

**Ploszajski Lynch
Consulting Ltd.**



West Suffolk Council
Sports Facilities Assessment

March 2022

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Ploszajski Lynch Consulting Ltd. (PLC) was commissioned by West Suffolk Council (WSC) to produce a Sports Facilities Assessment and Action Plan for the district. This is part of a wider assessment of sport and leisure provision in the district which also includes a playing pitch assessment.

1.2 The rationale for the assessment

1.2.1 Background

West Suffolk Council aims to encourage people that work and or live in the district to lead active lives and strives to create ‘resilient families and communities that are healthy and active’. Since the creation of the initial West Suffolk sports facilities assessment back in 2015 the Council has adopted a framework for promoting physical activity.

In response to the anticipated growth in population across West Suffolk, an update to the Council’s Indoor Sports Facility Assessment, Playing Pitch Assessment and Open Spaces Assessment is being commissioned. The study is being commissioned now, as it is nearly five years since the last assessment was undertaken and there have been several changes since that time.

A new Local Plan for West Suffolk is being prepared, with the first ‘Issues and Options’ consultation taking place October - December 2020. The Local Plan consultations will not alter the requirement for this assessment, but the information identified from the assessment will help inform the final plan.

West Suffolk Council-owned indoor sports facilities are currently managed by Abbeycroft Leisure, a not for profit social enterprise and despite recent significant investment at the leisure centres in Brandon, Newmarket, Haverhill and Mildenhall, it is recognised that these facilities alone will not cope with the demand from the local population and anticipated future growth. Sports and leisure provision is delivered by a number of partners across the district. This assessment will provide a better understanding of the current provision and future demand to inform holistic planning of facilities provision.

The updated assessments will also help inform the creation of a new Supplementary Planning Document for Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities. This new SPD will replace the current SPDs which the former St. Edmundsbury District Council and Forest Heath District Council had adopted.

An update to the assessments is needed to ensure that the current and future demand for sports and recreational facilities are planned for holistically and that the needs of the current and growing population of West Suffolk can be fully met. The assessments will also need to take into consideration the contribution West Suffolk’s sports facilities offer neighbouring authorities and the wider region. The assessment review will also provide evidence 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).

1.2.2 Purpose

The purpose of the assessment is to produce:

- A West Suffolk-wide Sports, Recreation and Open Space Assessment plus Action Plan.
- A framework to support for the short, medium, and long-term facilities planning (including capital financial planning) for the delivery of sports, leisure and open spaces in West Suffolk.
- A robust needs and evidence base to support the West Suffolk Local Plan.
- A clear framework for developers about sports and recreation needs in West Suffolk.
- A robust framework to assist the collection and allocation of CIL/Section 106 contributions for sports, recreation, and open spaces provision in West Suffolk.

1.2.3 Objectives

The objectives of the assessment are as follows:

- To identify supply and demand issues for sports and recreation provision across West Suffolk and the areas that the local authority serves.
- To provide evidence to shape the market inform bids to external funding partners to support the delivery of sports and recreation facilities in West Suffolk.
- To develop a priority list for investment and use of resources secured through developer contributions.
- A robust needs and evidence base to support the sport, leisure planning and open spaces policies and the allocation of sites for sports and recreation use throughout West Suffolk.

1.3 *The scope of the assessment*

The needs of the following sports are covered by the assessment:

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

The facilities that serve the sports' needs are:

- Sports halls (3-badminton court sized or larger)
- Indoor swimming pools
- Health and fitness gyms
- Squash courts
- Indoor bowling greens
- Indoor tennis courts
- Indoor netball courts
- Specialist gymnastics/trampolining centres

1.4 The study methodology

The methodology for the study follows the 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance' (2014) approach (ANOG), developed by Sport England. The process involves two parts and three stages as follows:

- **Part One** - Undertaking the assessment.
 - **Stage A:** Prepare and tailor the assessment.
 - **Stage B:** Gather information on supply and demand.
 - **Stage B:** Bring the information together.
- **Part Two - Stage C:** Applying the assessment.

1.5 Assessment format

The structure of the Strategy document is as follows:

- Assessing sports facilities needs in West Suffolk.
- The local context for facilities provision.
- Strategic influences on facilities provision.
- Sports halls.
- Swimming pools.
- Health and fitness facilities.
- Squash courts.
- Indoor bowls facilities.
- Indoor tennis facilities.

- Gymnastics facilities.
- Sub-area assessment.
- Policies and recommendations.
- Implementing and reviewing the strategy.

2 ASSESSING SPORTS FACILITIES NEEDS IN WEST SUFFOLK

2.1 Introduction

This section explains the basis upon which the current sports facilities needs in West Suffolk have been identified, along with the approach for identifying the additional provision that will be needed as a result of population growth.

The methodology applied to assess the needs and opportunities for sports facilities follows Sport England's recommended approach, advocated in '*Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance*' (2014) and the principles in its subsequent '*Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance*' (2018).

2.2 Preparing and tailoring the approach

WSC convened a project steering group led by officers from Policy Planning and Leisure and Culture and sought approval from Sport England and the relevant governing bodies of sport, for:

- The vision and objectives of the review of sports facilities in the district.
- The scope of the exercise, including the types of facilities to include, the geographical scope and the overall timeframe for the assessment.
- The local and wider strategic context.
- The project management arrangements for the study, including the decision to engage assistance from external consultants.

The project brief was approved and signed-off to complete Stage A of the process.

2.3 Assessing sports facilities supply

The assessment of sports facilities supply at Stage B of the study involved four main elements:

- **Quantity:** Establishing what facilities there are in the district, with details of their dimensions, technical information like playing surfaces and floodlighting. This included consideration of facilities not currently in use, those not available to the community and significant provision in neighbouring areas that serves some needs of West Suffolk residents.
- **Quality:** Auditing the quality of facilities. This involved assessing each facility in terms of its condition (its age, appeal, fabric and ancillary provision like changing and car parking - factors that will influence its attractiveness to users) and fitness for purpose (its technical specifications and ability to accommodate an appropriate standard of play).
- **Accessibility:** Determining spatial distribution of provision in the district of each facility type, including catchment analysis appropriate to the scale and role of each facility.

- **Availability:** Identifying how much each facility is used, whether there is any existing spare capacity and if there is any scope to increase capacity. This involved consideration of programming and usage data, opening times and pricing levels, which was secured through consultation with facility providers and operators.

The information was collated and analysed in a facilities supply report, which was evaluated and approved by the project steering group.

2.4 Assessing sports facilities demand

The assessment of sports facilities demand at Stage B of the study involved five main elements:

- **Local population profile:** Establishing the local demography, including the size, age profile, affluence/deprivation, health indices and growth projections.
- **Sports participation:** Identifying local sports participation characteristics, through analysing the results of Sport England's 'Active Lives' surveys (2015 - 2021), local facilities usage figures and a survey of local clubs to establish membership patterns and trends.
- **Unmet, displaced and future demand:** In addition to current expressed demand, analysis of unmet (demand which exists but cannot currently be satisfied), displaced (demand from within the district that is satisfied elsewhere) and future demand (based on projected population and participation increases) was identified.
- **Local participation priorities:** Establishing local priorities for the use of sports facilities, such as those relating to corporate health and well-being policies.
- **Sport-specific priorities:** Determining through consultation with WSC, the governing bodies of sport and a local sports clubs survey, whether there are any sport-specific priorities for West Suffolk.

The information was collated and analysed in a facilities demand report, which was evaluated and approved by the project steering group.

2.5 Assessing the balance between sports facilities supply and demand

To complete Stage B of the process, the supply and demand information was brought together for each type of facility to establish:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough facilities with sufficient capacity to meet needs?
- **Quality:** Are the facilities fit for purpose for the users?
- **Accessibility:** Are the facilities in the right physical location for the users?
- **Availability:** Are the facilities available for those who want to use them?

Where appropriate for some types of facility, the assessment included the use of Sport England planning tools, in particular the Sports Facility Calculator (SFC). The SFC has been developed by Sport England to help local planning authorities quantify how much additional demand for three key community sports facilities (swimming pools, sports halls and indoor bowls) is generated as a result of new growth linked to specific development locations.

The information has been collated and analysed in this Stage B report.

2.6 Applying the assessment - Developing the strategy

The results of the assessment will be applied to complete a Sports Facilities Assessment for the district, which included:

- **Options for provision:** The options for meeting current and future facilities needs were identified under Sport England's recommended headings of 'Protect', 'Provide' and 'Enhance'.
- **Policy recommendations:** Arranged under the headings of 'Protect', 'Provide' and 'Enhance', planning policy recommendations were developed to ensure that the implementation of the strategy will be supported by the provisions of the Local Plan.

2.7 Sources of information

Information was gathered throughout the process from a wide range of consultees including:

- **Sport England:** Guidance on the assessment methodology.
- **West Suffolk Council:** Consultation with officers from Planning and Culture on their respective areas of responsibility.
- **Abbecroft Leisure:** Data on usage of the key facilities run by the Council's appointed leisure management contractor.
- **Other local sports facilities providers:** Consultation with organisations such as local sports clubs and commercial health and fitness operators on usage levels and spare capacity.
- **Neighbouring local authorities:** Information on their sports facilities assessments and the impact of any cross-border issues was obtained from East Cambridgeshire District Council, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council, Breckland District Council, Mid-Suffolk District Council, Babergh District Council, Braintree District Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council.
- **Active Suffolk:** Information on local and wider strategic priorities.
- **Governing bodies of sport:** Information on local and wider strategic priorities and local supply and demand information.
- **Sports clubs:** Information on sports facilities provision and use, current and future needs and opinions on quality, which was submitted via an on-line survey.

- **Schools:** Information on sports facilities provision and use, plus attitudes towards community use, which was submitted via an on-line survey.
- **Town and parish councils:** Information on sports facilities in their respective areas, including perceptions of local surpluses or deficiencies and any prospective changes in provision and use, which was submitted via an on-line survey.

2.8 Summary

Assessing sports facilities needs in West Suffolk using the approach advocated by Sport England in its '*Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance*' has ensured that the exercise is both robust and evidence-based and as a result complies with the provisions of the Government's planning policy framework.

3 THE LOCAL CONTEXT FOR FACILITIES PROVISION

Key findings:

- ***An ageing population:*** The current demographic profile of West Suffolk is skewed toward the older end of population spectrum and according to ONS 2018 sub-national population projections, this trend is projected to continue and become even more pronounced over the period of the Plan.
- ***Population growth:*** The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 190,680 by 2040, an increase of 11,635 or 6.5% from 2019.
- ***Overall sports participation rates:*** General participation rates in sport and physical activity are above the county, regional and national averages. Demand for sports facilities is therefore high.
- ***Facilities supply:*** Sports facilities are provided by a mosaic of owners and operators from the public, voluntary and commercial sectors, which highlights the need for and benefits of a strategic approach to co-ordinating provision.

3.1 Introduction

This section identifies the context within which sports facilities provision is made in West Suffolk district.

3.2 Background

3.2.1 Location

West Suffolk is a predominantly rural district in the heart of East Anglia. Well-connected via the A11 and A14 with London, the rest of East Anglia and the Midlands. Its neighbouring local authorities are East Cambridgeshire District Council, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council, Breckland District Council, Mid-Suffolk District Council, Babergh District Council, Braintree District Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council. West Suffolk is a safe and comparatively prosperous place in which to live. It also has some beautiful and accessible countryside areas, including grassland, heath and forest.

