>Colleges within Waveney, Forest Heath, Suffolk coastal and Bury St Edmunds will be approached about improving netball in the colleges.</p> <p>To be able to increase the number of volunteers something needs to be done to increase the enjoyment of these volunteers.</p> <p>Plan on Setting up a Volunteering page on Suffolk website to provide opportunities for individuals to become involved with Netball in the county</p> <p>Sports halls are being built in schools but they are not big enough to be able to fit in any netball courts.</p>	

NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY	CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FURTHER COMMENTS
<p><b>VOLLEYBALL ENGLAND</b></p>	<p>Go Spike – Adult participation programme (16+)</p> <p>Satellite Clubs – Children and young people (11-25)</p> <p>Further Education – Colleges and Sixth Forms (16-18)</p> <p>Club Development</p> <p>Sitting Volleyball – Disability offer (14+)</p> <p>Since 2013 nationally there has been lots of effort put in to develop new clubs. Within Suffolk region for this to happen more successfully there needs to be more volunteers and funding.</p> <p>Very little volleyball is played in schools within the area. For this problem to be resolved there needs to be more PE teachers putting volleyball sessions on.</p> <p>Another reason for lower participation trends in Suffolk is because people within the area do not know about the volleyball clubs. People have no idea there are volleyball clubs in Suffolk so do not get the chance to play.</p>	<p>The marketing of clubs needs to improve to help inform residents of Suffolk about volleyball participation opportunities.</p> <p>Improvement in the times available for volleyball in the sports centres to encourage more people to get involved in training. Participants in West Suffolk frequently travel to Mid Suffolk to access courts.</p>	<p>The sport has limited funding available. There is a capital fund which is available but this is up to the NGB to spend and Suffolk does not get very much.</p> <p>The Bury Bobcats play at Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre; the club's outdoor venue is based at Tollgate rec, St Olaves. They have become affiliated to volleyball England and already have a men's team competing at regional level and a female junior member has been selected for England Juniors. They are keen to recruit more members.</p> <p>There is unmet demand by the players who want to train midweek but do not have the opportunity.</p> <p>Newmarket club has many adults in the club and a few youngsters. They train on Wednesday nights at Newmarket Leisure centre, from 8-10pm.</p> <p>Haverhill Hornets - this is an early-stage club that is trying to get going following the successful Sport England small grant/Sportivate funding secured in 2013, with sessions starting in 2014. The club is not yet affiliated to Volleyball England, but is still going.</p>

NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY	CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FURTHER COMMENTS
	<p>A point why volleyball participation rates nationally are very low compared to other sports and because of the sports lack of TV coverage.</p>		

Draft

- 3.53 Consultation was undertaken at local level with local sports clubs, who were asked their views on the current facilities they use, whether they are likely to increase their membership in the future, and what the main issues are for them in terms of facilities in West Suffolk.
- 3.54 A summary of feedback from sports clubs using sports hall facilities is set out below. Detailed feedback is included at Appendix 5B.
- 3.55 The current supply of facilities has satisfactory ratings and the majority of clubs would recommend their facilities to other clubs.
- 3.56 The survey indicates that with a recent increase in membership and a further projected rise in the next three years, sports organisations believe that a greater quality and quantity of sporting facilities would allow their club to further grow and improve.
- **43% of organisations stated their membership had increased over the past year while 53% predict their membership will increase over the next three years. (Question 11 and 21)**
  - **With an average score across all facilities of 3.6/5, sports facilities are scored as ‘better than adequate’. Accessibility (travel), Cleanliness and Ease of Booking score particularly highly however Childcare Facilities is the only subarea that is rated as below adequate. (Question 16)**
  - **The overall satisfaction rating average was 7.9 with 66% of respondents rating their facility between 8 and 10.**
  - **The average rating indicating likelihood of recommendation to other sports clubs was 7.8, with 66% of respondents rating their facility between 8 and 10.**
  - **52% of respondents believed that the current facility supply (across the area) does not satisfy the demand for their activity.**

## SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS - SPORTS HALLS

### ST EDMUNDSBURY FACILITIES PLANNING MODEL (FPM)

- 3.57 From the FPM, which is only one element of the needs assessment, the simplistic analysis of “supply versus demand” in relation to sports halls within St Edmundsbury has identified an over supply of sports hall space within the local authority area, based on both current and future demand. This assumes retention of all existing community accessible facilities, and development of a new 4 court sports hall at Moreton Hall School.
- 3.58 The Facilities Planning Model analysis identifies that the 2015 population generates a demand for 33.82 courts and 7,386 visits per week. This equates to a current over supply of 14.95 courts. By 2025 the population is likely to demand 34.15 courts for 7,458 vpwpp. Clearly, with current provision at 48.77 courts, and proposed provision at 51.89 courts (new 4 court hall at Moreton Hall School), there is an over supply in the provision of sports halls in the District of around 17.74 courts by 2025, taking into account proposed changes in provision at Moreton Hall School and the increased population. However, it is worth highlighting that the new sports hall at Moreton Hall School is the only one on that side of Bury St Edmunds, and the sole hall providing for the new population.
- 3.59 Current levels of satisfied demand are higher than national and regional levels at 91.7%. Only 5.5% of the demand that is being satisfied is being met by sports hall provision outside of St Edmundsbury, predominantly within Mid Suffolk district.



- 3.60 Assuming retention of all existing facilities, plus the new sports hall at Moreton Hall School, levels of unmet demand will decrease by 2025 to 7.9% and equate to 587 visits per week during the peak period. Circa 85.5%% of this unmet demand is attributed to people living outside the catchment of an existing sports hall facility.
- 3.61 Used capacity figures for St Edmundsbury vary widely across the district, from 100% at Haverhill Leisure Centre and Stour Valley School sports halls, to 56% at St Edmundsbury Leisure Centre sports hall, once the new sports hall is built at Moreton Hall School.
- 3.62 There is also an opportunity to increase operational hours at Culford School Sports Hall which would balance out supply and demand across the area, by improving community accessibility.

## ST EDMUNDSBURY

- 3.63 Badminton, Basketball, Netball and Volleyball NGBs highlight the need, and demand, for additional indoor sports hall space in West Suffolk, due to growing participation, and the establishment of new clubs. Netball identify the need for any new sports halls to be of an appropriate size to provide a netball court. There is only one 8 court sports hall in St Edmundsbury,
- 3.64 Given there are a significant number of sports halls on education sites, it may be possible to achieve some increased capacity within the existing sports hall stock, by negotiating improved and extended access to existing facilities on educational sites through formal community use agreements, and opening existing community facilities for longer.
- 3.65 Schools play a critical role in providing facilities for community access; it is critical that all new sports halls on school sites provide secured community access to a minimum 4 court sports hall, through a formal agreement.
- 3.66 Although there have been 2 new sports halls built in the last five years, the remainder of the existing sports hall facilities were predominantly built in the 1960s to mid 1980s. The condition and quality of these facilities, despite various refurbishments, will need to be carefully monitored, to ensure that facility quality does not deteriorate, and planning should be undertaken for replacement facilities in the medium term.
- 3.67 St Edmundsbury operates two sports halls, in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill, through Abbeycroft Leisure.
- 3.68 There is currently only one 8 badminton court sports hall in St Edmundsbury, which means that the capability to host county/regional indoor sports events, or provide a central venue for training and competition is limited. Sports hall provision for e.g. indoor netball, and volleyball is limited. The lack of halls this size also limits to ability to further develop basketball in the Borough.

## SWIMMING POOLS

### SWIMMING POOL SUPPLY IN ST EDMUNDSBURY

3.69 The analysis of the overall swimming pool supply in St Edmundsbury, (based on Appendix 3) is as follows:

**Table 3.6: Analysis of Swimming Pool Supply in St Edmundsbury**

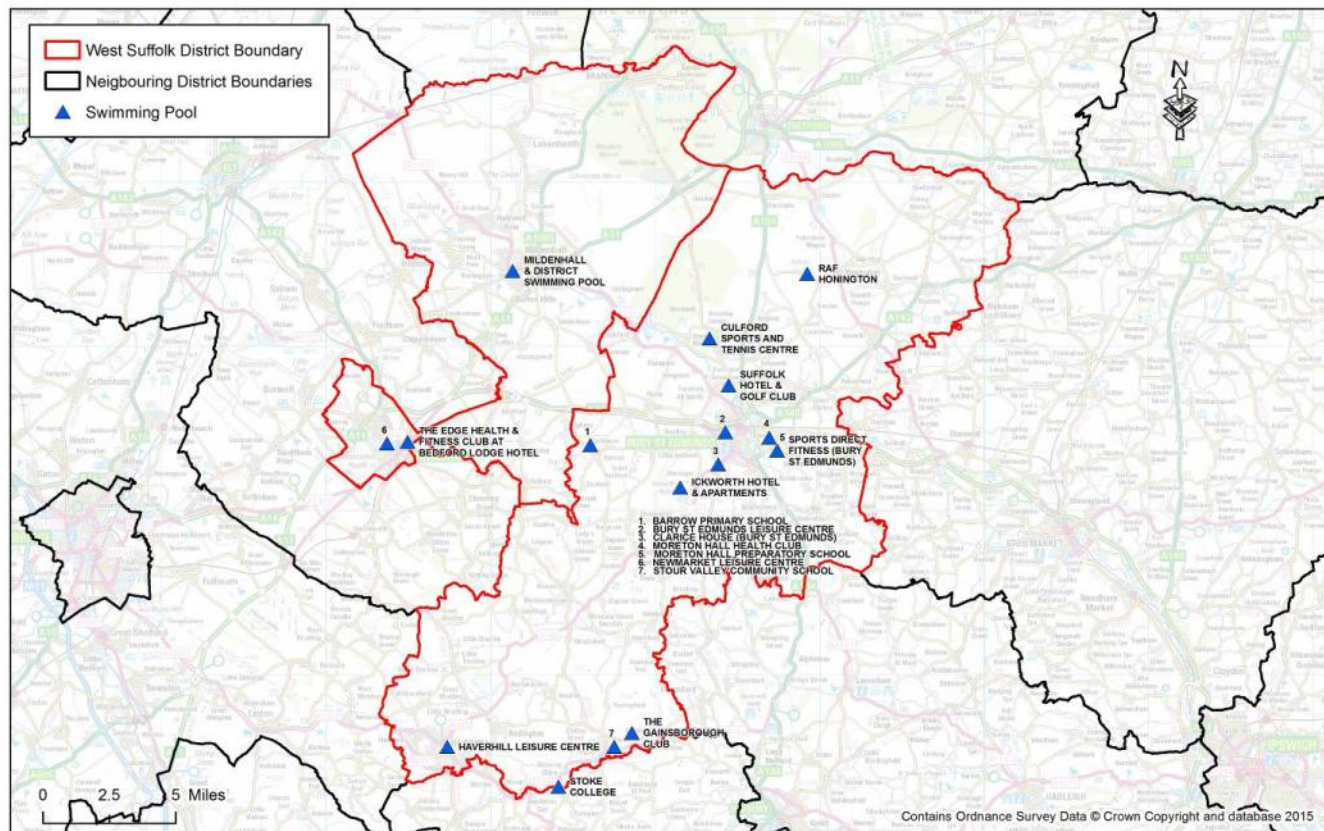
<b>TOTAL SWIMMING POOLS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>TOTAL COMMUNITY ACCESSIBLE SWIMMING POOLS</b>	<b>14 (5 LOCAL AUTHORITY POOLS)</b>
<b>TOTAL MAIN POOLS</b>	<b>4 (2 LOCAL AUTHORITY POOLS)</b>
<b>TOTAL LEARNER POOLS</b>	<b>2 (ONLY 1 IS 3 LANES WIDE, THE OTHERS ARE VERY SMALL)</b>

**N.B** The leisure pool at Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre, and the Haverhill Learner Pool, both of which are less than 20m in length have been included in the above figures, as they are in the FPM.

3.70 The supply analysis identifies that St Edmundsbury has a total of 18 swimming pools, across 14 sites (West Suffolk Audit of Facilities, August 2015, and Active Places August 2015). These are listed in Appendix 3. Of these 18 pools, 4 are lidos, 1 is a leisure pool (Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre), 10 are main pools, and 3 are learner/teaching/training pools.

3.71 Table 3.6 highlights that the majority of swimming pools in St Edmundsbury are available for community use. In addition to the St Edmundsbury pools, Culford Sports and Tennis Centre pool is available for club and community use (some casual swimming sessions have been added), Clarice House, Sports Direct and RAF Honington are all available for at least some community use; all other facilities are on education sites, and/or require a membership prior to use.

Map 3.5: Swimming Pools in St Edmundsbury



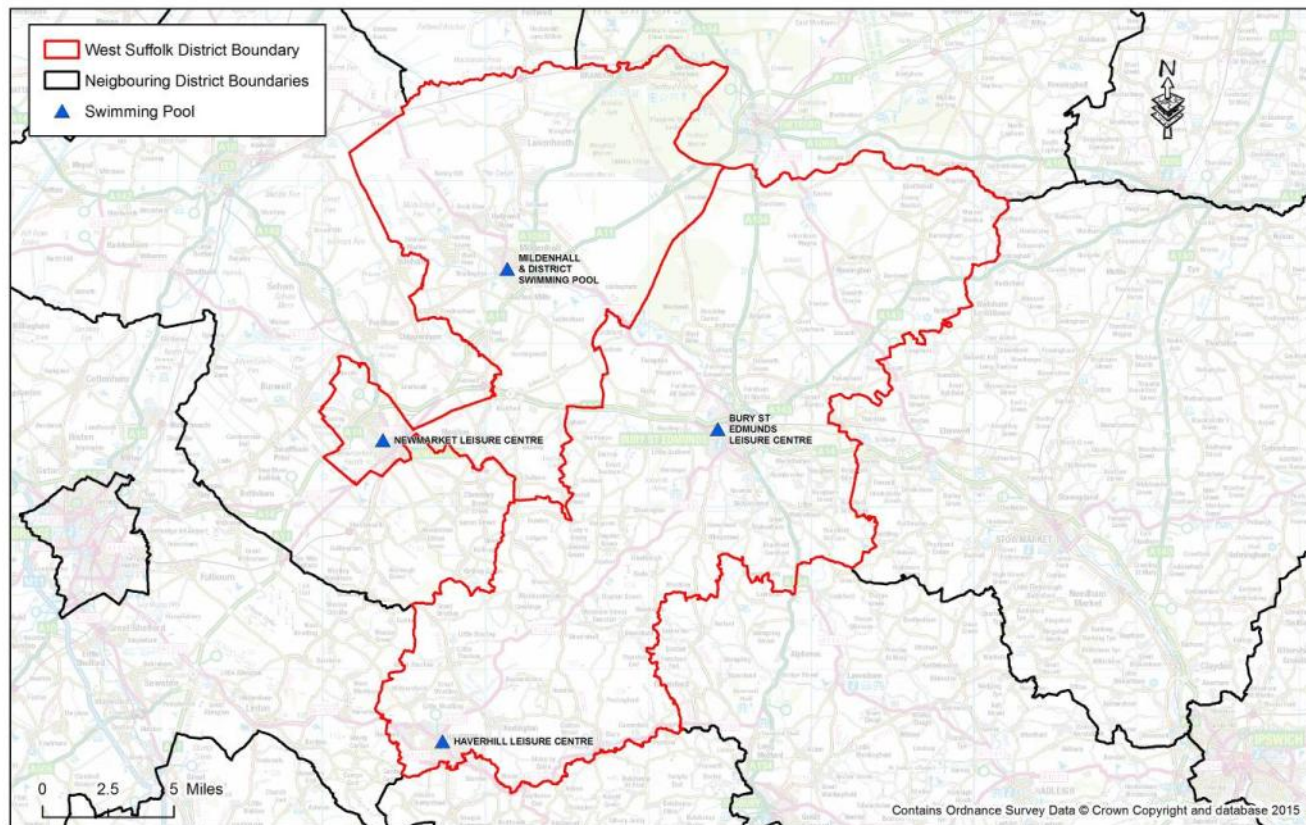
All Swimming Pools



3.72 Map 3.5 shows the swimming pools in St Edmundsbury and their location. Swimming pools are provided, in the main, by St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

3.73 Of the 14 sites, 2 are pay and play access, managed by Abbeycroft Leisure Trust (Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre, Haverhill Leisure Centre). 1 pool is managed by the MOD, 5 are on school sites, and 6 are commercially operated facilities. Effectively only 4 sites and 6 pools (4 main, 2 teaching / learner) are available for community use.

**Map 3.6 Community Accessible Swimming Pools**



**Community accessible Swimming Pools**



## EXISTING SUPPLY - GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND QUALITY

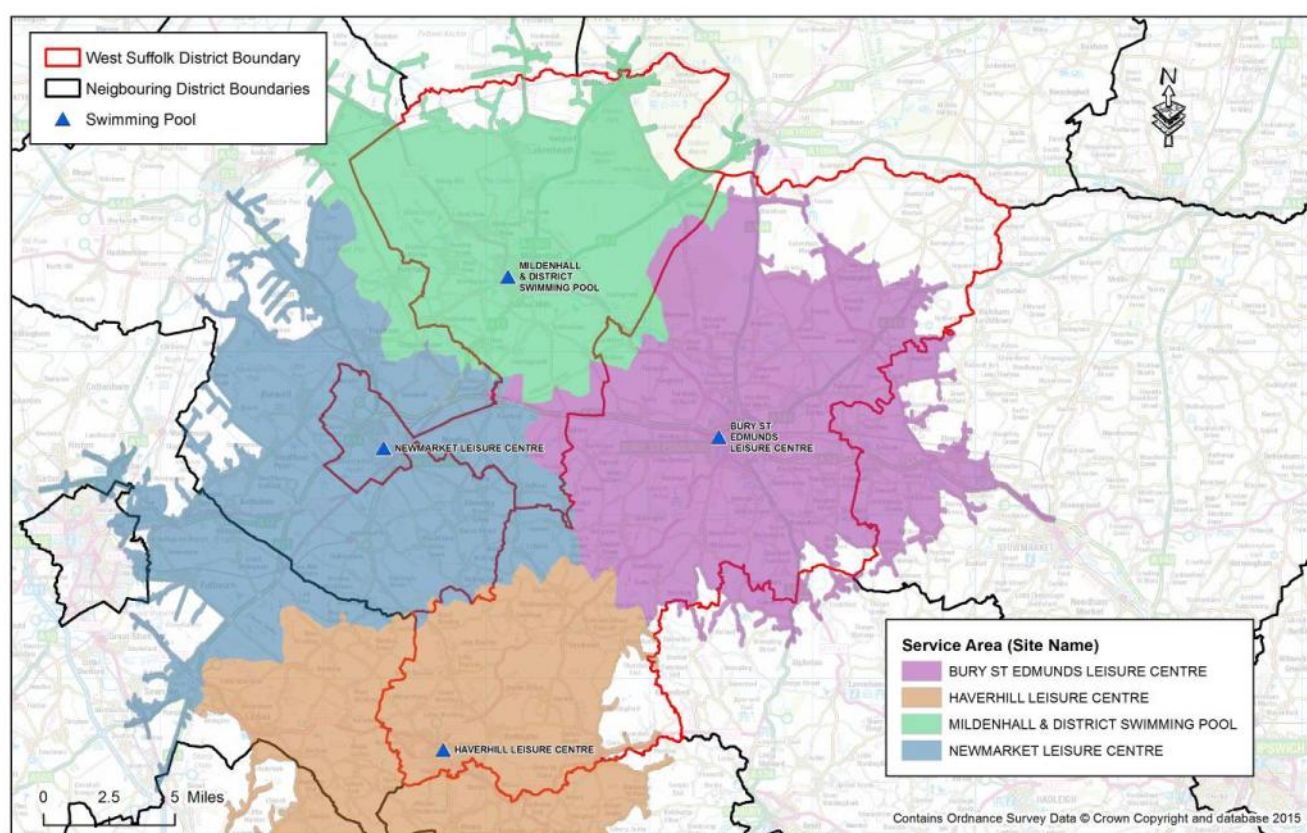
### QUALITY

- 3.74 Detailed quality assessments have been undertaken on all St Edmundsbury facilities. These are provided in Appendix 2 (2a-2f), and summarised in Table 3.3 above.
- 3.75 Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre was built 40 years ago (1975), and Haverhill Leisure Centre was built 44 years ago (1971).
- 3.76 The rest of the swimming pool stock in St Edmundsbury was been built between 1956 – 2009; the most recent facilities are commercial, built in 2009.
- 3.77 The quality of the existing swimming pool facilities is therefore extremely variable.
- 3.78 Although ageing facilities, both Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill Leisure Centres are in good states of repair; however, thought will need to be given to their replacement in the medium to long term, given that public swimming facilities are typically designed with a life of 30-40 years. The quality of the swimming offer moving forward will be critical, given that the majority of community swimming is provided through the St Edmundsbury pools.

## EXISTING SUPPLY - ACCESSIBILITY

- 3.79 Geographical distribution of swimming pool facilities provision is effectively based in the urban areas, in each of the main towns.
- 3.80 All St Edmundsbury swimming pools operated by Abbeycroft Leisure are 25m in length, are 6 lanes wide.
- 3.81 Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre is in the town centre, which is some distance from the new housing developments planned for the north and north east of the town. The existing swimming pools in the town will be less accessible for the areas of new population growth.
- 3.82 As illustrated in Map 3.7 below, residents in the more urban areas of West Suffolk have easier access to the existing swimming pools.

**Map 3.7: Swimming Pools in West Suffolk – Service Areas**



**Service areas (up to a 20 minute drive time) - Swimming Pools**



- 3.83 Based on a 20 minute catchment area, residents in St Edmundsbury who live in the north and the south of St Edmundsbury are currently outside the catchment area of a St Edmundsbury Borough Council pool. Residents in the north are however close to the Breckland Leisure Centre, located just over the boundary.
- 3.84 In St Edmundsbury a significant proportion of users travel by car to use the swimming facilities.

## SUPPLY AND DEMAND ANALYSIS

### SPORT ENGLAND'S FACILITIES PLANNING MODEL

3.85 Strategic Leisure was provided with the Sport England's Facilities Planning Model National Run (August 2014; data from April 2014 report) for swimming pool provision in St Edmundsbury. The report sets out an assessment of the current situation regarding swimming pool supply, based on 2015 population (317,027), and then looks forward to 2025, to test different scenarios in terms of provision changes in West Suffolk, and also in the surrounding local authorities of Forest Heath, East Cambridgeshire, South Cambridgeshire, Braintree, Uttlesford, Breckland, South Norfolk, Babergh, Mid Suffolk. The key findings are summarised below. The full reports can be accessed at Appendices 7C and D respectively.

### ST EDMUNDSBURY

#### SUPPLY

- 3.86 The Facilities Planning Model analysis identifies 9 pools across 6 sites in St Edmundsbury. Effectively, the FPM only considers pools over 20m in length; however, in this case the leisure pool at Bury St Edmunds Leisure centre has been included in the assessment (140 sq m).
- 3.87 The 4 swimming pools at Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre (all pools) – 6,171, Clarice House – 1,387, Culford – 704, Haverhill Leisure Centre (both pools) – 3,683 RAF Honington – 394 and Sport Direct – Bury St Edmunds – 1,320 provide a total of 13,659 visits per week in the peak period (vpwpp). 72% (9854) of this weekly use is at Bury St Edmunds and Haverhil Leisure Centres.
- 3.88 The existing community accessible pools provide a total of 1,275 sq m of water space, compared with a current demand for 1,155 sq m of water space i.e. an over supply of 420 sq m.
- 3.89 Residents in St Edmundsbury have good access to swimming pools, with the majority of the population being able to access a pool within a 20 minute drive time. St Edmundsbury residents have a higher share of swimming pools in the Borough than the East and England averages.
- 3.90 The FPM also identifies there is a difference in the opening hours in the peak period across the overall pool sites, and in the other facilities which are available for community use, and those which are operated by Abbeycroft Leisure on behalf of West Suffolk.

#### DEMAND

- 3.91 The Facilities Planning Model analysis identifies that the 2015 population (112,884) generates a demand for 6,963 visits per week during peak periods. Clearly there is a current imbalance between the level of demand in the Borough, and the available capacity in existing swimming pools. By 2025, the estimated population is likely to demand an additional 115 visits per week per peak periods (based on a 5% population increase).
- 3.92 Currently, 91% (6,344 visits per week in peak periods) of all demand for swimming pool provision is met in the Borough; this is an extremely high level of satisfied demand. 94% of all demand for swimming is retained in the Borough. However, only 53% of all available capacity in the existing and available community accessible provision is used during peak periods. Haverhill, being the only pool in the south of the Borough is the most heavily used at 76% capacity. These figures suggest that there is sufficient capacity in the existing pools to accommodate future increased participation and population growth.

- 3.93 9% (619) visits per week in peak periods) of demand is unmet with the current provision of community accessible swimming pools. This demand is unmet because some residents are outside the catchment of an existing swimming pool.
- 3.94 This latter point reflects the fact that around 15.2% of St Edmundsbury residents do not own a car (England average is 25%).
- 3.95 Current unmet demand is distributed across the Borough; additional pool provision at existing location is therefore unlikely to address accessibility challenges for these residents.
- 3.96 It is also interesting to note that the only pool that St Edmundsbury residents make significant use of outside the Borough is Breckland Leisure Centre and Water World (about 403 vpwpp). However, St Edmundsbury is a net importer of swimmers at around 26% or 1,036 per week.
- 3.97 By 2025, with a population of 118, 319 (5% increase), the level of demand for swimming will be for 1,175 sq m, compared to a supply of 1,275 i.e. an over supply of 400 sq m. By 2025, demand for swimming per 1000 people actually falls, due to an ageing population, although the number of vpwpp increases by 115 (2%).
- 3.98 Critically the age of the existing pool stock becomes the major issue as the St Edmundsbury pools will be nearly 60 years old, and therefore the quality of the offer will diminish.
- 3.99 Satisfied demand remains met at 91%, however satisfied demand becomes increasingly dispersed to other pools in the Borough, which offer a higher quality swimming offer. St Edmundsbury remains a net importer of swims, although the level drops slightly, reflecting the quality of the facilities by 2025.
- 3.100 Levels of unmet demand stay similar to the situation modelled in 2015, but relative share figures plummet, because the pools available are so much older and therefore of a lower quality.
- 3.101 Essentially, based on both current and future demand, there is sufficient swimming pool provision in the Borough. However, it is important to highlight that the FPM looks at population increase spread across the Borough, whereas in reality the majority of it will be in the north and north east of St Edmundsbury.
- 3.102 Extending the operating hours of the other available community accessible pools would assist in increasing capacity in the Borough, but capacity is less of an issue than quality of facilities moving forward, except at Haverhill Leisure Centre.
- 3.103 The pool at Haverhill Leisure Centre is full (76%), and is also ageing; therefore there is a need to consider the future of this facility, and how it might be replaced.. A significant amount of imported demand is seen at Haverhill, with the majority of these uses coming from Mid Suffolk, South Cambridgeshire and Braintree. Any future pool developments in these areas could be positive for Haverhill, in terms of reducing the net import of users.

## CONSULTATION

3.104 Consultation with relevant National Governing Bodies (NGBs), and local clubs, highlights local factors in relation to supply and demand for swimming pool provision in the future.

**Table 3.7 Summary of National Governing Body Consultation – Aquatic Activities**

NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY	CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FURTHER COMMENTS
<b>AMATEUR SWIMMING ASSOCIATION (ASA)</b>	<p>Encouraging and facilitating more people to swim more often.</p> <p>Development of the Talent pathway.</p>	<p>Encouraging and facilitating more people to swim more often.</p> <p>Development of the Talent pathway.</p> <p>Re-development of the Mildenhall Swimming Pool; the ASA would support a larger pool in this area, potentially 8 lane x 25m.</p> <p>ASA officers working with the operators to deliver interventions like Learn to Swim and Swim Fit. Working with the operators to deliver Aquatic Improvement Plan (sign up operator for 2 years, develop an improvement plan within the first 6 months).</p> <p>Working with Abbeycroft Leisure to deliver Preferred Partner Programme (PPP).</p>	<p>In Suffolk swimming participation levels have generally remained stable, or increased in comparison to other areas.</p> <p>Everyday Swim programme - Bury St. Edmunds more involved and pro-active.</p> <p>Three main swimming clubs; West Suffolk Swimming Club (Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre and Haverhill Leisure Centre); Newmarket Swimming Club (Newmarket Leisure Centre); Mildenhall Swimming Club (Mildenhall Swimming Pool)</p> <p>No 50m pools in Suffolk; the closest is in 50m pools are in Norwich (University Campus),, and in Luton; there has also been discussion about the construction of a new 50m pool in Cambridge. West Suffolk Swimming Club travel to Luton for training.</p> <p>No diving facilities in area; nearest diving centre is Cambridge.</p>

## SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS - SWIMMING POOLS

3.105 From the FPM, which is only one element of the overall assessment of swimming pools it is clear that there is over supply in St Edmundsbury. There is little import/export between St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath, so opportunities are limited to address this situation within existing pool supply; the two districts are clearly very different in terms of their swimming participation patterns.

3.106 Current levels of satisfied demand are high in St Edmundsbury; the FPM also suggests that high levels of demand are being retained within the district.



- 3.107 East Cambs is a source of imported use for St Edmundsbury. Levels of imported use are likely to reduce with the opening of a new pool in Ely.
- 3.108 Current levels of unmet demand are at 9% St Edmundsbury, and equate to 619 visits per week during the peak period respectively. All of this unmet demand is attributed to people living outside the catchment of an existing swimming pool.
- 3.109 Essentially, based on both current and future demand, there is sufficient swimming pool provision in St Edmundsbury. Residents in St Edmundsbury have more pools, and a higher relative share than those in Forest Heath.
- 3.110 Unmet demand is distributed across the District, but not at levels significant enough to demand additional provision either at existing sites, or new sites.

## HEALTH AND FITNESS FACILITIES

### SUPPLY OF HEALTH AND FITNESS SUITES IN ST EDMUNDSBURY

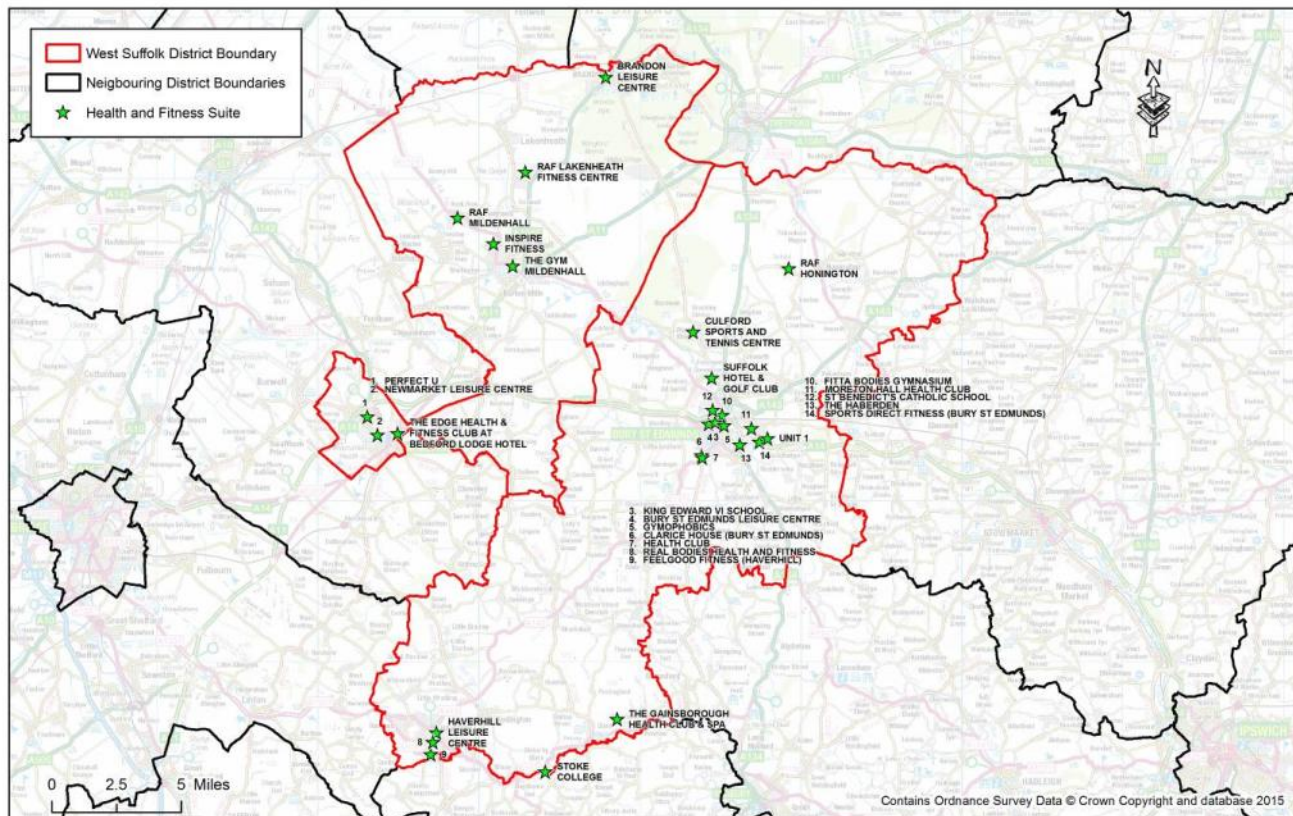
- 3.111 The supply analysis identifies that St Edmundsbury has a total of 20 fitness suites across 20 sites (West Suffolk Audit of Facilities August 2015/Active Places August 2015). These are listed in Appendix 3.
- 3.112 The analysis of the overall fitness suite supply in St Edmundsbury, (based on Appendix 3) is as follows:

**Table 3.8 Analysis of Fitness Suite Supply in St Edmundsbury**

<b>TOTAL FITNESS SUITES</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>TOTAL FITNESS STATIONS</b>	<b>823</b>
<b>TOTAL COMMUNITY ACCESSIBLE FITNESS SUITES (ALL WILL REQUIRE SOME FORM OF PAYMENT PRIOR TO USE/MONTHLY DD, MEMBERSHIP ETC)</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>TOTAL COMMUNITY ACCESSIBLE FITNESS STATIONS</b>	<b>652</b>

- 3.113 Table 3.8 highlights that there is a significant supply of fitness stations in St Edmundsbury.
- 3.114 Map 3.8 shows all the fitness suites in St Edmundsbury and their location. Fitness suites are located on education sites, in commercial fitness facilities and in the areas' leisure centres e.g. Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre, and Haverhill Leisure Centre.

Map 3.8 Health and Fitness Facilities in St Edmundsbury and the wider West Suffolk Area



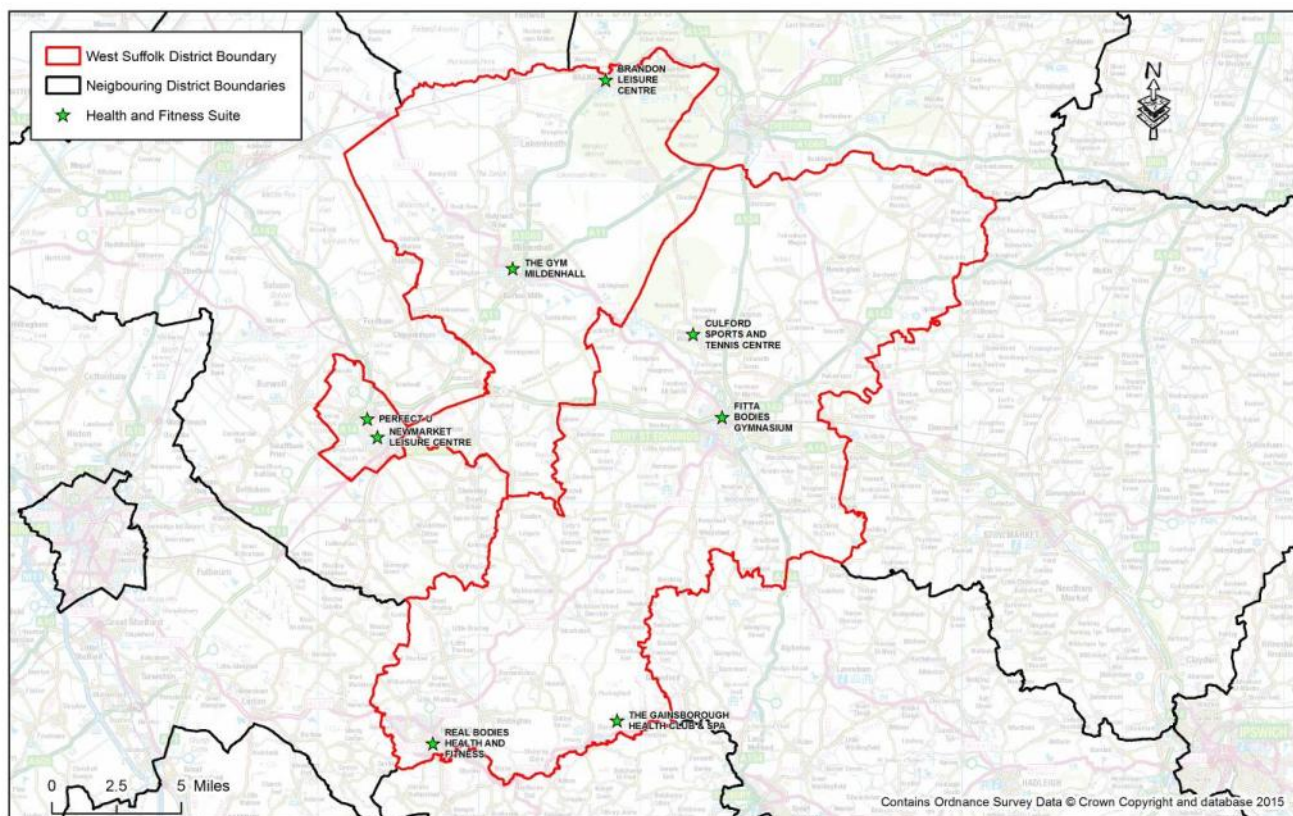
All Health and Fitness Suites



3.115 The majority of these operate as pay and play facilities (14 fitness suites, with a total of 652 stations), even though some facilities are operated through the commercial sector. However, it is important to highlight that although many of the facilities are described as pay and play facilities, there is actually a lean towards membership based access rather than pay and play.