3.2.2 Settlement pattern

59% of all residential properties in West Suffolk are in the five largest settlements of Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Newmarket, Brandon and Mildenhall.

- Bury St Edmunds, the largest settlement in West Suffolk, has been a prosperous town for centuries. People are drawn to its market and Georgian architecture, shops, leisure and cultural facilities.
- Newmarket is known as the 'home of horseracing'. It is said to have more racehorses, trainers, stable staff, stud farms and racing organisations in and around the town than anywhere else in the world. Racing accounts for a significant number of local jobs.

- 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.

3.2.3 Rural areas

West Suffolk has some extensive, sparsely populated rural areas, which include a number of habitats of conservation importance.

3.2.4 United States Air Force

The USAF has two major bases in West Suffolk (Mildenhall and Lakenheath) that collectively house around 12,200 US military and civilian employees. Whilst many of the personnel are transitory, they collectively contribute an estimated £700 million annually to the local economy.

3.2.5 Transport links

Two main strategic roads run through West Suffolk, the A11 from London to Norwich and the A14 linking the Midlands with Felixstowe. A number of other 'A' roads provide radial linkages and there are rail links connect Newmarket and Bury St. Edmunds to Cambridge and Ipswich.

3.2.6 Relationship with neighbouring areas

West Suffolk has an unusual geography, with several key settlements on the border with other districts/counties. In particular:

- Newmarket is almost surrounded by land in East Cambridgeshire district (Cambridgeshire).
- Haverhill is on the border with Braintree district (Essex).
- Brandon is on the border with Breckland district (Norfolk).
- Bury St Edmunds is close to the border with Babergh and Mid Suffolk district.

As a result, these settlements become key service centres for people living in neighbouring areas, which leads to significant imported demand for a range of provision, including sports facilities.

3.3 Demography

3.3.1 Current population

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) mid-2019 population estimates for West Suffolk indicate 179,045 residents. This represents an increase of 7,564 people (4.4% growth) since the 2011 Census figure of 171,481 (source Analysis of population estimate tool. Published 25 June 2021).

3.3.2 Age structure

The age structure of West Suffolk differs from the national average. Analysis of the ONS 2019 sub-national population projections shows that West Suffolk has:

- A slightly higher percentage of young people than the county and national averages.

- A higher percentage of older people than the national average, but lower than the proportion in Suffolk as a whole.

<i>Age</i>	<i>West Suffolk No.</i>	<i>West Suffolk %</i>	<i>Suffolk %</i>	<i>England %</i>
0-15	34,773	19.4%	18.1%	19.2%
16-64	106,254	59.3%	58.4%	62.4%
65+	38,018	21.2%	23.6%	18.4%
Total	179,045	100%	100%	100%

3.3.3 Population growth

Two sets of population projections have been considered:

- The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 190,680 by 2040, an increase of 11,635. Comparison of the age group projections for 2020 and 2040 show that the proportion of people aged 65 and over will increase from 21.4% to 26.9%.

<i>Age</i>	<i>Population 2020</i>	<i>% 2020</i>	<i>Population 2040</i>	<i>% 2040</i>
0 - 14	32,937.8	18%	32,632	17%
15 - 24	18,878.1	10%	20,417.4	11%
25 - 49	55,946.4	31%	54,934	29%
50 - 64	34,103.2	19%	31,495.6	17%
65+	38,579.9	21%	51,201	27%
Total	180,445	100%	190,680	100%

- The *West Suffolk Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment* (2020) states that the local housing need was for an additional 824 new dwellings per annum in the district. In the 18 years to 2040, this amounts to 14,832 dwellings, with an average occupancy of 2.3 people, giving an additional population of 34,114 (a 19.1% increase).

3.3.4 Health

Local health indices are recorded in Public Health England's *Health Profile for West Suffolk* (2019). In general the health of people in the district varied compared with England as a whole:

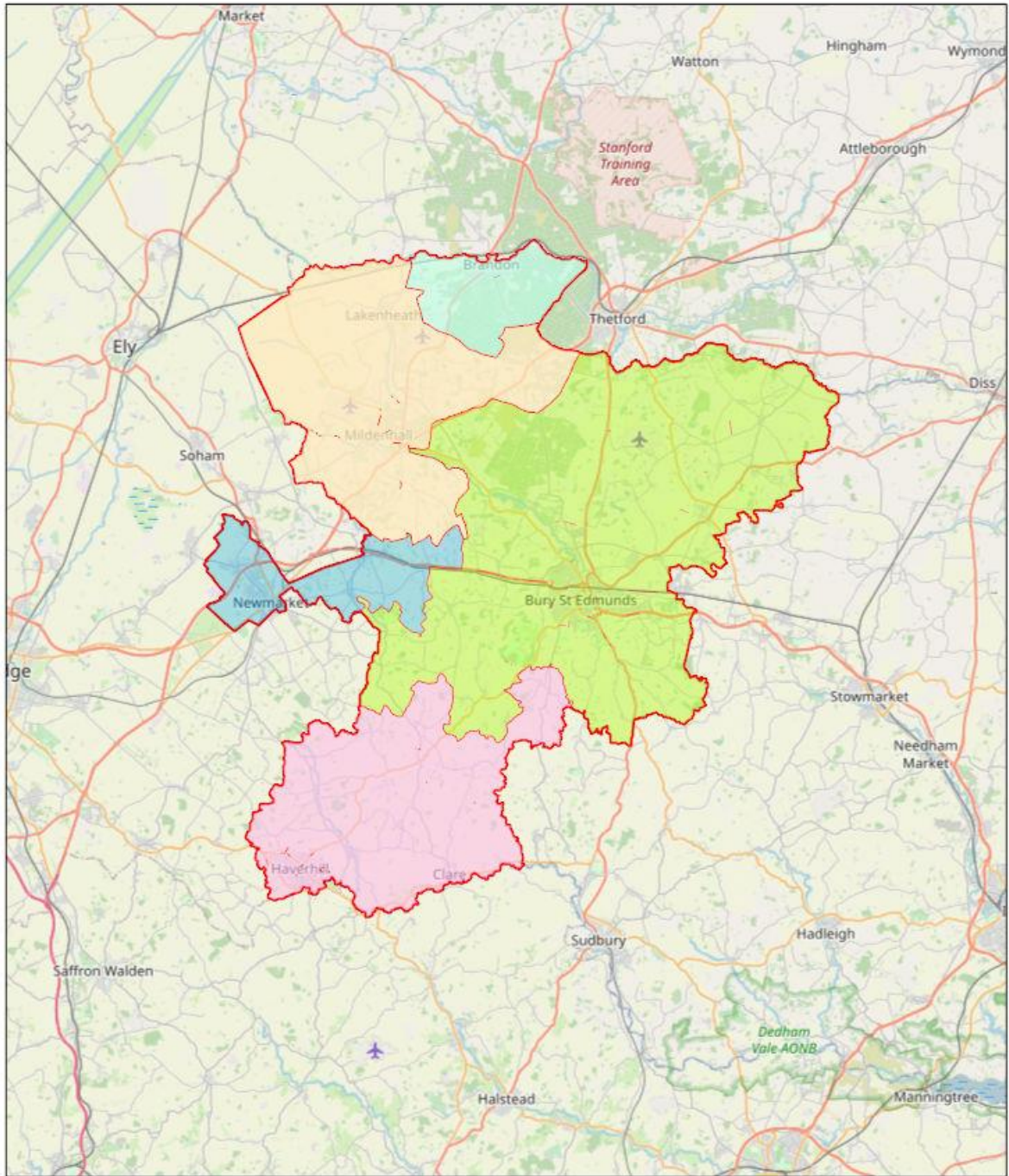
- Life expectancy at birth in West Suffolk is 1.2 years longer for men and 1.4 years longer for women than the respective national averages. However, life expectancy is 5.4 years lower for men and 3.9 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of the district than in the least deprived areas.
- The prevalence of obese children aged 10 - 11 years in West Suffolk is 16.7%, compared with the national average of 20.2%.
- 62.8% of the adult population of the district is classified as overweight or obese. This is above the national average of 62.0%.

3.3.5 Sub-areas

The district can be divided into sub-areas, to assist with analysing provision at a more local level and in particular to assess the differential spatial impact on supply and demand for sports facilities arising from housing growth. The sub-sub areas are defined as follows. The data source is 'Table SAPE22DT8a: Mid-2019 Population Estimates for 2019 Wards in England and Wales by Single Year of Age and Sex - Experimental Statistics'. Published 9 Sept 20.

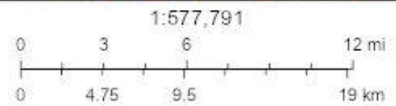
<i>Sub-area</i>	<i>Area type</i>	<i>Ward Name</i>	<i>Popn. 2019</i>	<i>Popn. 2019</i>	<i>Popn. 2019</i>	
Bury St. Edmunds and surrounds	Town	Abbeygate	5,281	41,554		
	Town	Eastgate	2,691			
	Town	Minden	5,758			
	Town	Moreton Hall	7,994			
	Town	St Olaves	4,170			
	Town	Southgate	4,262			
	Town	Tollgate	5,892			
	Town	Westgate	5,506			
Bury St. Edmunds and surrounds	Rural	Bardwell	2,676	31,278	72,832	
	Rural	Barningham	2,637			
	Rural	Barrow	2,495			
	Rural	Chedburgh & Chevington	2,572			
	Rural	Horringer	2,617			
	Rural	Ixworth	2,256			
	Rural	Pakenham & Troston	3,147			
	Rural	Risby	3,174			
	Rural	Rougham	2,374			
	Rural	Stanton	2,830			
	Rural	The Fornhams & Great Barton	4,500			
	Newmarket and surrounds	Town	Newmarket East			5,593
Town		Newmarket North	5,346			
Town		Newmarket West	5,660			
Newmarket & surrounds	Rural	Exning	2,171	4,733		
	Rural	Kentford & Moulton	2,562			
Haverhill and surrounds	Town	Haverhill Central	3,209	27,481	40,969	
	Town	Haverhill East	4,635			
	Town	Haverhill North	4,101			
	Town	Haverhill South	6,966			
	Town	Haverhill South-East	2,554			
	Town	Haverhill West	6,016			
Haverhill and surrounds	Rural	Clare, Hundon & Kedington	8,553	13,488		
	Rural	Whepstead & Wickhambrook	2,495			
	Rural	Withersfield	2,440			
Mildenhall and surrounds	Town	Mildenhall Great Heath	3,326	9,054	34,356	
	Town	Mildenhall Kingsway & Market	2,840			
	Town	Mildenhall Queensway	2,888			
Mildenhall and surrounds	Rural	Iceni	6,338	25302		
	Rural	Lakenheath	8,756			
	Rural	Manor	2,581			
	Rural	The Rows	7,627			
Brandon & surrounds	Town	Brandon Central	3,518	9,556	9,556	
	Town	Brandon East	2,745			
	Town	Brandon West	3,293			
TOTALS			179,045	179,045	179,045	