3.116 All fitness facilities will require some form of payment/membership before use so in this sense the St Edmundsbury facilities are no different to those in the commercial sector. The commercial fitness facilities in St Edmundsbury are not 'top end' provision, but in the bottom to middle of the commercial market; therefore the membership/monthly fees may not be as much of a barrier as if the commercial facilities were top end provision.

Map 3.9: Community Accessible Health and Fitness Facilities in St Edmundsbury and the wider West Suffolk Area



Community accessible Health and Fitness Suites



## EXISTING SUPPLY - GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND QUALITY

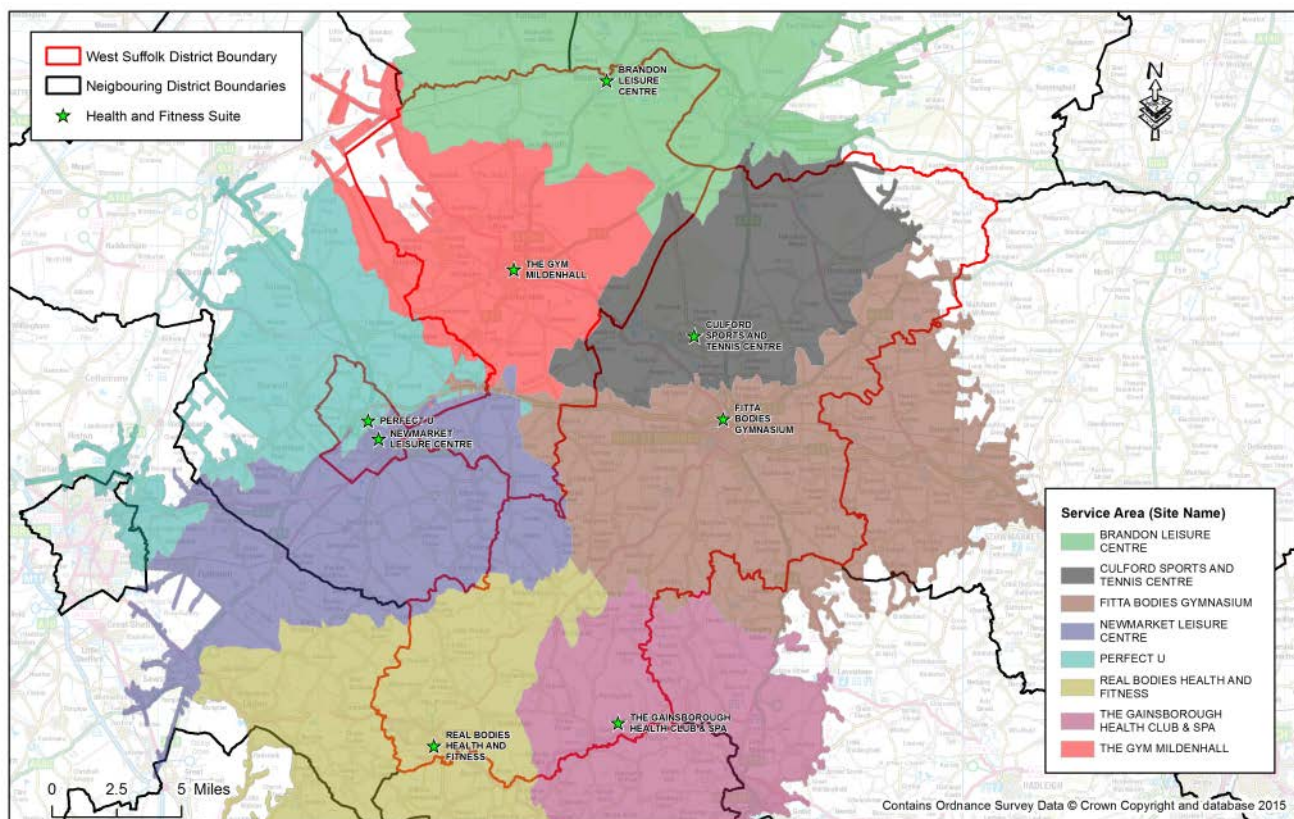
### QUALITY

- 3.117 Detailed quality assessments have been undertaken on all St Edmundsbury facilities. These are provided in Appendix 2 (2a-2f), and summarised in Table 3.3 above.
- 3.118 The fitness suite at Haverhill Leisure Centre was refurbished in 2009, and that at Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre in 2011.
- 3.119 The majority of the existing fitness facilities in St Edmundsbury were built from the mid 1990s onwards, and many have been refurbished in the last 5-10 years.
- 3.120 The quality of the existing facilities is therefore generally better than that of pools and halls.

### EXISTING SUPPLY - ACCESSIBILITY

- 3.121 Geographical distribution of fitness facilities provision is generally good, across St Edmundsbury, although the majority are located in and around the market towns.
- 3.122 There are currently 20 fitness facilities, on 20 different sites in West Suffolk. Of these sites, 2 are operated by Abbeycroft Leisure, 1 by the MOD, 12 by commercial providers, 4 by education providers, and 1 by a sports club.

**Map 3.10: Fitness Suites in St Edmundsbury – Service Areas**



**Service areas (up to a 20 minute drive time) - Health and Fitness Suites**

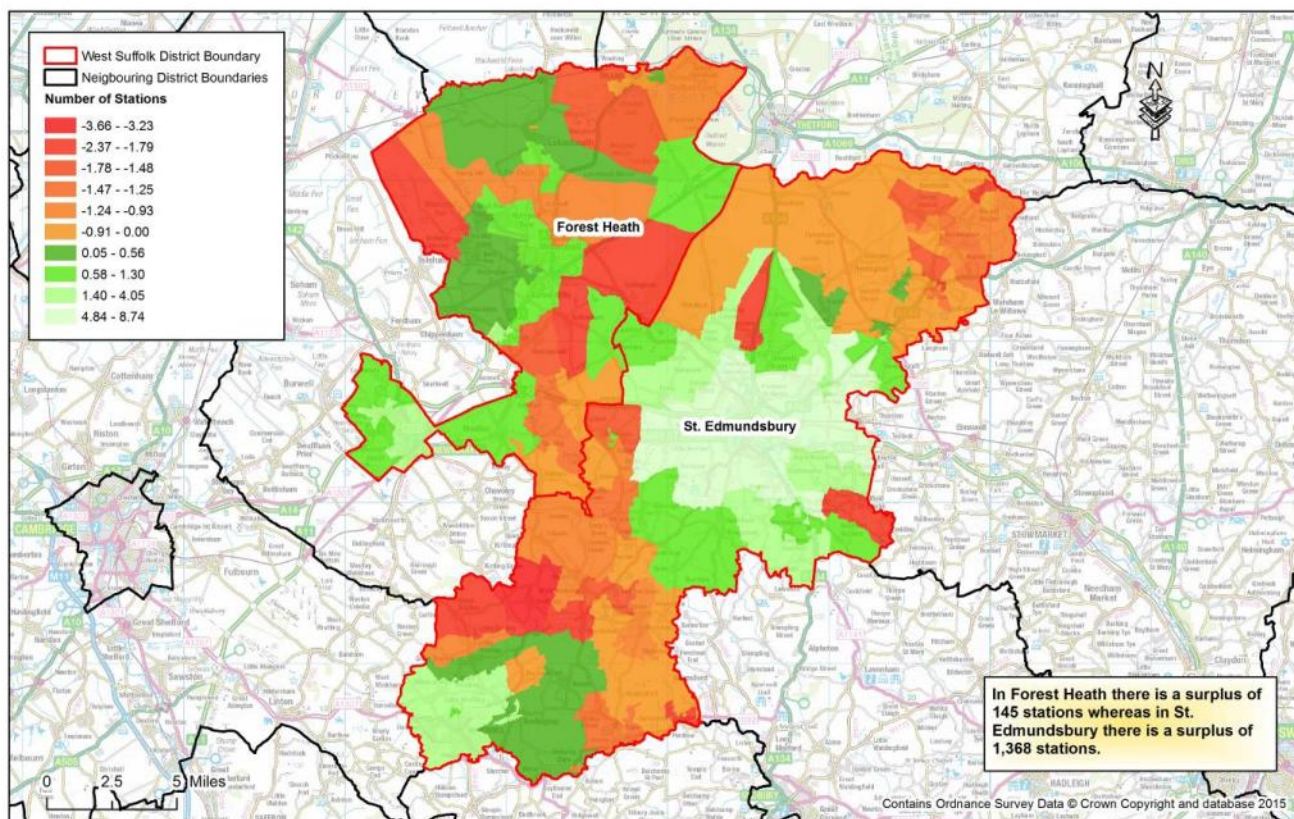


- 3.123 Map 3.10 illustrates that there is a large supply of fitness facilities in St Edmundsbury. Based on a 20 minute catchment area the map identifies a small surplus in current provision in St Edmundsbury.
- 3.124 The challenge in St Edmundsbury is that in a rural area travel distances vary, and although car ownership is high, 20% of the community do not have access to private transport (in urban areas) and in the rural areas, 10%.
- 3.125 This is where the local provision of fitness facilities on education sites becomes even more important, as this type of facility increases the level of local provision available for local people.
- 3.126 Maintaining and indeed developing increased community access to education-based sports facilities is critical in ensuring locally available access, and facilitating increased participation in sport and physical activity for health benefits. Equally, the provision of a few fitness stations in a village hall/community hall, or even a sports pavilion, such as the new one proposed in Bardwell Parish, in St Edmundsbury District, could increase access to provision, particularly in a rural area.

## SUPPLY AND DEMAND ANALYSIS

3.127 Map 3.11 illustrates the supply and demand balance of fitness stations across St Edmundsbury, based on 2015 population levels.

**Map 3.11: Health and Fitness supply and demand St Edmundsbury**



**Supply and demand analysis for Health and Fitness Suites**



3.128 Appendices 6a and 6b model the current supply and demand in more detail; this highlights a significant current over supply of fitness stations in St Edmundsbury; demand is for 424 stations but there is a supply of 652 (based on 2015 population as used in the FPM). There is an over supply of fitness station of 228 fitness stations.

3.129 Based on increased populations by 2025 in both areas, as used in the FPM modelling, demand increases in St Edmundsbury to 444 fitness stations against a supply of 652 fitness stations. Supply remains in excess of demand by 208 fitness stations.

## SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS - FITNESS SUITES

3.130 Generally there is a good supply of fitness facilities across St Edmundsbury, in and around the main towns. There is less provision in the rural areas, however, as shown in Map 3.8, accessibility is reasonable in most areas.

3.131 Current supply of fitness facilities is made predominantly through the public and commercial sectors (low to middle end of the market); very few facilities are located on education sites.

3.132 There is a current and future surplus in provision of fitness stations against demand, based on 2015 and 2025 population estimates in St Edmundsbury (228 and 208 fitness stations respectively).

3.133 Generally, the quality of fitness provision is better than that of pools and sports halls, because the facilities are newer; this is particularly so in the case of the refurbished fitness facilities at Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centres.

## SQUASH

### SUPPLY OF SQUASH FACILITIES IN ST EDMUNDSBURY

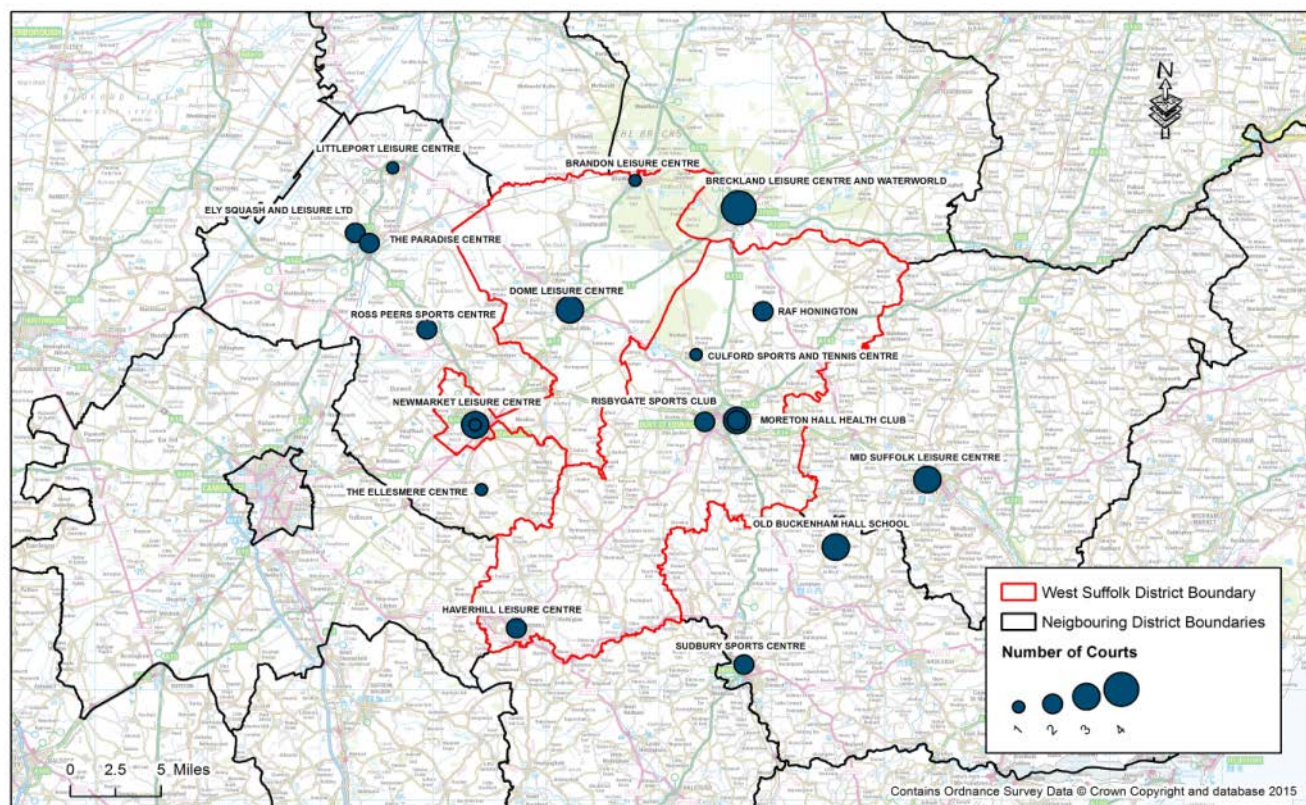
3.134 There are 20 squash courts in West Suffolk, located across 8 sites. There are 11 squash courts in St Edmundsbury across 6 sites.

3.135 Existing squash courts are managed by a combination of a sports club (1 site), the MOD (1 site), commercial management (1 site), and a school (1 site). Of the 20 courts available, 16 are community accessible, although the commercial facility and the sports club site require membership. St Edmundsbury provides the majority of pay and play squash facilities in the area.

3.136 Appendix 3 sets out the details of the existing squash courts in St Edmundsbury.

3.137 Map 3.12 shows the location of the existing squash courts in St Edmundsbury.

**Map 3.12: Squash Courts in St Edmundsbury**



Squash



## DEMAND AND ACCESSIBILITY

- 3.138 Map 3.12 above clearly shows that there is a reasonable distribution of squash courts across the area, given that in the main this type of provision is part of a larger sports facility, which tend to be located in and around the main urban areas. Moreton Hall is a separate fitness and squash facility, privately owned and operated.
- 3.139 The 14 courts were built between 1965 – 2009. Risbygate Sports club was refurbished in 2012 and the courts at RAF Honington in 2013, but these are not available for public use.
- 3.140 Consultation with England Squash and Racketball identified the following feedback:

**Table 3.9: Consultation with England Squash and Racquetball**

SPORT	CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES	OTHER KEY INFORMATION
<b>ENGLAND SQUASH AND RACKETBALL</b>	<p>Going through period of change. New CEO 10 months ago. Changing structure and strategy of organisation.</p> <p>Recently drawn up a list of priority areas, key factors:</p> <p>Key partners.</p> <p>Facility infrastructure.</p> <p>West Suffolk is not a priority areas, due to the low number of courts.</p> <p>Nationally a downward trend in Squash via APD past 5 years.</p> <p>Membership has stayed generally the same.</p>	<p>First priority is about protecting courts that already exist.</p> <p>One/Two courts in a facility really limits junior coaching provision and club growth.</p> <p>Three courts is the minimum required minimum for a club with adult and junior programme.</p> <p>If a new facility development was an option, it should have glass-backed courts.</p>	<p>Mortonhall, Bury St. Edmunds. 5 courts and decent junior programme. Big, private club. Attracts people from outside and better players.</p> <p>'Risbygate'. 3 courts. Private club.</p> <p>Squash courts are also available at LC Haverhill 3, Newmarket 3, Mildenhall 3.</p> <p>Littleport (outside area).</p> <p>Ely (outside area) Squash club on a multi-use site with cricket, hockey and rugby.</p>

- 3.141 No need for additional squash courts has been identified in the area, however this assumes the existing level of supply is retained. The closure of the only 2 public courts in the town at Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre close, has been mitigated by access arrangements at the squash club facilities.

## TABLE TENNIS

### SUPPLY OF TABLE TENNIS FACILITIES IN ST EDMUNDSBURY

3.142 All sports halls in St Edmundsbury have the capability to provide table tennis facilities. At Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre, Abbeycroft Leisure provides up to 6 tables for club training and competition, plus casual use. There are no purpose built table tennis facilities in West Suffolk.

### DEMAND AND ACCESSIBILITY

3.143 Consultation with Table Tennis England has identified some potential to develop purpose built provision both outdoors in the area and also in Bury St Edmunds.

**Table 3.10: Consultation with Table Tennis England**

<b>SPORT</b>	<b>CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES</b>	<b>FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES</b>	<b>OTHER KEY INFORMATION</b>
<b>TABLE TENNIS ENGLAND</b>	<p>Have a capital fund available. This year have £500k. Up to NGB how they spend it.</p> <p>Facility owners can apply to ESR for the funding.</p> <p>Any squash facility is available to apply for this funding, not just priority areas.</p>	<p>Look to convert casual members to competitive i.e. casual player becomes regular and then joins a club</p> <p>Opportunist outdoor recreational use.</p> <p>Build outdoor facilities wherever there is a major infrastructure investment.</p> <p>Potential for Bury St Edmunds.</p>	<p>Ping Projects – work with the city councils. (10 or 20k) run festival over the summer. Natural congregations – more tables and more bats and balls.</p>

3.144 Two table tennis clubs responded to the consultation; Thurston Table Tennis Club identifies that its membership is projected to grow and therefore additional facilities will be needed.

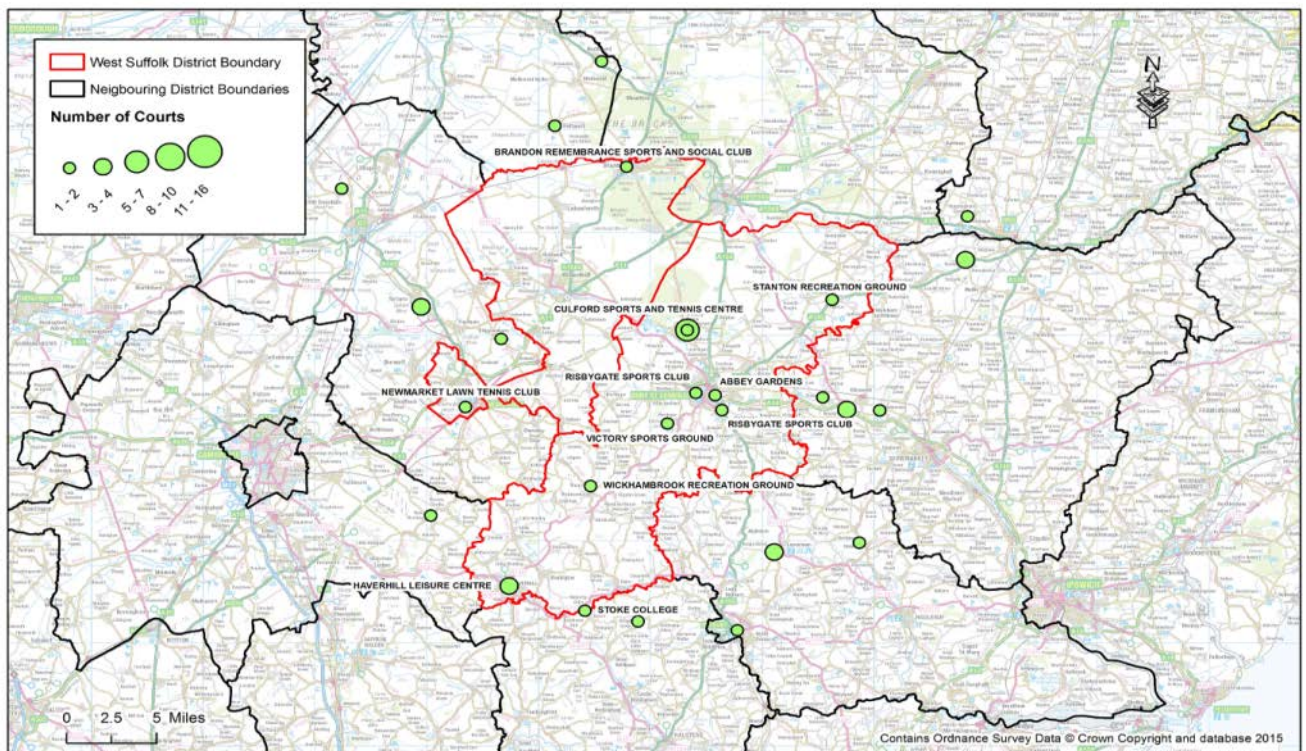


## INDOOR TENNIS

### SUPPLY OF TENNIS FACILITIES IN ST EDMUNDSBURY

- 3.145 There are 4 permanent indoor courts at Culford Sports and Tennis Centre, St Edmundsbury. These facilities are owned and operated by a sports club and a school, respectively. Membership is required for Culford Sports and Tennis Club,
- 3.146 The facility was built within the last 10 years so is of good quality. Full details of the indoor tennis courts are in Appendix 3.

**Map 3.13: Indoor Tennis Facilities in St Edmundsbury**



Tennis Indoor



## DEMAND AND ACCESSIBILITY

3.147 Map 3.13 shows that in addition to the facility in St Edmundsbury, there are a number of other indoor facilities in neighbouring authorities, which may also be accessible for residents of St Edmundsbury. Consultation with the LTA identifies no priority for additional indoor tennis facilities in St Edmundsbury, but a focus on developing participation at existing public courts.

Table 3.11: Consultation with the LTA

SPORT	CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES	OTHER KEY INFORMATION
<b>LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION (LTA)</b>	<p>National strategy – get more people playing more often and to enrich lives through tennis.</p> <p>Participation focus – deliver great services to clubs, community and education.</p> <p>Focus WSP areas are Oxford, Kings Lynn, Reading and Southend – on – Sea</p> <p>No LTA top down priorities – encouraging clubs to access the Easy Access Loan scheme.</p> <p>LTA trying to pilot Canopies for parks (similar to Gazebo) piloting one in Reading and Manchester.</p> <p>LTA is doing a lot of facility investment at the moment. Have noticed a lot of differentiation across strategies on how site quality is marked. LTA use 3 levels poor (unsafe to play), good (playable) or excellent (new) which keeps it simple.</p>	<p>Focus is working with local authorities to increase public use of public sites for recreational/informal use and competitions e.g. Tennis leagues virtual leagues online.</p> <p>Coaching products to attract and obtain members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini Tennis Programme.</li> <li>• Cardio Tennis.</li> <li>• Touch Tennis (mini tennis for adults).</li> </ul>	<p>Whole Sport Plan – have Sport England money, which has been reduced to £1.2m due to falling Active People Data.</p> <p>Trend in people not wanting to play in a club but prefer to play recreational / informal tennis in a park or community site predominately owned by the Local Authority. This is particularly relevant in rural areas.</p> <p>Some clubs do offer a pay and play but there is a barrier with access and challenge from paying members for court access.</p> <p>Challenge with members of the public knowing how to book public courts and who to contact at the local authority.</p> <p>Some Local Authorities have introduced a key Fob scheme (Southend is an example) where members of the public can buy a family FOB for £30 per annum to use to access any of the public courts.</p>

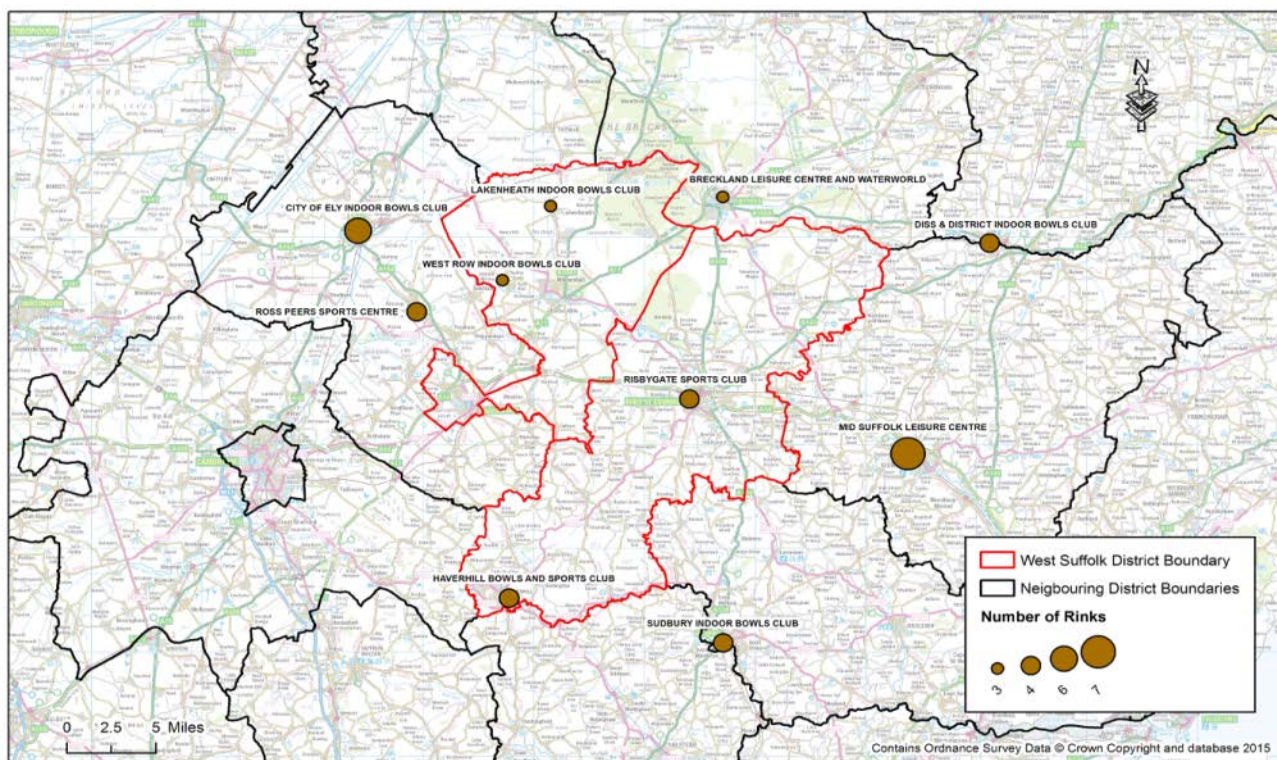
3.148 Wickhambrook Tennis Club responded to the club survey and identified the need for additional tennis facilities to increase the number of clubs and club members.

## INDOOR BOWLS

### SUPPLY OF INDOOR BOWLS FACILITIES IN ST EDMUNDSBURY

- 3.149 There are 16 indoor bowls rinks in West Suffolk provided through 5 bowling clubs. All are purpose built facilities; there are 8 rinks in St Edmundsbury across 2 sites.
- 3.150 The indoor bowls facilities were built between 1980 and 2010. Full details of the indoor bowling facilities are in Appendix 3. Map 3.14 shows the locations of the indoor bowling facilities in St Edmundsbury.

**Map 3.14: Indoor Bowling Facilities, St Edmundsbury and the wider area**



Indoor Bowls



### DEMAND AND ACCESSIBILITY

- 3.151 Existing indoor bowling facilities are located in and around urban areas, although there does appear to be a 'gap' in provision in the north of Bury St Edmunds. Given that the population of West Suffolk is ageing, it will be important to ensure there are appropriate and sufficient opportunities for participation in physical activity; bowling is one such activity.
- 3.152 Although no need has been identified at the current time for additional facilities, this will need to be reviewed in the future, as the population grows.
- 3.153 Bowls clubs were the highest number of respondents from one sport (5) to the club survey, but did not identify specific needs for additional provision at this time.

## GYMNASTICS

### SUPPLY OF GYMNASTICS FACILITIES IN ST EDMUNDSBURY

- 3.154 There is one purpose built gymnastics facility in West Suffolk; this is in Bury St Edmunds and is home to the Spectrum Gymnastics Club, who run the facility.
- 3.155 Haverhill Gymnastics Club currently train in Haverhill Leisure Centre.

### DEMAND AND ACCESSIBILITY

- 3.156 Consultation with British Gymnastics identified

Table 3.12: Consultation with British Gymnastics

SPORT	CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES	OTHER KEY INFORMATION
<b>BRITISH GYMNASTICS</b>	<p>British Gymnastics would be keen to see more access to sports hall time and space and provision made to either create new dedicated gymnastics spaces and or facilities, or improve existing centres to allow the increase in capacity of existing gymnastics clubs.</p> <p>With over 1500 club members in the area it is clear that gymnastics remains popular in the area with clubs have extensive waiting lists.</p>	<p>British Gymnastics would like to see provision for more dedicated Gymnastic spaces increased, with facilities able to house gymnastic equipment permanently set up to be able to cater for the diverse range of participants that want to be involved. Haverhill GC is in the process of developing a facility project for which they have just gained change of use permission. This project will look to convert an industrial unit into a dedicated centre (premises now secured).</p> <p>Gymnastics also requires access to good standard sports halls (with provision for storage of equipment) particularly for trampoline and low level gymnastic activities.</p>	<p>Gymnastics requires a diverse range of specification of facility depending upon the disciplines/activities being run. Current affiliated club Newmarket Gymnastics Club delivers out of a leisure centre sports hall, Breckland GC delivers out of a dedicated facility, Haverhill delivers out of a sports centre but is looking to relocate to a dedicated facility, Bury Spectrum out of a dedicated facility.</p>

- 3.157 Consultation with local clubs identified a significant demand for additional gymnastics facilities in the area, particularly in and around Haverhill. Haverhill Gymnastics Club – the club needed a dedicated space to accommodate those on the waiting list, which has now been secured. Haverhill Gymnastics has identified demand for additional gymnastics facilities, given they have 350/400 young people who want to participate in gymnastics.

- 3.158 Abbeycroft Leisure has been working with Haverhil Gymnastics Club to identify the potential to develop dedicated gymnastics facilities in the Haverhill Leisure Centre sports hall. However, Haverhil Gymnastics Club has just received planning permission to convert a former industrial unit, and has secured these new premises to develop a new facility.
- 3.159 The growth in population is also likely to increase demand for gymnastics participation, given that families are likely to be moving into St Edmundsbury as part of population growth; gymnastics provides initial participation opportunities for young children, who may not wish to play team sports.

## ATHLETICS

### SUPPLY OF ATHLETICS FACILITIES IN ST EDMUNDSBURY

- 3.160 There are 2 athletics tracks in West Suffolk, 1 in St Edmundsbury. This is an 8 lane, all weather track, with floodlights on the site of the Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre. The track at RAF Lakenheath is only available for private use. Full details are in Appendix 3.

### DEMAND AND ACCESSIBILITY

- 3.161 The only publicly accessible athletics track in West Suffolk is in Bury St Edmunds.
- 3.162 There is no identified demand for additional athletics facilities in Bury St Edmunds at this time.

## CYCLING

### SUPPLY OF CYCLING FACILITIES IN ST EDMUNDSBURY

- 3.163 There are 3 existing cycle facilities in St Edmundsbury, as identified in Appendix 3.

### DEMAND AND ACCESSIBILITY

- 3.164 There are 3 existing cycle facilities in St Edmundsbury, as identified in Appendix 3. Two of the facilities are in Bury St Edmunds, both on school sites and one is in Haverhill.
- 3.165 Consultation with British Cycling has identified the need for an off road cycling facility; this would help develop and further increase participation. Critically it would provide a safe opportunity to cycle, given that so many of the local roads are very narrow, or they are dual carriageways, and traffic moves fast on both, making cycling potentially dangerous, particularly for young people.
- 3.166 A specific off road facility would also complement the planned investment in safe cycle routes set out in the Local Plans, and Vision 31 for the main towns and growth areas in West Suffolk.

**Table 3.13 Consultation with British Cycling**

<b>SPORT</b>	<b>CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES</b>	<b>FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES</b>	<b>OTHER KEY INFORMATION</b>
<b>BRITISH CYCLING</b>	Growing – triathlon in particular  West Suffolk Wheelers. (Go-ride club) one of the biggest in the region. Mildenhall cycling Newmarket triathlon club	Preferable development would be a closed road – 6m wide. Minimum of 1km long. Not built to road surfaces. Floodlit is preferable – street lighting. Currently no firm plans, as cost is extremely high.	Funding is available through whole sport plan. Needs to be delivered at end of financial year.

- 3.167 West Suffolk Wheelers and Triathlon Club estimates that their membership will grow by at least 100 over the next few years, they support the need for additional cycling facilities in the area, and particularly off road safe provision.
- 3.168 British Cycling has identified Bury St Edmunds as a potential location for such provision.

### ARCHERY

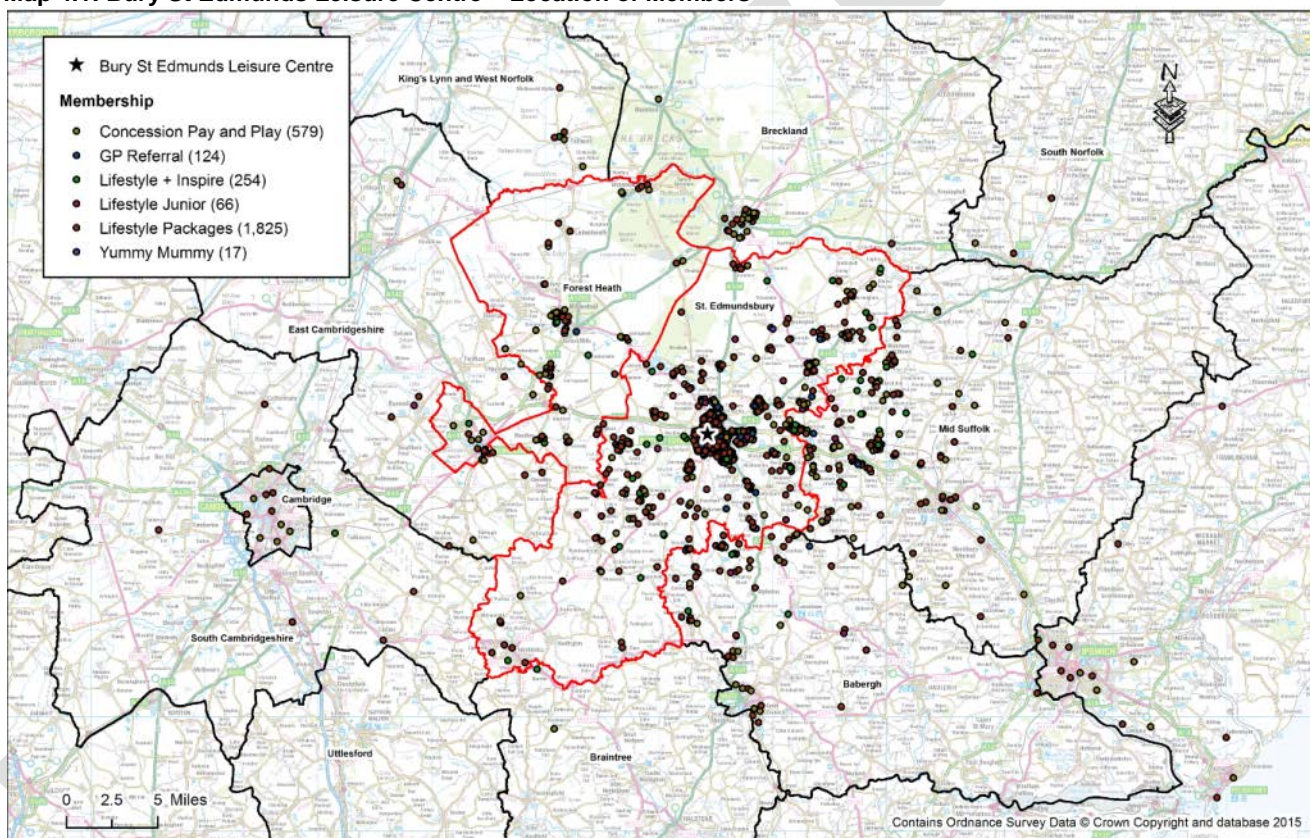
- 3.169 A need has been identified for the development of improved archery facilities, led by St Edmunds Archers. The Club is based in Whepstead, just south of Bury St Edmunds. The Club focuses on archery for those with a disability, and needs improved facilities to develop both their club and participation. The Club aims to develop a single storey archery building and outdoor range, to provide a stand alone facility. The Club has received planning permission for the development, but is now seeking funding support.