WEST SUFFOLK - SUB AREAS



7/6/2021

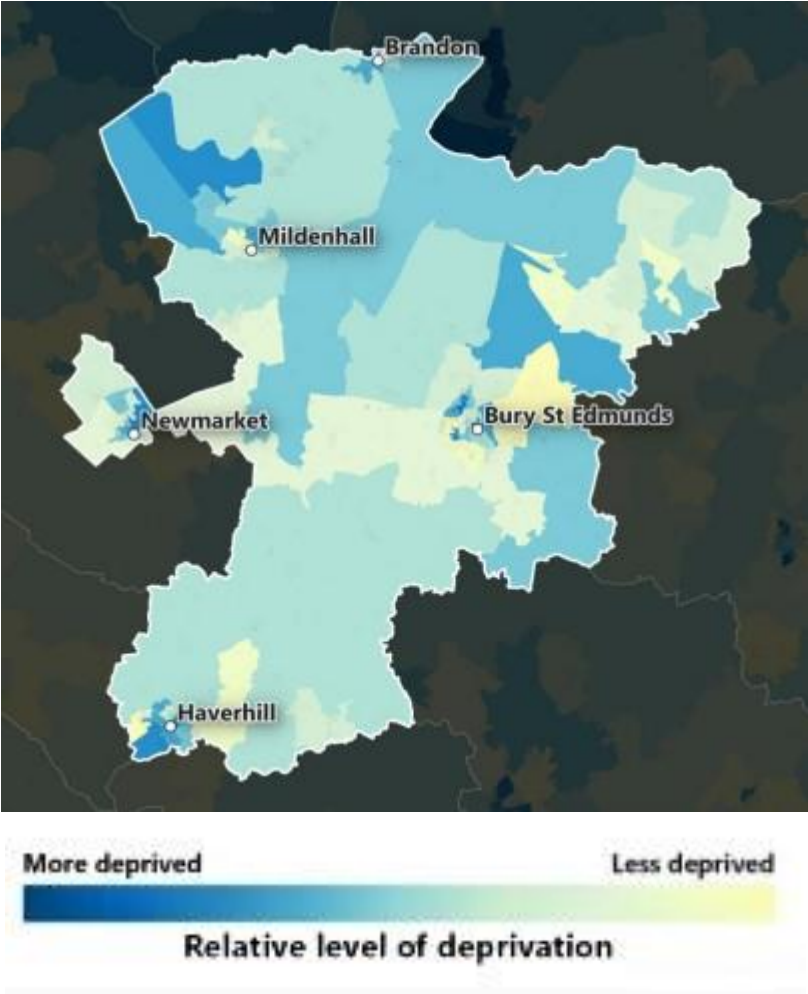
- Mildenhall Sub Area
- Brandon Sub Area
- Newmarket Sub Area
- Haverhill Sub Area
- WEST SUFFOLK BOUNDARY
- Bury St Edmunds Sub Area



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3.3.6 Deprivation

The English Indices of Deprivation (2019) show that the district is ranked 176 out of 317 local authority areas in England. Whilst no Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are ranked in the lowest 10% in the country, as the map below shows, around 1% of LSOAs are in the poorest 20% nationally and values vary widely across the district.



3.3.7 Housing need

The *West Suffolk Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment* (2020) states that the local housing need was for an additional 824 new dwellings per annum in the district, equivalent to 12,360 over 15 years, which is the timeframe of the SHELAA. The projected yields from included sites in SHELAA exceeds this figure. The SHELAA identifies 223 sites capable of accommodating 27,238 dwellings in total, or 1,816 per annum. Housing need changes every year. The housing need is different to housing requirement. Housing requirement is planned for in the Local Plan and West Suffolk Council will be consulting on this at the Preferred Options stage.

3.4 Sport and physical activity

3.4.1 Participation rates

Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey measures physical activity rates amongst people aged 16 and over at district, county, regional and national levels. The definitions used in the survey are as follows:

- **Sport and physical activity:** This includes at least 10-minutes of moderate or higher intensity sports activities, walking and cycling for leisure or travel, fitness and dance.
- **Active:** The 'Active' population is defined as those doing at least 150 minutes of the above activities per week.
- **Fairly active:** The 'Fairly active' population is defined as those doing between 30 and 149 minutes of the above activities per week.
- **Inactive:** The 'Inactive' population is defined as those doing 30 minutes or less of the above activities per week.

The key data for West Suffolk for the period 2020/21 is set out below. The results show quite a polarised position where the proportion of the population that are 'Active' is above the regional, county and national averages, but so is the proportion that are 'Inactive':

<i>Area</i>	<i>Active</i>	<i>Fairly active</i>	<i>Inactive</i>
West Suffolk	64.6%	6.5%	28.9%
Suffolk	60.4%	11.3%	28.4%
East	60.2%	11.6%	28.2%
England	60.9%	11.6%	27.5%

3.5 The local sports facilities supply network

Sports facilities provision in West Suffolk comprises a mixed economy involving the public, voluntary and commercial sectors. The key providers are as follows:

- **West Suffolk Council:** The Council provides leisure centres in Brandon, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Mildenhall and Newmarket. They are managed by not-for-profit social enterprise Abbeycroft Leisure.
- **Schools:** Schools are significant sports facilities providers in the district, although not all provision is fully community accessible.
- **Sports clubs:** Voluntary sector sports clubs provide and run a range of mostly smaller facilities.
- **Commercial providers:** The commercial sector has a presence in West Suffolk. Several of the major fitness companies including Bannantynes (Bury St. Edmunds) and Pure Gym (Haverhill) have facilities in the district.

3.6 The implications for sports facilities provision

The implications of the local context for sports facilities provision in West Suffolk are as follows:

- **An ageing population:** The current demographic profile of West Suffolk is skewed toward the older end of population spectrum and according to ONS 2018 sub-national population projections, this trend is projected to continue and become even more pronounced over the period of the Plan.
- **Imported demand:** Newmarket, Haverhill, Brandon and Bury St. Edmunds are all close to the border of West Suffolk and as a result these settlements become key service centres for people living in neighbouring areas. This leads to significant imported demand for a range of provision, including sports facilities.
- **Population growth:** The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 190,680 by 2040, an increase of 11,635 or 6.5% from 2019. An alternative projection, based upon provision for an additional 824 new dwellings per annum in West Suffolk, produces a population of 213,159 by the same date, a 19.1% increase. The additional population will drive demand for extra sports facilities.
- **Overall sports participation rates:** General participation rates in sport and physical activity are above the county, regional and national averages. Demand for sports facilities is therefore concomitantly high.
- **Facilities supply:** Sports facilities are provided by a mosaic of owners and operators from the public, voluntary and commercial sectors, which highlights the need for and benefits of a strategic approach to co-ordinating provision.

4 STRATEGIC INFLUENCES ON FACILITIES PROVISION

Key findings:

- **West Suffolk Strategic Framework:** Promoting healthy lifestyles is a specific priority.
- **Promoting Physical Activity Framework:** The Framework provides a powerful rationale for providing sports facilities to support wider physical activity objectives.
- **National Planning Policy Framework:** Government policy emphasises the need to ‘enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs - for example through the provision of sports facilities’.
- **West Suffolk Local Plan:** The suite of documents comprising the Local Plan include policies that are supportive of the provision and retention of sports facilities and their inclusion in the infrastructure to be funded by developers as part of new developments.
- **Forest Heath Open space, Sport and Recreation (October 2011 and St Edmundsbury Open space, Sport and recreation Facilities (December 2012):** These Supplementary Planning Documents set out the Council’s approach to the provision of open space and recreation facilities in conjunction with new housing development.
- **Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Strategy:** The strategy recognises the role that physical activity can play in preventing long-term health and wellbeing issues.
- **Sport England policy:** Sport England’s strategy broadens the traditional definition of sports facilities from formal specialist provision, to include other ‘Active Environments’ that provide opportunities for informal and non-specialist activities for ‘Movement’. The West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment focuses on formal built facilities needs as an important sub-set within the wider definition of ‘Active Environments’.

4.1 Introduction

This section examines the influence of relevant policies and priorities on sports facilities provision in West Suffolk, including the impact of national strategies.

4.2 West Suffolk Strategic Framework

4.2.1 Introduction

West Suffolk Council's strategic framework ‘sets out our vision and what the council aims to achieve together, with our partners, local businesses, communities and residents. This means focusing our efforts and resources in the areas that are the greatest priorities for West Suffolk’.

4.2.2 Vision

The vision is ‘being ambitious in supporting and investing in our West Suffolk communities, businesses and the environment, to encourage and manage growth in prosperity and quality of life for all’.

4.2.3 Strategic Priorities

One of the three strategic priorities is ‘resilient families and communities that are healthy and active’. Delivering the priority involves a commitment to ‘use our community, leisure, public open space, countryside and heritage assets so that they give maximum benefit to West Suffolk communities’.

4.3 Promoting Physical Activity Framework

4.3.1 Introduction

The *West Suffolk - Promoting Physical Activity Framework* (2015) sets out the council’s ‘commitment to enable and encourage people to lead active lives thereby increasing activity levels across West Suffolk. This will lead to improved health and wellbeing for our communities resulting in less reliance on health care services’.

4.3.2 Outcomes

Social and community:

- Create an environment that provides the opportunity for physical activity for all.
- Encourage personal responsibility for wellbeing through education and the development of life skills and healthy habits.
- Improve the quality of life and the health and wellbeing of all our communities.
- Ensure that physical activity is inclusive by understanding and addressing barriers to participation.
- Maximise use of local assets including sharing assets where appropriate.
- Make connections between different communities through shared activities.

Economic:

- Ensure we are financially efficient and responsible in a changing financial environment, in line with the council’s Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- Understand how our impact on health and wellbeing will financially benefit the whole public sector.
- Target our financial support and subsidies to improve outcomes that support our strategic priorities.
- Create wider value for money.

Personal experience:

- Provide opportunities for physical activity that are accessible, inclusive, welcoming, nurturing and convenient.
- Acknowledge that there are a range of motivations to participating in physical activity and that some people want to be competitive, whilst others don't.
- Support the provision of facilities (including shared facilities) and opportunities in locations that encourage participation and keep active people active.

Health and wellbeing:

- Promote initiatives that will support the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Focus on activity to address preventable health issues by creating local opportunities that address local health needs.
- Ensure that active people remain active and that more people become active.
- Encourage natural exercise as a part of daily lives and acknowledge that this may not include traditional sport.

4.3.3 The Council's role

The council's role in facilitating participation in physical activity is to:

- ***Plan:*** Plan for the future to ensure that we provide opportunities for people to participate in sport and physical activity at any level and maximise the impact of developer contributions
- ***Provide:*** Provide accessible parks and green spaces in the local area, creating opportunities for natural exercise.
- ***Support:*** For schemes and facilities that align with our priorities, explore funding opportunities for groups and organisations.
- ***Enable:*** Working with partners, enable local communities and individuals to participate in sport and physical activity in a way that works for them.
- ***Promote:*** Promoting opportunities at a local level through our communities and with providers.

4.4 West Suffolk Local Plan

4.4.1 Introduction

The Council has commenced work on a new West Suffolk Local Plan and at the end of 2020 undertook consultation on the Issues and Options stage. In 2021 they are working toward the Preferred Options stage. West Suffolk Council currently has two existing local plans (consisting of the former Forest Heath area and former St. Edmundsbury area Local Plan documents). These set out the long term planning and land use policies within West Suffolk. The main documents are as follows and the policies relevant to sports facilities provision are reviewed below:

- *Forest Heath Core Strategy* (2010).
- *Forest Heath Single Issue Review* and *Site Allocations Local Plan* (2019)
- *St. Edmundsbury Core Strategy* (2010).
- *Vision 2031* 2014 – for former St Edmundsbury area
- *West Suffolk Joint Development Policies Document* (2015).
- In addition to made Neighbourhood Plans for Hargrave (2018), Newmarket (2020) and Great Barton (2021).

4.4.2 Forest Heath Core Strategy 2010

The vision includes ‘all towns and villages will enjoy open spaces and a wide range of quality community, sport and recreation facilities will cater for the population and serve local community needs’.

This is supported by Spatial Objective C2 which comprises a commitment ‘to promote an improvement in the health of Forest Heath’s people by maintaining and providing quality open spaces, play and sports facilities and better access to the countryside’.

Policy CS13 on Infrastructure and Developer Contributions includes provision to ‘provide the Open Space, Sport and Recreation need throughout the District in accordance with the Forest Heath PPG17 Audit, Built Facilities Study and Green Space Strategy’.

4.4.3 St. Edmundsbury Core Strategy 2010

The vision includes ‘all residents of the district will have an equal opportunity to access services, jobs, housing and leisure facilities to maximise their potential to live and work in an environmentally sustainable manner’.

This is supported by Spatial Objective D which comprises a commitment ‘to maintain and develop leisure, cultural, educational and community facilities, including access to green space, commensurate to the level of housing and employment growth to meet the needs of residents and visitors’.

Policy CS14 on Community Infrastructure and Tariffs lists ‘required infrastructure as ‘community facilities across the district [including] leisure, open space, recreation provision and public realm enhancements’.

4.4.4 Joint Development Management Policies Document

Policy DM42 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities states that:

‘Proposals for the provision, enhancement and/or expansion of amenity, sport or recreation open space or facilities will be permitted subject to compliance with other Policies in this and other adopted Local Plans. Development which will result in the loss of existing amenity, sport or recreation open space or facilities will not be allowed unless:

- a) it can be demonstrated that the space or facility is surplus to requirement against the local planning authority’s standards for the particular location, and the proposed loss will not result in a likely shortfall during the plan period; or
- b) replacement for the space or facilities lost is made available, of at least equivalent quantity and quality, and in a suitable location to meet the needs of users of the existing space or facility. Any replacement provision should take account of the needs of the settlement where the development is taking place and the current standards of open space and sports facility provision adopted by the local planning authority’.

‘Where necessary to the acceptability of the development, the local planning authority will require developers of new housing, office, retail and other commercial and mixed development to provide open space including play areas, formal sport/recreation areas, amenity areas and where appropriate, indoor sports facilities or to provide land and a financial contribution towards the cost and maintenance of existing or new facilities, as appropriate. These facilities will be secured through the use of conditions and/or planning obligations. Clubhouses, pavilions, car parking and ancillary facilities must be of a high standard of design and internal layout and be in accordance with other policies in this Plan. The location of such facilities must be well related and sensitive to the topography, character and uses of the surrounding area, particularly when located in or close to residential areas. Proposals which give rise to intrusive floodlighting will not be permitted’.

4.4.5 Forest Heath Open Space, Sport and Recreation Supplementary Planning Document. (October 2011). St Edmundsbury Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Supplementary Planning Document. (December 2012).

New development may require additional or improved open space. The SPDs help to ensure the development makes a positive contribution to sustainable development and contributes towards measures to mitigate any negative effects, often through planning obligations. The SPDs define different types of open spaces, sports and recreational facilities. It sets out the policy context locally and nationally. It considers open space and facility standards and the costs of providing facilities. A flow chart sets out how to assess the scale of contributions to be calculated and considers viability. The development requirements for sports and recreation are set out.

4.5 Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Strategy

4.5.1 Introduction

The ‘*Suffolk Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy Refresh 2019 - 2022*’ (2019) has a vision that ‘people in Suffolk live healthier, happier lives. We also want to narrow the differences in healthy life expectancy between those living in our most deprived communities and those who are more affluent through greater improvements in more disadvantaged communities’.

4.5.2 Principles

The four key principles are as follows:

- **Prioritising prevention:** The strategy recognises the role that physical activity can play in preventing long-term health and wellbeing issues.
- **Reducing health inequalities:** The strategy notes the current inequalities, which includes access to facilities and services such as sport and physical activity provision.
- **Promoting resilient communities:** ‘Resilient communities have the local resources, skills, expertise and ‘know-how’ to help individuals, families, and communities to flourish. Individuals and communities who are self-sufficient and able to use their own assets to meet their needs, and those of others, have better outcomes’. Providing accessible sports facilities in the right location will help to develop and sustain this.
- **Working well together:** Coordinated provision is needed to achieve maximum effectiveness.

4.6 The Government’s Planning Policies

4.6.1 Introduction

In 2021, the Government published revisions to the ‘*National Planning Policy Framework*’ (2021), setting out its economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. Taken together, these policies articulate the Government’s vision of sustainable development, which should be interpreted and applied locally to meet local aspirations.

4.6.2 Sustainable development

Paragraph 7 states that ‘the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ and there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.6.3 Promoting healthy and safe communities

Paragraph 92 states that ‘planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

- Promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other - for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages.

- Are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion - for example through the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high-quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
- Enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs - for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling’.

4.6.4 Sport and leisure facilities

Paragraph 93 states that ‘to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

- Plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.
- Take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.
- Guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs.
- Ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community.
- Ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services’.

4.6.5 Planning Practice Guidance

The Government also issued *‘Planning Practice Guidance’* in 2014 and the following is of particular relevance to sports facilities:

- ***Open space, sport and recreation provision:*** ‘Open space should be taken into account in planning for new development and considering proposals that may affect existing open space. It can provide health and recreation benefits to people living and working nearby. Authorities and developers may refer to Sport England’s guidance on how to assess the need for sports and recreation facilities. Local planning authorities are required to consult Sport England in certain cases where development affects the use of land as playing fields. Where there is no requirement to consult, local planning authorities are advised to consult Sport England in cases where development might lead to loss of, or loss of use for sport, of any major sports facility, the creation of a site for one or more playing pitches, artificial lighting of a major outdoor sports facility or a residential development of 300 dwellings or more’.

- **Health and wellbeing:** ‘Local planning authorities should ensure that health and wellbeing, and health infrastructure are considered in local and neighbourhood plans and in planning decision making. Development proposals should support strong, vibrant and healthy communities and help create healthy living environments which should, where possible, include making physical activity easy to do. Opportunities for healthy lifestyles must be considered (e.g. planning for an environment that supports people of all ages in making healthy choices, helps to promote active travel and physical activity and promotes high quality open spaces and opportunities for play, sport and recreation)’.

4.7 The Government’s Sports Strategy

The Government’s sports strategy ‘*Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation*’ (2015) sets the context for a national policy shift. It contains the following material of relevance to sports facilities provision in West Suffolk:

- The Strategy seeks to ‘redefine what success looks like in sport’ by concentrating on five key outcomes: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and economic development.
- The benefit of engaging those groups that typically do little or no activity is immense. Future funding will focus on those people who tend not to take part in sport, including women and girls, disabled people, those in lower socio-economic groups and older people.

4.8 Sport England Strategy

4.8.1 Vision

Sport England’s strategy ‘*Uniting the Movement*’ (2021) contains a vision for ‘a nation of more equal, inclusive and connected communities. A country where people live happier, healthier and more fulfilled lives’.

4.8.2 Context

The strategy concludes that ‘there are deep-rooted inequalities in sport and physical activity, which mean there are people who feel excluded from being active because the right options and opportunities are not there:

- Disabled people and people with a long-term health condition are twice as likely to be physically inactive than those without a disability or health condition.
- People from a lower socioeconomic group (NS-SEC 6-8) are more likely to be inactive than people in higher social groups.
- Women are less active than men and this gender gap starts with girls being less active from a very young age.
- People from Asian and black backgrounds are far more likely to be physically inactive than people who are white’.

4.8.3 Advocating movement, sport and physical activity

Proposed actions include:

- ‘Continue to build, establish and grow partnerships and a common purpose across both the government and our sector to join up policies, strategies and approaches’.
- ‘Continue to develop and deliver behavioural change campaigns, building on the success of *This Girl Can*, *We Are Undefeatable* and *Join the Movement*, to put movement, sport and physical activity at the forefront of national conversations’.
- ‘Keep building evidence that shows the links between the issues we all care about as a nation and the value of movement, sport and physical activity as part of the solution’.
- ‘Grow the extent to which we communicate, both to people and organisations, the power of getting active to help strengthen public consensus around the importance of being physically active’.

4.8.4 Five key issues

These are identified as:

- ***Recover and reinvent:*** ‘Recovering from the biggest crisis in a generation and reinventing as a vibrant, relevant and sustainable network of organisations providing sport and physical activity opportunities that meet the needs of different people’.
- ***Connecting communities:*** Focusing on sport and physical activity’s ability to make better places to live and bring people together.
- ***Positive experiences for children and young people:*** Unrelenting focus on positive experiences for all children and young people as the foundations for a long and healthy life.
- ***Connection with health and wellbeing:*** Strengthening the connections between sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing, so more people can feel the benefits of, and advocate for, an active life.
- ***Active environments:*** Creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.

4.8.5 Active Environments

The key proposals for facilities are contained in the ‘Active Environments’ theme. This identifies three types of provision:

- ***Dedicated sport and physical activity facilities:*** ‘Dedicated sport and leisure facilities like leisure centres need to be co-created, well designed, supported and maintained to benefit the local community and their users’.

- **Other community spaces:** ‘Not usually designed exclusively for exercise, and certainly not for specific sports, these places are a vital resource for many and the activity they host provides a useful income to the venue. They may never be perfect competition or training spaces, but they attract people who might never go to a sports club, leisure centre or private gym. The development of community spaces like these is important to people who are regularly or newly active’.
- **The wider built environment:** ‘These places and spaces influence how much we move. Good design can help to increase activity levels by encouraging walking and cycling. This means connecting dedicated sport and activity facilities and community spaces, by making it easy for people to walk and cycle, by better design and by using the built and natural environments around us’.

4.9 The implications for sports facilities provision

The implications of strategic influences on sports facilities provision in West Suffolk are:

- **West Suffolk Strategic Framework:** Promoting healthy lifestyles is a specific priority.
- **Promoting Physical Activity Framework:** The Framework provides a powerful rationale for providing sports facilities to support wider physical activity objectives.
- **West Suffolk Local Plan:** The suite of documents comprising the Local Plan include policies that are supportive of the provision and retention of sports facilities and their inclusion in the infrastructure to be funded by developers as part of applicable new developments.
- **Forest Heath Open space, Sport and Recreation (October 2011 and St Edmundsbury Open space, Sport and recreation Facilities (December 2012):** These Supplementary Planning Documents set out the Council’s approach to the provision of open space and recreation facilities in conjunction with new housing development.
- **Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Strategy:** The strategy recognises the role that physical activity can play in preventing long-term health and wellbeing issues.
- **Government planning policy:** Policy emphasises the need to ‘enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs - for example through the provision of sports facilities’.
- **Sport England policy:** Sport England’s strategy broadens the traditional definition of sports facilities from formal specialist provision, to include other ‘Active Environments’ that provide opportunities for informal and non-specialist activities for ‘Movement’. The West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment focuses on formal built facilities needs as an important sub-set within the wider definition of ‘Active Environments’.