## 4. APPLYING THE ANALYSIS

### INTRODUCTION

- 4.1. Building on the assessment of current provision, it is useful to understand more about the impact and operation of the local authority existing sports facilities in St Edmundsbury.
- 4.2. The following maps illustrate the current relationship between the facilities provided in St Edmundsbury, the 2015 population and the location of residents who become members.
- 4.3. Map 4.1 illustrates the postcodes of existing members of the Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre, based on user data provided to inform this strategy.

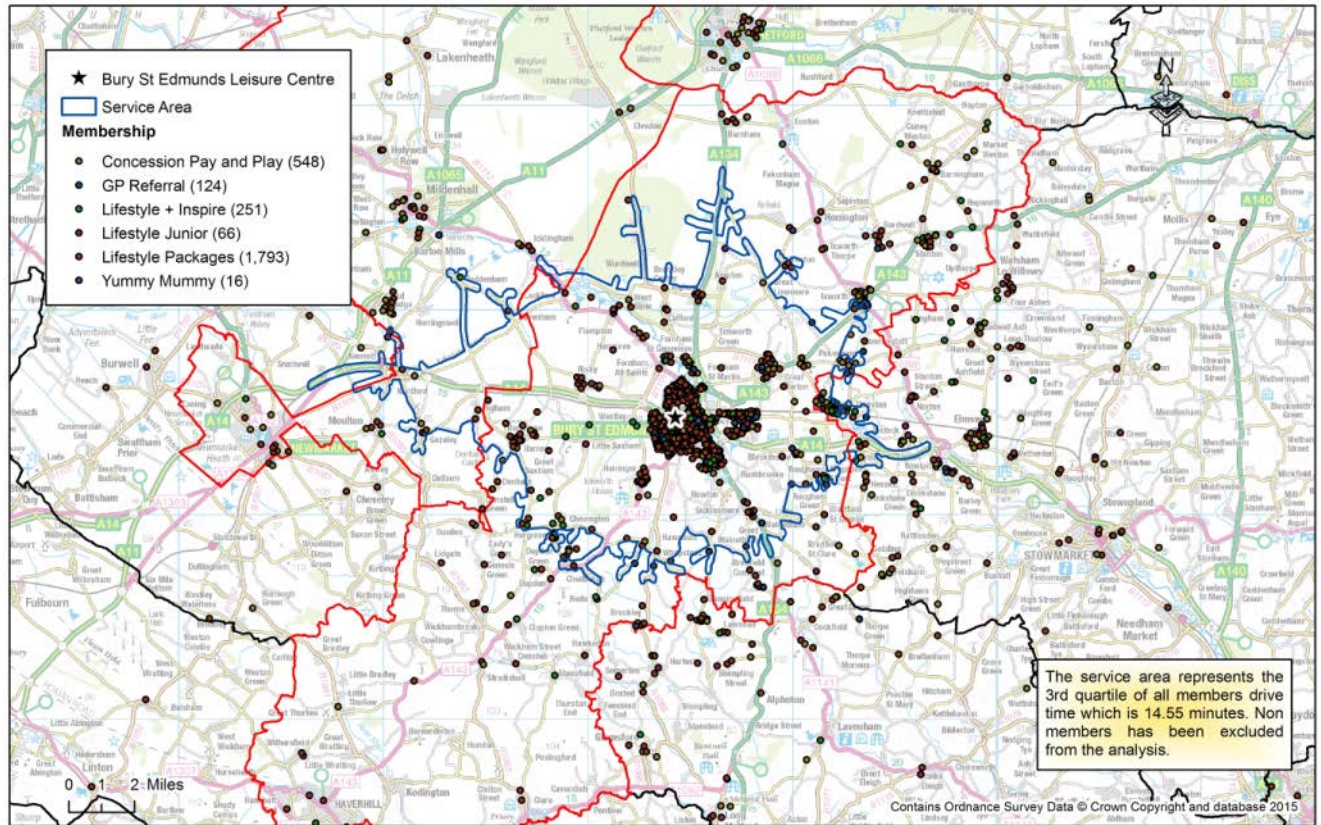
**Map 4.1: Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre – Location of Members**



**Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre members**



Map 4.2: Catchment Area for Bury St Edmunds Leisure centre, based on where members live



Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre service area based on members drive time



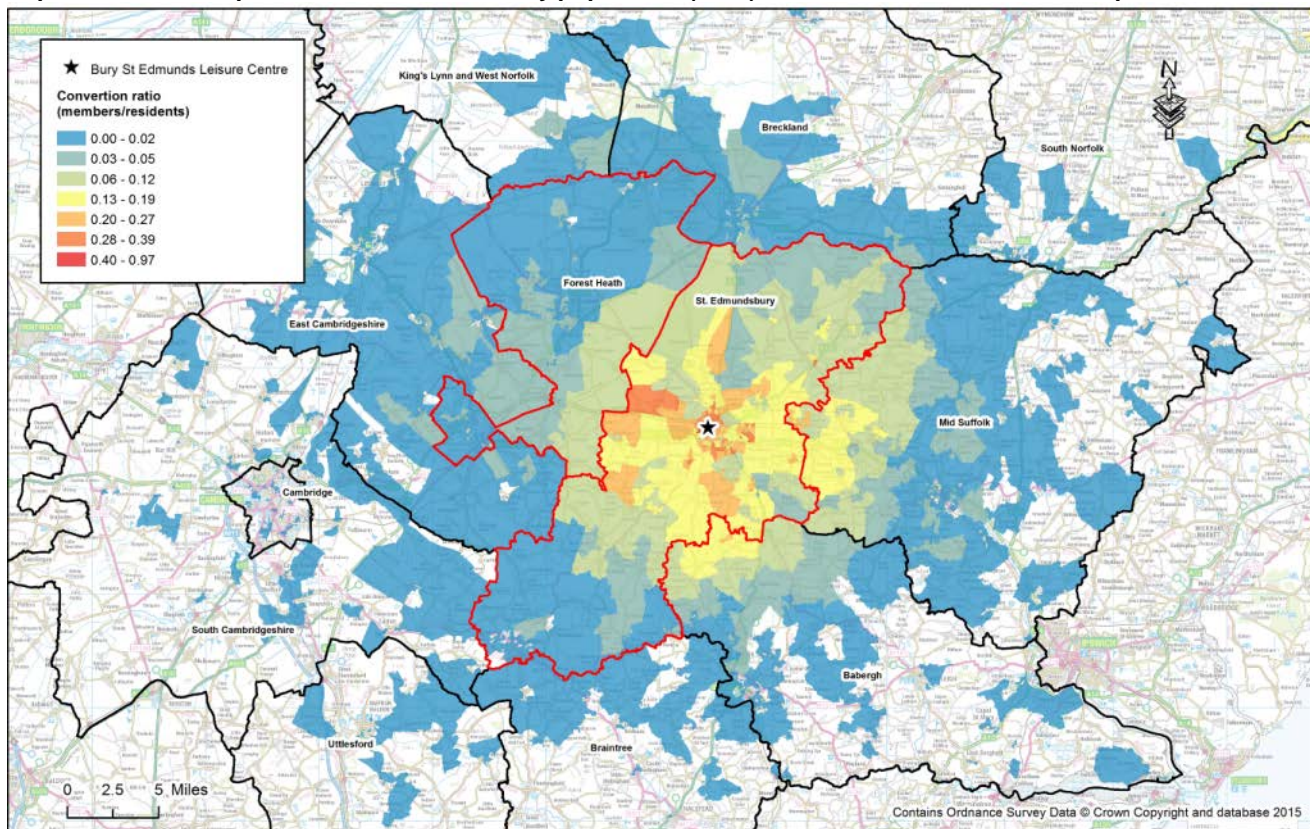
4.4. Map 4.2 illustrates the catchment area for the Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre, based on the areas where current members reside. It is clear from Map 4.2 that the majority of leisure centre members live in and around Bury St Edmunds, as already highlighted in the FPM modelling.



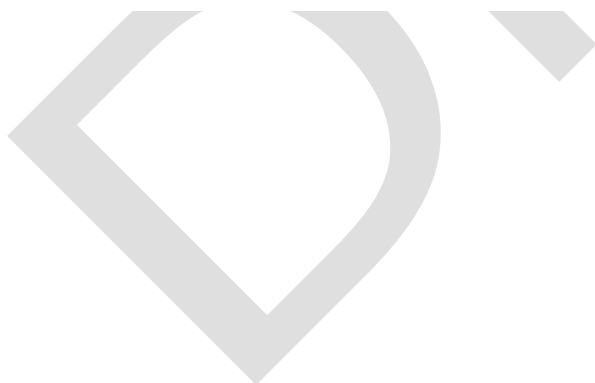


4.5. Map 4.3 shows the proportion of St Edmundsbury residents who are members of Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre. It is clear from Map 4.3 that the highest penetration rate for membership is in the areas immediately around the leisure centre (yellow) and those highlighted (orange) to the west, south west, north, south east, and east of the town of the town.

**Map 4.3: Relationship between St Edmundsbury population (2015) and Leisure Centre Membership**

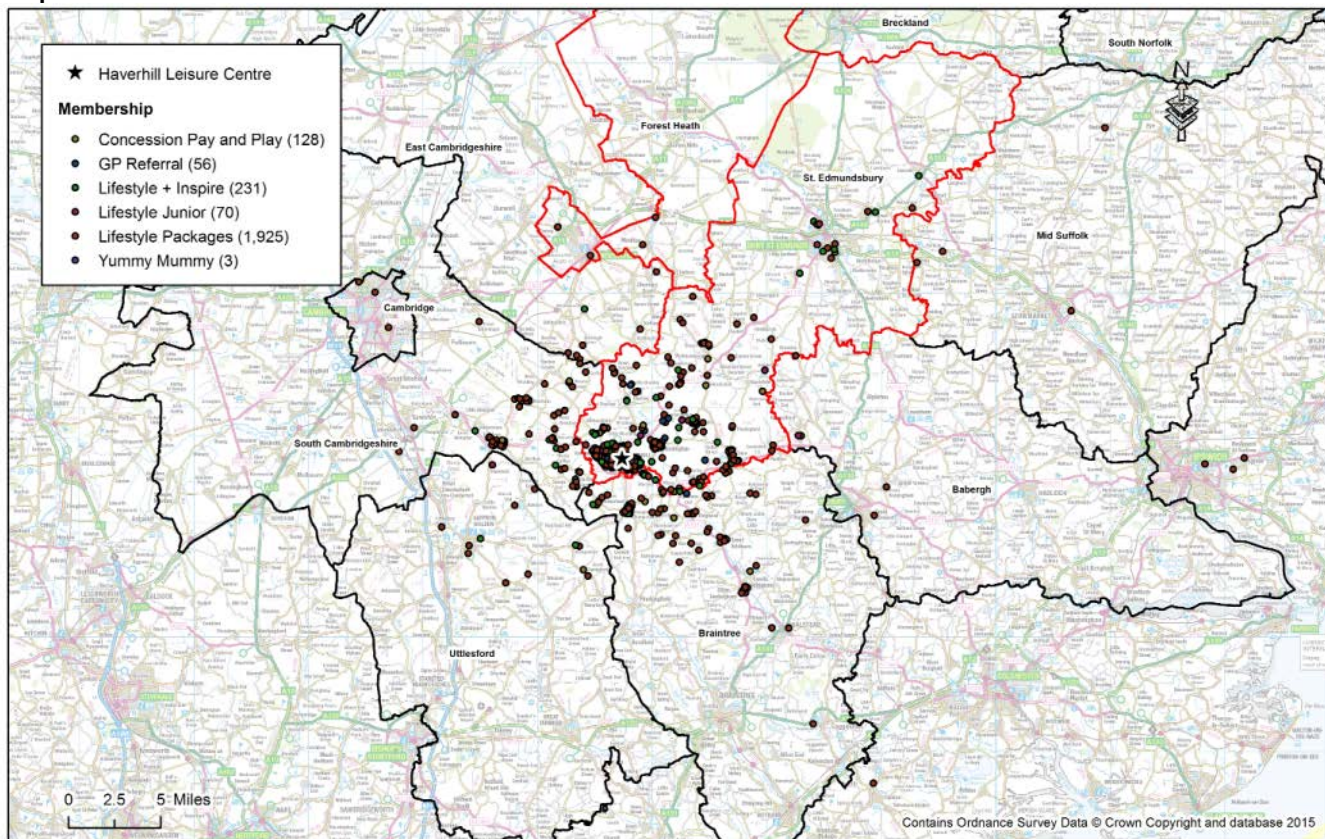


**Conversion ratio (members/residents) - Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre**



4.6. Map 4.4 illustrates the postcodes of existing members of the Haverhill Leisure Centre, based on user data provided to inform this strategy.

**Map 4.4: Haverhill Leisure Centre – Location of Members**

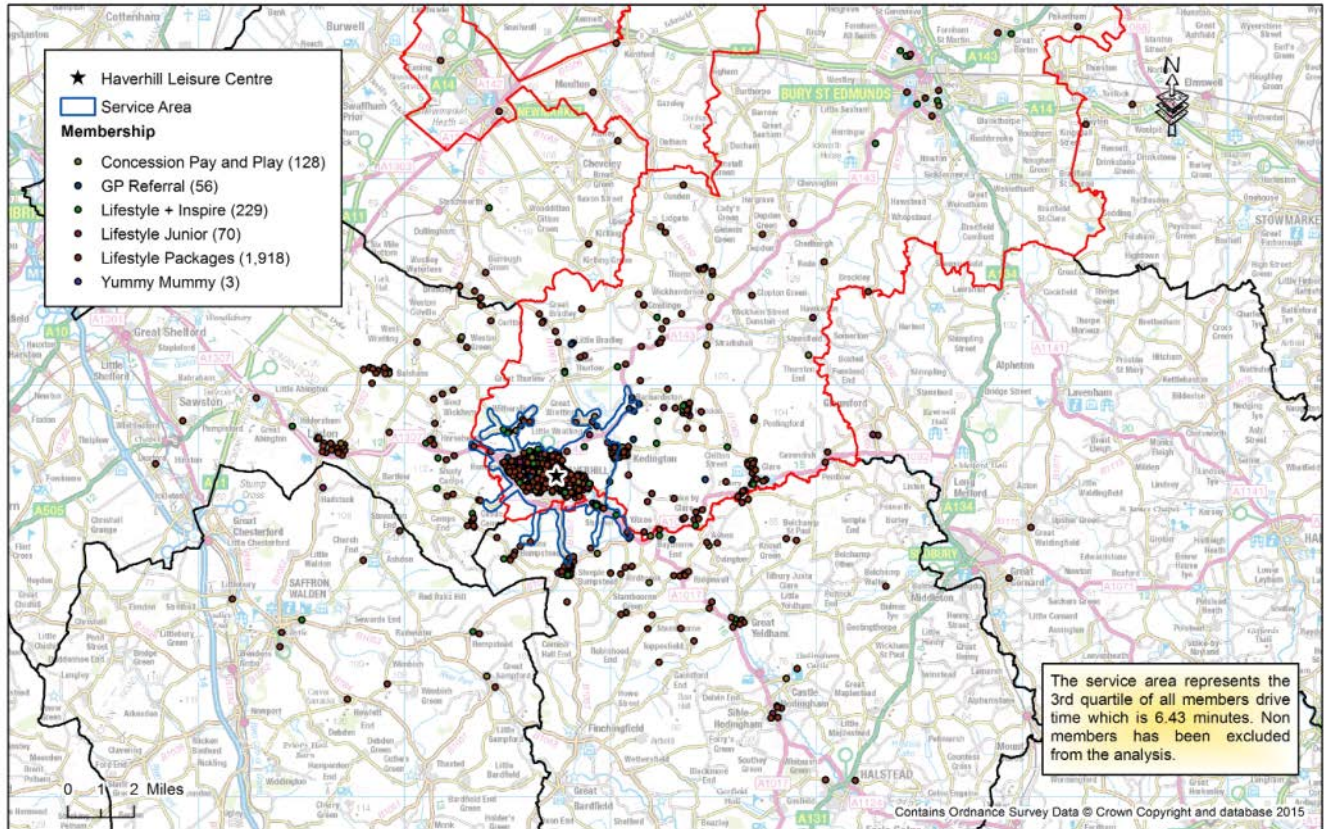


**Haverhill Leisure Centre members**



4.7. Map 4.5 illustrates the catchment area for the Haverhill Leisure Centre, based on the areas where current members reside. It is clear from Map 4.5 that the majority of leisure centre members live in and around Haverhill, but there is also a significant membership in the neighbouring East Cambs authority, as already highlighted in the FPM modelling.

**Map 4.5: Catchment Area for Haverhill Leisure centre, based on where members live**

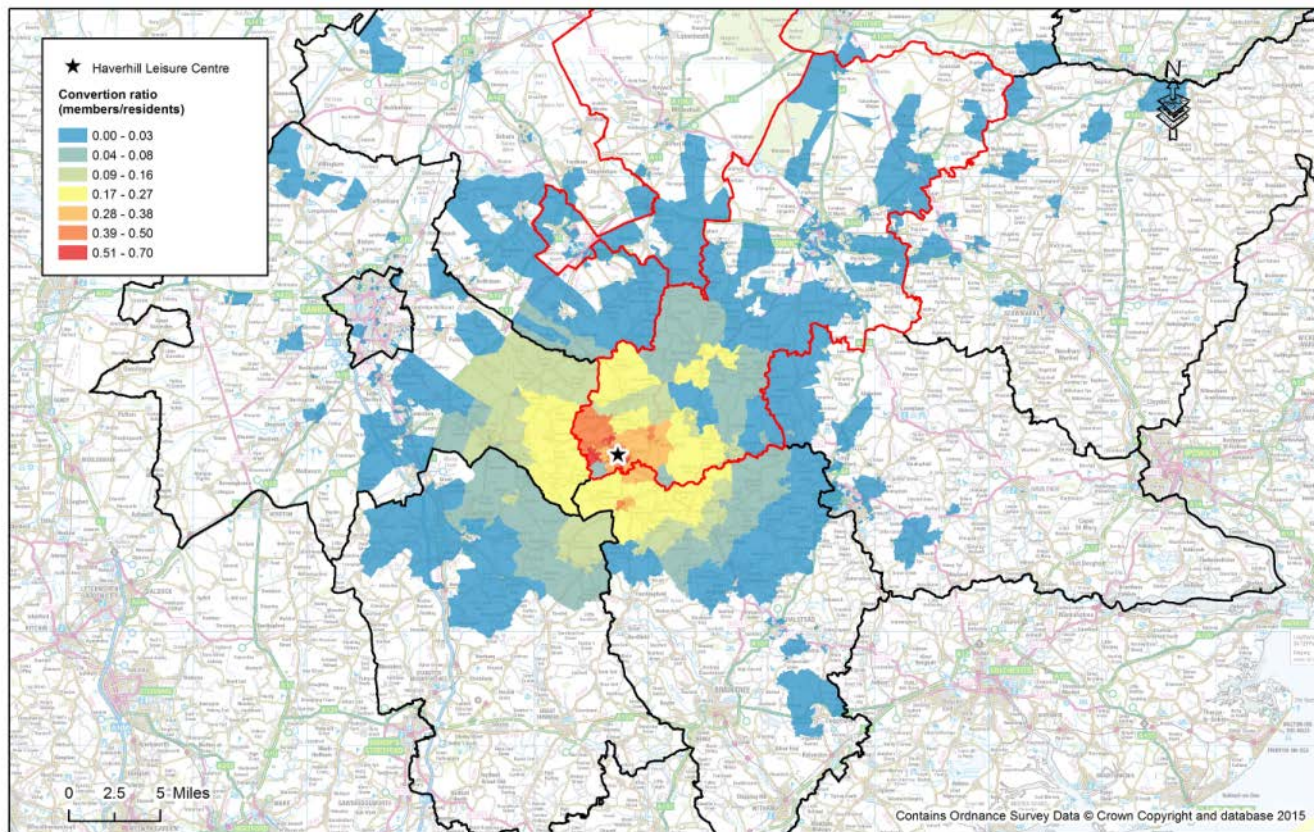


**Haverhill Leisure Centre service area based on members drive time**



- 4.8. Map 4.6 shows the proportion of St Edmundsbury residents who are members of Haverhill Leisure Centre. It is clear from Map 4.6 that the highest penetration rate for membership is in the areas immediately around the leisure centre (red and yellow) and those highlighted (orange) to the west, south west, north, south east, and east of the town of the town.

**Map 4.6: Relationship between St Edmundsbury population (2015) and Leisure Centre Membership**



**Conversion ratio (members/residents) - Haverhill Leisure Centre**



- 4.9. It is clear from the pattern of membership and usage that accessibility is key in terms of participation; those living further away from a leisure facility are less likely to use it, or become a member. Given the rurality of West Suffolk, it is clear that the highest usage levels of existing leisure facilities is coming from the more urban areas. This highlights the importance of retaining access to informal, multi-purpose space in the rural areas, to facilitate access to opportunities for sport and physical activity, as set out in the Vision 31 statements for the rural areas and villages.
- 4.10. Also clear is that given the anticipated population growth in St Edmundsbury, and the fact that this will be focussed in a small number of areas around existing urban infrastructures, it will be critical to maintain and develop accessibility to quality sports facilities, to enable participation, and provide choice about physical activity as part of daily life.

### CONSULTATION WITH NEIGHBOURING LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- 4.11. In determining the nature and level of sports facility provision required for the future in West Suffolk, it is also important to be aware of how neighbouring local authorities are planning for the future. Given that communities use sports facilities in areas other than where they live, the development of new or improved provision can impact significantly on both participation levels and capacity cross-boundary.
- 4.12. Table 4.3 summarises the consultation undertaken with neighbouring local authorities to inform this Strategy.

**Table 4.3: Neighbouring Local Authority Facility Developments**

LOCAL AUTHORITY	FACILITY DEVELOPMENTS
<b>EAST CAMBS DC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are proposals for the development of a new pool in Ely; this will be an 8 lane x 25m main pool, plus a 13m x 7m learner pool with a moveable floor, a 4 badminton court sports hall and fitness suite. Development timescale around 3 years.</li> <li>• Development of a new facility in Ely will result in the closure of the existing Paradise Pool, Ely.</li> <li>• Cambridgeshire County Council is considering development of the existing Littleport Leisure Centre.</li> </ul>
<b>STH CAMBS DC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A district Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) is being prepared; it is also likely that an indoor facility needs assessment will be developed. No new facility developments yet prioritised.</li> </ul>
<b>BRAINTREE DC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Sports Facility Strategy being produced; anticipated September 2015.</li> <li>• New facility opened in Witham in August 2014; three other facilities refurbished.</li> <li>• No other current plan for new facility development by the Council. Hedingham School has identified an interest in refurbishment of their current facilities, and potentially new facility development.</li> </ul>
<b>KINGS LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No new facility development proposals highlighted at this time.</li> </ul>
<b>BRECKLAND DC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No new facility development proposals highlighted at this time.</li> </ul>
<b>BABERGH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council is developing its Built Facility Strategy; this has highlighted the need to replace ageing facilities in Hadleigh and Sudbury, and potentially extend swimming facilities to meet demands of future population growth. Under-supply of fitness facilities is also highlighted.</li> </ul>
<b>MID SUFFOLK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council is developing its Built Facility Strategy; this has highlighted a significant under-supply of facilities (pools, halls and fitness) across the District, as well as the need to replace ageing facilities in Stowmarket and Stradbroke.</li> </ul>
<b>BRAINTREE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Sports Facility Strategy being produced; anticipated September 2015.</li> <li>• New facility opened in Witham in August 2014; three other facilities refurbished.</li> <li>• No other current plan for new facility development by the Council. Hedingham School has identified an interest in refurbishment of their current facilities, and potentially new facility development.</li> </ul>

## KEY ISSUES AND OPTIONS

- 4.13. Based on the local context and the supply and demand analysis, there is clearly a need, and an opportunity, to consider additional provision/replacement of some sports and leisure facilities in St Edmundsbury. There are a number of reasons for this:
- **The age, condition and poor quality of some facilities – particularly swimming pools and sports halls**
  - **The need to increase participation in physical activity for community health benefits**
  - **The need to further create and develop an environment of choice, where physical activity is the norm**
  - **The vision of providing good quality community sport and leisure facilities for all St Edmundsbury communities**
  - **The need to improve accessibility in the rural areas**
  - **The focus on the 2 main towns in terms of community provision**
  - **The lack of some specific facility types/opportunities in St Edmundsbury, which could increase participative opportunities at local level**
  - **Long term population growth in St Edmundsbury, which will increase demand for community facilities, including sport and leisure provision, particularly in the more urban areas**
- 4.14. Housing development is one of the principal justifications for additional community sports facilities because additional residents increase demand for sports facilities. The population of St Edmundsbury is set to grow significantly to 2031, and there will be a need to ensure good quality community sport and leisure facilities are available to meet existing and future demand.
- 4.15. A further driver for considering investment/replacement in terms of sports facilities is accessibility; this can be both location related, and in relation to operational management, which determines hours of use.
- 4.16. The way in which a sport and recreation facility is managed often determines the level and type of community use allowed/encouraged. For example, local authority managed sport and recreation facilities are more likely to encourage use by disadvantaged groups than those managed by commercially sector operators and are, thus, in effect, more accessible.
- 4.17. There has already been investment in St Edmundsbury's own facilities in the past 10 years (Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill Leisure Centres), but there is a need to consider the replacement of the ageing facilities in the future.
- 4.18. There is a Boccia court marked out in in Haverhill Leisure Centre; this facility is in the sports hall , which is a space shared with other users and sports.
- 4.19. Improving the quality of provision is particularly important in given that less than a third of St Edmundsbury residents currently take part in sport and physical activity at least once a week, on a regular basis.

4.20. Increasing levels of participation is also critical given the growing obesity across St Edmundsbury. The priority placed on reducing health inequalities and increasing participation in physical activity is high in St Edmundsbury; the provision of good quality, local community facilities, accessible and affordable to meet identified need, is key to facilitate participation growth.

4.21. Based on the quality audits and assessments, age and condition, the priorities for future investment in facility provision are:

- **Swimming Pools – due to age (by 2025) – Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre, Haverhill Leisure Centre**
- **Sports Halls – due to age (by 2025) - Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre, Haverhill Leisure Centre**

4.22. Key issues informing future provision include the following points:

### GENERAL

#### AGE AND CONDITION

- **The age of two of the existing swimming and sports hall facilities, which means there is a need to plan now for future investment/replacement**
- **Under supply of sports halls in St Edmundsbury, and the age of the facilities at Haverhill, and Bury St Edmund Leisure Centres means they will need to be replaced in the medium term**

#### PARTICIPATION LEVELS

- **Very low levels of participation in sport and physical activity generally across St Edmundsbury**
- **The focus for facility provision in the future should be about increasing participation, and contributing to St Edmundsbury's health and well-being agenda and the Active Suffolk priorities i.e. more regular physical activity, for more people, more often**
- **Facility programming should reflect the market segmentation analysis for St Edmundsbury, to facilitate as many relevant opportunities for participation as possible to increase participation overall, high quality facilities for fitness/keep fit/gym/weight training, swimming, football, athletics, boxing, badminton, and cycling are needed at local level. There is also a need to ensure opportunities exist for walking and dancing. Programming should also reflect the 9 priority sports identified by Active Suffolk.**

#### ACCESSIBILITY

- **Sport and leisure facilities, should, wherever possible, be accessible to communities by foot, cycling, or public transport, as well as private car.**
- **The need to ensure appropriate provision is available for both an ageing population, and for younger participants**
- **Ensuring access is available to those without access to private transport (average 15.2% of the St Edmundsbury population)**

- **Ensuring provision (even if informal, in multi-purpose space) is local to the communities in which people live, given the fact that some people will not travel out of their immediate area**

## RESOURCES

- **The growth in population will result in increased demand for sports facilities in the areas of housing development, and in St Edmundsbury, particularly around Bury St Edmunds**
- **There is potential to access funding through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or through S106 for additional facilities required as a consequence of population growth**
- **Investment in future facility provision could be made by St Edmundsbury Council, Abbeycroft Leisure, local partners, national/regional agencies, and potentially local organisations, depending on the nature and scale of development**

## GEOGRAPHIC

- 4.23. Unmet demand for swimming pools and sports halls is not concentrated in any one specific area in St Edmundsbury, but distributed across the area.
- 4.24. There is potentially a gap in indoor bowls provision in the north of Bury St Edmunds.

## FACILITY SPECIFIC

### SPORTS HALLS

- 4.25. There is sufficient supply of sports halls in St Edmundsbury Borough to meet both current and future demand, assuming all existing facilities are retained.
- 4.26. Although there has been significant investment in refurbishment of sports halls in the last 15 years, the majority of the stock is ageing, and will, in time, need replacing. This in particular is true of St Edmundsbury facilities.
- 4.27. The Facilities Planning Model analysis identifies that the 2015 population generates a demand for 33.82 courts and 7,386 visits per week. This equates to a current over supply of 14.95 courts. By 2025 the population is likely to demand 34.15 courts for 7,458 vpwpp. Clearly, with current provision at 48.77 courts, and proposed provision at 51.89 courts (new 4 court hall at Moreton Hall School), there is an over supply in the provision of sports halls in the St Edmundsbury District of around 17.74 courts by 2025, taking into account proposed changes in provision at Moreton Hall School and increased population.
- 4.28. Current levels of satisfied demand are higher than national and regional levels at 91.7%. Only 5.5% of the demand that is being satisfied is being met by sports hall provision outside of St Edmundsbury, predominantly within Mid Suffolk district.
- 4.29. Assuming retention of all existing facilities, plus the new sports hall at Moreton Hall School, levels of unmet demand will decrease by 2025 to 7.9% and equate to 587 visits per week during the peak period. Circa 85.5% of this unmet demand is attributed to people living outside the catchment of an existing sports hall facility.
- 4.30. Used capacity figures for St Edmundsbury vary widely across the district, from 100% at Haverhill Leisure Centre and Stour Valley School sports halls, to 56% at St Edmundsbury Leisure Centre sports hall, once the new sports hall is built at Moreton Hall School.



- 4.31. There is also an opportunity to increase operational hours at Culford School Sports Hall which would balance out supply and demand across the area, by improving community accessibility.
- 4.32. Key to future provision is the scale of the sports hall at Moreton Hall School; if this is 8 badminton court size, there is no need to also re-floor Samuel Ward School sports hall. If Moreton Hall sports hall is only 6 court, the option to re-floor Samuel Ward should be considered.

### SWIMMING POOLS

- 4.33. There is sufficient swimming pool provision to meet both current and future provision in St Edmundsbury; in fact there is an over supply of water space, based on used capacity now and into the future.
- 4.34. However, the Haverhill Leisure Centre is full (76%), and is also ageing; therefore there is a need to consider the future of this facility, and how it might be replaced in the future. A significant amount of imported demand is seen at Haverhill, with the majority of these uses coming from Mid Suffolk, South Cambridgeshire and Braintree. Any future pool developments in these areas could be positive for Haverhill, in terms of reducing the net import of users.
- 4.35. St Edmundsbury is a net importer of use for swimming pools (91%), The district also has high levels of satisfied demand at St Edmundsbury (91%).
- 4.36. The development of a new swimming pool in Ely is likely to reduce the level of exported demand into St Edmundsbury.

### BURY ST EDMUNDS LEISURE CENTRE

- 4.37. The existing leisure centre is ageing and in the medium term there will need to be consideration to its replacement. It currently occupies a strategic site adjacent to the Council offices. The existing leisure centre site comprises both the built facility and the athletics track.
- 4.38. Current car parking provision is inadequate.
- 4.39. St Edmundsbury Council is currently considering the potential for the development of Public Service Village 2; this would comprise redeveloped Council offices and West Suffolk College, and could potentially provide an opportunity to redevelop the leisure centre.
- 4.40. Replacing the leisure centre could create an opportunity to review the scale and nature of provision for swimming in St Edmundsbury, plus develop a purpose-built fitness suite, potentially a larger sports hall i.e. 8 court (if an appropriate facility is not provided at either Moreton Hall School, or the Samuel Ward floor is not replaced), and studios. The critical issue will be whether the athletics track is retained or re-located as part of the wider public services re-development. Existing use of Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre by West Suffolk College is also a critical factor, as the College use a significant amount of the facilities on a daily basis. Clearly any future provision should take this into account, and ensure that both community and College access is retained.

### OTHER FACILITIES

- 4.41. The assessment of need and stakeholder consultation has, in addition to the specific needs for sports halls and swimming pools, identified the need for the following facility provision in St Edmundsbury:
- **An off road cycling facility (Bury St Edmunds)**
  - **The lack of 6/8 court sports halls limits use of provision for indoor netball and indoor tennis.**

- **Dedicated archery facilities**

- 4.42. Existing squash court provision should, if possible be retained, and/replaced; there is potential to look at replacement facilities being incorporated into new school developments as part of sports facilities shared with the community.
- 4.43. There is also need to review future provision of indoor bowls facilities as the population grows and ages
- 4.44. Other future facility provision, linked particularly to the population growth and housing development, is the development of new and improved walking, jogging and cycling routes, to encourage active travel, and provide an environment in which physical activity can be easily integrated into daily life.

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## 5. DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

### INTRODUCTION

- 5.1. Overall, St Edmundsbury has a very good range of existing sport and leisure facilities across the area; however, some are now ageing, and will require investment and/or replacement. This is particularly true, in the medium term, of Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre and Haverhill Leisure Centre.
- 5.2. In St Edmundsbury there is sufficient swimming pool, sports hall and fitness provision to meet current and future demand.
- 5.3. Whilst there are some facilities on education sites, which are not available for community use, these are in the minority. Proposals for new schools will incorporate formal community use arrangements for use of sports facilities.
- 5.4. St Edmundsbury's population will grow significantly over the next few years, particularly in and around the main urban areas, so there is a need to ensure sufficient provision of accessible, quality and affordable facilities to meet local need.
- 5.5. There is a range of facility providers in West Suffolk, and it is important that St Edmundsbury Borough Council continues to work with these in partnership to develop and deliver facility provision, given that the Council can no longer be the provider and funder of last resort, but needs to adopt more of an enabling and facilitating role.

### VISION

- 5.6. The Vision for future provision of sport and leisure facilities in St Edmundsbury is:

***'Provision of sufficient high quality, fit for purpose, accessible and sustainable sports facilities across St Edmundsbury, to meet local need, including population growth, facilitate increased participation and contribute to improved community health'***

- 5.7. As a minimum, St Edmundsbury wishes to see accessible community sport and leisure facilities for swimming, fitness and sports hall sports/activities available for all residents. This includes both formal and informal spaces in which to play sport and be physically active.

### AIMS

- 5.8. The aim of providing sufficient high quality, fit for purpose and accessible provision is to:
  - Deliver the Vision for St Edmundsbury articulated in the Local Plan and contribute significantly to the health and well-being priorities for the area;
  - Increase the regular amount of physical activity undertaken by individuals;
  - Develop additional facility provision where need is evidenced
  - Create an environment where the choice to become physically active can become an integral part of everyday life
  - Encourage new participants to start taking part in physical activity;

- **Facilitate the development of healthier lifestyles across St Edmundsbury's communities;**
- **Contribute to a reduction in health inequalities across St Edmundsbury;**
- **Support and provide opportunities for local sports clubs and community groups; and**
- **Facilitate and support the development of talented athletes.**

5.9. The provision of a network of high quality and accessible facilities will contribute to the overall priority for healthier lifestyles in St Edmundsbury, across all age groups. Facilitating opportunities to be more physically active, more often is also important, to contribute to a reduction in health inequalities across St Edmundsbury, and help people to live and age better, because they are more active.

5.10. Sustainability of facility provision is critical to maintain these opportunities; St Edmundsbury Borough Council needs to plan now for the investment requirements of its existing facilities, and work in partnership with other providers and stakeholders to address the other priorities identified through this Strategy.