5 SPORTS HALLS

Key findings:

- **Quantity:** There are 11 community-accessible sports halls in West Suffolk, plus three other facilities without public access. All facilities are currently used within ‘comfortable capacity’. Additional demand by 2040 will amount to the equivalent of an additional 3.12 badminton courts, which is equivalent to a 0.78 four-badminton court sized sports hall with full community access. A new facility built on the former St Felix school site. This would help to address the peak time capacity issues in the Newmarket sub-area.
- **Quality:** The quality of all aspects of all sports halls is rated as ‘standard’ or better, with the exception of the tarmac floor and air handling at Samuel Ward. No quality issues have any impact upon either capacity or usage levels at present.
- **Accessibility:** The whole population of the district is within 20-minutes driving time of a community-accessible sports hall. Provision varies markedly between sub-areas, with Mildenhall and Brandon having the lowest per capita levels of provision.
- **Availability:** Three sports halls in the district currently have no community access. With eight of the 11 community available sports halls in the district on education sites, there is limited midweek daytime access to sports halls.

5.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of sports halls in West Suffolk. Sports halls are defined as indoor halls with multi-sport markings and minimum dimensions equivalent to three badminton courts (27m x 18m).

5.2 Quantity

5.2.1 Sports halls with community use

The location and dimensions of sports halls with community use in West Suffolk is as follows:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Year Built</i>	<i>Sub-Area</i>	<i>Community use</i>
Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre	Beeton’s Way, Bury St. Edmunds IP33 3TT	34.5m x 18m	2006	Bury St. Edmunds	Secured
Castle Manor Academy	Eastern Avenue, Haverhill CB9 9JE	27m x 18m	1975	Haverhill	Unsecured
County Upper School	Beeton’s Way, Bury St. Edmunds IP32 6RF	34.5m x 20m	2004	Bury St. Edmunds	Unsecured
Culford Sports and Leisure Centre	Culford IP28 6TX	39m x 22m	1992	Bury St. Edmunds	Unsecured
King Edward VI School	Grove Road, Bury St. Edmunds IP33 3BH	34.5m x 20m	2005	Bury St. Edmunds	Unsecured
Mildenhall Hub	Sheldrick Way, Mildenhall IP28 7JX	35m x 20m	2021	Mildenhall	Secured

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Year Built</i>	<i>Sub-Area</i>	<i>Community use</i>
Newmarket Leisure Centre	Exning Road, Newmarket CB8 0AE	32m x 18m	2009	Newmarket	Secured
Samuel Ward Academy	Chalkstone Way, Haverhill CB9 0LD	45m x 35m 27m x 18m	2012 1978	Haverhill	Unsecured
Skyliner Sports Centre	Rougham Tower Avenue, Bury St. Edmunds IP32 7QB	33m x 18m	2017	Bury St. Edmunds	Secured
Stour Valley Community School	Cavendish Road, Clare CO10 8PJ	33m x 18m	1956	Haverhill	Unsecured

5.2.2 Sports halls without community use

The location and dimensions of sports halls without community use in West Suffolk is as follows:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Year Built</i>	<i>Sub-Area</i>
Howards Primary School	Beard Road, Burt St. Edmunds IP32 6SA	34.5m x 20m	1999	Bury St. Edmunds
RAF Honington	Honington IP31 1EE	34.5m x 20m	1995	Bury St. Edmunds
RAF Lakenheath Sports Centre	Lakenheath IP27 9PN	34.5m x 20m	2005	Mildenhall

5.2.3 Small sports halls

The following sports halls were recently converted from 4-badminton-court sized halls to 2-badminton court halls, with the remaining floor space converted to other sports and play uses:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Sub-Area</i>
Brandon Leisure Centre	Church Road, Brandon IP27 0JB	Brandon
Haverhill Leisure Centre	Ehringshausen Way, Haverhill CB9 0ER	Haverhill

5.2.4 Sub-area analysis

The distribution of sports halls with community use by sub-area in West Suffolk is as follows:

<i>Sub-area</i>	<i>Sub-area population 2020</i>	<i>No. sports halls</i>	<i>Sports halls per capita</i>
Bury St. Edmunds	74,671	5	1: 14,934
Newmarket	22,141	1	1: 22,141
Haverhill	38,032	4	1: 9,508
Mildenhall	34,260	1	1: 34,260
Brandon	9,941	0*	-
WEST SUFFOLK	179,045	11	1: 16,277

* Although there is no full-sized sports hall, there is a two-court hall at Brandon Leisure Centre and the sports hall at Breckland Leisure Centre in Thetford is within easy reach.

5.3 Quality

5.3.1 The criteria assessed

The quality of sports halls with community access was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were evaluated were as follows:

- **Playing area:** The overall condition, playing surface, clear span roof height, lighting, spectator provision, equipment and fitness for purpose.
- **Changing facilities:** The capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- **Disability access:** The extent of full disabled access to the facility, including the provision of access ramps, dedicated changing, toilets and car parking.
- **Maintenance and cleanliness:** The quality of maintenance and cleanliness standards.
- **General access:** Including car parking, signposting, external lighting and proximity to public transport.

5.3.2 The basis of the ratings

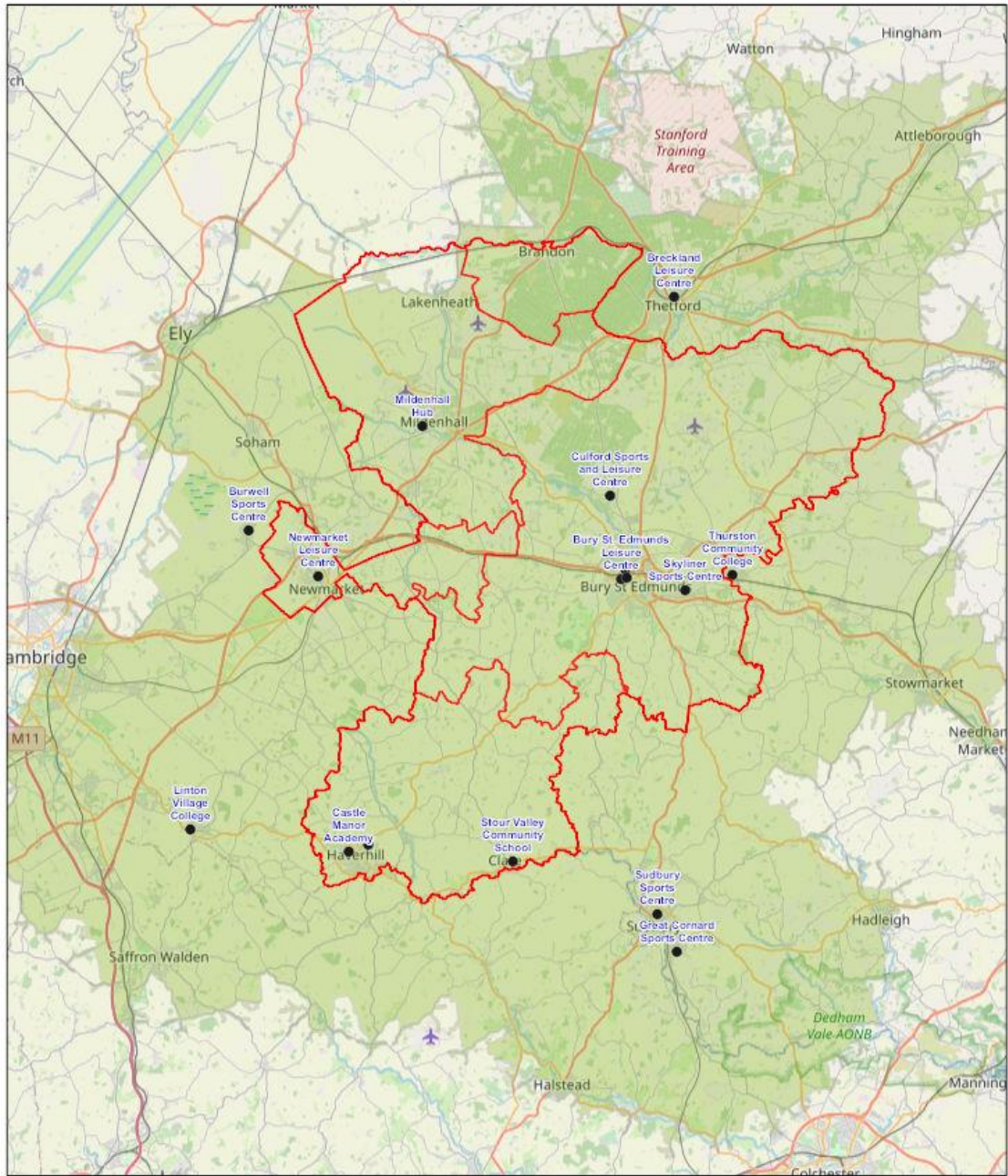
The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to ‘very good’ (highlighted in green below), 4 to ‘good’ (also highlighted in green below), 3 to ‘average’ (highlighted in yellow below), 2 to ‘poor’ (highlighted in red below) and 1 to ‘very poor’ (highlighted in red below). The ratings for the sports halls in West Suffolk are shown in the table below.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Playing area</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Disability Access</i>	<i>Maintenance</i>	<i>General access</i>
Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre	4	4	4	5	5
Castle Manor Academy	3	3	4	4	4
County Upper School	4	3	4	4	4
Culford Sports and Leisure Centre	5	4	4	5	4
King Edward VI School	4	3	4	4	4
Mildenhall Hub	5	5	5	5	5
Newmarket Leisure Centre	5	5	5	5	5
Samuel Ward Academy	2	4	4	4	4
Skyliner Sports Centre	5	5	5	5	5
Stour Valley Community School	3	3	4	3	3

5.4 Accessibility

Based on Sport England research, the ‘effective catchment’ for sports halls (defined as the time/distance travelled and the prevailing mode of transport used by up to 90% of facility users) is 20 minutes driving time. The map overleaf shows that the whole of West Suffolk is within 20-minutes’ drive time of at least one sports hall, with the exception of a small, sparsely populated area to the north of Lakenheath.