### PRINCIPLES FOR FUTURE PROVISION

5.11. Analysis of existing provision also identifies the principles that should underpin all future sport and leisure facility development in St Edmundsbury Borough. These are to:

- **Ensure residents in all areas of St Edmundsbury have good quality, local, accessible and affordable facilities, with the minimum provision being a 4 court sports hall, a 25m x 6 lane pool, and a fitness suite**
- **Replace ageing facilities where new provision is needed; all new provision should be designed and developed based on Sport England and NGB guidance, and be fully inclusive**
- **Rationalise existing provision where new facilities can replace/improve facilities**
- **Invest in existing provision to improve quality**
- **Invest strategically to ensure economic viability and sustainability of provision**
- **Where possible, provide facilities (formal and informal) closer to where people live; access to informal provision is critical in the rural areas**
- **Aim to ensure that more facilities on education sites provide opportunities (on a formal basis) for community access**

### SUMMARY OF NEEDS, PRIORITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

5.12. The assessment and analysis undertaken to develop this Strategy identifies a need for some additional provision, across a range of facility types, as well as more generic needs in terms of improvement to the quality of existing facilities, and the accessibility and operational management of provision. It is also important to recognise that much of the existing facility provision is on the other side of the A14 to where the majority of the population growth will be located, so ensuring accessibility is key.

5.13. The facility needs have been identified as a result of the qualitative, quantitative and accessibility analysis undertaken.

5.14. These are summarised below, by facility type.

**Table 5.1: Summary of Facility Needs in St Edmundsbury**

FACILITY TYPE	FACILITY NEEDS/PRIORITIES
<b>SPORTS HALLS</b>	<p>Badminton, volleyball, basketball and netball NGBs support the need for additional sports hall capacity in St Edmundsbury.</p> <p>Although there is sufficient current and future provision of sports halls in St Edmundsbury, there is a lack of sports halls capable of accommodating indoor netball, basketball, and volleyball. There is only one 8 badminton sized sports hall in St Edmundsbury (Samuel Ward and that has a tarmacadam floor), and only one 6 court hall (Culford Sports and Tennis Centre).</p> <p>Improvement in the quality of some ageing facilities, in the medium term, Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill Leisure Centres.</p>
<b>SWIMMING POOLS</b>	<p>There is an over supply of current and future swimming pool provision in St Edmundsbury.</p> <p>There is a need to start planning now for investment in existing pool facilities, all of which are ageing. i.e. Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre and Haverhill Leisure Centre.</p>
<b>SQUASH COURTS</b>	<p>Existing squash courts should be retained where possible, to ensure public access is retained in St Edmundsbury.</p> <p>If any new facilities are developed, consideration should be given to provision of squash courts; two adjacent courts are needed to facilitate development of participation and club development.</p>
<b>CYCLING FACILITY</b>	Off road track, approx. ¾ mile, closed track.
<b>ARCHERY</b>	Dedicated facility to facilitate increased participation by those with a disability.
<b>INFORMAL FACILITIES</b>	Cycling and walking routes; safe cycling routes

## SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

### SPORTS HALLS

- 5.15. The simplistic analysis of “supply versus demand” in relation to sports halls within St Edmundsbury has identified an over-supply of sports hall space, based on both current and future demand. This assumes retention of all existing community accessible facilities and development of a new 4 court sports hall at Moreton Hall School in St Edmundsbury.
- 5.16. Current levels of satisfied demand in St Edmundsbury are higher than national and regional levels at 91.7%. Only 5.5% of the demand that is being satisfied is being met by sports hall provision outside of St Edmundsbury, predominantly within Mid Suffolk district.
- 5.17. Assuming retention of all existing facilities, plus the new sports hall at Moreton Hall School, levels of unmet demand will decrease by 2025 to 7.9% and equate to 587 visits per week during the peak period. Circa 85.5% of this unmet demand is attributed to people living outside the catchment of an existing sports hall facility.
- 5.18. Used capacity figures for St Edmundsbury vary widely across the district, from 100% at Laverhill Leisure Centre and Stour Valley School sports halls, to 56% at St Edmundsbury Leisure Centre sports hall, once the new sports hall is built at Moreton Hall School.
- 5.19. There is also an opportunity to increase operational hours at Culford School Sports Hall which would balance out supply and demand across the area, by improving community accessibility.
- 5.20. Netball, basketball, badminton and volleyball NGBs highlight the need, and demand, for additional indoor sports hall space in the District. Netball identifies the lack of access to sports halls large enough for training and competition, particularly given the increased levels of participation in St Edmundsbury.
- 5.21. Although there are sports halls already available on education sites, it may be possible to achieve some increased capacity within the existing sports hall stock e.g. Culford Sports and Tennis Centre, by negotiating improved and extended access to existing facilities on educational sites through formal community use agreements, and opening existing community facilities for longer.
- 5.22. Ensuring community use of new school sports halls will be critical to ensure access to quality facilities. Opportunities to implement formal community use agreements have been identified at Castle Manor School (already used by sports clubs), Haverhill, Moreton Hall School, Bury St Edmunds, and at the new school to be built to the east of Bury St Edmunds.
- 5.23. The condition and quality of these facilities, despite various refurbishments, will need to be carefully monitored, to ensure that facility quality does not deteriorate, and planning should be undertaken for replacement facilities in the medium term.
- 5.24. West Suffolk operates a number of sports halls through its Trust partners; whilst there has been significant investment and redevelopment of sports hall facilities in the medium term, Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill Leisure Centres will need investment and improvement.
- 5.25. There is currently only one 8 badminton court sports hall in St Edmundsbury, and only one 6 court sports hall, which means that the capability to host county/regional indoor sports events is limited. Sports hall provision for e.g. indoor netball, basketball and volleyball is limited.

### SWIMMING POOLS

- 5.26. From the FPM, which is only one element of the needs assessment, the simplistic analysis of “supply vs demand” in relation to swimming pools within St Edmundsbury has identified a current and future over-supply of swimming pool provision, based on both current and future demand.

- 5.19 The FPM analysis identifies that the 2015 population (112,884) generates a demand for 6,963 visits per week during peak periods. Clearly there is a current in balance between the level of demand in the district, and the available capacity in existing swimming pools. By 2025, the estimated population is likely to demand 22,540 visits per week per peak periods.
- 5.20 Currently, 91% (6,344 visits per week in peak periods) of all demand for swimming pool provision is met in the District; this is an extremely high level of satisfied demand. 94% of all demand for swimming is retained in the district. However, only 53% of all available capacity in the existing and available community accessible provision is used during peak periods. Haverhill, being the only pool in the south of the district is the most heavily used at 76% capacity. These figures suggest that there is sufficient capacity in the existing pools to accommodate future increased participation and population growth.
- 5.21 9% (619) visits per week in peak periods) of demand is unmet with the current provision of community accessible swimming pools. This demand is unmet because some residents are outside the catchment of an existing swimming pool. This latter point reflects the fact that around 15.2% of St Edmundsbury residents do not own a car (England average is 25%).
- 5.22 St Edmundsbury is a net importer of swimmers at around 26% or 1,036 per week
- 5.23 By 2025, with a population of 118, 319 (5% increase), the level of demand for swimming will be for 1,175 sq m, compared to a supply of 1,275 i.e. an over supply of 400 sq m. By 2025, demand for swimming per 1000 people actually falls, due to an ageing population, although the number of pvwpp increases by 115 (2%).
- 5.24 Critically the age of the existing pool stock becomes the major issue as the West Suffolk pools will be nearly 60 years old, and therefore the quality of the offer will diminish.
- 5.25 The pool at Haverhill Leisure Centre is full (76%), and is also ageing; therefore there is a need to consider the future of this facility, and how it might be replaced in the future. A significant amount of imported demand is seen at Haverhill, with the majority of these uses coming from Mid Suffolk, South Cambridgeshire and Braintree. Any future pool developments in these areas could be positive for Haverhill, in terms of reducing the net import of users.

## HEALTH AND FITNESS

- 5.27. There is a significant amount of fitness provision in St Edmundsbury, with the majority of facilities being provided by the public/commercial sector.
- 5.28. Access is generally good to fitness facilities across St Edmundsbury.
- 5.29. There is over-supply of fitness facilities now and into the future in St Edmundsbury.

## INDOOR NETBALL

- 5.30. There is significant opportunity to further develop indoor netball, if there is investment in a larger sports hall. Access to larger sports halls is critical for training and competition, and is supported by the NGB.

## SQUASH COURTS

- 5.31. Work with local clubs to retain/replace existing courts and if any new facilities are developed, a minimum of two courts should be provided to facilitate participative opportunities.

## GYMNASTICS FACILITIES

5.32. There is a need to increase access wherever possible to existing sports halls for gymnastics use, to complement development of more dedicated facilities.

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## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

### OVERVIEW

- 6.1. Although St Edmundsbury has a good range of facilities across the Borough, there are some poor quality and ageing facilities. St Edmundsbury Leisure Centre and Haverhill Leisure Centre are ageing and will require replacement in the medium term.
- 6.2. The options for future provision of both these facilities (given the existing and future over-supply of swimming pools and sports halls in St Edmundsbury District) now needs to be considered. There is a potential opportunity to review the future provision of Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre given the proposals for the Public Service Hub 2 in the town.
- 6.3. The anticipated population growth in St Edmundsbury to 2031 needs to be appropriately catered for in terms of demand for sports facilities – both formal facilities and informal, multi-purpose spaces. In St Edmundsbury this means better geographical distribution of facilities to enable more people to access facilities in the urban area by walking, and/or cycling. It also means better quality facilities, given the age, in particular of St Edmundsbury provision.
- 6.4. The provision of a network of high quality and accessible facilities will contribute to the overall priority for healthier lifestyles in St Edmundsbury, across all age groups. Facilitating opportunities to be more physically active, more often is also important, to contribute to a reduction in health inequalities across St Edmundsbury, and help people to live and age better.

### VISION

- 6.5. The Vision for future provision of sport and leisure facilities in St Edmundsbury is:

***‘Provision of high quality, fit for purpose, accessible and sustainable sports facilities across St Edmundsbury, to meet current and future community need, facilitate increased participation and contribute to improved community health’***

### AIMS

- 6.6. The aim of providing a range of high quality, fit for purpose and accessible provision is to:
  - Deliver the Vision for St Edmundsbury articulated in the Local Plan and contribute significantly to the health and well-being priorities for the area
  - Increase the regular amount of physical activity undertaken by individuals;
  - Encourage new participants to start taking part in physical activity;
  - Facilitate the development of significantly healthier lifestyles across West Suffolk’s communities;
  - Contribute to a real reduction in health inequalities across the Borough;
  - Support and provide opportunities for local sports clubs and community groups
  - Facilitate and support the development of talented athletes

- **Develop additional facility provision where need is evidenced**

6.7. In order to realise the above Vision and Aims for sport and leisure facility provision in St Edmundsbury, there are a number of key recommendations that need to be addressed, and implemented. These are set out below, and then detailed in the Action Plan, based on the identified principles for provision.

**RECOMMENDATION 1 (SER1)**

**St Edmundsbury Council will need to consider the future nature and level of provision of sports halls and swimming pools in Bury St Edmunds, given the age of the existing facility.**

**RECOMMENDATION 2 (SER2)**

**St Edmundsbury Council will need to consider the future provision of sports halls and swimming pools in Haverhill, given the age of the existing facility.**

**RECOMMENDATION 3 (SER3)**

**St Edmundsbury Council explore opportunities to work in partnership to enable the development of an 8 court sports hall.**

**RECOMMENDATION 4 (SER4)**

**St Edmundsbury Council works with:**

- Existing indoor bowling clubs to monitor participation increases and the need for new provision in the future, aligned to population growth in and around Bury St Edmunds.

**RECOMMENDATION 5 (R5)**

**St Edmundsbury Borough Council works with British Cycling and local cycling clubs to develop an off road cycle track (minimum 1.5km).**

**RECOMMENDATION 6 (R6)**

**St Borough Edmundsbury Council works with Local groups for the retention, or replacement of existing squash courts in future facility development.**

**RECOMMENDATION 7 (R7)**

**St Edmundsbury Borough Council works with St Edmunds Archers to review in detail the proposals for the development of a facility providing for archers with a disability in Bury St Edmunds.**

**RECOMMENDATION 8 (R8)**

**St Edmundsbury Borough Council works closely with Suffolk County Council, and local secondary schools to review and explore the options for re-development of ageing pools and sports halls on an ongoing basis.**

**RECOMMENDATION 9 (R9)**

**St Edmundsbury Borough Council works closely with Suffolk County Council, existing, and all new secondary schools to encourage the development of formal community use agreements for on-site sports facilities.**

**RECOMMENDATION 10 (R10)**

**St Edmundsbury Borough Council works with Town and Parish councils to agree the strategic facilities where investment in informal space for use for fitness stations, and sports hall activities should be prioritised.**

**RECOMMENDATION 11 (R11)**

**St Edmundsbury Borough Council uses the West Suffolk Facilities Assessment as an evidence base to secure S106/CIL contributions to future investment in open space, sport and leisure provision in the Borough.**

**RECOMMENDATION 12 (R12)**

**St Edmundsbury Borough Council uses the West Suffolk Facilities Assessment as an evidence base to secure S106/CIL contributions in all new housing developments for the development of walking and cycling routes in the Borough.**

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## ACTION PLAN

6.8. The Action Plan underpinning the Strategy is summarised in the table below:

Table 6.1: Strategy Action Plan

RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE		RESOURCES
			SHORT	= 1 – 3 YEARS	
			MEDIUM	= 3 - 5 YEARS	
			LONG TERM	= 5 - 10 YEARS	
<p><b>RECOMMENDATION 1(R1)</b> St Edmundsbury Council will need to consider the future nature and level of provision of sports halls and swimming pools in Bury St Edmunds, given the age of the existing facility.</p>	<p>Undertake a feasibility study to assess the realistic options for long term provision of Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre in the context of the potential Public Sector Village project, West Suffolk Collage sports facility needs, and the current over supply of pools and halls, in the District, identified within this Strategy.</p>	<p>St Edmundsbury Council, West Suffolk College</p>	<p>SHORT – MEDIUM TERM</p>		<p>Internal officers – leisure, planning, property; external consultants. Likely cost £12-15k for a detailed feasibility study.</p>
<p><b>RECOMMENDATION 2 (R2)</b> St Edmundsbury Council will need to consider the future provision of sports halls and swimming pools in Haverhill, given the age of the existing facility.</p>	<p>Undertake a feasibility study to identify the options for long term provision of Haverhill Leisure Centre, given its age.</p>	<p>St Edmundsbury Council</p>	<p>SHORT-MEDIUM TERM</p>		<p>Internal officers – leisure, planning, property; external consultants. Likely cost £10-12k for a detailed feasibility study.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE		RESOURCES
			SHORT	= 1 – 3 YEARS	
			MEDIUM	= 3 - 5 YEARS	
			LONG TERM	= 5 - 10 YEARS	
<p><b>RECOMMENDATION 3 (R3)</b> St Edmundsbury Council explore opportunities to work in partnership to enable the development of an 8 court sports hall.</p>	<p>St Edmundsbury Council to undertake an options appraisal into future provision of an 8 badminton court hall in the District, and which option – Samuel Ward School, Moreton Hall School, or a re-provided Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre provides the optimum location for such a facility.</p>	<p>St Edmundsbury Council; SCC; Samuel Ward School, new Moreton Hall School</p>	SHORT- MEDIUM TERM		<p>Officer – leisure, planning, education; likely cost of an options appraisal circa £8k</p>
<p><b>RECOMMENDATION 4 (R4)</b> St Edmundsbury Council works with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing indoor bowling clubs to monitor participation increases and the need for new provision in the future, aligned to population growth in and around Bury St Edmunds.</li> </ul>	<p>St Edmundsbury Council to contact all indoor bowling clubs and set up working group to review existing demand and use, and monitor future demand</p>	<p>St Edmundsbury Council; indoor bowling clubs</p>	ONGOING		<p>Officer time (leisure / community);</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE		RESOURCES
			SHORT	= 1 – 3 YEARS	
			MEDIUM	= 3 - 5 YEARS	
			LONG TERM	= 5 - 10 YEARS	
<b>RECOMMENDATION 5 (R5)</b> St Edmundsbury Borough Council works with British Cycling and local cycling clubs to develop an off road cycle track (minimum 1.5km).	Identify a suitable site for the of road cycling circuit; establish a project development working group	St Edmundsbury Council, British Cycling, Local cycling clubs	SHORT		Officer time; capital costs (dependent on site identified)
<b>RECOMMENDATION 6 (R6)</b> St Edmundsbury Borough Council works with Local groups for the retention, or replacement of existing squash courts in future facility development.	St Edmundsbury Council, British Cycling, Local cycling clubs	SHORT	Officer time; capital costs (dependent on site identified)		Planning officer time
<b>RECOMMENDATION 7 (R7)</b> St Edmundsbury Borough Council works with St Edmunds Archers to review in detail the proposals for the development of a facility providing for archers with a disability in Bury St Edmunds.		Edmunds Archers, St Edmundsbury Council	SHORT – MEDIUM TERM		Officer and Club time

RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE		RESOURCES
			SHORT	= 1 – 3 YEARS	
			MEDIUM	= 3 - 5 YEARS	
			LONG TERM	= 5 - 10 YEARS	
<b>RECOMMENDATION 8 (R8)</b> St Edmundsbury Borough Council works closely with Suffolk County Council, and local secondary schools to review and explore the options for re-development of ageing pools and sports halls on an ongoing basis.	Establish Facility Development Partnership	St Edmundsbury Council, SCC, local secondary schools	SHORT TERM, BUT ONGOING PARTNERSHIP		Officer (leisure/community) and partner time; potentially capital contributions in the future
<b>RECOMMENDATION 9 (R9)</b> St Edmundsbury Borough Council works closely with Suffolk County Council, existing, and all new secondary schools to encourage the development of formal community use agreements for on-site sports facilities.	Identify potential education partners who may be interested in developing a formal community use agreement	St Edmundsbury Council, SCC, local secondary schools	ONGOING		Officer time – leisure/community, legal, finance, property
<b>RECOMMENDATION 10 (R10)</b> St Edmundsbury Borough Council works with Town and Parish councils to agree the strategic facilities where investment in informal space for use for fitness stations, and sports hall activities should be prioritised.	Identify agreed priorities for investment	St Edmundsbury Council, Town and Parish Councils	MEDIUM LONG TERM		Officer time – leisure, community, planning Approx. £5k per hall

RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE		RESOURCES
			SHORT	= 1 – 3 YEARS	
			MEDIUM	= 3 - 5 YEARS	
			LONG TERM	= 5 - 10 YEARS	
<b>RECOMMENDATION 11 (R11)</b> St Edmundsbury Borough Council uses the West Suffolk Facilities Assessment as an evidence base to secure S106/CIL contributions to future investment in open space, sport and leisure provision in the Borough.	St Edmundsbury Council incorporates identified facility needs and evidence base into Local Plan, with the appropriate development contribution policy	St Edmundsbury Council	ONGOING		Officers' time (planning)
<b>RECOMMENDATION 12 (R12)</b> St Edmundsbury Borough Council uses the West Suffolk Facilities Assessment as an evidence base to secure S106/CIL contributions in all new housing developments for the development of walking and cycling routes in the Borough.	St Edmundsbury Council incorporates identified facility needs and evidence base into Local Plan, with the appropriate development contribution policy	St Edmundsbury Council	ONGOING		Officers' time (planning)

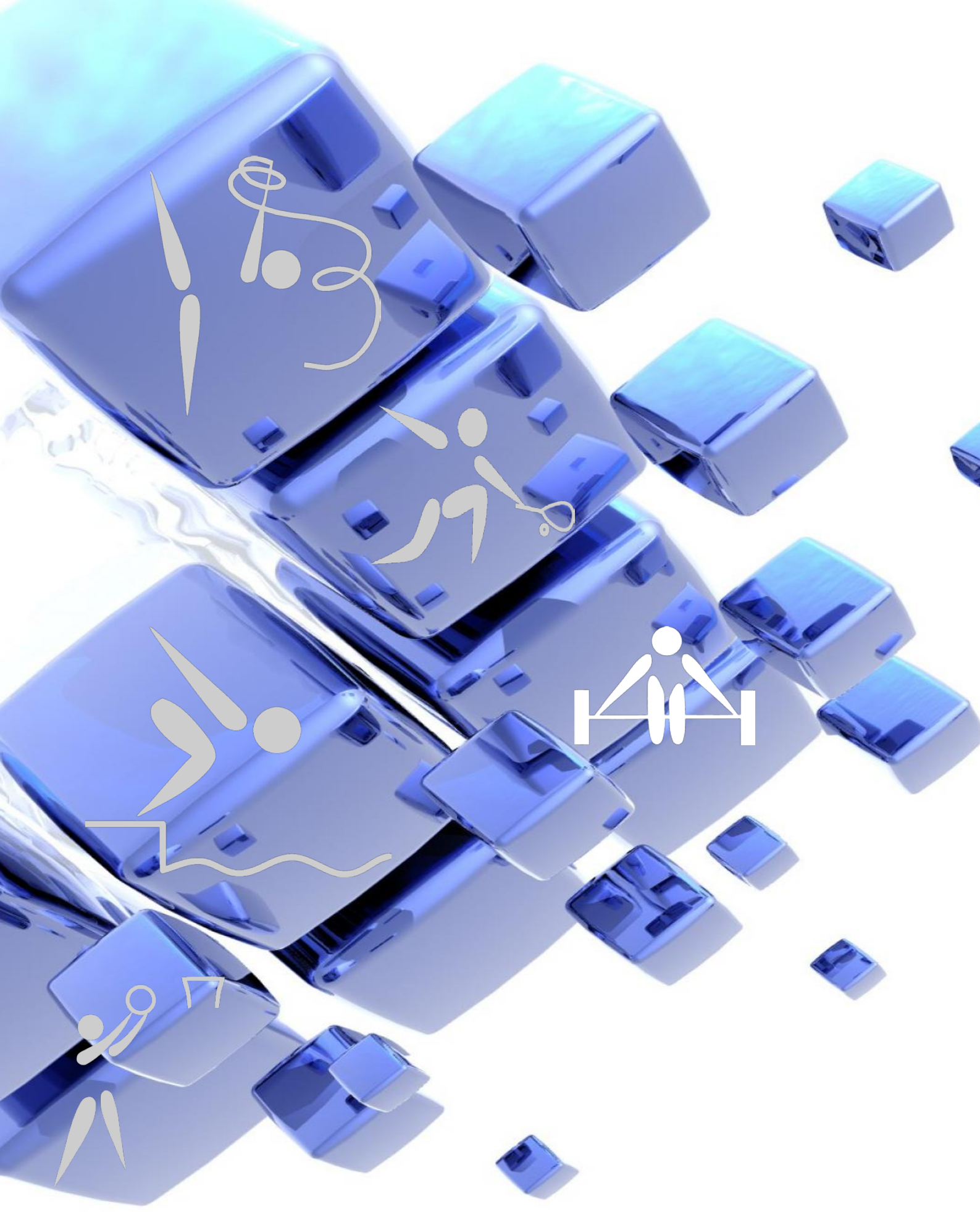
6.9. The table below identifies the priority facility needs for the Borough:

Table 6.2 Summary of Facility Needs in West Suffolk

FACILITY TYPE	FACILITY NEEDS/PRIORITIES
<b>SPORTS HALLS</b>	<p>Badminton, volleyball, basketball and netball NGBs support the need for additional sports hall capacity in St Edmundsbury.</p> <p>Although there is sufficient current and future provision of sports halls in St Edmundsbury, there is a lack of sports halls capable of accommodating indoor netball, basketball, and volleyball.</p> <p>There is only one 8 badminton sized sports hall in St Edmundsbury (Samuel Ward and that has a tarmacadam floor), and only one 6 court hall (Culford Sports and Tennis Centre).</p>



FACILITY TYPE	FACILITY NEEDS/PRIORITIES
	Improvement in the quality of some ageing facilities, in the medium term, Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill Leisure Centres.
<b>SWIMMING POOLS</b>	<p>There is an over supply of current and future swimming pool provision in St Edmundsbury.</p> <p>There is a need to start planning now for investment in existing pool facilities, all of which are ageing. i.e. Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre and Haverhill Leisure Centre.</p>
<b>GYMNASTICS FACILITIES</b>	Increased access to dedicated facilities for club use
<b>SQUASH COURTS</b>	<p>Working with local clubs, existing squash courts should be retained/replaced where possible.</p> <p>If any new facilities are developed, consideration should be given to provision of squash courts; two adjacent courts are needed to facilitate development of participation and club development.</p>
<b>CYCLING FACILITY</b>	Off road track, approx. ¾ mile, closed track.
<b>ARCHERY</b>	Dedicated facility to facilitate increased participation by those with a disability.
<b>INFORMAL FACILITIES</b>	Cycling and walking routes; safe cycling routes



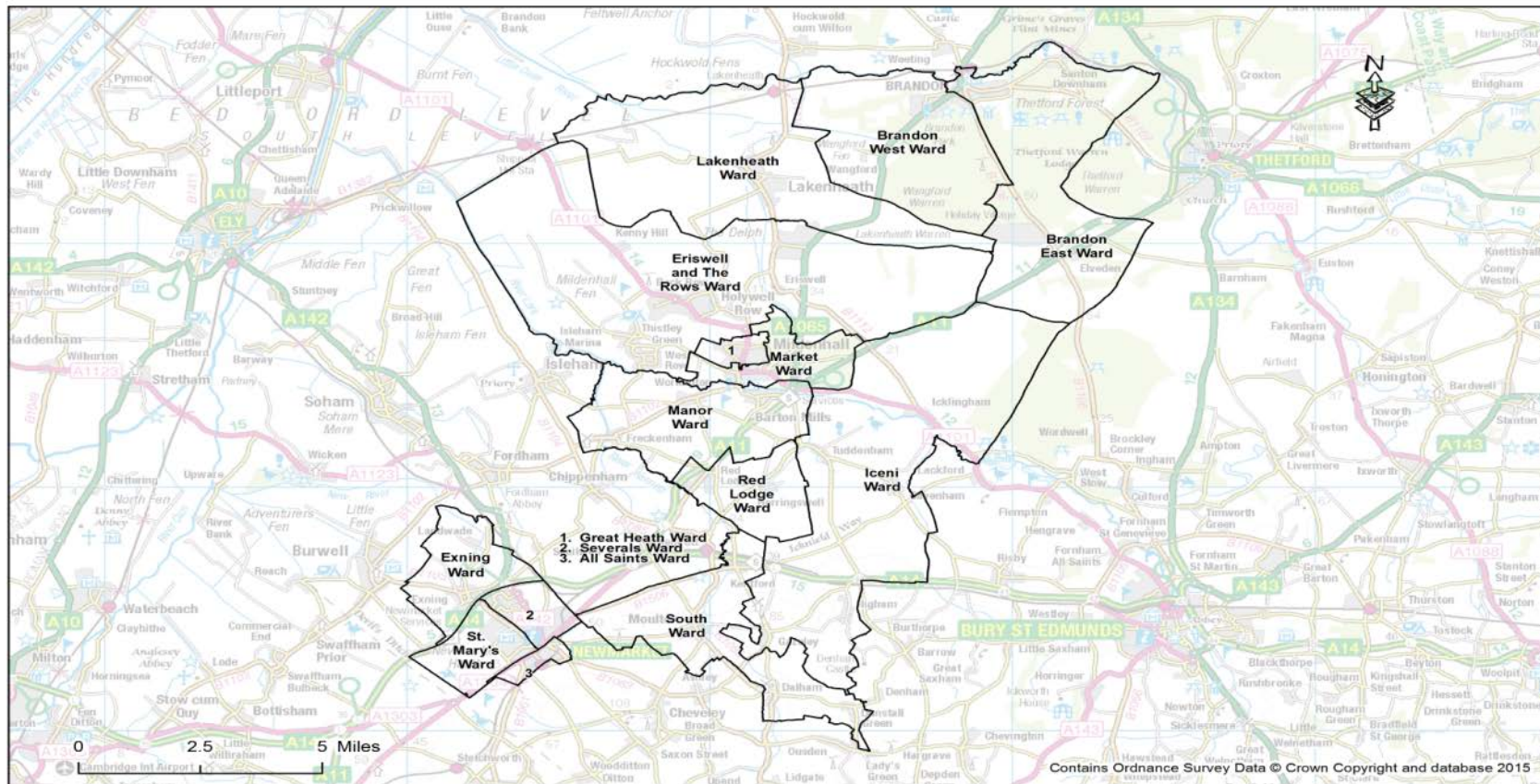
FOREST HEATH DISTRICT

## 7. EXISTING FACILITY PROVISION

### INTRODUCTION

7.1 The current level and nature of facility provision in West Suffolk, has been assessed overall, and on the basis of the two council areas; Map 7.1 below shows the main towns and wards in Forest Heath district.

**Map 7.1: Forest Heath District showing main towns and Wards**



**Forest Heath wards**



7.2 The three main sub areas for Forest Heath, and the wards comprising them are shown below in Table 7.1.

**Table 7.1: Forest Heath Sub Areas**

AUTHORITY AREA	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	ELECTORAL AREA	PARISH/WARD AREA	
FOREST HEATH DC	NORTH	Brandon East	Elveden Parish Council	
			Santon Downham Parish Council	
		Brandon West	Brandon West	
		Lakenheath	Lakenheath	
	CENTRAL	Eriswell and the Rows		Eriswell Parish Council
				Beck Row, Holywell Row, and Kenny Hill Parish Council
				West Row Parish Council
		Mildenhall - Great Heath	Great Heath	
		Mildenhall - Market	Market	
		Manor		Barton Mills Parish Council
				Freckenham Parish Council
				Worlington Parish Council
		Iceni		Tuddenham Parish Council
				Cavenham Parish Council
				Icklingham Parish Council
				Higham Parish Council
				Gazeley Parish Council
	Red Lodge		Herringswell Parish	
			Red Lodge Parish Council	
	SOUTH	Exning	Exning Parish Council	
		Newmarket - Severals	Newmarket - Severals	
		Newmarket - South		Moulton Parish Council
				Dalham Parish Council
				Kentford Parish Council
		Newmarket - St Mary's	Newmarket - St Mary's	
		Newmarket - All Saints	Newmarket - All Saints	

7.3 Prior to 2015, the Forest heath facilities were managed by Anglia Leisure. The two trusts (Abbeycroft Leisure and Anglia Leisure) have now merged and Abbeycroft Leisure is now responsible for the operation of the main sports facilities in Forest Heath:

- **Brandon Leisure Centre**
- **Newmarket Leisure Centre**
- **Mildenhall Swimming Pool**
- **Mildenhall Dome Leisure Centre**

7.4 The Mildenhall Dome Leisure Centre (dryside facilities only) is in a poor condition; some of the existing facilities and activities have transferred to temporary facilities on the site of the Forest Heath District Council offices (fitness suite).

- 7.5 Abbeycroft Leisure manages the former Dome facility, and is managing the temporary fitness suite in an area of the council offices, which is no longer required for administrative purposes, given the merging of the two Councils to form West Suffolk.
- 7.6 Abbeycroft Leisure (formed 1 April 2015), now the largest trust in geographical terms operating local authority facilities in Suffolk, has a long-term contract (to 2020) for the management of the sports facilities for West Suffolk (St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath) on behalf of the Council. The subsidy required to operate the existing facilities will be reduced over the life of the contract.

## SUPPLY OF SPORT AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN FOREST HEATH

- 7.7 The following summarises the existing indoor sports facilities across Forest Heath:

**Table 7.2: Existing Indoor Sports Facilities –Forest Heath**

FACILITIES	FOREST HEATH
Health & Fitness Suite	6
Ice Rinks	0
Indoor Bowls	3 sites (8 greens)
Indoor Tennis Centre	1
Ski Slopes	0
Sports Hall	4
Activity Halls	2
Squash Courts	9
Swimming Pool	5

**N.B Outdoor facilities (with the exception of athletics (1 track in each district), and cycling) are covered in the 2015 West Suffolk Playing Pitch Strategy i.e. grass pitches, All Weather Pitches, tennis courts**

- 7.8 Based on the West Suffolk audit of facilities (2015), the Active Places database, and the local sports profile data (Sport England March 2014), the maps used in the following facility assessments show the extent of existing sport and leisure built facility provision in Forest Heath.
- 7.9 Active Places allows sports facilities in an area to be identified. Nationally, it contains information about over 50,000 facilities, across eleven facility types.
- 7.10 Users of sport and recreation facilities do not recognise administrative boundaries and will use facilities that are convenient and/or provide a quality/value for money experience. Ownership and management are, in this context, a minor consideration for most users.
- 7.11 The availability of facilities in neighbouring areas can and does influence sports facility usage patterns; however, in West Suffolk, usage patterns are more affected by accessibility, given the rurality of the area.

## CATCHMENT AREAS

- 7.12 Catchment areas for different types of provision provide a means of identifying areas currently not served by existing indoor sports facilities. It is however, recognised that catchment areas vary from person to person, day to day, hour to hour, and are also very different in rural and urban areas. This problem is overcome by accepting the concept of 'effective catchment', defined as the distance travelled by around 75-80% of users. The maps in Section 3 demonstrate catchment areas for facility provision in Forest Heath, based on this approach.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- 7.13 The 2011 Census identified that there is high car ownership across the area, due to its rural nature. It is not always easy (or indeed possible in some cases) to use public transport to get to and from some sport and recreation facilities. In Forest Heath, overall 15.2% of the population does not have access to private transport
- 7.14 In light of aspirations to reduce private car journeys, improved links with the public transport network could improve access to sport and recreation facilities.
- 7.15 Establishing or improving links with existing or proposed public transport networks should therefore be a key consideration in development of new sports facilities in West Suffolk.. It is however recognised that in rural areas this can present more of a challenge than in more urban communities.
- 7.16 This approach is clearly supported in Local Plan policy, and the Vision 31 statements, which positively support the development of additional opportunities for walking and cycling (within existing communities and those that will be developed), both on an informal basis, and as a means of accessing community facilities, and thereby reducing the number of car journeys and contributing to Forest Heath's health and well-being agenda. This approach also reflects the fact that there is growing interest and participation in walking and cycling at local level.

## ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING SPORTS FACILITY PROVISION IN FOREST HEATH

- 7.17 Given the range of facilities in Forest Heath, each type is summarised below and assessed separately, to provide a more detailed picture of the current supply and demand, and critically future need.
- 7.18 The facility types assessed are:
- **Sports Halls**
  - **Swimming Pools**
  - **Health and Fitness**
  - **Squash Courts**
  - **Gymnastics**
  - **Table Tennis**
  - **Indoor facilities for Tennis/Netball/Bowls**
  - **Athletics tracks**
  - **Cycling**

7.19 The quality assessments of the Forest Heath facilities are summarised in Table 7.3; they will also be referenced in subsequent sections as they clearly impact on sports halls, swimming pools, health and fitness facilities etc.

**Table 7.3: Summary of Forest Heath Facilities – Quality Audits**

<b>FACILITY</b>	<b>QUALITY AUDIT SCORE</b>	<b>NEED FOR INVESTMENT</b>
<b>BRANDON LEISURE CENTRE</b>	Average (47%)	Significant
<b>NEWMARKET LEISURE CENTRE</b>	Good (73%)	Minimum
<b>MILDENHALL SWIMMING POOL</b>	Poor (26%)	Significant
<b>MILDENHALL DOME</b>	Poor (35%)	Significant

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## SPORTS HALLS

### EXISTING PROVISION - SUPPLY

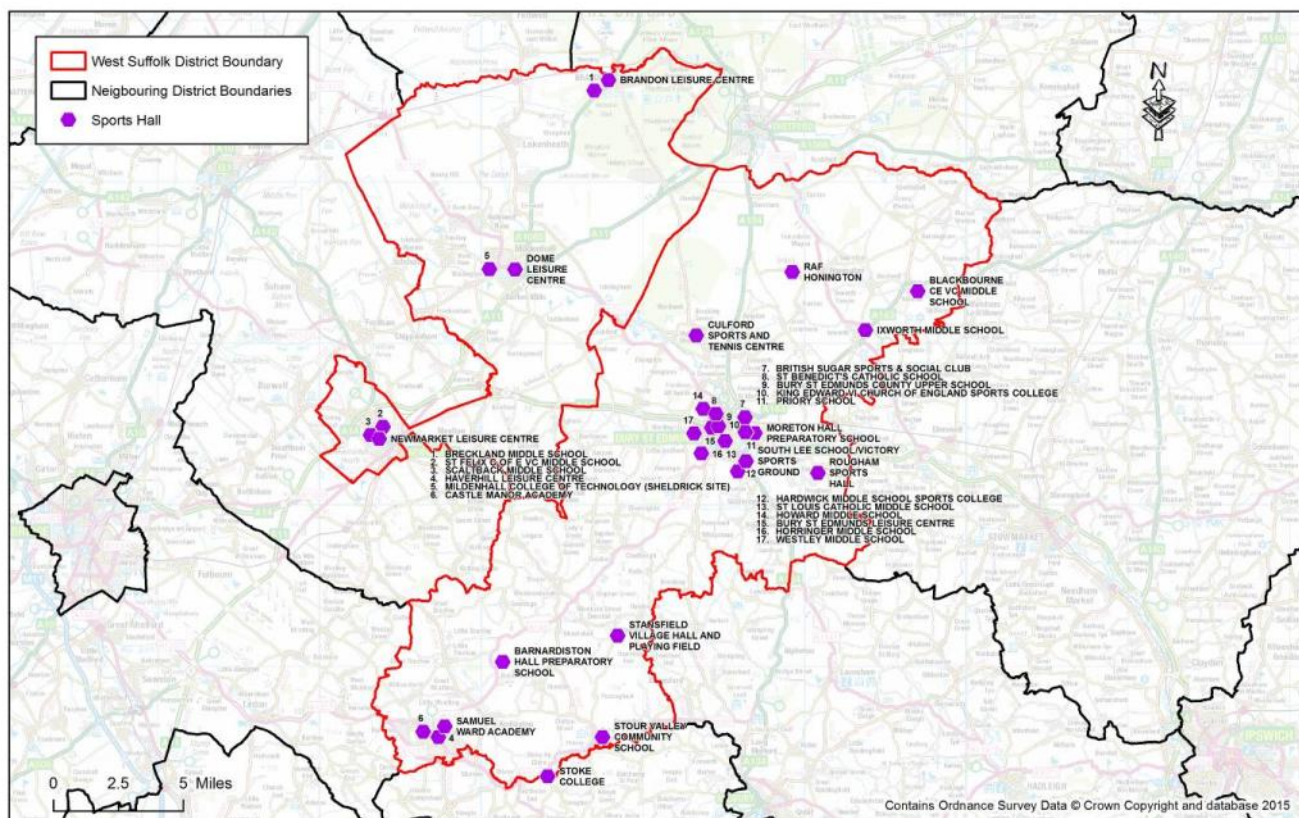
7.20 Indoor multi-sports halls are defined as areas where a range of sport and recreational activities are carried out. They are at least 10m x 18m (e.g. the size of one badminton court including surrounding safety area) and include specifically designed venues such as leisure centres and school sports halls. The definition also applies to halls where activities can take place, such as school assembly halls, community buildings and community centres (the main ones are included in the table below). Specialist centres, e.g. dance centres, are not included.