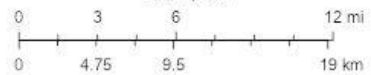
WEST SUFFOLK - Sports Halls within 20 Minutes Drive



7/16/2021

1:577,791

- SUB AREAS Brandon, Mildenhall, Newmarket, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill
- revised sports halls
- WEST SUFFOLK BOUNDARY
- 20.0 Minutes



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5.5 Availability

The table below identifies the opening hours, usage arrangements, pricing, booking arrangements and used capacity in the peak periods.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Opening hours and basis of use</i>	<i>Pricing and booking arrangements</i>	<i>Peak period usage levels</i>
Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri 6am - 9pm Sat-Sun 8am - 4pm Casual use and block bookings	Badminton court £9.80 per hour. Whole hall £40 per hour. Bookings in person, on-line or by phone.	65%
Castle Manor Academy	Mon-Fri 6pm - 10pm Sat 8.15am - 12.15pm Casual use and block bookings	Whole hall £50 per hour. Advance bookings only by email or phone.	60%
County Upper School	Mon-Fri 6pm - 10pm Sat-Sun 10am - 6pm Block bookings only	Whole hall £50 per hour. Badminton court £10 per hour. Advance bookings only by email or phone.	65%
Culford Sports and Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri 5pm - 10pm Sat-Sun 8.30am - 5pm Membership only	Membership Adult £37 per month Junior £19 per month	50%
King Edward VI School	Mon-Fri 6pm - 10pm Sat-Sun 8am - 7pm Block bookings only	Whole hall £50 per hour Advance bookings only by email or phone.	60%
Mildenhall Hub	Mon-Fri 5pm - 10pm Sat-Sun 8am - 6pm Casual use and block bookings	Badminton court £9.80 per hour. Whole hall £40 per hour. Bookings in person, on-line or by phone.	-
Newmarket Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri 6am - 9pm Sat-Sun 8am - 4pm Casual use and block bookings	Badminton court £9.80 per hour. Whole hall £40 per hour. Bookings in person, on-line or by phone.	70%
Samuel Ward Academy	Mon-Fri 6am - 12pm, 4pm - 9pm Sat-Sun 8am - 4pm Block bookings only	Whole hall £50 per hour Advance bookings only by email or phone.	65%
Skyliner Sports Centre	Mon-Fri 7am - 12pm 4pm - 9.30pm Sat-Sun 8am - 4pm Casual use and block bookings	Badminton court £9.80 per hour. Whole hall £40 per hour. Bookings in person, on-line or by phone.	70%
Stour Valley Community School	Mon-Fri 6pm - 9pm Block bookings only	Whole hall £50 per hour. Badminton court £10 per hour. Advance bookings only by email or phone.	60%

5.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- With eight of the 11 sports halls currently available for community use in the district on education sites, there is limited midweek daytime access.
- Seven of the sports halls on school sites are not subject to a formal Community Use Agreement, therefore public access could theoretically be rescinded at any time.
- Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre is due to be re-located to a site on Western Way and re-providing a sports hall will be important to meet current and future needs.

- The quality of sports halls in the district is generally good, although several facilities are ageing. Part of the floor in the larger sports hall at Samuel Ward Academy is ‘poor’ quality and the hall has no air handling provision which results in the formation of condensation and makes the use of that part of the facility problematic in the colder months.
- Accessibility of sports halls is good, with the entire West Suffolk population within 20 minutes driving time of a sports hall.
- Four of the halls are only available for block bookings by clubs and one is membership only, which mitigates against casual participants who may wish to play on an irregular or intermittent basis.
- Pricing is relatively consistent between the local sports halls.
- Sport England recognises a measure of ‘comfortable capacity’, where a sports hall is regarded as effectively fully utilised when peak usage levels reach 80%. This reflects the fact that changeover periods between bookings, particularly those that involve removing and/or installing equipment, will reduce the usage time available. None of the currently available sports halls in West Suffolk are used at or above ‘comfortable capacity’.

5.7 Current demand for sports halls

5.7.1 Expressed demand

Actual expressed community use demand for sports halls in West Suffolk is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Peak hours available</i>	<i>Peak hours utilised</i>	<i>% Peak utilisation</i>
Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre	36	23	65%
Castle Manor Academy	24	14	60%
County Upper School	36	23	65%
Culford Sports and Leisure Centre	37	19	50%
King Edward VI School	40	24	60%
Mildenhall Hub	30	-	-
Newmarket Leisure Centre	31	22	70%
Samuel Ward Academy	31	20	65%
Skyliner Sports Centre	31	22	70%
Stour Valley Community School	15	8	60%
TOTALS	380	254	67%

5.7.2 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to users of sports halls from within the study area which takes place outside of the area. The following sports halls with community accessibility are located in adjacent local authority areas, close enough to the district boundary to provide usage opportunities for West Suffolk residents.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Distance from West Suffolk</i>
Breckland Leisure Centre	Croxton Road, Thetford IP24 1JD	2.5 miles
Burwell Sports Centre	Buntings Path, Burwell CB25 0DD	0.5 miles
Great Cornard Sports Centre	Head Lane, Sudbury CO10 0JU	5 miles
Linton Village College	Cambridge Road, Linton CB21 4JB	4 miles
Thurston Community College*	Norton Road, Thurston IP31 3PB	0.5 miles
Sudbury Sports Centre	Tudor Rd, Sudbury CO10 1NW	5 miles

* Available on a block-booked basis only through the school.

5.7.3 Unmet demand

There is limited evidence of unmet demand for sports halls in West Suffolk at present. Peak time usage is within comfortable capacity at most sites, although the Newmarket Leisure Centre and Skyliner halls are close to peak capacity and there is limited daytime and casual access and Badminton England has identified a need for additional capacity. The Newmarket Neighbourhood Plan references a need for a new hall in Newmarket to replace that removed at Scaltback former school site. Newmarket Town Council is keen to see a new facility built on the former St Felix school site. This would help to address the peak time capacity issues in the Newmarket sub-area.

5.8 West Suffolk Sports Facilities Strategy

The *West Suffolk Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2015 - 2031* (2015) identifies indoor sports facilities needs in the two former districts that now comprise West Suffolk. The key findings in relation to sports halls were as follows:

- Badminton, volleyball, basketball and netball NGBs support the need for additional sports hall capacity in West Suffolk..
- Although there is sufficient current and future provision of sports halls in West Suffolk, there is a lack of sports halls capable of accommodating indoor netball, basketball, and volleyball.
- Improvement in the quality of some ageing facilities including Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill Leisure Centres, Mildenhall Dome and Brandon Leisure Centre.
- The Mildenhall Hub development offers the opportunity to replace Mildenhall Dome.

The findings of the strategy were informed in part by the outputs of Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM). The FPM is a computer model that compares the supply of facilities with demand, to calculate shortfalls. The findings of the FPM 'run' for sports halls in 2025 in the two former districts that now comprise West Suffolk were as follows:

- **Forest Heath:** Sports halls in Forest Heath were assessed to be at operating at well above 'comfortable capacity', based upon the following evaluation:

- **Supply-demand balance:** The FPM calculates that the supply of sports halls in the peak period in Forest Heath is equivalent to 15.37 badminton courts, whilst demand is for 22.38 badminton courts. This suggests a deficit of 7.01 badminton courts (equivalent to 1.75 four-badminton court-sized sports halls).
 - **Used peak capacity:** Average peak utilisation rates for sports halls in the district are 100%, which is well above Sport England’s ‘comfortable capacity’ figure of 80%. This suggests that there is no spare capacity to accommodate additional demand.
 - **Satisfied demand:** The FPM supports this conclusion, calculating that 83.5% of demand for sports halls in the district is met by current provision. The unmet demand is assessed to be equivalent to 3.69 badminton courts (0.92 of a sports hall).
 - **Displaced demand:** The FPM calculates that only 4.1% of all sports hall demand in the district is exported to facilities in neighbouring areas, whilst 7.3% is imported, making Forest Heath district a small net importer of sports hall demand. This reflects the fact that most sports halls in neighbouring areas are on the outer limits of the 20-minute drivetime catchment from the district.
- **St. Edmundsbury:** Sports halls in St. Edmundsbury were assessed to be at operating at well within ‘comfortable capacity’, based upon the following evaluation:
 - **Supply-demand balance:** The FPM calculates that the supply of sports halls in the peak period in St. Edmundsbury is equivalent to 48.77 badminton courts, whilst demand is for 34.15 badminton courts. This suggests a surplus of 14.62 badminton courts (equivalent to 3.66 four-badminton court-sized sports halls).
 - **Used peak capacity:** Average peak utilisation rates for sports halls in the district are 61.6%, which is well below Sport England’s ‘comfortable capacity’ figure of 80%. This suggests that the current number of community-accessible sports halls can comfortably meet projected demand in 2025.
 - **Satisfied demand:** The FPM supports this conclusion, calculating that 91.9% of demand for sports halls in the district is met by current provision. The unmet demand is assessed to be equivalent to 2.78 badminton courts (0.69 of a sports hall).
 - **Displaced demand:** The FPM calculates that only 5.3% of all sports hall demand in the district is exported to facilities in neighbouring areas, whilst 20.9% is imported, making St. Edmundsbury a net importer of sports hall demand.

The implications of the FPM runs for sports hall provision in West Suffolk are as follows:

- If provision in the two former districts is aggregated for West Suffolk, for the new district as a whole there is adequate sports hall provision.
- However, since the FPM runs were undertaken in 2015 the deficit in the former Forest Heath part of West Suffolk has been exacerbated by the loss of the three-badminton court-sized sports hall at Scaltback School in Newmarket, which underlines the case for additional sports hall provision to serve the Newmarket sub-area.

5.9 Assessments of need in neighbouring areas

The table below summarises strategic assessments of sports hall needs in neighbouring areas.

<i>Local Authority</i>	<i>Facilities priorities</i>	<i>Implications for West Suffolk</i>
East Cambridgeshire	The <i>'East Cambridgeshire Indoor Sports Needs Assessment and Action Plan'</i> (2015) states that supply of sports halls in the district exceeds demand and therefore 'it is anticipated that there will be a surplus of sports halls in the District by 2026'.	There is some spare capacity that might meet surplus demand from the Newmarket area.
South Cambridgeshire	The <i>'Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2015 - 2031'</i> (2016) identifies a need for two additional sports halls by 2031, primarily associated with demand from new housing developments to the north and west of Cambridge.	There is no current spare capacity to meet demand from West Suffolk and the location of new provision is too distant to meet needs.
Braintree	The <i>'Braintree Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Study'</i> (2017) states that 'the existing supply of community sports halls is not quite sufficient to meet current estimated demand, although the unmet demand is not focussed on any particular geographic area'.	The study shows that Braintree residents in the north of the district used the former sports hall at Haverhill Leisure Centre.
Mid-Suffolk	The <i>'Mid-Suffolk, Leisure Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Update'</i> (2021) identifies that sports hall supply and demand are currently balanced, with a deficit of one badminton court in 2036. The assessment states that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Sports hall provision is heavily reliant upon education sites (4 of the 7 identified), limiting access during the day and providing the Council with limited control in how they are managed in terms of community use'. • 'The age and condition of the only fully publicly accessible sports halls at Mid Suffolk LC and Debenham LC is also an issue and the current oversupply could shift to an undersupply if facilities reach the end of their economic life or deteriorate in quality to such extent as to significantly impact upon their ability to meet the needs of users'. 	There is no current spare capacity to meet demand and the location of provision is too distant to meet needs from West Suffolk. New housing developments in Mid-Suffolk (Thurston) are within 20-minutes' drive time of Bury Leisure Centre and existing Thurston residents already utilise WSC's facilities as they are the closest to them.
Babergh	The <i>'Babergh Leisure Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Update'</i> (2021) identifies over-supply of 20 badminton courts both currently and in 2036, but states that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'The total supply of sports halls across the district is sufficient to meet current and future estimated demand'. • 'However, a key challenge for sports hall provision in the district is that all of these are on education sites, limiting access during the day and providing the Council with limited control in how they are managed in terms of community use'. • 'The age and condition of a number of sports halls is also an issue and the current oversupply could shift to an undersupply if facilities reach the end of their economic life or deteriorate in quality to such extent as to significantly impact upon their ability to meet the needs of users'. 	There is some spare capacity to meet demand but the location of provision is too distant to meet needs from West Suffolk.

<i>Local Authority</i>	<i>Facilities priorities</i>	<i>Implications for West Suffolk</i>
Breckland	Breckland Council's <i>'Evidence Base for Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities'</i> (2017) identified the need re-provide sports halls in Attleborough and Swaffham and for a new sports hall in Dereham by 2031.	There is no current spare capacity to meet demand and the location of new provision is too distant to meet needs from West Suffolk.
Kings Lynn and West Norfolk	The Council does not have a current assessment of indoor sports facilities needs.	No assessment

5.10 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in West Suffolk, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. Sports halls have a role to play in this, given the breadth of appeal of the wide range of indoor sports and activities that they can accommodate.