### SPORTS HALL SUPPLY IN FOREST HEATH

7.19 The supply analysis identifies that Forest Heath has a total of 6 sports halls (sports halls/activity halls) across 6 sites (West Suffolk Audit of Built Facilities August 2015; also informed by Active Places). These sports halls are listed in Appendix 3.

7.20 Map 7.2 shows all the sports halls in Forest Heath and their location. Sports halls are primarily located on education sites and in Forest Heath's leisure centres e.g. Brandon Leisure Centre, Mildenhall Dome and Newmarket Leisure Centre. Map 7.2 also illustrates the proximity of sports halls in neighbouring local authority areas.

**Map 7.2 : Sports Halls in West Suffolk**



**All Sports Halls**





7.21 The analysis of the overall hall supply in the area, (based on Appendix 3) is as follows:

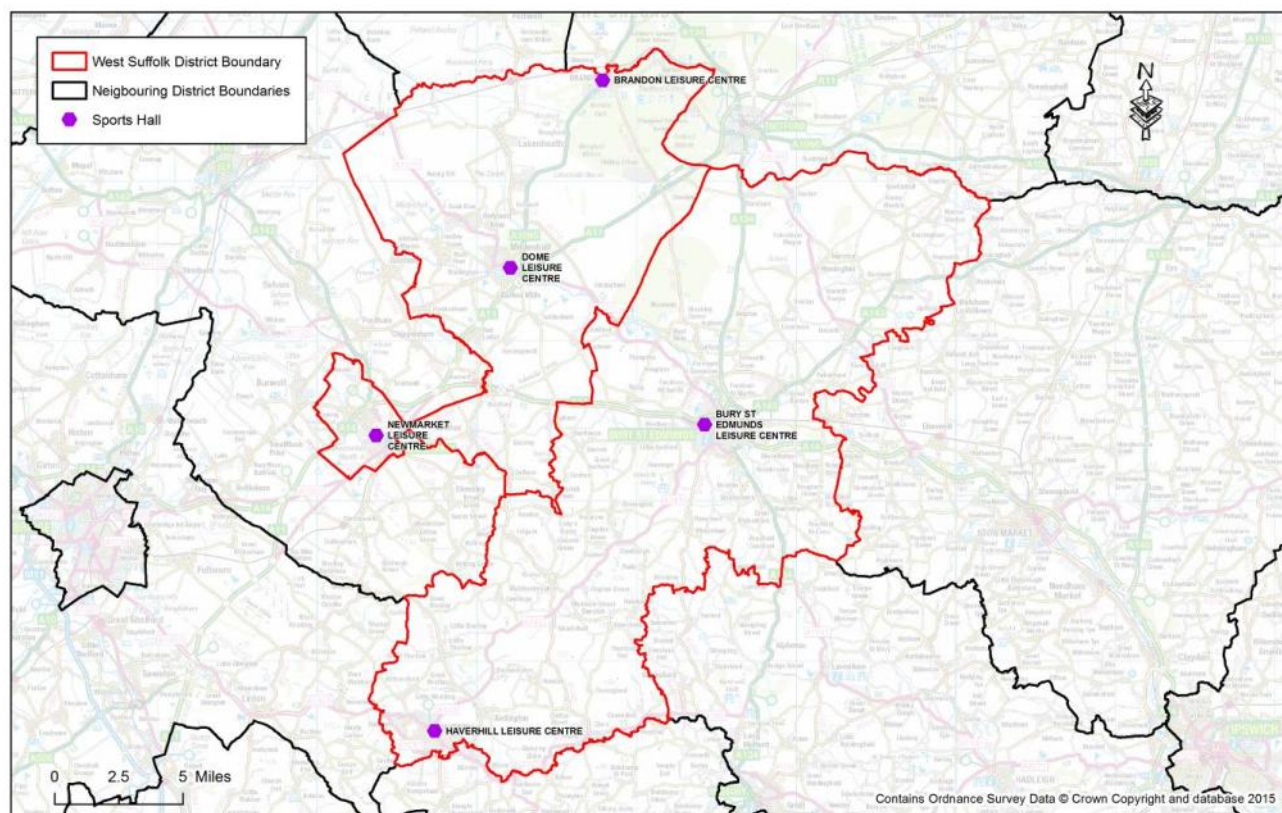
**Table 7.4: Analysis of Sports Hall Supply in Forest Heath**

	<b>FOREST HEATH</b>
<b>TOTAL BADMINTON COURTS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>TOTAL SPORTS HALLS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>TOTAL COMMUNITY ACCESSIBLE SPORTS HALLS 3+ COURTS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>TOTAL COMMUNITY ACCESSIBLE BADMINTON COURTS</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>COMMUNITY ACCESSIBLE 4+ COURT HALLS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>COMMUNITY ACCESSIBLE 5+ COURT HALLS</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>COMMUNITY ACCESSIBLE 6 COURT HALLS</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>COMMUNITY ACCESSIBLE 8 COURT HALLS</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>ACTIVITY HALLS 1 OR 2 COURTS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>TOTAL ACTIVITY HALLS</b>	<b>2</b>

7.22 Table 7.4 and Appendix 3 highlight that there is currently no 8 badminton court in Forest Heath. Of the overall 4 sports halls, 1 is only available for sports club/community association use; this is the Scaltback School sports hall. 3 of the 4 sports halls are on education sites; these provide access for community associations/sports club use (Scaltback) and in the case of the Mildenhall Dome and Newmarket Leisure Centre, the community out of school hours. Only 3 sites provide for pay and play access; these are the facilities operated by Abbeycroft Leisure at Newmarket and Brandon Leisure Centres, and the dual-use Mildenhall Dome. The majority (3) of the existing sports halls are a minimum 4 badminton court size; there are no sports halls larger than 4 court in the District.

7.23 Map 7.3 shows the community accessible sports halls in Forest Heath.

**Map 7.3: Community Accessible Sports Halls West Suffolk**



**Community accessible Sports Halls**



## EXISTING SUPPLY - GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND QUALITY

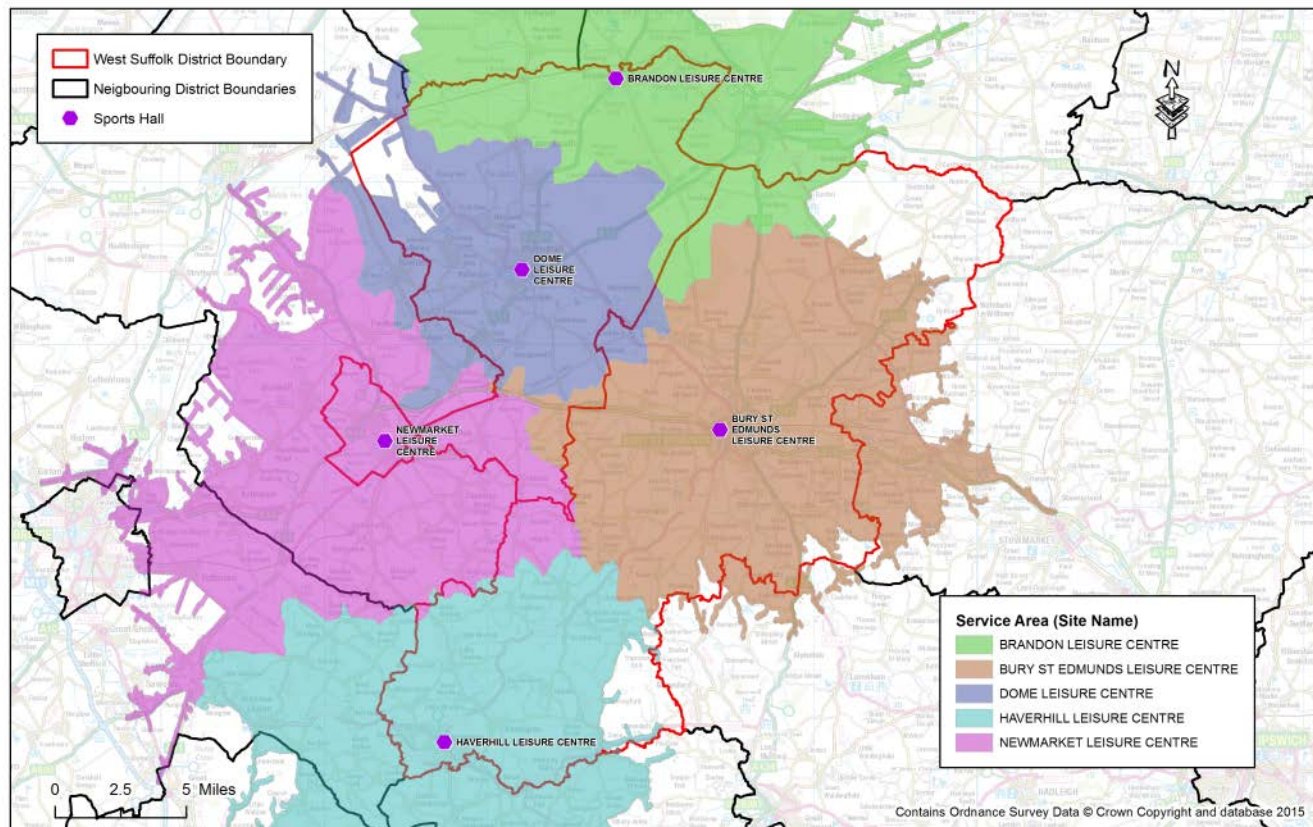
### QUALITY

- 7.24 Detailed quality assessments have been undertaken on all Forest Heath facilities. These are provided in Appendix 2 (2a-2f), and summarised in Table 7.4 above.
- 7.25 Of the three Forest Heath sports hall facilities, one has been refurbished within the last 10 years. However, given that the three facilities were originally built between fifty-five and twenty-six years ago (Newmarket Leisure Centre 1981 (new extension built 2009), Mildenhall Dome 1984, and Brandon Leisure Centre 1991), there is a need to plan for their replacement in the medium to long term.
- 7.26 All 3 community accessible sports halls (3 courts+), were built well over 10 years ago i.e. pre 2005. While most sports halls were built in the 1980s or 1990s this still makes them 20-25 years old.
- 7.27 The quality of the existing facilities is therefore extremely variable, despite refurbishments undertaken in the last sixteen years. Whilst all the pay and play facilities have been refurbished to modern day standards, most of the community accessible facilities on education sites are older. Although some have been refurbished significant investment will be required to upgrade/refurbish many of the existing sports halls in the next few years, given their age, current condition and quality.

### EXISTING SUPPLY - ACCESSIBILITY

- 7.28 Geographical distribution of sports hall provision is generally based around the more urban areas of Forest Heath. Whilst the facilities in the urban areas are within walking distance of a large number of residents in those towns, walking catchment areas are not really an appropriate means of determining accessibility for those in the more rural areas. The rural roads are not, generally, particularly safe for either walking or cycling, so use of private transport tends to be the norm to access leisure facilities.
- 7.29 As illustrated in Map 7.4, virtually the whole of Forest Heath falls within the identified service area for the Council's pay and play facilities, operated by Abbeycroft Leisure. It is however important to highlight that the Mildenhall Dome Leisure Centre has moved, on an interim basis, to a traditional dual-use model i.e. sports hall, courts and pitches; extended fitness provision is now available on the former Forest Heath Council office site. The future nature and level of provision at the Mildenhall Dome is dependent on the scale and nature of future provision in Mildenhall, through the proposed Hub development.

**Map 7.4: Sports Halls in Forest Heath and West Suffolk – Service Areas Map**



**Service areas (up to a 20 minute drive time) - Sports Halls**



- 7.30 Map 7.4 shows the catchment area of the main sports halls in Forest Heath, based on a 20 minute drivetime. All residents within Forest Heath are within 20 minutes drive of a community accessible sports hall.
- 7.31 Given that the majority of existing community accessible sports halls are 4 badminton court size, communities in Forest Heath generally have reasonable access to a sports hall within their local area. Given the proximity of some sports halls outside Forest Heath boundaries, some communities may find it easier to access these facilities e.g. west of Forest Heath, close to boundary with East Cambs district.
- 7.32 The challenge in Forest Heath is that whilst many of the community live in the rural areas, the majority of the sports facility provision is in the urban areas. This is where the provision of informal activity halls, or sports halls on education sites becomes even more important, as this type of facility increases the level of local provision available for local people.
- 7.33 Two schools and colleges offer their sports hall facilities for community use although the nature, extent, practical arrangements surrounding this and ‘usefulness’ of said use varies considerably. This is critical in terms of both future accessibility and participation.
- 7.34 Those education facilities with a formal community use arrangement provide community access and use based on this formal agreement e.g. times and types of use; education facilities which are not subject to a formal community use arrangement may withdraw community access at any time eg Scaltback.
- 7.35 Some of the newest sports halls have been developed on education sites eg Newmarket Leisure Centre as a result of investment in education provision; these sites tend to have at least a form of formal community usage agreed, even if it is use by community sports clubs and associations.

- 7.36 Maintaining and indeed developing increased community access to education-based sports facilities is critical in ensuring locally available access, and facilitating increased participation in sport and physical activity for health benefits. An example of where community use of sports facilities could be extended is Scaltbeck School, Newmarket..

## SUPPLY AND DEMAND ANALYSIS

### SPORT ENGLAND'S FACILITIES PLANNING MODEL

- 7.37 Strategic Leisure was provided with the Sport England's Facilities Planning Model National Run (August 2014; data from April 2014 report) for sports hall provision in Forest Heath.

### FOREST HEATH

- 7.38 The report sets out an assessment of the current situation regarding sports hall supply, based on 2015 population (63,352), and then looks forward to 2025, to test different scenarios in terms of provision changes in Forest Heath, and also in the surrounding authorities of East Cambs DC, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk BC, St Edmundsbury, and Breckland DC. It also assess the impact of closing Mildenhall Dome, Forest Heath, and developing a new facility in Mildenhall. The key findings are summarised below. The full report can be accessed at Appendix 8B.

### SUPPLY

### FOREST HEATH

- 7.39 The Facilities Planning Model analysis for Forest Heath identifies 6 sports halls across 4 sites in the District (sports halls and activity halls) with a total supply of 15.37 marked out courts. The hall space provides a capacity for approximately 4,197 visits per week during the peak period.
- 7.40 The halls modelled are those identified as being community accessible, and take into account court availability. This explains the small difference in the overall number of halls between the Facility Planning Model (FPM) and the earlier assessment (see Table 7.4).
- 7.41 There are only 6 sports halls in the District: this means that Forest Heath residents have a lower share of sports hall facilities in the District than the East and England averages. Forest Heath also has a lower level of provision per 10,000 population at 3.52 than the East and England averages, and its neighbouring authorities, (St Edmundsbury of 7.27 courts, though it is higher than the figures for King's Lynn and West Norfolk (2.37) and Breckland (2.41). East Cambs has 5.44 courts per 10,000 population). Overall, Forest Heath is poorly supplied with sports halls.
- 7.42 The closure of the Mildenhall Dome (due to condition of the overall building), which has the greatest number of visits per week at 1,427 will reduce both the number of available courts in the District and overall capacity. Development of a new facility to replace the Dome would increase the current capacity available, and the number of courts, but the level of provision would only be 2.9 per 10,000 population, because only the sports hall, and not the activity hall would be replaced. Capacity per week would be 3,622.

### DEMAND

- 7.43 The Facilities Planning Model analysis identifies that the 2015 population generates a demand for 20.2 courts and 4,373 visits per week during peak periods. By 2025, the estimated population is likely to demand 22.38 courts and 4,888 visits per week in the peak period (vpwpp). Clearly, with current provision at 15.37 courts, and proposed provision at 13.27 there is a deficit in the provision of sports halls in the District of around 7 courts by 2025, taking into account proposed changes in provision in Mildenhall and increased population.

- 7.44 There is higher demand for sports hall provision in Forest Heath than both the East and England average.
- 7.45 Currently, 86% of all demand for sports hall provision is met in the District; this is a lower figure than both the East and England average. 100% of all available capacity in the existing and available community accessible provision is used during peak periods.
- 7.46 The percentage of demand satisfied by car users (88.6%) is much higher than the national average (75.3%) and the regional average (82.2%), reflecting the rural nature of the district.
- 7.47 The highest level of unmet demand for sports hall provision is in and around the Newmarket area. However, generally unmet demand is dispersed around the District.
- 7.48 13% of demand is unmet with current provision of community accessible sports halls. It is thought that this demand is unmet for two reasons; firstly existing sports halls are full, and secondly, there are insufficient courts to meet current and therefore future, demand.
- 7.49 It is also interesting to note that Forest Heath residents travel to facilities out of the District eg St Edmundsbury and facilities in East Cambs (around 20% of latent demand is exported), and people living in East Cambs District, Kings Lynn and South Norfolk District, and also Breckland District travel into Forest Heath to use sports halls (approximately 10.9% of satisfied demand is imported from East Cambs).
- 7.50 Opening the proposed new Mildenhall Hub in 2018 will see levels of satisfied demand reduce to 82%, due to reduced capacity and number of courts from the 2015 position. The population growth in the area will also impact and is likely to further reduce satisfied demand.
- 7.51 Essentially, based on both current and future demand, there is insufficient sports hall provision in the District, even with the Mildenhall Hub proposal.

## CONSULTATION

- 7.52 Consultation with relevant National Governing Bodies (NGBs), and local clubs, highlights local factors in relation to supply and demand for sports halls in the future.
- 7.53 A specific comment from a netball club in West Suffolk is: *Jetts Netball Club – I would welcome any discussion on the facilities for netball in West Suffolk for the clubs in our area. Our summer league has around 70 teams competing and suitable venues are very hard to find to accommodate such a growing league. This season we have had to reject two teams wanting to join our leagues.*

Table 7.5: Summary of National Governing Body Consultation – Sports Hall Sports

NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY	CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FURTHER COMMENTS
<p><b>BADMINTON ENGLAND</b></p>	<p>Focus Young People 13-26 years</p> <p>Casual Market</p> <p>Club engagement</p> <p>Badminton as a whole aims to improve the profile of the sport.</p>	<p>Abbeycroft Leisure wants to start a junior club.</p> <p>The area would benefit from more courts.</p> <p>The long-term aim would be to have a big sports centre with a hall for the entire county. This could host county tournaments but this would be very expensive. The badminton association has already looked into this but decided against it. The major issue was that it would be too expensive to upkeep and run this facility.</p> <p>Overall the major issue is the price of a badminton court. The average of £9 an hour is too much for clubs to pay and as a result is forcing them to fold.</p>	<p>The participation trends within the area are very similar to the national trend via APD. Suffolk has a high average age population, which helps with participation. As a whole the participation trends in Suffolk have remained unchanged.</p> <p>A community badminton network has recently been formed; this is a group of people from a variety of clubs that aim to get more people playing badminton. This does however, put facilities under strain. There are also school initiatives that are being run by CBN (community badminton network).</p> <p>At Haverhill they are trying to use CBN but this is not yet used in schools. So far the programme has managed to get 15 ex badminton players playing badminton again with the aim to get them to join clubs in the future.</p> <p>The major club in the area is the Abbygate Premier Club. They play at King Edwards's VI school, Bury St. Edmunds. The club has a hall with four courts and was refurbished for badminton. The club has senior and junior teams.</p>

NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY	CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FURTHER COMMENTS
			<p>The multipurpose areas at King Edward's are also used by a church group, which can impact on accessibility to the facilities.</p> <p>The Newmarket Badminton Association has its own league across Suffolk, which involves a variety of clubs.</p>
<p><b>ENGLAND BASKETBALL</b></p>	<p>Focus Satellite Clubs, school and club competitions – national perspective. AP9 – shows that basketball participation has increased even though Sport England funding was cut from Basketball England in 2014 due to them not hitting their previous Active People targets. The AP9 increase could be legacy of Ball Again and IM basketball programmes that Basketball England used to promote. Mixed economy model now being used through alternative organisations to deliver basketball that are receiving Sport England funding e.g. British Basketball Foundation, Reach and Teach. Basketball England still received some funding from Sport England for Satellite clubs programme, which is one of the most successful Satellite programmes amongst NGBs, and is currently working on a higher education specific satellite clubs model.</p> <p>Urban conurbations have the greatest potential and therefore are the main focus for Basketball England.</p>	<p>Main issues from NGB that they receive from clubs are: the cost of a basketball court, size of the courts not being appropriate for national league competition (small halls). Competition with other sports e.g. Badminton.</p> <p>There is unmet demand. There needs to be better access to school sites. Currently working with Sport England on this.</p>	<p>£1.8m pot for the last 4 years (2009-13) is all Basketball England have.</p>

NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY	CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FURTHER COMMENTS
<b>BOXING ENGLAND</b>	<p>Boxing since London 2012 has continued to grow throughout England.</p> <p>St Helens boxing club.</p> <p>Astley V.I.P Amateur Boxing club</p>	<p>'Creating an Active Suffolk- where boxing is involved.</p> <p>The Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (AASE) programme is running across the country aims at boxers who have the realistic potential to achieve excellence in boxing and are seeking to perform at the highest level.</p>	<p>No funding available from NGB. Not targeted as a Whole Sport.</p>
<b>ENGLAND NETBALL</b>	<p>West Suffolk has been a major priority area especially in relation to the Junior section.</p> <p>Within the last year netball has seen an increase in participation rates. There are now more than 150,000 netballers across the country who are playing the sport for at least half an hour every week.</p> <p>Junior netball in West Suffolk has seen a massive increase in participation rates compared to other areas. Adult participation levels are still slightly above the national average.</p> <p>There is the 'Back to Netball' initiative, which in being run to encourage people to get back into playing the game.</p> <p>Sessions provide qualified coaches lead a gentle re-introduction into the game for women who are over 16 and the sessions.</p>	<p>A major issue would be that many outdoor courts do not have floodlights. This means that sessions cannot be run in the evening; this results in a lack of supply to cater for the amount of demand.</p> <p>There is not enough after school clubs across Suffolk. There is also limited junior club provision.</p> <p>There is a lack of coaching opportunities for students of the University.</p> <p>They want to increase participation rates in Suffolk through intramural sport delivered by UNO or partner university/programmes.</p> <p>There is a target to deliver accessible and affordable pay and play sessions throughout the county.</p> <p>In the process of investigating a central venue.</p>	<p>There is currently not a central venue in Suffolk due to the landscape but all regional matches are now being played at Suffolk One in Ipswich.</p> <p>Within Suffolk there are minimal indoor courts and most new courts have to put down astro turf carpets. Often other sports take the indoor court time.</p> <p>Within Suffolk there is one University who have one team entered into BUCS. They have facilities but these are not on campus so have to travel 15 minutes by car to access these.</p> <p>The High 5 tournament will be run in Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds. They aim to deliver 2 holiday camps for High 5 age group attracting 30 participants at Bury St Edmunds.</p>



NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY	CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FURTHER COMMENTS
	<p>There is the aim to deliver 4 B2N local festivals engaging 80 participants across the county.</p>	<p>Disability facilities would be a key priority. Suffolk Netball doesn't receive direct funding to help with facility development so this is an area that is seen as a problem.</p> <p>Only 12 primary schools in Suffolk are affiliated to EN, which represents a small percentage of the schools across the county this can be increased. Communication from EN to schools needs to improve. There needs to be more volunteers and umpires to help cater for the demand.</p> <p>Colleges within Waveney, Forest Heath, Suffolk coastal and Bury St Edmunds will be approached about improving netball in the colleges.</p> <p>To be able to increase the number of volunteers something needs to be done to increase the enjoyment of these volunteers.</p> <p>Plan on Setting up a Volunteering page on Suffolk website to provide opportunities for individuals to become involved with Netball in the county</p> <p>Sports halls are being built in schools but they are not big enough to be able to fit in any netball courts.</p>	
<p><b>VOLLEYBALL ENGLAND</b></p>	<p>Go Spike – Adult participation programme (16+)</p>	<p>The marketing of clubs needs to improve to help inform residents of Suffolk about volleyball participation opportunities.</p>	<p>The sport has limited funding available. There is a capital fund which is available but this is up to the NGB to spend and Suffolk does not get very much.</p>

NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY	CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FURTHER COMMENTS
	<p>Satellite Clubs – Children and young people (11-25)</p> <p>Further Education – Colleges and Sixth Forms (16-18)</p> <p>Club Development</p> <p>Sitting Volleyball – Disability offer (14+)</p> <p>Since 2013 nationally there has been lots of effort put in to develop new clubs. Within Suffolk region for this to happen more successfully there needs to be more volunteers and funding.</p> <p>Very little volleyball is played in schools within the area. For this problem to be resolved there needs to be more PE teachers putting volleyball sessions on.</p> <p>Another reason for lower participation trends in Suffolk is because people within the area do not know about the volleyball clubs. People have no idea there are volleyball clubs in Suffolk so do not get the chance to play.</p> <p>A point why volleyball participation rates nationally are very low compared to other sports and because of the sports lack of TV coverage.</p>	<p>Improvement in the times available for volleyball in the sports centres to encourage more people to get involved in training. Participants in West Suffolk frequently travel to Mid Suffolk to access courts.</p>	<p>The Bury Bobcats play at Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre; the club's outdoor venue is based at Tollgate rec, St Olaves. They have become affiliated to volleyball England and already have a men's team competing at regional level and a female junior member has been selected for England Juniors. They are keen to recruit more members.</p> <p>There is unmet demand by the players who want to train midweek but do not have the opportunity.</p> <p>Newmarket club has many adults in the club and a few youngsters. They train on Wednesday nights at Newmarket Leisure centre, from 8-10pm.</p> <p>Haverhill Hornets - this is an early-stage club that is trying to get going following the successful Sport England small grant/Sportivate funding secured in 2013, with sessions starting in 2014. The club is not yet affiliated to Volleyball England, but is still going.</p>

- 7.54 Consultation was undertaken at local level with local sports clubs, who were asked their views on the current facilities they use, whether they are likely to increase their membership in the future, and what the main issues are for them in terms of facilities in West Suffolk.
- 7.55 A summary of feedback from sports clubs using sports hall facilities is set out below. Detailed feedback is included at Appendix 5B.
- 7.56 The current supply of facilities has satisfactory ratings and the majority of clubs would recommend their facilities to other clubs.
- 7.57 The survey indicates that with a recent increase in membership and a further projected rise in the next three years, sports organisations believe that a greater quality and quantity of sporting facilities would allow their club to further grow and improve.
- **43% of organisations stated their membership had increased over the past year while 53% predict their membership will increase over the next three years. (Question 11 and 21)**
  - **With an average score across all facilities of 3.6/5, sports facilities are scored as ‘better than adequate’. Accessibility (travel), Cleanliness and Ease of Booking score particularly highly however Childcare Facilities is the only subarea that is rated as below adequate. (Question 16)**
  - **The overall satisfaction rating average was 7.9 with 66% of respondents rating their facility between 8 and 10.**
  - **The average rating indicating likelihood of recommendation to other sports clubs was 7.8, with 66% of respondents rating their facility between 8 and 10.**
  - **52% of respondents believed that the current facility supply (across the area) does not satisfy the demand for their activity.**

## SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS - SPORTS HALLS

### FOREST HEATH SPORTS HALLS FPM

- 7.58 From the FPM, which is only one element of the needs assessment, the simplistic analysis of “supply versus demand” in relation to sports halls within Forest Heath has identified an under supply of sports hall space within the local authority area, based on both current and future demand. This assumes retention of all existing community accessible facilities, other than the Mildenhall Dome, because sports halls in Forest Heath are full in peak periods.
- 7.59 The Facilities Planning Model analysis identifies that the 2015 population generates a demand for 20.2 courts and 4,373 visits per week during peak periods. By 2025, the estimated population is likely to demand 22.38 courts and 4,888 vpwpp. Clearly, with current provision at 15.37 courts, and proposed provision at 13.27 there is a deficit in the provision of sports halls in the District of around 7 courts by 2025, taking into account proposed changes in provision in Mildenhall and increased population.
- 7.60 Current levels of satisfied demand are lower than national and regional levels at 86%. However, the FPM suggests that circa 13% of the demand that is being satisfied is being met by sports hall provision outside of Forest Heath, predominantly within East Cambs district. Similarly, Forest Heath imports around 10.95% demand from East Camb; if there were no net import/export, then there would still be insufficient sports hall provision in the District to meet current and future demand.

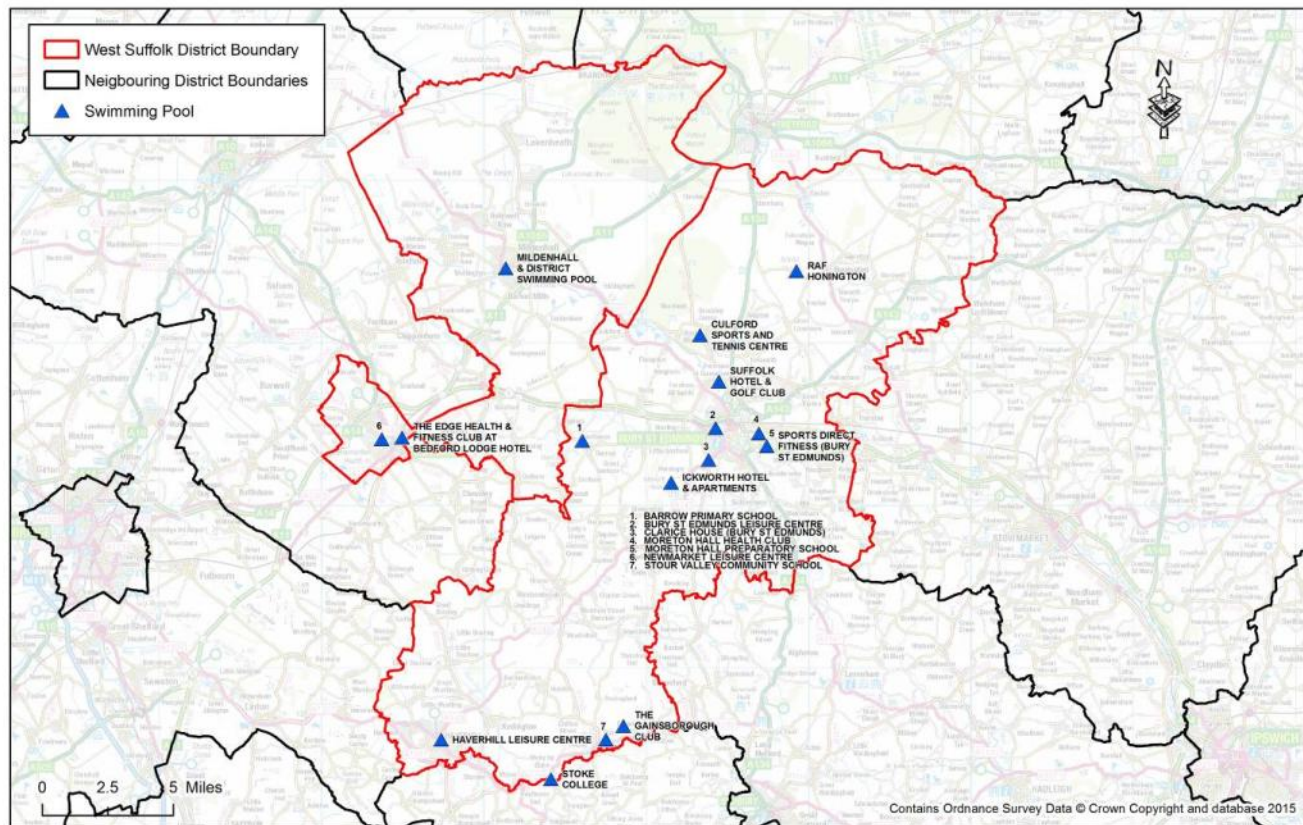
- 7.61 Assuming closure of the Mildenhall Dome, levels of unmet demand will increase to 18% and equate to 787 visits per week during the peak period. Circa 49.3% of this unmet demand is attributed to people living outside the catchment of an existing sports hall facility whilst the other 50% is attributed to there being a lack of capacity at current facilities.
- 7.62 Used capacity figures for Forest Heath are significantly higher than national and regional levels at 100%.
- 7.63 Badminton, Basketball, Netball and Volleyball NGBs highlight the need, and demand, for additional indoor sports hall space in West Suffolk, due to growing participation, and the establishment of new clubs. Netball identify the need for any new sports halls to be of an appropriate size to provide a netball court. There is only one 8 court sports hall in St Edmundsbury, and no 6 or 8 court sports halls in Forest Heath; the under supply of courts means there is less flexibility over sports hall programming.
- 7.64 Given there are a significant number of sports halls on education sites, it may be possible to achieve some increased capacity within the existing sports hall stock, by negotiating improved and extended access to existing facilities on educational sites through formal community use agreements, and opening existing community facilities for longer.
- 7.65 Schools play a critical role in providing facilities for community access; it is critical that all new sports halls on school sites provide secured community access to a minimum 4 court sports hall, through a formal agreement.
- 7.66 Although there has been investment in Newmarket Leisure Centre in the last 6 years, the remainder of the existing sports hall facilities were predominantly built in the 1980s to 1990s. The condition and quality of these facilities, despite various refurbishments, will need to be carefully monitored, to ensure that facility quality does not deteriorate, and planning should be undertaken for replacement facilities in the medium term.
- 7.67 Forest Heath operates 3 sports halls through its Trust partners; whilst there has been significant investment, refurbishment and redevelopment of all facilities managed by Abbeycroft Leisure, there are issues with the quality of two facilities – the Mildenhall Dome and Brandon Leisure Centre. The former facility really needs to be replaced by a new, fit for purpose sports hall, fitness suite, etc, and the latter provision has potential to be re-thought, particularly in the light of the proposed development of the Mildenhall Hub, and the potential for accessing existing sports facilities on the nearby Mildenhall US Airforce base.
- 7.68 There is currently only one 8 badminton court sports hall in West Suffolk, which means that the capability to host county/regional indoor sports events, or provide a central venue for training and competition is limited. Sports hall provision for e.g. indoor netball, and volleyball is limited. The lack of halls this size also limits the ability to further develop basketball in the borough.

## SWIMMING POOLS

### SWIMMING POOL SUPPLY IN FOREST HEATH

- 7.69 The supply analysis identifies that West Suffolk has a total of 22 swimming pools, across 17 sites (West Suffolk Audit of Facilities, August 2015, and Active Places August 2015). These are listed in Appendix 3. Of these 22 pools, 4 are lidos, 1 is a leisure pool (Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre), 6 are main pools, and eleven are learner/teaching/training pools.
- 7.70 Of the 17 sites, there are 4 pools in Forest Heath 2 sites are pay and play access, managed by Abbeycroft Leisure Trust (Mildenhall Swimming Pool and Newmarket Leisure Centre). 1 pool is commercially operated. Effectively only 2 sites and 3 pools (2 main, 1 teaching / learner) are available for community use in Forest Heath.