5.11 Sport-specific priorities

Analysis of sport-specific strategies and consultation with the governing bodies of sport identified a range of issues in relation to local sports hall provision:

<i>Sport</i>	<i>Facilities priorities</i>	<i>Implications for West Suffolk</i>
Badminton	Badminton England's <i>'National Facilities Strategy 2012 - 2016'</i> (2012) is the most recent assessment of the requirements of facilities used for badminton: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hall should have a sprung floor as a minimum. • The lighting must be suitable (no lights above the courts and no natural light). • There should be appropriate space around the court for safety. • The walls must be the right colour (green or blue). • The ceiling must be the appropriate height (6.7m). Priority areas are identified for 'Community Badminton Networks'.	West Suffolk is not identified as a priority area, but Badminton England has identified a local shortfall in sports hall provision.
Basketball	Basketball England's <i>'Growing Basketball Together 2018 - 2024'</i> (2018) contains a facilities objectives to 'develop, support and sustain a high-quality infrastructure network that inspires the next generation and meets the needs and demands of the game for the future'. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Enhance the playing experience through an appropriate network of innovative and inspirational facilities and playing environments that not only meet the needs and demands of the game but inspire growth within the sport'. • 'Pilot new and alternative pricing and booking models for indoor facilities to improve access and affordability for clubs and individuals supporting both formal and informal play'. 	Three basketball clubs use sports halls in the district.
Judo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Judo's <i>'Strategic Plan 2017 - 2021'</i> (2017) has an objective to increase participation to 50,000 members by 2021. There are no facilities objectives. 	No specific local facilities priorities in West Suffolk.

<i>Sport</i>	<i>Facilities priorities</i>	<i>Implications for West Suffolk</i>
Netball	<p>England Netball's <i>Vision, Mission and Strategic Goals</i> (2016) has the following facilities objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with Badminton England and England Basketball actively influence the development of, and access to community facilities in common priority areas. • Establish a new network of appropriate standard indoor netball facilities through a partnership with the English Cricket Board. • Increase and enhance the network of County and Regional Netball Centres providing central venue homes for netball. <p>Support the provision of Intensive Netball Training Centres offering high quality netball environments for performance athletes.</p>	West Suffolk is not a priority area for England Netball.
Table tennis	<p>Table Tennis England's <i>Facilities Strategy 2015 - 2025</i> (2015) identifies that table tennis takes place in a variety of settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal club-led environments - Consisting of dedicated table tennis facilities (equipped for and predominantly used by table tennis), school halls, community halls, church halls, multisport clubs and leisure centres. • Informal social environments - Including bars, workplaces, parks, sport-specific clubs and community spaces. <p>To support sustainable clubs, the priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a minimum of one accessible, high quality dedicated multi-table facility in every active county. • Support current clubs to ensure long-term security of use of their facilities and to develop facilities or access multisport and multi-use environments. <p>To support the social recreational game, the priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the implementation of free-to-use outdoor tables, prioritising centres of population. • Establish a network of social table tennis venues offering vibrant informal environments for all. 	There is limited table tennis activity in West Suffolk
Volleyball	<p>Volleyball England's <i>Facilities Strategy</i> (2009) is the most recent assessment of needs. The strategy identifies that a court size of 18m x 9m x 7.5m is required for National League standard play and below. It also states that 'the minimum width of standard sports halls should be raised to 20m from the current 18m, to allow two practice courts in a single hall'.</p>	There are volleyball clubs in Bury St. Edmunds and Newmarket.

5.12 Governing body of sport consultations

5.12.1 Badminton England

Consultation with Badminton England's Senior Relationship Manager identified the following issues:

- **Overview:** ‘For the eastern part of the district badminton participation rates are above average. Two affiliated clubs with over 60 members is reasonable for the size of the authority. Two-thirds of courts meet the Badminton England quality threshold. For the western part of the district badminton participation rates are lower than average. Six affiliated clubs with over 160 members suggests a strong badminton infrastructure. Over three quarters of courts meet Badminton England’s quality threshold (standard). There appears to be scope to expand the sport.
- **Current demand:** ‘Based on figures from the ‘Active Lives’ survey, there are 2,500 regular adult badminton players and 558 regular junior badminton players in West Suffolk (playing at least twice a month). In addition, there are 8,400 occasional players. For West Suffolk as a whole, regular adult players have a weekly requirement for 834 badminton court hours. Regular junior players have a weekly requirement for 105 court hours. Occasional adult players require 216 court hours. To service all current badminton demand there is a need for 1,076 badminton court hours per week’.
- **Current supply:** ‘There are 10 community-accessible sports halls collectively containing 41 courts. The total number of court hours per week available in the district during stated peak time is 2,044. 74.6% of badminton courts meet the Badminton England quality threshold (above average/good) which equates to 1,525 court hours’.
- **Current shortfall:** ‘With demand for 2,044 badminton court hours per week and supply of 1,525 hours, there is a current shortfall of 519 badminton court hours per week (equivalent to 130 hours of peak time in a four-badminton court-sized sports hall, or 4.33 sports halls)’.
- **Future shortfall:** ‘The projected increase in regular demand in 2030 is for an additional 83 badminton court hours per week’.

5.13 Future demand for sports halls

5.13.1 Population growth

Two scenarios are considered:

- The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 190,680 by 2040, an increase of 11,635 or 6.5%.
- A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population of 213,159 by 2040, an increase of 34,114 or 19.1%.

5.13.2 Participation rates

One factor in considering future sports participation rates is to track historical trends, as a guide to possible future developments.

- **National trends:** Sport England’s ‘Active Lives’ survey records adult (16+) weekly participation rates for each sport at national level. The results for those sports that use sports halls are tabulated below. Badminton, Basketball and Tennis have also experienced statistically significant decreases, whilst only martial arts has achieved a statistically significant increase:

<i>Sport</i>	<i>Nov 2015- Nov 2016</i>	<i>May 2016- May 2017</i>	<i>Nov 2016- Nov 2017</i>	<i>May 2017- May 2018</i>	<i>Nov 2017- Nov 2018</i>	<i>May 2018- May 2019</i>	<i>Nov 2018- Nov 2019</i>	<i>May 2019- May 2020</i>	<i>% Change</i>
Badminton	2.1%	2.1%	2.0%	1.9%	1.8%	1.8%	1.7%	1.6%	-0.5%
Basketball	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	-0.1%
Gymnastics	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	-0.1%
Judo	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Martial Arts	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%	+0.2%
Netball	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	-0.1%
Table Tennis	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%	0.9%	-0.1%
Tennis	2.0%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	1.7%	1.7%	1.6%	1.6%	-0.4%
Volleyball	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	-0.1%

- **Local trends:** Sport England’s ‘Active Lives’ survey recorded the proportion of the adult (16+) population who are active for at least 150 minutes per week in West Suffolk between 2015 and the present. The results are tabulated below and show that rates have increased significantly between 2015 and 2020:

<i>Nov 2015- Nov 2016</i>	<i>May 2016- May 2017</i>	<i>May 2017- May 2018</i>	<i>May 2018- May 2019</i>	<i>May 2019- May 2020</i>	<i>% Change</i>
55.4%	60.6%	61.7%	61.2%	64.4%	+9.0%

5.13.3 The impact of coronavirus

Sport England’s ‘Active Lives’ survey analysed the effects of covid-19 on participation rates in sport and physical activity in the initial period of the pandemic (March - May 2020), which provides some pointers to the possible longer-term impact on activity patterns. The key findings were as follows:

- All formal indoor and outdoor sports facilities were closed in this period and social distancing measures meant that team sports were prohibited.
- Despite large numbers of adults switching into alternative activities, the overall number of regularly active adults fell due to the disruption caused by the pandemic when there were fewer opportunities to be active.
- During the mid-March to mid-May period, the number of active adults nationally (defined as taking at least 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity exercise) fell by 7.1%, or just over 3 million, whilst inactivity levels rose by 7.4% or 3.4 million adults.
- Walking, running and cycling all increased participation rates marginally, but activities dependent on formal facilities like sports halls fell by 56%. The growth of in-home activities on-line fitness classes and static bike racing offset the reductions to a limited extent.

The long-term implications of covid-19 on participation patterns and demand for facilities like sports halls are still being assessed, but it is likely that some sports will struggle to recover their pre-pandemic participation rates, due to former participants who have altered their exercise patterns during lockdown periods not reverting to their former habits.

5.13.4 Future projections

Sport England has developed the Sport Facility Calculator (SFC), to help to quantify how much additional demand for key community facilities like sports halls, will be generated by population increases. The SFC uses Sport England survey data on who uses facilities and applies this to the population profile of the local area. This builds up a profile of usage, which can be then applied to estimate how much demand any given population would generate. This demand is then converted into the quantity of facilities needed and expressed as badminton courts to define sports hall needs. For the purposes of projecting future demand in West Suffolk, two scenarios are considered:

- The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 190,680 by 2040, an increase of 11,635 or 6.5%. Based upon this, the SFC calculates demand for an additional 3.12 badminton courts, which is equivalent to 0.78 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access.
- A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population of 213,159 by 2040, an increase of 34,114 or 19.1%. Based upon this, the SFC calculates demand for an additional 9.21 badminton courts, which is equivalent to 2.3 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access.

5.14 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- There is spare capacity in sports halls in West Suffolk at present, with average peak time utilisation rates of 67% and all facilities used to within ‘comfortable capacity’. With eight of the 11 sports halls currently available for community use in the district on education sites, there is limited midweek daytime access.
- There is evidence of unmet demand for badminton usage of sports halls in the district at present.
- There is some evidence of unmet demand for sports halls in West Suffolk at present. Peak time usage is within comfortable capacity at most sites, although the Newmarket Leisure Centre and Skyliner halls are close to peak capacity and there is limited daytime and casual access and Badminton England has identified a need for additional capacity. The Newmarket Neighbourhood Plan references a need for a new hall in Newmarket to replace that removed at Scaltback former school site. Newmarket Town Council is keen to see a new facility built on the former St Felix school site. This would help to address the peak time capacity issues in the Newmarket sub-area.
- Sport England’s Sport Facility Calculator projects demand for an additional 2.97 badminton courts by 2040, which is equivalent to 0.78 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access based upon the lower population projections and 9.21 badminton courts, which is equivalent to 2.3 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access based on the higher projections.

5.15 The balance between sports hall supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between sports hall supply and demand in West Suffolk:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough facilities with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the facilities fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the facilities in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the facilities available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

5.16 Quantity

5.16.1 Current needs

Current sports halls in West Suffolk are assessed to be operating within ‘comfortable capacity’, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used peak capacity:** Average peak utilisation rates for sports halls in West Suffolk are 67%, which is well below Sport England’s ‘comfortable capacity’ figure of 80%. In addition, the majority of the facilities are on education sites, which have no midweek daytime access.
- **Unmet demand:** There is evidence of unmet demand for badminton usage of sports halls. In addition, the Newmarket Leisure Centre and Skyliner halls are close to peak capacity.
- **Imported/exported demand:** The facilities in Bury St. Edmunds, Newmarket and Haverhill draw some users from neighbouring districts, given their location close to the West Suffolk boundary.