Map 7.5: Swimming Pools in West Suffolk



All Swimming Pools



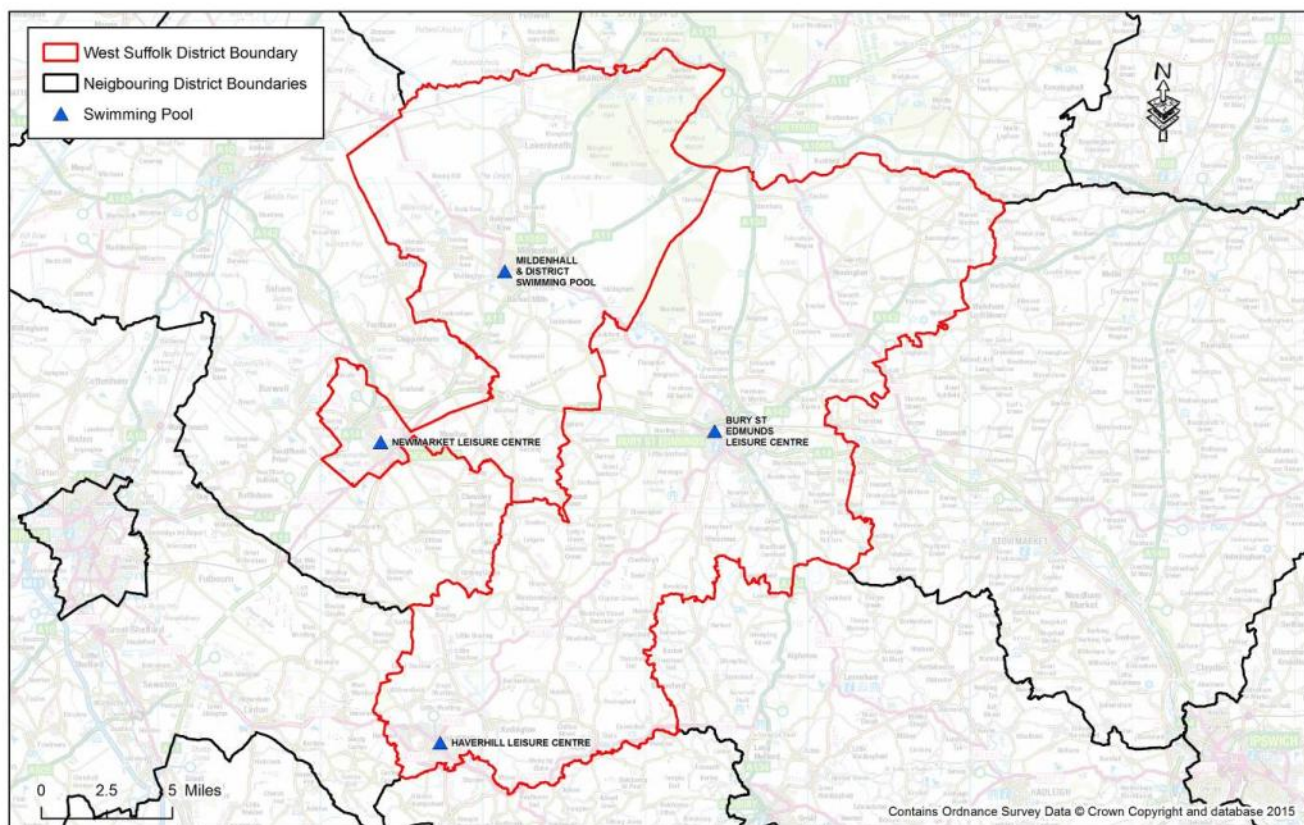
7.71 Map 7.5 shows the swimming pools in Forest Heath and their location. Swimming pools are provided, in the main, by Forest Heath District Council. Only the existing facility at Mildenhall Swimming Pool is a standalone facility; all other pools are on sites where there is a range of wet and dryside facility provision.

7.72 The analysis of the overall swimming pool supply in Forest Heath, (based on Appendix 3) is as follows:

Table 7.6: Analysis of Swimming Pool Supply in Forest Heath

<b>TOTAL SWIMMING POOLS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>TOTAL COMMUNITY ACCESSIBLE SWIMMING POOLS</b>	<b>3 (3 LOCAL AUTHORITY POOLS)</b>
<b>TOTAL MAIN POOLS</b>	<b>2 (2 LOCAL AUTHORITY POOLS)</b>
<b>TOTAL LEARNER POOLS</b>	<b>1</b>

Map 7.6 Community Accessible Swimming Pools Forest Heath



Community accessible Swimming Pools



## EXISTING SUPPLY – GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND QUALITY

### QUALITY

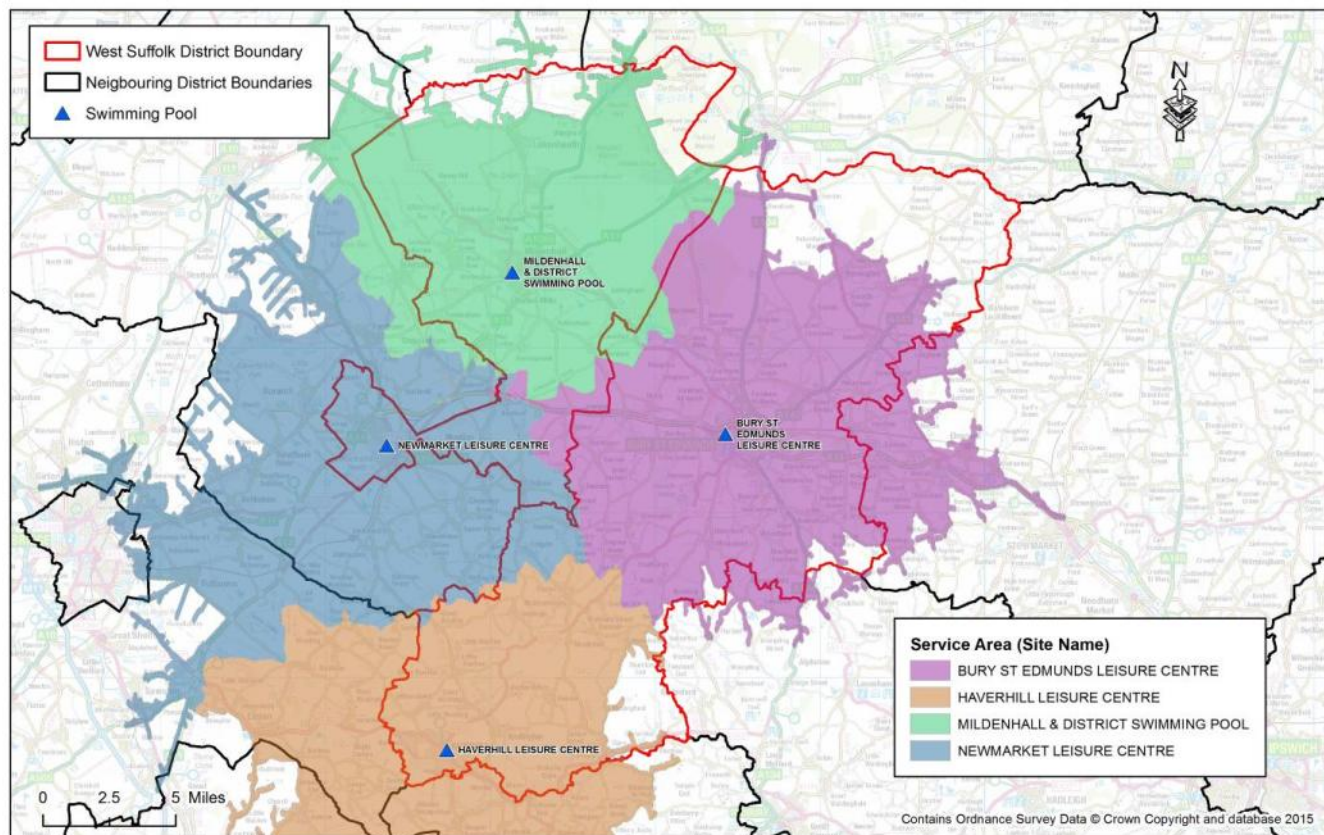
- 7.73 Detailed quality assessments have been undertaken on all Forest Heath facilities. These are provided in Appendix 2 (2a-2f), and summarised in Table 7.6 above.
- 7.74 Newmarket Swimming Pool, built in 2009, is the newest pool in Forest Heath. Mildenhall Swimming Pool was refurbished in 2002. It is however worth highlighting that Mildenhall Swimming Pool was actually built 41 years ago (1974).
- 7.75 The quality of the existing swimming pool facilities is therefore extremely variable.
- 7.76 Mildenhall Swimming Pool is, however, in a poor condition; plant is ageing and the overall infrastructure needs significant investment. Moreover, the facility is not well located, in the middle of what is now an extremely busy car park, providing for a number of retail units, including a large supermarket. Parking presents a challenge for pool users as well as shoppers.

### EXISTING SUPPLY - ACCESSIBILITY

- 7.77 Geographical distribution of swimming pool facilities provision is effectively based in the urban areas, in each of the main towns.
- 7.78 All Forest Heath swimming pools operated by Abbeycroft Leisure are 25m in length, but Mildenhall Swimming Pool is 4 lanes wide. Mildenhall therefore has both the poorest quality and the smallest pool in the West Suffolk area.

7.79 As illustrated in Map 7.7 below, residents in the more urban areas of Forest Heath have easier access to the existing swimming pools.

**Map 7.7: Swimming Pools in West Suffolk– Service Areas**



**Service areas (up to a 20 minute drive time) - Swimming Pools**



7.80 Based on a 20 minute catchment area, residents who live in the north of Forest Heath, those in the extreme south of Forest Heath are currently outside the catchment area of a Forest Heath pool. Residents in the north are however close to the Breckland Leisure Centre, located just over the boundary.

7.81 In Forest Heath a significant proportion of users travel by car to use the swimming facilities.

## SUPPLY AND DEMAND ANALYSIS

### SPORT ENGLAND'S FACILITIES PLANNING MODEL

7.82 Strategic Leisure was provided with the Sport England's Facilities Planning Model National Run (August 2014; data from April 2014 report) for swimming pool provision in Forest Heath. The report sets out an assessment of the current situation regarding swimming pool supply, based on 2015 population (317,027), and then looks forward to 2025, to test different scenarios in terms of provision changes in Forest Heath, and also in the surrounding local authorities of East Cambridgeshire, , Breckland, King Lynn and South Norfolk.. The key findings are summarised below. The full reports can be accessed at Appendices 7C and D respectively.

## SUPPLY

7.83 The Facilities Planning Model analysis identifies 3 pools across 2 sites in Forest Heath. The 3 swimming pools are at Newmarket Leisure Centre (main and learner) and at Mildenhall Swimming Pool; these provide a total of 5,382 visits per week in the peak period (vpwpp).

- 7.84 100% of this weekly use is at Newmarket Leisure Centre (3,5450 and Mildenhall Swimming Pool (1,837), which demonstrates that in Forest Heath there is total reliance on local authority provided pools as the only strategic provision in the area.
- 7.85 The existing community accessible pools provide a total of 621sq m of water space, compared with a current demand for 676sq m of water space i.e. an under supply of 55 sq m.
- 7.86 Residents in Forest Heath have good access to swimming pools, with the majority of the population being able to access a pool within a 20 minute drive time. Forest Heath residents have a higher demand per head for swimming than the East and England average, but a lower share of swimming pools in the district than the East and England averages.

## DEMAND

- 7.87 The Facilities Planning Model analysis identifies that the 2015 population (63,562) generates a demand for 4,076 visits per week during peak periods. Clearly there is a current imbalance between the level of demand in the district , and the available capacity in existing swimming pools.
- 7.88 By 2025, the estimated population is likely to demand 0.9 fewer visits per week per peak periods (vpwpp). This is due to an ageing population. The population in Mildenhall will also reduce as a result of the closure of the US Airforce base, but demand for swimming is likely to stay the same as airforce personnel do not tend to use Mildenhall Swimming Pool (they tend to use or the pool at RAF Honnington).
- 7.89 Currently, 89% (6,344 visits per week in peak periods) of all demand for swimming pool provision is met; this is an extremely high level of satisfied demand. 85% of all demand for swimming is retained in the district. 83% of all available capacity in the existing and available community accessible provision is used during peak periods. Mildenhall is 100% full, and Newmarket is 74% full.
- 7.90 These figures suggest that there is insufficient capacity in the existing pools to accommodate future increased participation and population growth.
- 7.91 11% (459 visits per week in peak periods) of demand is unmet with the 2015 provision of community accessible swimming pools. This demand is unmet because some residents are outside the catchment of an existing swimming pool. This latter point reflects the fact that around 15.2% of Forest Heath residents do not own a car (England average is 25%), and live outside the 20-30 minute catchment area of existing pool facilities, within and outside the district.
- 7.92 Current unmet demand is distributed across the district but is not significant; additional pool provision at existing location is therefore unlikely to address accessibility challenges for these residents. Existing pool provision is generally well-located in the district for Forest Heath residents.
- 7.93 It is also interesting to note that Forest Heath residents do not make significant use of pools outside the district, as they are not within the catchment areas which people are prepared to travel. However about 31% of use at peak times (a significant net figure of 852, vpwpp, which equates to 3 lanes of a 25m pool) is imported use of swimmers from neighbouring local authority areas. The majority of this is from East Cambs; that local authority is planning to build a new pool at Ely which is likely to impact on the current level of net import into Forest heath, and may reduce this.
- 7.94 By 2025, with a population of 72,299 (14% increase on 2015), the level of demand for swimming will actually slightly decrease due to an ageing population, although the number of vpwpp increases by 578. This increase cannot be accommodated within the existing pool stock, given they are already full. Critically the age of the existing pool stock becomes the major issue as Mildenhall Pool will be 53 years old by 2025, and therefore the quality of the offer will diminish.



- 7.95 Satisfied demand reduces to 88.3%. Forest Heath remains a net importer of swims, although the level increases slightly, as it does for exported swims, reflecting the quality of the facilities by 2025. Levels of unmet demand stay similar to the situation modelled in 2015, but relative share figures plummet, because the pools available are so much older and therefore of a lower quality.
- 7.96 Essentially, based on both current and future demand, there is insufficient swimming pool provision in the district. By 2025, Mildenhall Swimming Pool will remain 100% full, and Newmarket Leisure Centre pools will be 85% full. However, it is important to highlight that the FPM looks at population increase spread across the district, whereas in reality the majority of it will be in the middle and south of the district.
- 7.97 It is also important to note that the swimming pools which were on the Lakenheath and Mildenhall air bases have closed; although the US Airforce will vacate Mildenhall in 2019, there is potential that airforce families from both bases may access local swimming facilities while in the area (tends to be Newmarket Leisure Centre and RAF Honnington). Around 15,000 airforce personnel are on the two bases, plus their families.
- 7.98 If the existing pool at Mildenhall is replaced with the same pool facilities as in Newmarket, this both increases the supply of water space and the quality of the offer. Critically, improved accessibility would also result, as two pools in the one location would provide increased programming flexibility and capacity.
- 7.99 By 2025 population increases are likely to increase demand for swimming by at least 12%; A new 6 lane x 25m pool plus learner pool in Mildenhall would increase the pool capacity in the district to 6,908 vpwpp, an increase on 2015 figures of 28%, or 1,562 vpwpp. This reduces the used capacity at Newmarket to 70% and at Mildenhall to 59%; however once population growth is applied, both pools would be very close to the 70% comfort level again.
- 7.100 Increasing the level of water space would result in a very small over supply in provision equating to around 1 lane of a 25m pool, allowing for population increase. Levels of unmet demand would remain very similar.
- 7.101 New facilities at Mildenhall will ensure continuity of provision in Mildenhall and across the district. Without the proposed changes the existing pool infrastructure will not be in a position to cope with future demand created by Forest Heath residents and those from neighbouring communities. Investment in Mildenhall is likely to provide the most sustainable solution and whilst there will remain around 535 vpwpp unmet even with this provision, there is no alternative location which would see this figure reduce any further.

## CONSULTATION

7.102 Consultation with relevant National Governing Bodies (NGBs), and local clubs, highlights local factors in relation to supply and demand for swimming pool provision in the future.

**Table 7.7: Summary of National Governing Body Consultation – Aquatic Activities**

NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY	CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FURTHER COMMENTS
<b>AMATEUR SWIMMING ASSOCIATION (ASA)</b>	<p>Encouraging and facilitating more people to swim more often.</p> <p>Development of the Talent pathway.</p>	<p>Encouraging and facilitating more people to swim more often.</p> <p>Development of the Talent pathway.</p> <p>Re-development of the Mildenhall Swimming Pool; the ASA would support a larger pool in this area, potentially 8 lane x 25m.</p> <p>ASA officers working with the operators to deliver interventions like Learn to Swim and Swim Fit. Working with the operators to deliver Aquatic Improvement Plan (sign up operator for 2 years, develop an improvement plan within the first 6 months).</p> <p>Working with Abbeycroft Leisure to deliver Preferred Partner Programme (PPP).</p>	<p>In Suffolk swimming participation levels have generally remained stable, or increased in comparison to other areas.</p> <p>Everyday Swim programme - Bury St. Edmunds more involved and pro-active.</p> <p>Three main swimming clubs; West Suffolk Swimming Club (Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre and Haverhill Leisure Centre); Newmarket Swimming Club (Newmarket Leisure Centre); Mildenhall Swimming Club (Mildenhall Swimming Pool)</p> <p>No 50m pools in Suffolk; the closest is in 50m pools are in Norwich (University Campus),, and in Luton; there has also been discussion about the construction of a new 50m pool in Cambridge. West Suffolk Swimming Club travel to Luton for training.</p> <p>No diving facilities in area; nearest diving centre is Cambridge.</p>

7.103 No local aquatic clubs in Forest Heath responded to the survey.

## SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS - SWIMMING POOLS

7.104 From the FPM, which is only one element of the overall assessment of swimming pools in Forest Heath it is clear that there is under supply in Forest Heath. However, there is little import/export between the two authorities, so opportunities are limited to address this situation within existing pool supply; the two districts are clearly very different in terms of their swimming participation patterns.

- 7.105 Current levels of satisfied demand are high in both districts; the FPM also suggests that high levels of demand are being retained within each district. Forest Heath is a significant importer of use, particularly from East Cambs; levels of imported use are likely to reduce with the opening of a new pool in Ely.
- 7.106 Current levels of unmet demand are at 11% in Forest Heath and equate to 459 visits per week during the peak period respectively. All of this unmet demand is attributed to people living outside the catchment of an existing swimming pool.
- 7.107 Used capacity figures for Forest Heath are significantly higher than national and regional levels at 100% in Mildenhall.
- 7.108 Essentially, based on both current and future demand, there is insufficient swimming pool provision in Forest Heath. Residents in Forest Heat also have fewer pools, and a lower relative share than those in St Edmundsbury. The oldest pool in West Suffolk at Mildenhall is in Forest Heath.
- 7.109 Unmet demand is distributed across both districts, but not at levels significant enough to demand additional provision either at existing sites, or new sites. There is some case for increased provision in Mildenhall, if a new pool is developed to address population growth by 2025, and the increased demand that will derive from this.
- 7.110 There is a need to consider the age, condition and quality of f the existing pool at Mildenhall, as the quality of the offer will reduce, given the age of the pool.
- 7.111 The ASA has highlighted the need to provide better quality facilities in the Mildenhall area of Forest Heath.

## HEALTH AND FITNESS FACILITIES

### SUPPLY OF HEALTH AND FITNESS SUITES IN FOREST HEATH

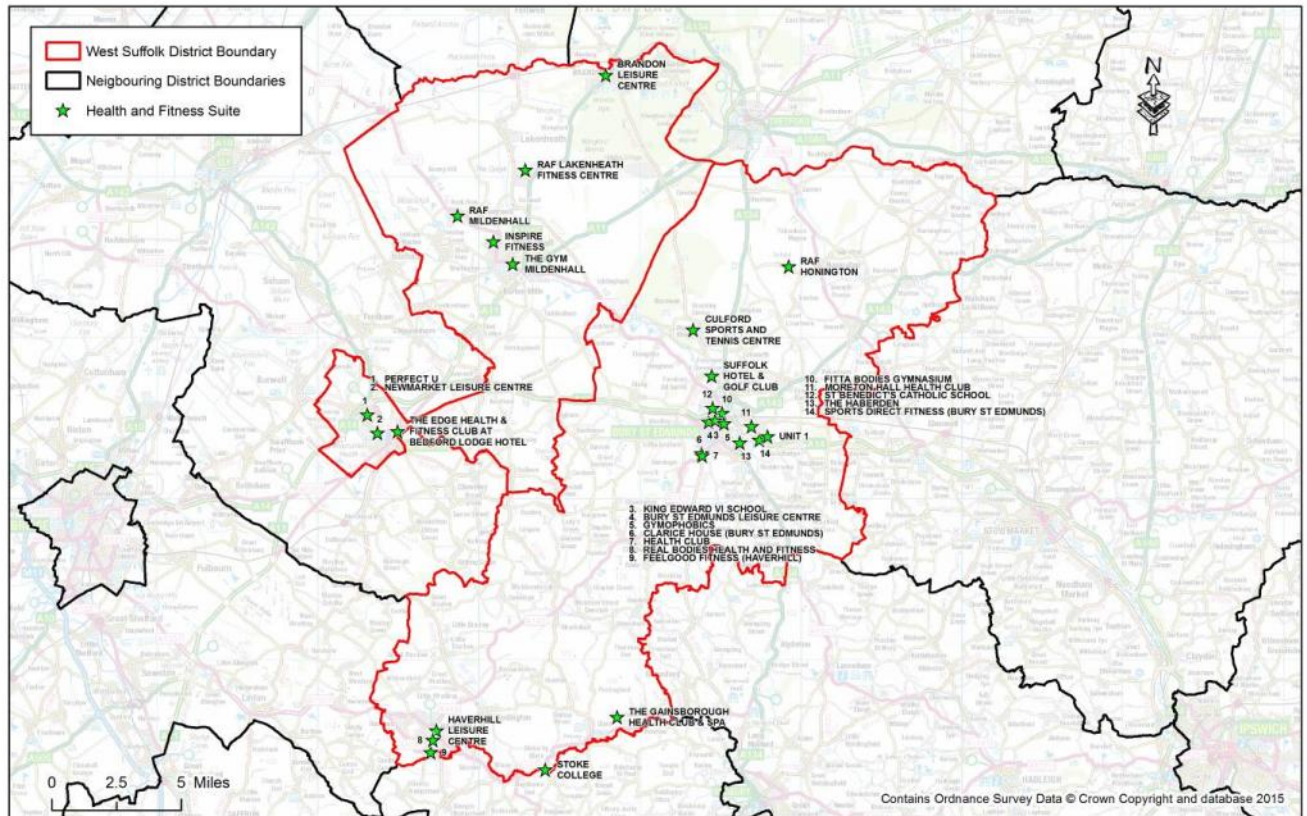
- 7.112 The supply analysis identifies that West Suffolk has a total of 27 fitness suites across 27 sites (West Suffolk Audit of Facilities August 2015/Active Places August 2015). These are listed in Appendix 3.
- 7.113 The analysis of the overall fitness suite supply in Forest Heath, (based on Appendix 3) is as follows:

**Table 7.8: Analysis of Fitness Suite Supply in Forest Heath**

<b>TOTAL FITNESS SUITES</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>TOTAL FITNESS STATIONS</b>	<b>334</b>
<b>TOTAL COMMUNITY ACCESSIBLE FITNESS SUITES (ALL WILL REQUIRE SOME FORM OF PAYMENT PRIOR TO USE/MONTHLY DD, MEMBERSHIP ETC)</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>TOTAL COMMUNITY ACCESSIBLE FITNESS STATIONS</b>	<b>146</b>

- 7.114 Table 7.8 highlights that there is low supply of fitness stations in Forest Heath.
- 7.115 Map 7.8 shows all the fitness suites in Forest Heath and their location. Fitness suites are located on education sites, in commercial fitness facilities and in some of the areas' leisure centres e.g. Newmarket Leisure Centre, Mildenhall Dome (temporarily at the Hub site), Brandon Leisure Centre.

Map 7.8: Health and Fitness Facilities West Suffolk



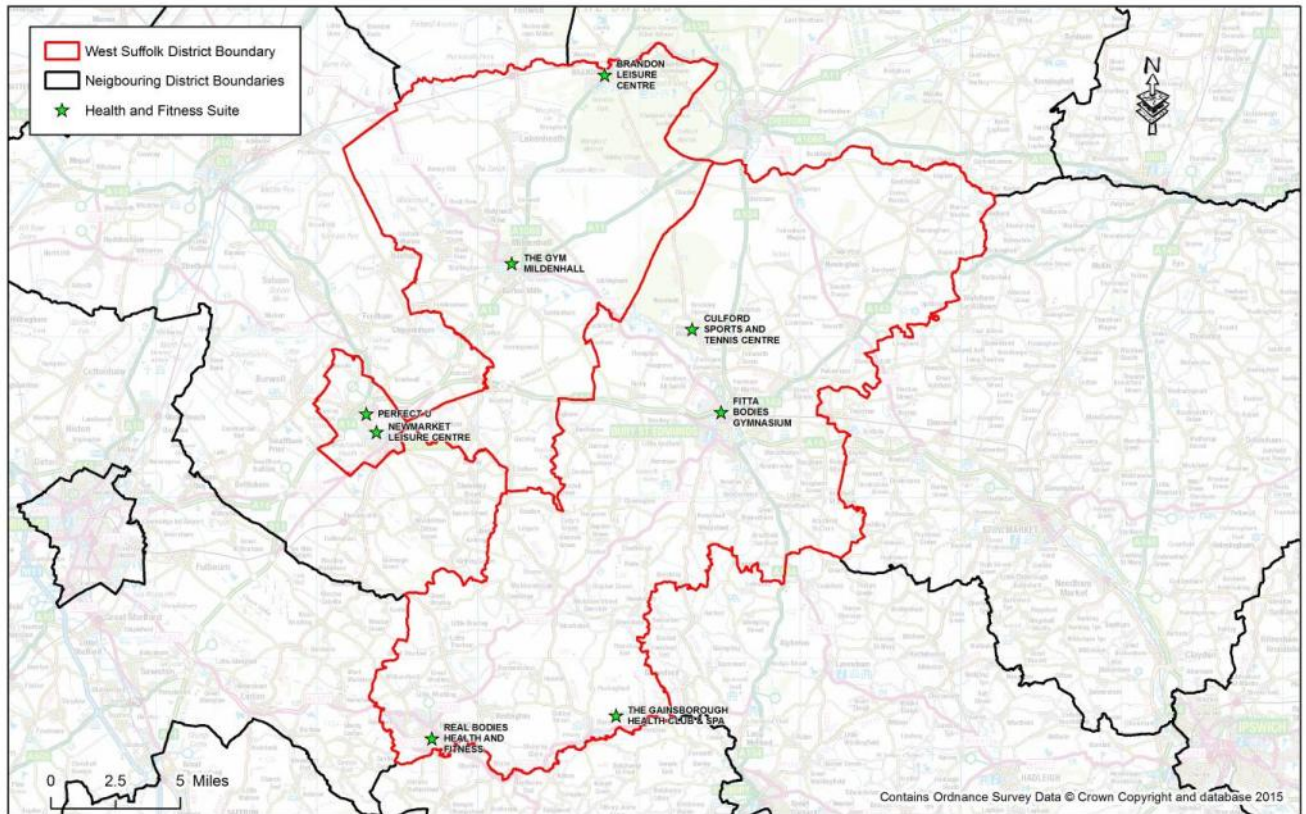
All Health and Fitness Suites



- 7.116 Three of these operate as pay and play facilities (3 fitness suites, with a total of 146 stations), 3 as commercial facilities, and 1 is an MOD facility.
- 7.117 All fitness facilities will require some form of payment/membership before use; however, Newmarket, Mildenhall and Brandon all have pay and play usage options. The commercial fitness facilities in Forest Heath are not 'top end' provision, but in the bottom to middle of the commercial market; therefore the membership/monthly fees may not be as much of a barrier as if the commercial facilities were top end provision.

7.118 Map 7.9 shows the community accessible health and fitness facilities in Forest Heath.

**Map 7.9 Community Accessible Health and Fitness Facilities West Suffolk**



**Community accessible Health and Fitness Suites**



## EXISTING SUPPLY - GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND QUALITY

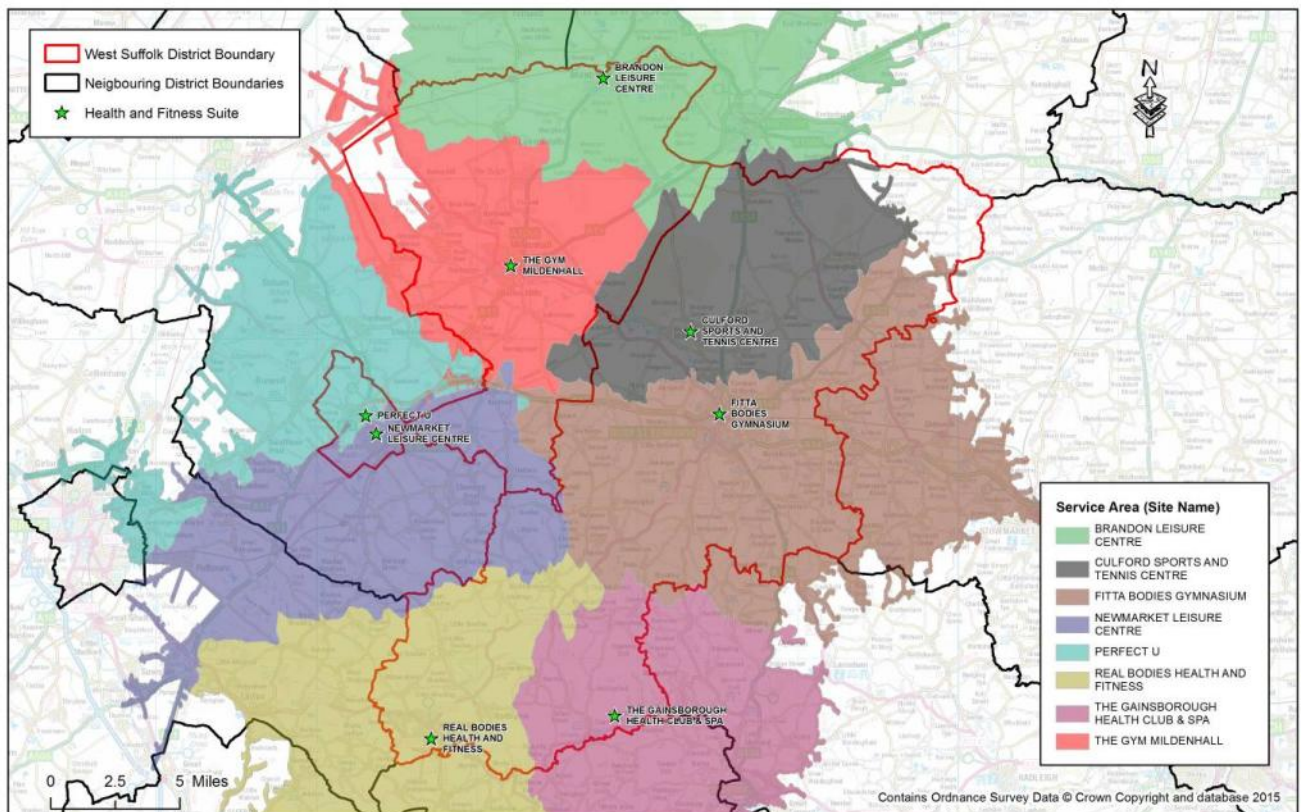
### QUALITY

- 7.119 Detailed quality assessments have been undertaken on all Forest Heath facilities. These are provided in Appendix 2 (2a-2f), and summarised in Table 7.8 above.
- 7.120 Of the Forest Heath facilities, Newmarket Leisure Centre is the newest built facility, refurbished in 2009. The fitness suite at Brandon Leisure Centre was refurbished in 2012.
- 7.121 The fitness facilities at the Mildenhall Dome have been relocated to a temporary facility on the site of the Forest Heath Council offices.
- 7.122 The majority of the existing fitness facilities in Forest Heath were built from the mid 1990s onwards, and many have been refurbished in the last 5-10 years.
- 7.123 The quality of the existing facilities is therefore generally better than that of pools and halls.

## EXISTING SUPPLY - ACCESSIBILITY

- 7.124 Geographical distribution of fitness facilities provision is generally good, across Forest Heath, although the majority are located in and around the market towns. The real issue is the lack of capacity.
- 7.125 There are currently 7 fitness facilities, on 7 different sites in Forest Heath. Of these sites, 3 are operated by Abbeycroft Leisure, 1 by the MOD, and 3 by commercial providers.

**Map 7.10: Fitness Suites in Forest Heath– Service Areas**



**Service areas (up to a 20 minute drive time) - Health and Fitness Suites**

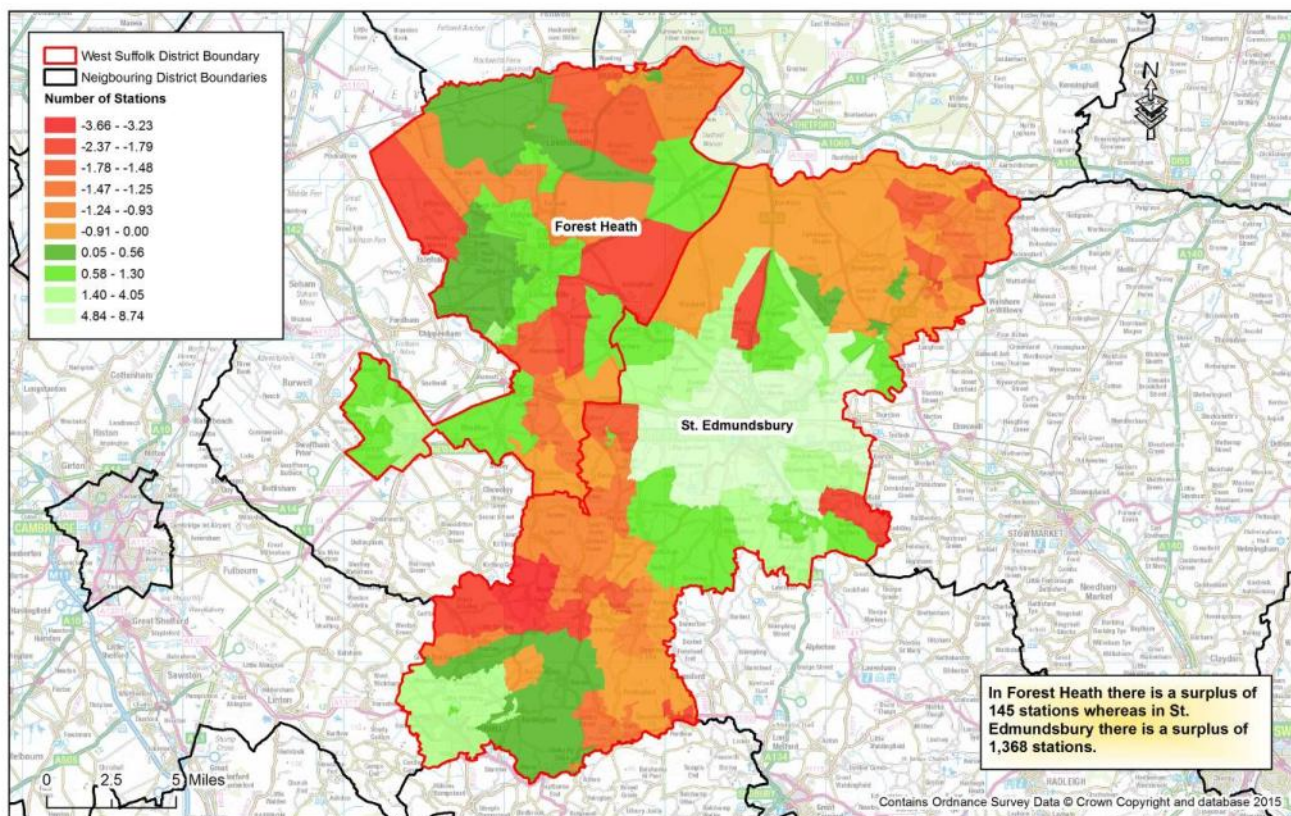


- 7.126 Map 7.10 illustrates that there is a low supply of fitness facilities in Forest Heath. Based on a 10km catchment area the map identifies a under supply of provision in Forest Heath, based on accessibility to the current population.
- 7.127 The challenge in Forest Heath is that in a rural area travel distances vary, and although car ownership is high, 15.2% of the community do not have access to private transport.
- 7.128 This is where the local provision of fitness facilities on education sites becomes even more important, as this type of facility increases the level of local provision available for local people.
- 7.129 Maintaining and indeed developing increased community access to education-based sports facilities is critical in ensuring locally available access, and facilitating increased participation in sport and physical activity for health benefits. Equally, the provision of a few fitness stations in a village hall/community hall could increase access to provision, particularly in a rural area.

## SUPPLY AND DEMAND ANALYSIS

7.130 Map 7.11 illustrates the supply and demand balance of fitness stations across Forest Heath, based on 2015 population levels.

**Map 7.11: Health and Fitness supply and demand Forest Heath**



**Supply and demand analysis for Health and Fitness Suites**



7.131 Appendices 6a and 6b model the current supply and demand in more detail; this highlights a significant current over supply of fitness stations in St Edmundsbury; demand is for 424 stations but there is a supply of 652 (based on 2015 population as used in the FPM). In Forest Heath 2015 demand is for 239 fitness stations, with a supply of 146, which means there is an under supply of – 93 fitness stations.

7.132 Based on increased populations by 2025 in both areas, as used in the FPM modelling, demand increases in Forest Heath demand increases to 272 fitness stations, so under supply increases to - 126 stations.

7.133 If a new facility is built in the district to replace Mildenhall Swimming Pool, and the Mildenhall Dome, there is potential to increase the current number of fitness stations currently provided, to meet future demand, generated through population growth and increased participation.

## SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS – FITNESS SUITES

7.134 Generally there is a good supply of fitness facilities across Forest Heath, in and around the main towns. There is less provision in the rural areas, however, as shown in Map 7.8 accessibility is reasonable in most areas.

7.135 Current supply of fitness facilities is made predominantly through the public and commercial sectors (low to middle end of the market).

7.136 Based on 2015 and 2025 population estimates there is a current and future under supply of fitness stations in Forest Heath.

7.137 Generally, the quality of fitness provision is better than that of pools and sports halls, because the facilities are newer; this is particularly so in the case of the Newmarket Leisure Centre, and the refurbished fitness facilities at Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centres.

## SQUASH

### SUPPLY OF SQUASH FACILITIES IN FOREST HEATH

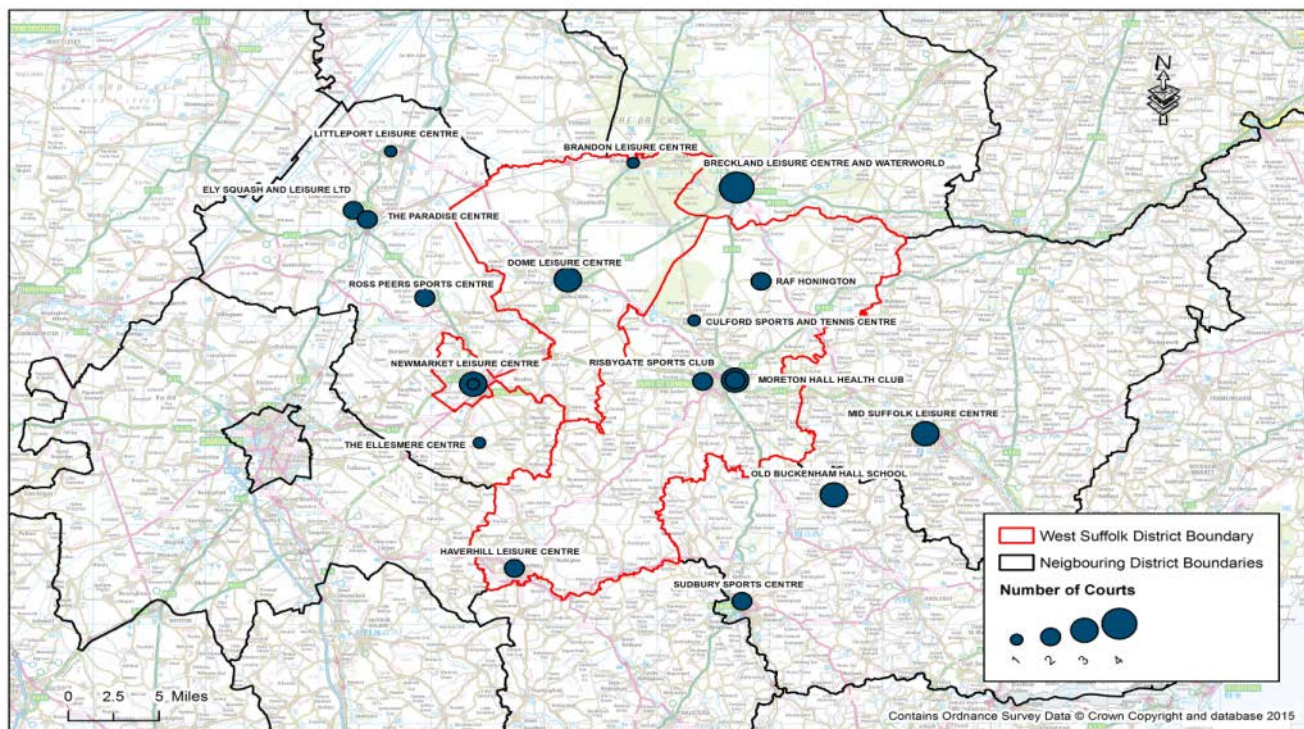
7.138 There are 21 squash courts in West Suffolk, located across 8 sites. There are 9 squash courts in Forest Heath at 3 sites.

7.139 Existing squash courts are managed by Abbeycroft Leisure (3 sites). All 9 courts are community accessible,. Forest Heath provides pay and play squash facilities in the area.

7.140 Appendix 3 sets out the details of the existing squash courts in Forest Heath.

7.141 Map 7.12 shows the location of the existing squash courts in Forest Heath.

Map 7.12: Squash Courts in Forest Heath



Squash





## DEMAND AND ACCESSIBILITY

- 7.142 Map 7.9 above clearly shows that there is a reasonable distribution of squash courts across the area, given that in the main this type of provision is part of a larger sports facility, which tend to be located in and around the main urban areas.
- 7.143 The 9 courts were built between 1965 – 2009, with Newmarket Leisure centre having the newest public courts in the area.
- 7.144 Consultation with England Squash and Racketball identified the following feedback:

**Table 7.9: Consultation with England Squash and Racquetball**

SPORT	CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES	OTHER KEY INFORMATION
<b>ENGLAND SQUASH AND RACKETBALL</b>	<p>Going through period of change. New CEO 10 months ago. Changing structure and strategy of organisation.</p> <p>Recently drawn up a list of priority areas, key factors:</p> <p>Key partners.</p> <p>Facility infrastructure.</p> <p>West Suffolk is not a priority areas, due to the low number of courts.</p> <p>Nationally a downward trend in Squash via APD past 5 years.</p> <p>Membership has stayed generally the same.</p>	<p>Bury St. Edmunds LC potential to take the courts out and turn into a gym? This would impact on public access to courts in the area.</p> <p>First priority is about protecting courts that already exist.</p> <p>One/Two courts in a facility really limits junior coaching provision and club growth.</p> <p>Three courts is the minimum required minimum for a club with adult and junior programme.</p> <p>If a new facility development was an option, it should have glass-backed courts.</p>	<p>Morton hall, Bury St. Edmunds. 5 courts and decent junior programme. Big, private club. Attracts people from outside and better players.</p> <p>'Risbygate'. 3 courts. Private club.</p> <p>Squash courts are also available at LC Haverhill 3, Newmarket 3, Mildenhall 3.</p> <p>Littleport (outside area).</p> <p>Ely (outside area) Squash club on a multi-use site with cricket, hockey and rugby.</p>

- 7.145 No need for additional squash courts has been identified in the area, however this assumes the existing level of supply is retained.

## TABLE TENNIS

### SUPPLY OF TABLE TENNIS FACILITIES IN FOREST HEATH

7.146 All sports halls in West Suffolk have the capability to provide table tennis facilities. There are no purpose built table tennis facilities in West Suffolk.

### DEMAND AND ACCESSIBILITY

7.147 Consultation with Table Tennis England has identified some potential to develop purpose built provision both outdoors in the area.

**Table 7.10: Consultation with Table Tennis England**

<b>SPORT</b>	<b>CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES</b>	<b>FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES</b>	<b>OTHER KEY INFORMATION</b>
<b>TABLE TENNIS ENGLAND</b>	<p>Have a capital fund available. This year have £500k. Up to NGB how they spend it.</p> <p>Facility owners can apply to ESR for the funding.</p> <p>Any squash facility is available to apply for this funding, not just priority areas.</p>	<p>Look to convert casual members to competitive i.e. casual player becomes regular and then joins a club</p> <p>Opportunist outdoor recreational use.</p> <p>Build outdoor facilities wherever there is a major infrastructure investment.</p> <p>Potential for Bury St Edmunds.</p>	<p>Ping Projects – work with the city councils. (10 or 20k) run festival over the summer. Natural congregations – more tables and more bats and balls.</p>

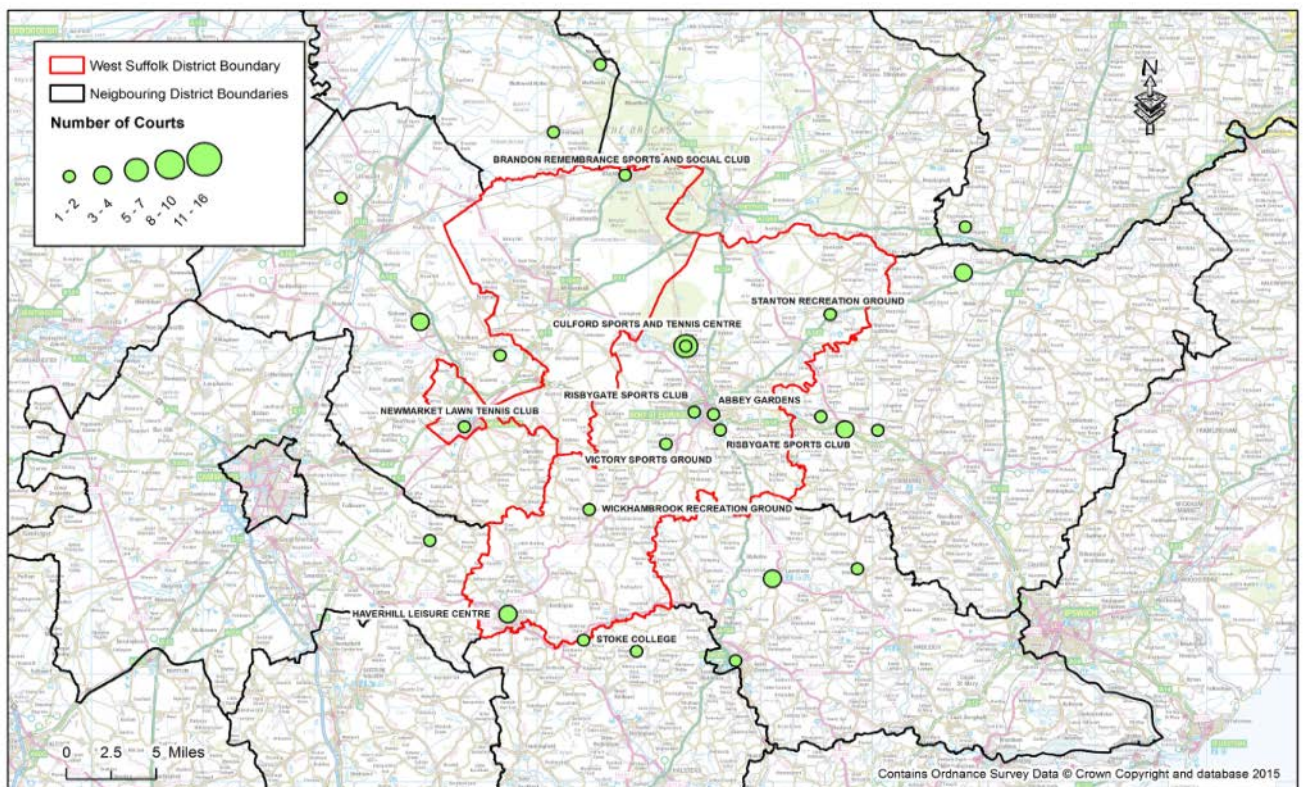
## INDOOR TENNIS

### SUPPLY OF TENNIS FACILITIES IN FOREST HEATH

7.148 There are 7 indoor tennis courts in West Suffolk, across 2 sites. Newmarket Lawn Tennis Club has an airhall (3 courts seasonal use). These facilities are owned and operated by a sports club. Pay and play usage is available at Newmarket Lawn Tennis Club.

7.149 The facility was developed within the last 10 years so is of good quality. Full details of the indoor tennis courts are in Appendix 3.

**Map 7.13: Indoor Tennis Facilities in West Suffolk**



Tennis Indoor



## DEMAND AND ACCESSIBILITY

7.150 Map 7.13 shows that in addition to the facility in Forest Heath, there are a number of other indoor facilities in neighbouring authorities, which may also be accessible for residents of Forest Heath. Consultation with the LTA identifies no priority for additional indoor tennis facilities in Forest Heath, but a focus on developing participation at existing public courts.

Table 7.11: Consultation with the LTA

SPORT	CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES	OTHER KEY INFORMATION
<b>LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION (LTA)</b>	<p>National strategy – get more people playing more often and to enrich lives through tennis.</p> <p>Participation focus – deliver great services to clubs, community and education.</p> <p>Focus WSP areas are Oxford, Kings Lynn, Reading and Southend – on – Sea</p> <p>No LTA top down priorities – encouraging clubs to access the Easy Access Loan scheme.</p> <p>LTA trying to pilot Canopies for parks (similar to Gazebo) piloting one in Reading and Manchester.</p> <p>LTA is doing a lot of facility investment at the moment. Have noticed a lot of differentiation across strategies on how site quality is marked. LTA use 3 levels poor (unsafe to play), good (playable) or excellent (new) which keeps it simple.</p>	<p>Focus is working with local authorities to increase public use of public sites for recreational/informal use and competitions e.g. Tennis leagues virtual leagues online.</p> <p>Coaching products to attract and obtain members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini Tennis Programme.</li> <li>• Cardio Tennis.</li> <li>• Touch Tennis (mini tennis for adults).</li> </ul>	<p>Whole Sport Plan – have Sport England money, which has been reduced to £1.2m due to falling Active People Data.</p> <p>Trend in people not wanting to play in a club but prefer to play recreational / informal tennis in a park or community site predominately owned by the Local Authority. This is particularly relevant in rural areas.</p> <p>Some clubs do offer a pay and play but there is a barrier with access and challenge from paying members for court access.</p> <p>Challenge with members of the public knowing how to book public courts and who to contact at the local authority.</p> <p>Some Local Authorities have introduced a key Fob scheme (Southend is an example) where members of the public can buy a family FOB for £30 per annum to use to access any of the public courts.</p>

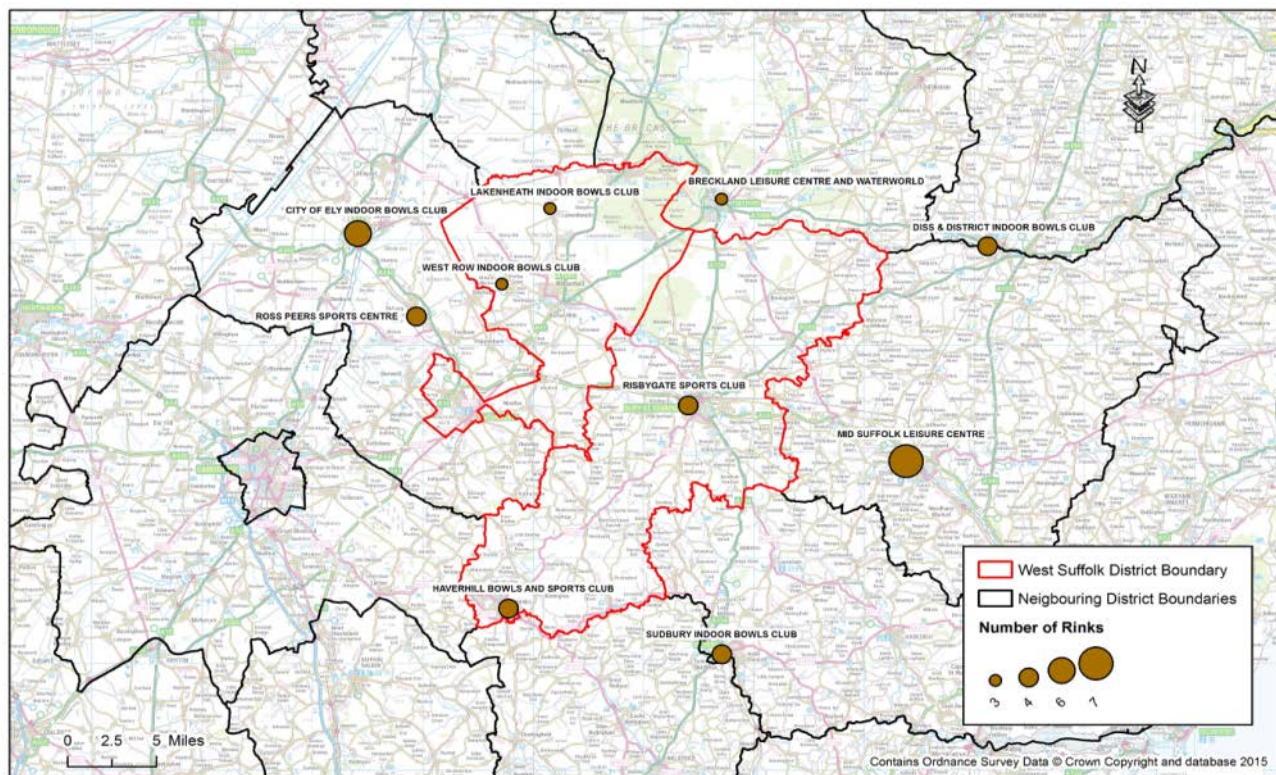
7.151 Wickhambrook Tennis Club responded to the club survey and identified the need for additional tennis facilities to increase the number of clubs and club members.

## INDOOR BOWLS

### SUPPLY OF INDOOR BOWLS FACILITIES IN FOREST HEATH

7.152 There are 16 indoor bowls greens in West Suffolk provided through 5 bowling clubs. All are purpose built facilities; there are 8 greens in Forest Heath across 3 sites. The indoor bowls facilities were built between 1980 and 2010. Full details of the indoor bowling facilities are in Appendix 3. Map 7.14 shows the locations of the indoor bowling facilities in Forest Heath.

Map 7.14: Indoor Bowling Facilities, West Suffolk



Indoor Bowls



## DEMAND AND ACCESSIBILITY

7.153 Existing indoor bowling facilities are located in and around urban areas. Given that the population of Forest Heath is ageing, it will be important to ensure there are appropriate and sufficient opportunities for participation in physical activity; bowling is one such activity.

7.154 Although no need has been identified at the current time for additional facilities, this will need to be reviewed in the future, as the population grows.

7.155 Bowls clubs were the highest number of respondents from one sport (5) to the club survey, but did not identify specific needs for additional provision at this time.

## GYMNASTICS

### SUPPLY OF GYMNASTICS FACILITIES IN FOREST HEATH

7.156 Newmarket Gymnastics Club train at Scaltbeck and share this facility with other users..

### DEMAND AND ACCESSIBILITY

7.157 Consultation with British Gymnastics identified

Table 7.12: Consultation with British Gymnastics

SPORT	CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES	FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES	OTHER KEY INFORMATION
<b>BRITISH GYMNASTICS</b>	<p>British Gymnastics would be keen to see more access to sports hall time and space and provision made to either create new dedicated gymnastics spaces and or facilities, or improve existing centres to allow the increase in capacity of existing gymnastics clubs.</p> <p>With over 1500 club members in the area it is clear that gymnastics remains popular in the area with clubs have extensive waiting lists.</p>	<p>British Gymnastics would like to see provision for more dedicated Gymnastic spaces increased, with facilities able to house gymnastic equipment permanently set up to be able to cater for the diverse range of participants that want to be involved. Haverhill GC is in the process of developing a facility project for which they have just gained change of use permission. This project will look to convert an industrial unit into a dedicated centre.</p> <p>Gymnastics also requires access to good standard sports halls (with provision for storage of equipment) particularly for trampoline and low level gymnastic activities.</p>	<p>Gymnastics requires a diverse range of specification of facility depending upon the disciplines/activities being run. Current affiliated club Newmarket Gymnastics Club delivers out of a leisure centre sports hall, Breckland GC delivers out of a dedicated facility, Haverhill delivers out of a sports centre but is looking to relocate to a dedicated facility, Bury Spectrum out of a dedicated facility.</p>

7.158 Consultation with local clubs identified a significant demand for additional gymnastics facilities in the area.

7.159 The growth in population is also likely to increase demand for gymnastics participation, given that families are likely to be moving into West Suffolk as part of population growth; gymnastics provides initial participation opportunities for young children, who may not wish to play team games.

## ATHLETICS

### SUPPLY OF ATHLETICS FACILITIES IN FOREST HEATH

7.160 There are 2 athletics tracks in West Suffolk, 1 in Forest Heath. The track at RAF Lakenheath is only available for private use. Full details are in Appendix 3.

### DEMAND AND ACCESSIBILITY

7.161 The only publicly accessible athletics track is therefore in Bury St Edmunds; this means that those in Forest Heath wishing to use a track have to travel.

7.162 Despite this fact there is no identified demand for additional athletics facilities in West Suffolk at this time.

## CYCLING

### SUPPLY OF CYCLING FACILITIES IN FOREST HEATH

7.163 There are 3 existing cycle facilities in West Suffolk, as identified in Appendix 3.

7.164 There are currently no cycling facilities in Forest Heath.

## DEMAND AND ACCESSIBILITY

- 7.165 Consultation with British Cycling has identified the need for an off road cycling facility; this would help develop and further increase participation. Critically it would provide a safe opportunity to cycle, given that so many of the local roads are very narrow, or they are dual carriageways, and traffic moves fast on both, making cycling potentially dangerous, particularly for young people.
- 7.166 A specific off road facility would also complement the planned investment in safe cycle routes set out in the Local Plans, and Vision 31 for the main towns and growth areas in West Suffolk.

**Table 7.13: Consultation with British Cycling**

<b>SPORT</b>	<b>CURRENT FOCUS/PRIORITIES</b>	<b>FUTURE FOCUS/PRIORITIES</b>	<b>OTHER KEY INFORMATION</b>
<b>BRITISH CYCLING</b>	Growing – triathlon in particular  West Suffolk Wheelers. (Go-right club) one of the biggest in the region. Mildenhall cycling Newmarket triathlon club	Preferable development would be a closed road – 6m wide. Minimum of 1km long. Not built to road surfaces. Floodlit is preferable – street lighting. Currently no firm plans, as cost is extremely high.	Funding is available through whole sport plan. Needs to be delivered at end of financial year.

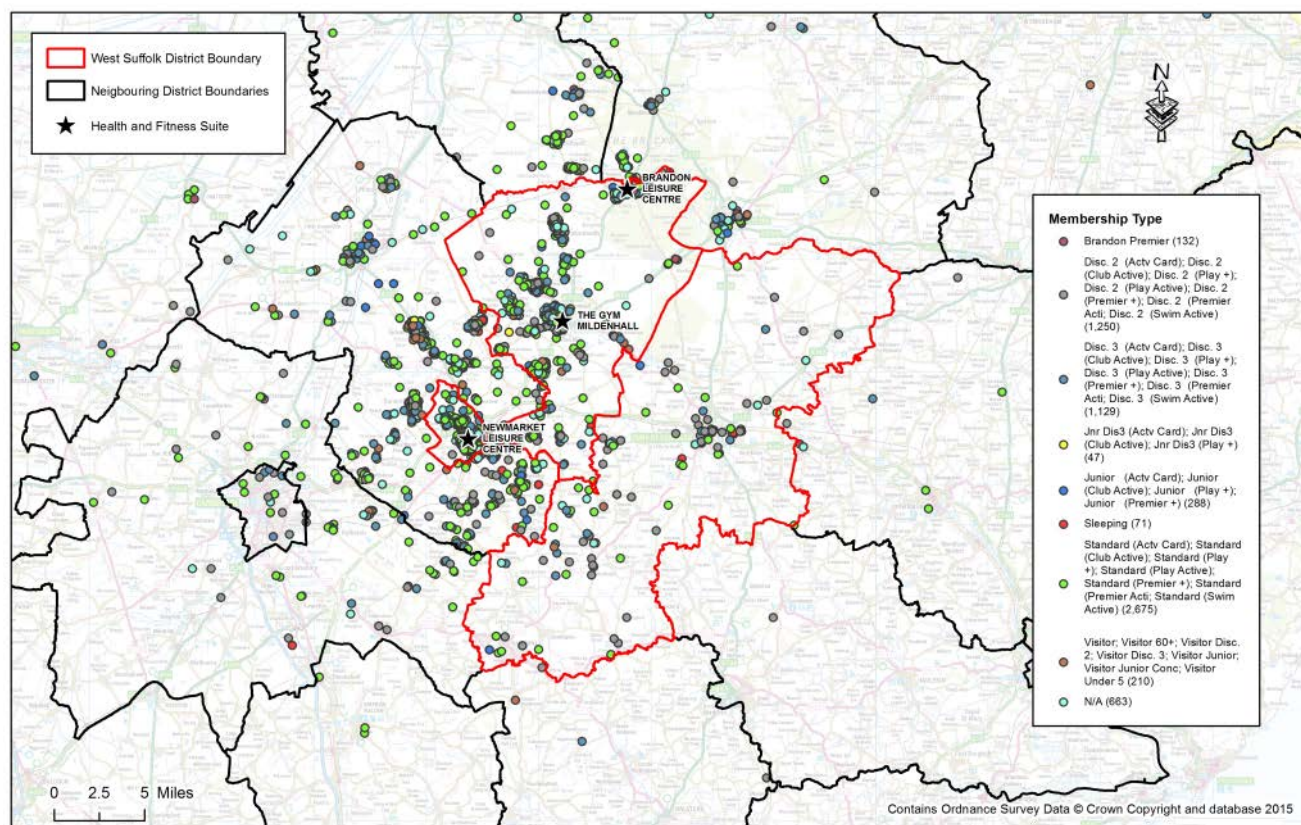


## 8. APPLYING THE ANALYSIS

### INTRODUCTION

- 8.1 Building on the assessment of current provision, it is useful to understand more about the impact and operation of the local authority existing sports facilities in Forest Heath.
- 8.2 The following maps illustrate the current relationship between the facilities provided in Forest Heath, the 2015 population and the location of residents who become members.
- 8.3 Map 8.1 illustrates the postcodes of existing members of the Newmarket Leisure Centre, Brandon Leisure Centre and Mildenhall Dome/Mildenhall Hub, based on user data provided to inform this strategy (data provided for all facilities together; separate data will be developed in time as part of the overall Trust merger).

**Map 8.1: Newmarket Leisure Centre, Brandon Leisure centre, Mildenhall Dome/Hub – Location of Members**

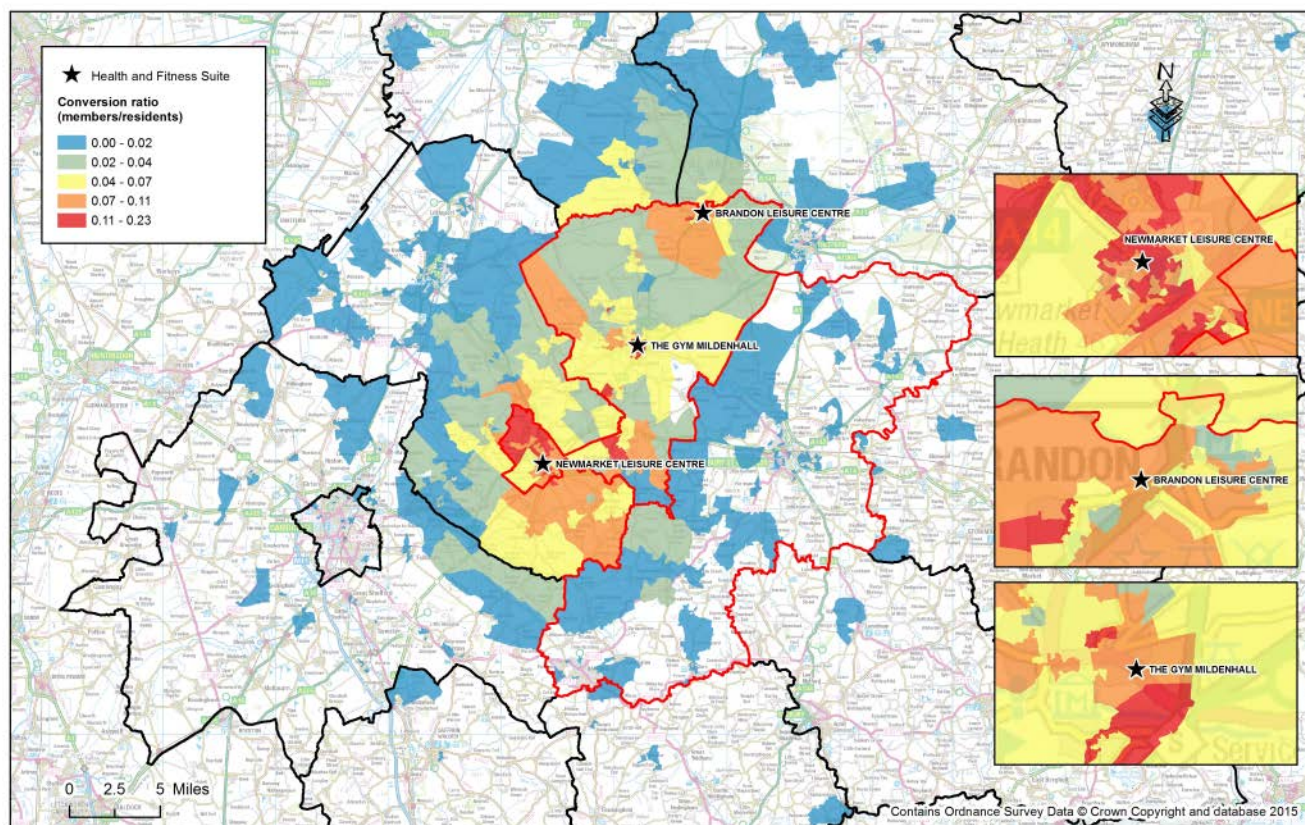


**Brandon, The Gym Mildenhall and Newmarket Leisure Centres members**



- 8.4 Map 8.2 illustrates the catchment area for the Newmarket Leisure Centre, based on the areas where current members reside. It is clear from Map 8.2 that the majority of leisure centre members live in and around Newmarket, as already highlighted in the FPM modelling.

**Map 8.2: Catchment Area for Newmarket Leisure Centre, Brandon Leisure centre, Mildenhall Dome/Hub based on where members live**



**Conversion ratio (members/residents) - Brandon, The Gym Mildenhall and Newmarket Leisure Centres**



- 8.5 Based on Maps 8.1 and 8.2 it is clear that the areas of highest membership of the Forest Heath facilities and therefore conversion rates are in those areas closest to the three existing facilities ie those areas in red and orange in Map 8.2. Areas in blue are where membership of the health and fitness facilities is less, and these are further from the facilities, but may be closer to other fitness facilities over the Forest Heath boundary.
- 8.6 It is clear from the pattern of membership and usage that accessibility is key in terms of participation; those living further away from a leisure facility are less likely to use it, or become a member. Given the rurality of Forest Heath, it is clear that the highest usage levels of existing leisure facilities is coming from the more urban areas. This highlights the importance of retaining access to informal, multi-purpose space in the rural areas, to facilitate access to opportunities for sport and physical activity, as set out in the Vision 31 statements for the rural areas and villages.
- 8.7 Also clear is that given the anticipated population growth in Forest Heath, and the fact that this will be focussed in a small number of areas around existing urban infrastructures, it will be critical to maintain and develop accessibility to quality sports facilities, to enable participation, and provide choice about physical activity as part of daily life.

## CONSULTATION WITH NEIGHBOURING LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- 8.8 In determining the nature and level of sports facility provision required for the future in Forest Heath, it is also important to be aware of how neighbouring local authorities are planning for the future. Given that communities use sports facilities in areas other than where they live, the development of new or improved provision can impact significantly on both participation levels and capacity cross-boundary.

8.9 Table 8.1 summarises the consultation undertaken with neighbouring local authorities to inform this Strategy.

**Table 8.1: Neighbouring Local Authority Facility Developments**

LOCAL AUTHORITY	FACILITY DEVELOPMENTS
<b>EAST CAMBS DC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are proposals for the development of a new pool in Ely; this will be an 8 lane x 25m main pool, plus a 13m x 7m learner pool with a moveable floor, a 4 badminton court sports hall and fitness suite. Development timescale around 3 years.</li> <li>• Development of a new facility in Ely will result in the closure of the existing Paradise Pool, Ely.</li> <li>• Cambridgeshire County Council is considering development of the existing Littleport Leisure Centre.</li> </ul>
<b>KINGS LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No new facility development proposals highlighted at this time.</li> </ul>
<b>BRECKLAND DC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No new facility development proposals highlighted at this time.</li> </ul>

## KEY ISSUES AND OPTIONS

8.10 Based on the local context and the supply and demand analysis, there is clearly a need, and an opportunity, to consider additional provision/replacement of some sports and leisure facilities in Forest Heath. There are a number of reasons for this:

- **The age, condition and poor quality of some facilities – particularly swimming pools and sports halls**
- **The geographical proximity of the poorest quality facilities i.e. all in Forest Heath**
- **The need to increase participation in physical activity for community health benefits**
- **The need to further create and develop an environment of choice, where physical activity is the norm**
- **The vision of providing good quality community sport and leisure facilities for all Forest Heath communities**
- **The need to improve accessibility in the rural areas**
- **The focus on the 3 main market towns in terms of community provision**
- **The lack of some specific facility types/opportunities in Forest Heath, which could increase participative opportunities at local level**
- **Long term population growth in Forest Heath, which will increase demand for community facilities, including sport and leisure provision, particularly in the more urban areas**

- 8.11 Housing development is one of the principal justifications for additional community sports facilities because additional residents increase demand for sports facilities. The population of Forest Heath is set to grow significantly to 2031, and there will be a need to ensure good quality community sport and leisure facilities are available to meet existing and future demand.
- 8.12 A further driver for considering investment/replacement in terms of sports facilities is accessibility; this can be both location related, and in relation to operational management, which determines hours of use.
- 8.13 The way in which a sport and recreation facility is managed often determines the level and type of community use allowed/encouraged. For example, local authority managed sport and recreation facilities are more likely to encourage use by disadvantaged groups than those managed by commercially sector operators and are, thus, in effect, more accessible.
- 8.14 However, given the current facility stock, and in particular the investment that has already taken place in Forest Heath's own facilities in the past 10 years (Newmarket Leisure Centre), the key priority is the future facility provision in Mildenhall and Brandon given the age and condition of the existing facilities in these towns. Equally, economic sustainability is key – the swimming facilities in Mildenhall, plus the Mildenhall Dome and Brandon Leisure Centre, are becoming increasingly costly and inefficient to operate.
- 8.15 Improving the quality of provision is particularly important in given that just over a third of Forest Heath residents currently take part in sport and physical activity at least once a week, on a regular basis.
- 8.16 Increasing levels of participation is also critical given the growing obesity across Forest Heath. The priority placed on reducing health inequalities and increasing participation in physical activity is high in Forest Heath; the provision of good quality, local community facilities, accessible and affordable to meet identified need, is key to facilitate participation growth.
- 8.17 The facilities that have been identified as being in need of significant investment are:

**Table 8.2: Priority Facility Investment needs in Forest Heath Leisure Centres**

TOWN	FACILITY	QUALITY	NEED FOR INVESTMENT
MILDENHALL	Mildenhall Swimming Pool	Poor	Significant
	Mildenhall Dome	Poor	Significant
BRANDON	Brandon Leisure Centre	Average	Significant

- 8.18 Based on the quality audits and assessments, age and condition, the priorities for future investment in facility provision are:
- **Mildenhall – Mildenhall Swimming Pool, Mildenhall Dome**
  - **Brandon – Brandon Leisure Centre**
- 8.19 It is clear that there are significant issues, and opportunities, to address in Mildenhall, which is the one town in West Suffolk with one swimming pool (only 4 lane) and a separate dryside facility.

8.20 Key issues informing future provision include the following points:

## GENERAL

### AGE AND CONDITION

- The age of 2 of the existing swimming and sports hall facilities, which means there is a need to plan now for future investment/replacement
- The quality of some facilities e.g. swimming pools, sports halls, which means there is an urgent need to consider significant investment. The specific priorities are Mildenhall Swimming Pool, and Mildenhall Dome
- Lack of available capacity in existing Forest Heath swimming pools, due to high demand, and the fact that pools are already operating at capacity
- Current levels of provision are insufficient in Forest Heath (swimming pools) to meet current demand; therefore existing levels of provision (not necessarily specific sites/locations) should be retained as a minimum
- Under supply of sports halls in Forest Heath,

### PARTICIPATION LEVELS

- Very low levels of participation in sport and physical activity generally across Forest Heath
- High levels of use at facilities in Forest Heath, and particularly swimming pools (operating at 100% and 95%), which means existing facilities are at capacity
- The focus for facility provision in the future should be about increasing participation, and contributing to Forest Heath's health and well-being agenda and the Active Suffolk priorities i.e. more regular physical activity, for more people, more often
- Facility programming should reflect the market segmentation analysis for Forest Heath, to facilitate as many relevant opportunities for participation as possible to increase participation overall, high quality facilities for fitness/keep fit/gym/weight training, swimming, football, athletics, boxing, badminton, and cycling are needed at local level. There is also a need to ensure opportunities exist for walking and dancing. Programming should also reflect the 9 priority sports identified by Suffolk Sport.

## ACCESSIBILITY

- Sport and leisure facilities, should, wherever possible, be accessible to communities by foot, cycling, or public transport, as well as private car.
- The need to ensure appropriate provision is available for both an ageing population, and for younger participants
- Ensuring access is available to those without access to private transport (15.2% of the Forest Heath population)
- Ensuring provision (even if informal, in multi-purpose space) is local to the communities in which people live, given the fact that some people will not travel out of their immediate area

## RESOURCES

- The growth in population will result in increased demand for sports facilities in the areas of housing development, and across Forest Heath
- There is potential to access funding through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or through S106 for additional facilities required as a consequence of population growth
- Investment in future facility provision could be made by Forest Heath, Abbeycroft Leisure, local partners, national/regional agencies, and potentially local organisations, depending on the nature and scale of development

## GEOGRAPHIC

- 8.21 Unmet demand for swimming pools and sports halls is not concentrated in any one specific area in Forest Heath, but distributed across the area.

## FACILITY SPECIFIC

### SPORTS HALLS

#### FOREST HEATH SPORTS HALLS

- 8.22 From the FPM, which is only one element of the needs assessment, the simplistic analysis of “supply versus demand” in relation to sports halls within Forest Heath has identified an under supply of sports hall space within the local authority area, based on both current and future demand. This assumes retention of all existing community accessible facilities, other than the Mildenhall Dome, because sports halls in Forest Heath are full in peak periods.
- 8.23 The Facilities Planning Model analysis identifies that the 2015 population generates a demand for 20.2 courts and 4,373 visits per week during peak periods. By 2025, the estimated population is likely to demand 22.38 courts and 4,888 vpwpp. Clearly, with current provision at 15.37 courts, and proposed provision at 13.27 there is a deficit in the provision of sports halls in the District of around 7 courts by 2025, taking into account proposed changes in provision in Mildenhall and increased population.
- 8.24 There is only one 8 badminton court sports hall in West Suffolk, which impacts on the ability to both develop some sports e.g. netball, basketball, volleyball, and limits the level of competitive training and event that can be accommodated.
- 8.25 There are no badminton courts larger than 4 courts in Forest Heath.
- 8.26 Access is generally good to existing sports hall provision, given that the majority of sports halls are located in and around the more urban areas.
- 8.27 Retaining and increasing access to education provision through the implementation of formal community use agreements could contribute to improved facility accessibility, and increased capacity across West Suffolk; in principle, all new schools should incorporate sports facilities designed to accommodate community use.
- 8.28 In addition the former middle school site in Newmarket has some potential for development as a sports hub. There is potential for this site to be developed with badminton, gymnastic and rugby facilities, but a strategic lead needs to be identified for the overall project.
- 8.29 The real issue in Forest Heath regarding sports hall provision is the poor quality of facilities at Mildenhall Dome and Brandon Leisure Centre.
- 8.30 Replacement of the Mildenhall Dome sports hall is linked to the proposed development of the Mildenhall Hub, which would also incorporate swimming and fitness facilities. If the Hub is developed, Mildenhall Dome would close.
- 8.31 In the short term, given that the operating costs exceed income generation (because usage levels are low), there is a need to review the operation of the facility. It may be that reducing operational hours, to focus usage into fewer hours, will increase demand, but reduce operational costs, because the number of staffing hours would reduce. Under this scenario, utility costs would also reduce, because public access would be needed for fewer hours. Alternatively the use of the site could be considered beyond traditional sport and consideration could be given to other community use to make the site more sustainable.

## SWIMMING POOLS

- 8.32 There is a current deficit in the supply of swimming pool provision to meet demand in Forest Heath by 2025. Currently access to swimming provision in Forest Heath is also impacted because existing pools are full.
- 8.33 Whilst Forest Heath is a net importer of use for swimming pools (91% and 89% respectively), Forest Heath in particular attracts significant usage from residents of East Cambs (around 1,253 vpwpp). The district also has high levels of satisfied demand at 89%.
- 8.34 The development of a new swimming pool in Ely is likely to reduce the level of exported demand into Forest Heath.
- 8.35 The critical issues for swimming provision in Forest Heath are that the two existing local authority pools at Mildenhall and Newmarket are both full above capacity at 100% and 76% respectively; demand for swimming is higher than the national average, and the pool at Mildenhall is in a poor condition. Population growth, and increased participation BY 2025 will increase demand in Forest Heath to the extent that both pools will be operating at 100% capacity.
- 8.36 There is therefore a need to prioritise the replacement of Mildenhall Pool, and increase the overall pool capacity in the district.

## THE NEED FOR NEW SPORT AND LEISURE FACILITY PROVISION IN MILDENHALL

- 8.37 The need for new facility provision in Mildenhall is clear, and derives from four main factors:
- **The age and condition of the swimming facility (Mildenhall Swimming Pool)**
  - **The need to address the under-supply of swimming pool provision in Forest Heath**
  - **The need to address the under-supply of fitness facilities in Forest Heath**
  - **The age and condition of the Mildenhall Dome**

## MILDENHALL SWIMMING POOL

- 8.38 The need to improve the current quality and economic sustainability of facilities in Mildenhall provides a significant opportunity to develop a new swimming pool, sports hall and associated facilities for the benefit of local people.
- 8.39 However, in order to achieve this, there will need to be some changes in the existing level, nature and location of provision.
- 8.40 The availability of at least some of the Forest Heath Council offices site provides a significant opportunity in Mildenhall to develop an integrated sports facility with wet and dry facilities on one site, as opposed to the two current sites.
- 8.41 Development of a 'hub' sports facility would also provide significant opportunity to link with wider community facilities on the site, and critically education. A 'Hub' sports facility could provide shared facilities with the new Academy School in the town, and also for the new primary school to be developed. The overall development would provide significant community facilities, both for the existing residents, and those who will be occupying the 800 new homes in Mildenhall.



- 8.42 There are currently two separate facilities in Mildenhall, both of which have separate operational structures and costs. Given the need to develop new, fit for purpose facilities, strategically planning for a reduced number of facilities, focused on one site, provides the most likely way forward.
- 8.43 This would enable the delivery of bigger and better provision, operated more effectively and efficiently by one operational management structure.
- 8.44 The options for swimming pool development are:
- **Minimum 6 lane x 25m pool, plus learner pool**
  - **8 lane x 25m pool, plus learner pool**
- 8.45 The Sport England FPM modelling (Run 3 August 2015) has already demonstrated that development of a 6 lane pool would result in increased water space in the district, but that by 2025, the new pool and that in Newmarket would be operating pretty much at capacity, given levels of unmet demand for swimming in the District. It is important to highlight, however, that the planned new pool in Ely (8 lane x 25m plus learner pool), which will be only 25 minutes from Mildenhall, could have a significant impact on the level of demand imported to the town's swimming facility. Assuming this reduces the current import of demand to Mildenhall, there is an argument to say that a 6 lane x 25m pool would be sufficient for the district. The scale of facility would mean that all the main market towns of Newmarket, Mildenhall, Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill have a 25m x 6 lane pool, plus a learner pool.
- 8.46 It is only by building a new swimming pool that increased capacity can be realised, and therefore increased participation can be facilitated.
- 8.47 In addition to a new and larger pool (minimum 6 lane x 25m), the Hub facility should incorporate a minimum 4 badminton court hall. It is important that the option of developing a 6 court hall is also considered, given the under-supply of sports halls in Forest Heath. The decision on the size of the sports hall will however need to be made in the context of factors such as:
- **The development of any other education provision in the district, with formal community access to a sports hall**
  - **Decisions over the long-term future of Brandon Leisure Centre**
  - **The potential to open up community access to the existing facilities on the Mildenhall Airforce base in 2019**
- 8.48 In addition to a new pool and sports hall, there is a need to provide replacement and additional fitness stations. There is an identified under-supply of fitness stations in Forest Heath of -38 fitness stations by 2025, so it makes sense to provide a larger fitness facility in any new development now. Given the former Mildenhall Dome provision was 33 stations, a new development should be a minimum of 70-75 stations.
- 8.49 Provision of multi-purpose space studios would also benefit a new facility in terms of both programming and flexibility, and enable a greater range of activities to be provided to encourage increased participation.
- 8.50 Consideration needs to be given to the future provision of squash courts in Mildenhall; closing the Mildenhall Dome would mean a loss of 3 courts in the district.
- 8.51 In addition, given the sports facilities are likely to operate on a formal dual-use arrangement, outdoor provision, particularly of a 3G pitch should be considered. This is explored further in the Playing Pitch Strategy (2015).

8.52 Based on the analysis of need, a new Mildenhall Hub should comprise the following minimum facility mix:

- **6 lane x 25m pool**
- **4 badminton court sports hall**
- **71 Station fitness suite**
- **Multi-purpose studio space (ideally 2)**
- **Squash courts**

### BRANDON LEISURE CENTRE

8.53 The future of Brandon Leisure Centre also needs to be considered. The facility is in an average condition, but requires investment. Located on a shared site with a number of other sports and community facilities, the centre has a significant social role, as well as a sporting facility. In a sense, the facilities are too large for the town, but some elements e.g. the fitness suite, studio are too small to provide a quality sports facility.

8.54 The operating costs of the facility are high in comparison to its income.

8.55 Given these decisions are likely to become clearer in the next 3 years, it is considered that the priority is to improve the operational position at Brandon Leisure Centre to drive footfall. It may be possible to increase income generation and lower the operational cost by reducing opening hours, and focussing on specific programmes/participation opportunities, to concentrate usage into fewer hours.

8.56 This approach will give time for the Mildenhall Hub development to progress, the impact of new facilities at Ely to become clearer, and for the future uses of the air base to be determined.

### OTHER FACILITIES

8.57 The assessment of need and stakeholder consultation has, in addition to the specific needs for sports halls and swimming pools, identified the need for the following facility provision in Forest Heath:

- **Additional dedicated gymnastics facilities**
- **The lack of 6 court sports halls limits use of provision for indoor netball and indoor tennis.**

8.58 The future provision of squash courts in Forest Heath also needs to be considered given that if the Mildenhall Hub development progresses without squash courts, 3 would be lost and this would mean no public accessible courts would be available in Mildenhall.

8.59 Working with local clubs, existing squash court provision should be retained/replaced where possible; there is potential to look at replacement facilities being incorporated into new school developments as part of sports facilities shared with the community.

8.60 Other future facility provision, linked particularly to the population growth and housing development, is the development of new and improved walking, jogging and cycling routes, to encourage active travel, and provide an environment in which physical activity can be easily integrated into daily life.

## 9. DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

### INTRODUCTION

- 9.1 Overall, Forest Heath has a very good range of existing sport and leisure facilities across the area; however, some are now ageing, and will require investment and/or replacement. This is particularly true of Mildenhall Swimming Pool, Mildenhall Dome, and Brandon Leisure Centre.
- 9.2 In Forest Heath there is a current and future under-supply of swimming pools, sports halls and fitness provision. Additional facility provision is needed. In addition the age and condition of facilities in Midenhall is critical.
- 9.3 Whilst there are some facilities on education sites, which are not available for community use, these are in the minority. Proposals for new schools will incorporate formal community use arrangements for use of sports facilities.
- 9.4 Forest Heath's population will grow significantly over the next few years, particularly in and around the main urban areas, so there is a need to ensure sufficient provision of accessible, quality and affordable facilities to meet local need.
- 9.5 There is a range of facility providers in Forest Heath, and it is important that Forest Heath District Council continues to work with these in partnership to develop and deliver facility provision, given that the Council can no longer be the provider and funder of last resort, but needs to adopt more of an enabling and facilitating role.

### VISION

- 9.6 The Vision for future provision of sport and leisure facilities in Forest Heath is:

***'Provision of sufficient high quality, fit for purpose, accessible and sustainable sports facilities across Forest Heath, to meet local need, including population growth, facilitate increased participation and contribute to improved community health'.***

- 9.7 As a minimum, Forest Heath District Council wishes to see accessible community sport and leisure facilities for swimming, fitness and sports hall sports/activities available for all residents. This includes both formal and informal spaces in which to pay sport and be physically active.

### AIMS

- 9.8 The aim of providing sufficient high quality, fit for purpose and accessible provision is to:
- Increase the regular amount of physical activity undertaken by individuals
  - Develop additional facility provision where need is evidenced
  - Create an environment where the choice to become physical active can become an integral part of everyday life
  - Encourage new participants to start taking part in physical activity
  - Facilitate the development of healthier lifestyles across Forest Heath's communities

- **Contribute to a reduction in health inequalities across Forest Heath**
- **Support and provide opportunities for local sports clubs and community groups**
- **Facilitate and support the development of talented athletes**

9.9 The provision of a network of high quality and accessible facilities will contribute to the overall priority for healthier lifestyles in Forest Heath, across all age groups. Facilitating opportunities to be more physically active, more often is also important, to contribute to a reduction in health inequalities across Forest Heath, and help people to live and age better, because they are more active.

9.10 Sustainability of facility provision is critical to maintain these opportunities; Forest Heath needs to plan now for the investment requirements of its existing facilities, and work in partnership with other providers and stakeholders to address the other priorities identified through this Strategy.

### PRINCIPLES FOR FUTURE PROVISION

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

- **Ensure residents in all areas of Forest Heath have good quality, local, accessible and affordable facilities, with the minimum provision being a 4 court sports hall, a 25m x 6 lane pool, and a fitness suite**
- **Replace ageing facilities where new provision is needed; all new provision should be designed and developed based on Sport England and NGB guidance, and be fully inclusive**
- **Rationalise existing provision where new facilities can replace/improve facilities**
- **Invest in existing provision to improve quality**
- **Invest strategically to ensure economic viability and sustainability of provision**
- **Where possible, provide facilities (formal and informal) closer to where people live; access to informal provision is critical in the rural areas**
- **Aim to ensure that more facilities on education sites provide opportunities (on a formal basis) for community access**

### SUMMARY OF NEEDS, PRIORITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

9.12 The assessment and analysis undertaken to develop this Strategy identifies a need for some additional provision, across a range of facility types, as well as more generic needs in terms of improvement to the quality of existing facilities, and the accessibility and operational management of provision.

9.13 The facility needs have been identified as a result of the qualitative, quantitative and accessibility analysis undertaken.

9.14 These are summarised below, by facility type.

**Table 9.1: Summary of Facility Needs in Forest Heath**

FACILITY TYPE	FACILITY NEEDS/PRIORITIES
<b>SPORTS HALLS</b>	<p>Badminton, volleyball, basketball and netball NGBs support the need for additional sports hall capacity in West Suffolk.</p> <p>There is a lack of sports halls capable of accommodating indoor netball, basketball, and volleyball in West Suffolk. There is only one 8 badminton sized sports hall in West Suffolk, and only two 6 court halls.</p> <p>Improvement in the quality of some ageing facilities, the priorities are Mildenhall Dome, and Brandon Leisure Centre,</p> <p>The Mildenhall Hub development offers the opportunity to replace Mildenhall Dome.</p>
<b>SWIMMING POOLS</b>	<p>There is a current and future under-supply of swimming pool provision in Forest Heath.</p> <p>The ASA has identified the need for increased swimming pool provision in Forest Heath. In addition, there is a need to start planning now for investment in existing pool facilities, all of which are ageing</p> <p>The priority for significant investment is Mildenhall Swimming Pool. This should be replaced; the development opportunity to achieve this is the Mildenhall Hub.</p>
<b>HEALTH AND FITNESS FACILITIES</b>	Additional 126 fitness stations by 2031
<b>GYMNASTICS FACILITIES</b>	Increased access to dedicated facilities for club use; significant potential for a dedicated hall in Newmarket.
<b>SQUASH COURTS</b>	<p>Working with local clubs, existing squash courts should be retained/replaced where possible..</p> <p>If any new facilities are developed, consideration should be given to provision of squash courts; two adjacent courts are needed to facilitate development of participation and club development.</p>
<b>INFORMAL FACILITIES</b>	Cycling and walking routes; safe cycling routes

## SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

### SPORTS HALLS

- 9.15 The simplistic analysis of “supply versus demand” in relation to sports halls within West Suffolk has identified an under supply in Forest Heath districts, based on both current and future demand. This assumes retention of all existing community accessible facilities, closure of the Mildenhall Dome and opening of the new Mildenhall Hub in Forest Heath. Sports halls in Forest Heath district are currently full in peak periods.
- 9.16 Current levels of satisfied demand are lower than national and regional levels at 86%. However, the FPM suggests that circa 13% of the demand that is being satisfied is being met by sports hall provision outside of Forest Heath within other neighbouring local authority areas.
- 9.17 Similarly, Forest Heath imports around 10.9% of demand from neighbouring local authorities e.g. East Cambs; if there were no net import/export, then there would still be insufficient sports hall provision in the District to meet current and future demand.
- 9.18 Levels of unmet demand are at 13% and equate to 511 visits per week during the peak period. This unmet demand is attributed to people living outside the catchment of an existing sports hall facility and to there being a lack of capacity at current facilities.
- 9.19 Used capacity figures for Forest Heath are significantly higher than national and regional levels at 100%.
- 9.20 Netball, basketball, badminton and volleyball NGBs highlight the need, and demand, for additional indoor sports hall space in the District. Netball identifies the lack of access to sports halls large enough for training and competition, particularly given the increased levels of participation in West Suffolk.
- 9.21 Although there are sports halls already available on education sites, it may be possible to achieve some increased capacity within the existing sports hall stock e.g. Scaltback School, by negotiating improved and extended access to existing facilities on educational sites through formal community use agreements, and opening existing community facilities for longer.
- 9.22 Ensuring community use of new school sports halls will be critical to ensure access to quality facilities. The former middle school site in Newmarket has some potential for development as a sports hub. There is potential for this site to be developed with badminton, gymnastic and rugby facilities, but a strategic lead needs to be identified for the overall project.
- 9.23 The condition and quality of these facilities, despite various refurbishments, will need to be carefully monitored, to ensure that facility quality does not deteriorate, and planning should be undertaken for replacement facilities in the medium term.
- 9.24 Forest Heath operates a number of sports halls through its Trust partners; whilst there has been significant investment and redevelopment of sports hall facilities Mildenhall Dome, Brandon Leisure Centre will need investment and improvement.
- 9.25 There is currently only one 8 badminton court sports hall in West Suffolk, and only two 6 court sports halls, which means that the capability to host county/regional indoor sports events is limited. Sports hall provision for e.g. indoor netball, basketball and volleyball is limited.

## SWIMMING POOLS

- 9.19 The FPM analysis identifies that the 2015 population (63,562) generates a demand for 4,076 visits per week during peak periods. Clearly there is a current imbalance between the level of demand in the district, and the available capacity in existing swimming pools.
- 9.20 By 2025, the estimated population is likely to demand 0.9 fewer visits per week per peak periods (vpwpp). This is due to an ageing population. Whilst the population in Mildenhall will reduce as a result of the closure of the US Airforce base (depending on what that site is used for in the future), but demand for swimming is likely to stay the same as airforce personnel do not tend to use Mildenhall Swimming Pool.
- 9.21 Currently, 89% (6,344 visits per week in peak periods) of all demand for swimming pool provision is met; this is an extremely high level of satisfied demand. 85% of all demand for swimming is retained in the district. 83% of all available capacity in the existing and available community accessible provision is used during peak periods. Mildenhall is 100% full, and Newmarket is 74% full.
- 9.22 These figures suggest that there is insufficient capacity in the existing pools to accommodate future increased participation and population growth.
- 9.23 11% (459 visits per week in peak periods) of demand is unmet with the 2015 provision of community accessible swimming pools. This demand is unmet because some residents are outside the catchment of an existing swimming pool. This latter point reflects the fact that around 15.2% of Forest Heath residents do not own a car (England average is 25%), and live outside the 20-30 minute catchment area of existing pool facilities, within and outside the district.
- 9.24 Current unmet demand is distributed across the district but is not significant; additional pool provision at existing location is therefore unlikely to address accessibility challenges for these residents. Existing pool provision is generally well-located in the district for Forest Heath residents.
- 9.25 Forest Heath residents do not make significant use of pools outside the district, as they are not within the catchment areas which people are prepared to travel. However about 31% of use at peak times (a significant net figure of 852, vpwpp, which equates to 3 lanes of a 25m pool) is imported use of swimmers from neighbouring local authority areas. The majority of this is from East Cambs; that local authority is planning to build a new pool at Ely which is likely to impact on the current level of net import into Forest heath, and may reduce this.
- 9.26 By 2025, with a population of 72,299 (14% increase on 2015), the level of demand for swimming will actually slightly decrease due to an ageing population, although the number of vpwpp increases by 578. This increase cannot be accommodated within the existing pool stock, given they are already full. Critically the age of the existing pool stock becomes the major issue as Mildenhall Pool will be 53 years old by 2025, and therefore the quality of the offer will diminish.
- 9.27 Essentially, based on both current and future demand, there is insufficient swimming pool provision in the district. By 2025, Mildenhall Swimming Pool will remain 100% full, and Newmarket Leisure Centre pools will be 85% full. However, it is important to highlight that the FPM looks at population increase spread across the district, whereas in reality the majority of it will be in the middle and south of the district.
- 9.28 By 2025 population increases are likely to increase demand for swimming by at least 12%; A new 6 lane x 25m pool plus learner pool in Mildenhall would increase the pool capacity in the district to 6,908 vpwpp, an increase on 2015 figures of 28%, or 1,562 vpwpp. This reduces the used capacity at Newmarket to 70% and at Mildenhall to 59%; however once population growth is applied, both pools would be very close to the 70% comfort level again.

- 9.26 There is now an urgent need to consider the age, condition and quality of Mildenhall Swimming Pool, and an opportunity to re-think how swimming pool facilities could best be developed for the future in Mildenhall through the Mildenhall Hub concept.
- 9.27 The ASA has highlighted the need to provide better quality facilities in the Mildenhall area of West Suffolk. The ASA also highlights that the minimum scale of a replacement pool should be 6 lane x 25m, but would support development of an 8 lane x 25m pool.

### HEALTH AND FITNESS

- 9.28 There is a lack of fitness provision in Forest Heath, with the majority of facilities being provided by the public/commercial sector.
- 9.29 Access is generally poor to fitness facilities across Forest Heath.
- 9.30 There is an under-supply of fitness facilities in Forest Heath. The Mildenhall Hub development provides an opportunity to address this under-supply in Forest Heath.

### INDOOR NETBALL

- 9.31 There is significant opportunity to further develop indoor netball, if there is investment in a larger sports hall. Access to larger sports halls is critical for training and competition, and is supported by the NGB.

### SQUASH COURTS

- 9.32 Working in partnership with local clubs, retention/replacement of existing courts and if any new facilities are developed, a minimum of two courts should be provided to facilitate participative opportunities.

### GYMNASTICS FACILITIES

- 9.33 Given the growing participation in gymnastics at local level, there is a need for additional dedicated gymnastics facilities. This should be driven by the local gymnastics clubs.
- 9.34 There is also a need to increase access wherever possible to existing sports halls for gymnastics use, until more dedicated facilities can be provided.



## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

### OVERVIEW

- 10.1 Although Forest Heath has a good range of facilities across the District, there are some poor quality and ageing facilities, particularly the Mildenhall Dome and Mildenhall Swimming Pool, and Brandon Leisure Centre.
- 10.2 The options for future provision of both these facilities now need to be considered. The closure of the Mildenhall Dome, and specifically the condition of Mildenhall Swimming Pool need to be considered urgently; the proposed Mildenhall Hub development offers a critical opportunity to re-provide high quality new sports facilities (swimming pool, sports hall and fitness suite) in the town, and to address the current under-supply. Based on the assessment of need undertaken, and the analysis of all relevant factors the minimum facility mix should include:
- **6 lane x 25m pool**
  - **4 badminton court sports hall**
  - **71 Station fitness suite**
  - **Multi-purpose studio space (ideally 2)**
  - **Squash courts**
- 10.3 The anticipated population growth in Forest Heath to 2031 needs to be appropriately catered for in terms of demand for sports facilities – both formal facilities and informal, multi-purpose spaces. In Forest Heath this means better geographical distribution of facilities to enable more people to access facilities in the urban area by walking, and/or cycling. It also means better quality facilities, given the age, in particular of Forest Heath provision.
- 10.4 In Forest Heath, addressing the needs of a growing population means both better quality provision, but also additional facilities, to meet both current and future needs for participation.
- 10.5 The provision of a network of high quality and accessible facilities will contribute to the overall priority for healthier lifestyles in Forest Heath, across all age groups. Facilitating opportunities to be more physically active, more often is also important, to contribute to a reduction in health inequalities across Forest Heath, and help people to live and age better.

### VISION

- 10.6 The Vision for future provision of sport and leisure facilities in Forest Heath is:

***'Provision of high quality, fit for purpose, accessible and sustainable sports facilities across Forest Heath, to meet current and future community need, facilitate increased participation and contribute to improved community health'***

## AIMS

10.7 The aim of providing a range of high quality, fit for purpose and accessible provision is to:

- Deliver the Vision for Forest Heath articulated in the Local Plans, and contribute significantly to the health and well-being priorities for the area
- Increase the regular amount of physical activity undertaken by individuals
- Encourage new participants to start taking part in physical activity
- Facilitate the development of significantly healthier lifestyles across Forest Heath's communities
- Contribute to a real reduction in health inequalities across the District
- Support and provide opportunities for local sports clubs and community groups
- Facilitate and support the development of talented athletes
- Develop additional facility provision where need is evidenced

10.8 In order to realise the above Vision and Aims for sport and leisure facility provision in Forest Heath, there are a number of key recommendations that need to be addressed, and implemented. These are set out below, and then detailed in the Action Plan, based on the identified principles for provision.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### RECOMMENDATION 1(FHR1)

Forest Heath District Council proceeds with the development of the Mildenhall Hub, but reviews the facility mix and scale of provision to reflect the need for a larger sports hall, and potentially additional swimming pool provision, plus additional fitness stations. Provision of replacement squash courts could also be considered.

### RECOMMENDATION 2 (FHR2)

Forest Heath District Council confirms the closure of the Mildenhall Pool facility once the new Mildenhall Hub is open for use.

### RECOMMENDATION 3 (R3)

Forest Heath District Council and Abbeycroft Leisure work in partnership to maximise the use of Brandon Leisure Centre

### RECOMMENDATION 4 (R4)

Forest Heath District Council works with local gymnastics clubs to increase access to purpose-built gymnastics provision.

### RECOMMENDATION 5 (R5)

Forest Heath District Council considers the retention, or replacement of existing squash courts, where possible, in future facility development.

### RECOMMENDATION 6 (R6)

Forest Heath District Council seeks to work closely with Suffolk County Council, and local secondary schools to review and explore the options for re-development of ageing pools and sports halls on an on-going basis.

**RECOMMENDATION 7 (R7)**

Forest Heath District Council works with Suffolk County Council, existing, and all new secondary schools to develop formal community use agreements for on-site sports facilities

**RECOMMENDATION 8 (R8)**

Forest Heath District Council works with town and parish councils to agree the strategic facilities where investment in informal space for use for fitness stations, and sports hall activities should be prioritised

**RECOMMENDATION 9 (R9)**

Forest Heath District Council uses the West Suffolk Facilities Assessment as an evidence base to secure S106/CIL contributions to future investment in open space, sport and leisure provision in the District.

**RECOMMENDATION 10 (R10)**

Forest Heath District Council uses the Strategy evidence base to secure S106/CIL contributions in all new housing developments for the development of walking and cycling routes in the District

## ACTION PLAN

10.9 The Action Plan underpinning the Strategy is summarised in the table below:

Table 10.1: Strategy Action Plan

RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE		RESOURCES
			SHORT	= 1 – 3 YEARS	
			MEDIUM	= 3 - 5 YEARS	
			LONG TERM	= 5 - 10 YEARS	
<b>RECOMMENDATION 1(R1)</b> Forest Heath District Council proceeds with the development of the Mildenhall Hub, but reviews the facility mix and scale of provision to reflect the need for a larger sports hall, and potentially additional swimming pool provision, plus additional fitness stations. Provision of replacement squash courts could also be considered.	Review the proposed facility mix for the Mildenhall Hub, and re-run revenue models to reflect the options for a larger sports hall and additional swimming and fitness provision.	Forest Heath District Council	SHORT	TEM	Internal officers – leisure, planning, Abbeycroft Leisure external consultants. Likely cost £5k for re-modelling revenue options.
<b>RECOMMENDATION 2 (R2)</b> Forest Heath District Council confirms the closure of the Mildenhall Pool facility once the new Mildenhall Hub is open for use.	Confirm the closure of Mildenhall Pool; explore the options for sale of the current site with a potential S106 contribution to the new Mildenhall Hub.	Forest Heath District Council	SHORT		Internal Members and Councillors

RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE		RESOURCES
			SHORT	= 1 – 3 YEARS	
			MEDIUM	= 3 - 5 YEARS	
			LONG TERM	= 5 - 10 YEARS	
<b>RECOMMENDATION 3 (R3)</b> Forest Heath District Council and Abbeycroft Leisure work in partnership to maximise the use of Brandon Leisure Centre	Review the existing operational hours and programme and reduce facility operation to an agreed number of days per week. Promote new opening hours and programme within local community.	Forest Heath District Council; Abbeycroft Leisure	SHORT TERM		Internal officers – leisure, planning, Abbeycroft Leisure
<b>RECOMMENDATION 4 (R4)</b> Forest Heath District Council works with local gymnastics clubs to increase access to purpose-built gymnastics provision.	Work with local gymnastic clubs to support the development of purpose built provision, including increased access to existing sports hall space where possible.	Forest Heath District Council; Abbeycroft Leisure; local gymnastics clubs	MEDIUM TERM		Internal Officers – leisure, planning; Abbeycroft Leisure
<b>RECOMMENDATION 5 (R5)</b> Forest Heath District Council considers the retention, or replacement of existing squash courts, where possible, in future facility development.	Review all planning proposals that could impact on the current provision of squash courts in the District	Forest Heath District Council	ONGOING		Planning officer time
<b>RECOMMENDATION 6 (R6)</b> Forest Heath District Council seeks to work closely with Suffolk County Council, and local secondary schools to review and explore the options for re-development of ageing pools and sports halls on an on-going basis.	Establish Facility Development Partnership	Forest Heath District Council, SCC, local secondary schools	SHORT TERM, BUT ONGOING PARTNERSHIP		Officer (leisure / community) and partner time; potentially capital contributions in the future

RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE		RESOURCES
			SHORT	= 1 – 3 YEARS	
			MEDIUM	= 3 - 5 YEARS	
			LONG TERM	= 5 - 10 YEARS	
<b>RECOMMENDATION 7 (R7)</b> Forest Heath District Council works with Suffolk County Council, existing, and all new secondary schools to develop formal community use agreements for on-site sports facilities	Identify potential education partners who may be interested in developing a formal community use agreement	Forest Heath District Council, SCC, local secondary schools	ONGOING		Officer time – leisure/community, legal, finance, property
<b>RECOMMENDATION 8 (R8)</b> Forest Heath District Council works with town and parish councils to agree the strategic facilities where investment in informal space for use for fitness stations, and sports hall activities should be prioritised	Identify agreed priorities for investment	Forest Heath District Council, Town and Parish Councils	MEDIUM LONG TERM		Officer time – leisure, community, planning Approx. £5k per hall
<b>RECOMMENDATION 9(R9)</b> Forest Heath District Council uses the West Suffolk Facilities Assessment as an evidence base to secure S106/CIL contributions to future investment in open space, sport and leisure provision in the District.	Forest Heath District Council incorporates identified facility needs and evidence base into Local Plan, with the appropriate development contribution policy	Forest Heath District Council	ONGOING		Officers' time (planning)

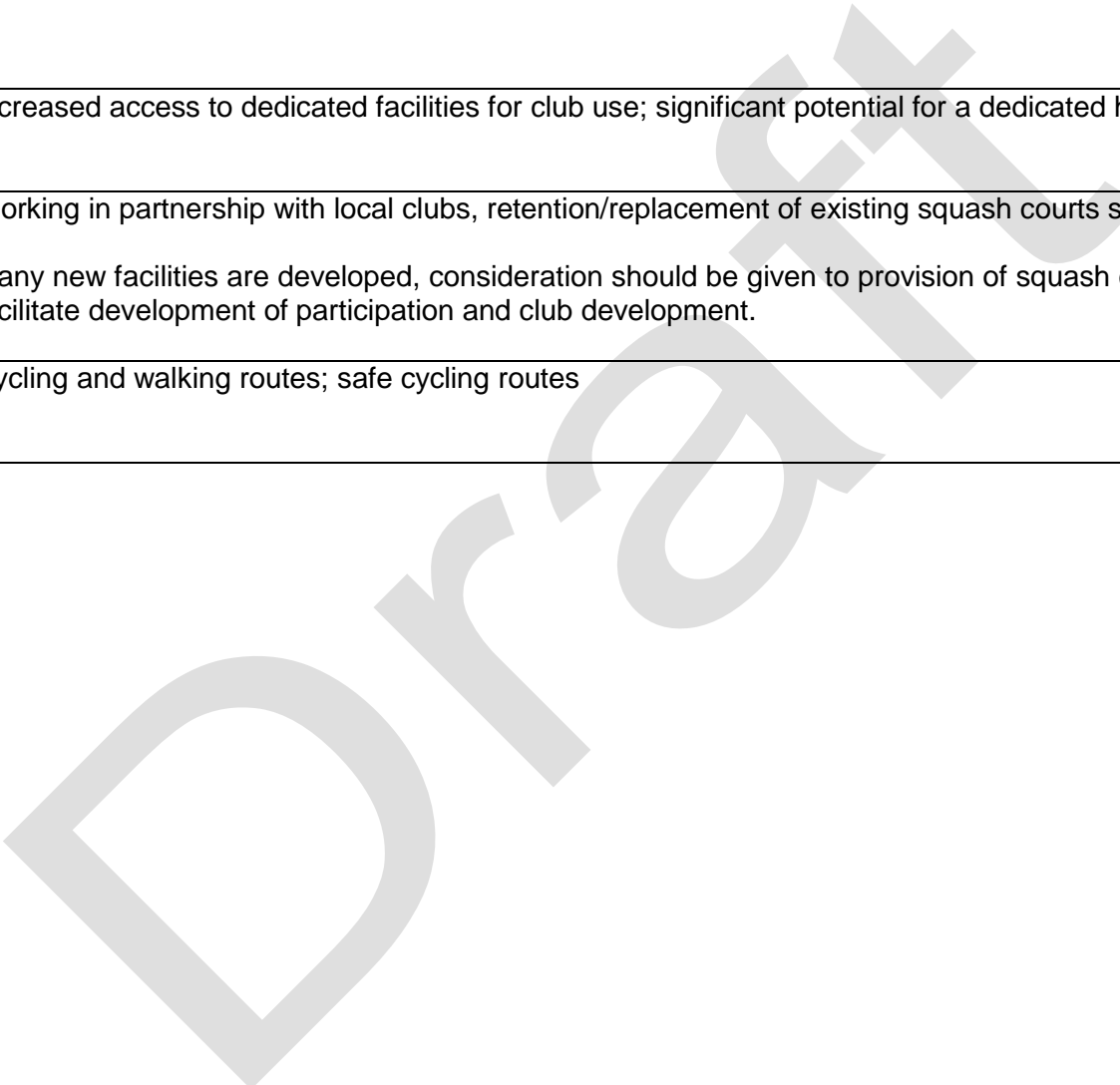
RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE		RESOURCES
			SHORT	= 1 – 3 YEARS	
			MEDIUM	= 3 - 5 YEARS	
			LONG TERM	= 5 - 10 YEARS	
<b>RECOMMENDATION 10 (R10)</b> <b>Forest Heath District Council uses the Strategy evidence base to secure S106/CIL contributions in all new housing developments for the development of walking and cycling routes in the District</b>	Forest Heath District Council incorporates identified facility needs and evidence base into Local Plan, with the appropriate development contribution policy	Forest Heath District Council	ONGOING		Officers' time (planning)

10.10 The table below identifies the priority facility needs for the District:

Table 10.2: Summary of Facility Needs in Forest Heath

FACILITY TYPE	FACILITY NEEDS/PRIORITIES
<b>SPORTS HALLS</b>	<p>Badminton, volleyball, basketball and netball NGBs support the need for additional sports hall capacity in West Suffolk.</p> <p>There is a lack of sports halls capable of accommodating indoor netball, basketball, and volleyball in West Suffolk. There is only one 8 badminton sized sports hall in West Suffolk, and only two 6 court halls.</p> <p>Improvement in the quality of some ageing facilities, the priorities are Mildenhall Dome, and Brandon Leisure Centre.</p> <p>The Mildenhall Hub development offers the opportunity to replace Mildenhall Dome.</p>
<b>SWIMMING POOLS</b>	<p>There is a current and future under-supply of swimming pool provision in Forest Heath.</p> <p>The ASA has identified the need for increased swimming pool provision in Forest Heath. In addition, there is a need to start planning now for investment in existing pool facilities, all of which are ageing.</p> <p>The priority for significant investment is Mildenhall Swimming Pool. This should be replaced; the development opportunity to achieve this is the Mildenhall Hub.</p>

FACILITY TYPE	FACILITY NEEDS/PRIORITIES
<b>HEALTH AND FITNESS FACILITIES</b>	Additional 126 fitness stations by 2031
<b>GYMNASTICS FACILITIES</b>	Increased access to dedicated facilities for club use; significant potential for a dedicated hall in Newmarket.
<b>SQUASH COURTS</b>	<p>Working in partnership with local clubs, retention/replacement of existing squash courts should be retained where possible.</p> <p>If any new facilities are developed, consideration should be given to provision of squash courts; two adjacent courts are needed to facilitate development of participation and club development.</p>
<b>INFORMAL FACILITIES</b>	Cycling and walking routes; safe cycling routes





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