5.16.2 Future needs

The quantity of sports halls required to meet future needs has been assessed as follows:

- **Population increases:** Two scenarios are considered:
 - The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 190,680 by 2040, an increase of 11,635 or 6.5%.
 - A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population of 213,159 by 2040, an increase of 34,114 or 19.1%.
- **Re-provision:** Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre is due to be re-located to a site on Western Way and re-providing a sports hall will be important to meet current and some future needs.
- **Participation trends:** Based on national and local sports participation trends, for the purposes of forecasting future demand the likeliest scenario is for participation rates to remain at their current levels.

- **Additional needs:**

- Based upon a population increase of 11,635 people in the district by 2040 and sports participation rates remaining at current levels, Sport England's Sport Facility Calculator projects demand for an additional 3.12 badminton courts, which is equivalent to 0.78 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access. This can be accommodated by spare capacity at existing facilities.
- Based upon a population increase of 34,114 people in the district by 2040 and sports participation rates remaining at current levels, Sport England's Sport Facility Calculator projects demand for an additional 9.21 badminton courts, which is equivalent to 2.3 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access. This would require the provision of one additional four-badminton court sized sports hall with the balance of additional need met by the existing spare capacity.

5.17 Quality

5.17.1 Current quality

- There are no critical quality issues relating to sports halls in West Suffolk, although the position should be kept under review. The floor in part of the larger sports hall at Samuel Ward Academy is 'poor' quality and the hall has no air handling provision which results in the condensation and makes the use of that part of the facility problematic in the colder months.

5.17.2 Future quality

By 2040, other than Mildenhall Hub many of the sports halls in the district will be in need of refurbishment.

5.18 Accessibility

5.18.1 Current accessibility

All populated parts of the district are within 20 minutes driving time of a sports hall with the exception of a small, sparsely populated area to the north of Lakenheath. Provision varies markedly between sub-areas, with Brandon and Mildenhall having the lowest per capita levels of provision (although there is a two-court hall at Brandon Leisure Centre and the sports hall at Breckland Leisure Centre in Thetford is within easy reach of the Brandon sub-area).

5.18.2 Future accessibility

To ensure that there is adequate accessibility to sports halls in the future, an appropriate level of developer contributions will be required to upgrade existing facilities and/or to provide new ones, appropriately located in relation to the new population.

5.19 Availability

5.19.1 Current availability

There are a number of current impediments to sports hall availability in West Suffolk:

- **Impaired community access:** Three sports halls in the district currently have no community access, which is not the best use of available facilities resources. Seven of the sports halls with public access at present are not subject to formal Community Use Agreements and as a result access could theoretically be rescinded at any time.

- ***‘Pay and play’ availability:*** Four of the halls are only available for block bookings by clubs and one is membership only, which mitigates against casual participants who may wish to play on an irregular or intermittent basis.
- ***Off-peak availability:*** With eight of the 11 sports halls currently available for community use in the district on education sites, there is limited midweek daytime access.

5.19.2 Future availability

Addressing the current availability issues in the future will either involve providing sports halls on non-education sites, with appropriate management arrangements, or looking at innovative solutions to facilitate daytime community access to school sports halls.

5.20 The options for securing additional sports hall capacity

The options for securing existing and additional sports hall capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

5.20.1 Protect

Protecting existing sports halls through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing sports halls, including any without current community access, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

5.20.2 Provide

Spare capacity at existing sports halls can accommodate some projected demand to 2040 based upon the lower population estimates, provided that current provision is maintained (in particular re-providing a sports hall at the redeveloped Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre), including community access to school facilities. Peak capacity issues in the Newmarket sub-area would be addressed by providing an additional sports hall in the Newmarket sub-area, subject to the outcome of a detailed feasibility study. To meet the needs of the higher population projections, an additional four-badminton court sized sports hall will be required by 2040. The optimum location of this will depend upon the location of housing developments, but per capita levels of sports hall provision in the district are currently lowest in the Mildenhall sub-area.

5.20.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing sports hall capacity by:

- Securing formal Community Use Agreements at existing and proposed future facilities on school sites, to enhance community accessibility.
- Encouraging schools with existing community use to extend opening hours, particularly those with limited use at present.
- Supporting schools to improve their management of community use arrangements, to improve ‘pay-and-play’ access to sports halls.

5.21 Action Plan

5.21.1 Introduction

The tables below set out the suggested action plan for sports halls to guide the implementation of the Assessment.

5.21.2 Key strategic actions

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Protection of existing sports halls	Retain the inclusion of a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing sports halls.	WSC	-	-	High
Funding for future sports hall needs	Ensure that provision is made to secure developer contributions towards improved facilities.	WSC	Developers	-	High
Community access to sports halls	Consider the merits of formal Community Use agreements at all existing and any future proposed sports halls on education sites.	WSC	Academies and schools	Possible funding for improvements to physical accessibility.	High

5.21.3 Site-specific opportunities for consideration

<i>Site</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre	The Leisure Centre is due to be re-provided at Western Way.	Re-provide a sports hall as part of the Leisure Centre redevelopment.	WSC	-	TBC	High
Castle Manor Academy	No formal Community Use Agreement.	Consider the merits of a formal Community Use Agreement	WSC	Castle Manor Academy	-	Medium
County Upper School	No formal Community Use Agreement.	Consider the merits of a formal Community Use Agreement	WSC	County Upper School	-	Medium
Culford Sports and Leisure Centre	No formal Community Use Agreement.	Consider the merits of a formal Community Use Agreement	WSC	Culford School	-	Medium
King Edward VI School	No formal Community Use Agreement.	Consider the merits of a formal Community Use Agreement	WSC	King Edward VI School	-	Medium
Mildenhall Hub	No current issues	No action required.	-	-	-	-
Newmarket Leisure Centre	Hall usage is close to capacity at peak times. This was exacerbated by the closure of the Scaltback Hall facility in Newmarket.	Feasibility study for an additional sports hall in Newmarket.	WSC	Newmarket Town Council Suffolk County Council	£20,000	High
Samuel Ward Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor quality tarmac floor and air handling. Community Use Agreement being finalised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve floor and air handling. Finalise Community Use Agreement 	WSC	Samuel Ward Academy	TBC	Medium
Skyliner Sports Centre	Hall usage is close to capacity at peak times.	Utilise other spare capacity in Bury St. Edmunds	-	-	-	-
Stour Valley Community School	No formal Community Use Agreement.	Pursue a formal Community Use Agreement	WSC	Stour Valley Community School	-	Medium

6 SWIMMING POOLS

Key findings:

- **Quantity:** There are community accessible swimming pools at eight sites in West Suffolk. There is currently unmet demand of 140sq.m. Additional demand by 2040 will amount to the equivalent to 111sq.m of water space.
- **Quality:** There are no critical issues with swimming pool quality at present, although the Bury St Edmunds facility is ageing.
- **Accessibility:** The whole population of the district is within 20 minutes' drive of the nearest pool apart from a small rural part of the Mildenhall sub-area. Provision within sub-areas is relatively equitable and whilst there is no pool in Brandon, needs are served by a facility in Thetford.
- **Availability:** Three pools in the district are only accessible on a membership basis and the pool at RAF Honington is available for community use on a very restrictive basis.

6.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of swimming pools in West Suffolk. Swimming pools are defined as indoor facilities with minimum pool length of 20 metres, although smaller teaching and diving pools are included in the assessment where they are integral to a facility with a main pool. Pools. This conforms with Sport England's policy in its Facilities Planning Model to exclude pools smaller than 180sq.m and Swim England's assessment that standalone pools of less than 20m length have such limited applications for swimming that they should be discounted.

6.2 Quantity

6.2.1 Swimming pools with community use

The swimming pools with community use in West Suffolk is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Year built</i>	<i>Sub-area</i>	<i>Community use</i>
Bannantyne Health Club	Horringer Court, Bury St. Edmunds IP29 5PH	20m x 8m	2001	Bury St. Edmunds	Secured
Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre	Beeton's Way, Bury St. Edmunds IP33 3TT	25m x 12.5m 20m x 7m 20m x 8m 13m x 8m	2006	Bury St. Edmunds	Secured
Culford Sports and Leisure Centre	Culford IP28 6TX	25m x 13m	1992	Bury St. Edmunds	Unsecured
Haverhill Leisure Centre	Lordscroft Lane, Haverhill CB9 0ER	25m x 13m 13m x 10m	2012	Haverhill	Secured
Mildenhall Hub	Sheldrick Way, Mildenhall IP28 7JX	25m x 12.5m 20m x 8m	2021	Mildenhall	Secured
Newmarket Leisure Centre	Exning Road, Newmarket CB8 0EA	25m x 13m 12m x 7m	2009	Newmarket	Secured

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Year built</i>	<i>Sub-area</i>	<i>Community use</i>
RAF Honington	Green Lane, Honington IP31 1EE	25m x 8m	2001	Bury St. Edmunds	Unsecured
Sports Direct Fitness	Eastlea Road, Bury St. Edmunds IP32 7BY	20m x 8m	2011	Bury St. Edmunds	Secured

6.2.2 Swimming pools with no community use

The swimming pool without community use in West Suffolk is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Year built</i>	<i>Sub-area</i>
Center Parcs	Brandon Road, Elevden IP24 3TZ	20m x 13m	2003	Brandon

6.2.3 Smaller pools

Although the following pools are considered too small to serve a range of swimming needs, the following smaller pools in West Suffolk are listed below for completeness:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Year built</i>	<i>Sub-area</i>
Barrow Primary School	Colethorpe Lane Barrow IP29 5AU	10m x 5m	2016	Bury St. Edmunds
Bedford Lodge Hotel	Bury Road, Newmarket CB8 7BX	15m x 7.5m	2012	Newmarket
Ickworth Hotel and Apartments	Ickworth House, Horringer IP29 5QE	15m x 6m	2018	Bury St. Edmunds
Moreton Hall Health Club	Mount Road, Bury St. Edmunds IP32 7BL	15m x 8m	2004	Bury St. Edmunds
The Gainsborough Health Club	Cavendish Road, Cavendish CO10 8BW	15m x 6.5m	2007	Haverhill
Swallow Leisure	Fornham St. Martin IP28 6JQ	17m x 8m	2006	Bury St. Edmunds

6.2.4 Sub-area analysis

The distribution of swimming pools with community use by sub-area in West Suffolk is as follows:

<i>Sub-area</i>	<i>Sub-area population 2020</i>	<i>No. pools</i>	<i>Pools per capita</i>	<i>Pool space per 1,000 people</i>
Bury St. Edmunds	74,671	5	1: 14,934	20.91sq.m
Newmarket	22,141	1	1: 22,141	18.47sq.m
Haverhill	38,032	1	1: 38,032	11.96sq.m
Mildenhall	34,260	1	1: 34,260	13.79sq.m
Brandon	9,941	0*	-	-
WEST SUFFOLK	179,045	8	1: 22,381	16.25sq.m

* The pool at Breckland Leisure Centre in Thetford is within easy reach of the Brandon sub-area.

6.3 Quality

6.3.1 The criteria assessed

The quality of swimming pools was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were evaluated were as follows:

- **Pool area(s):** The overall condition, lighting, aquatic activities provided for, temperature, spectator provision and fitness for purpose.
- **Changing facilities:** Capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- **Disability access:** Provision for disabled access throughout the facility.
- **Maintenance and cleanliness:** The quality of maintenance and cleanliness standards.
- **General access:** Car parking, lighting, signposting and proximity to public transport.

6.3.2 The basis of the ratings

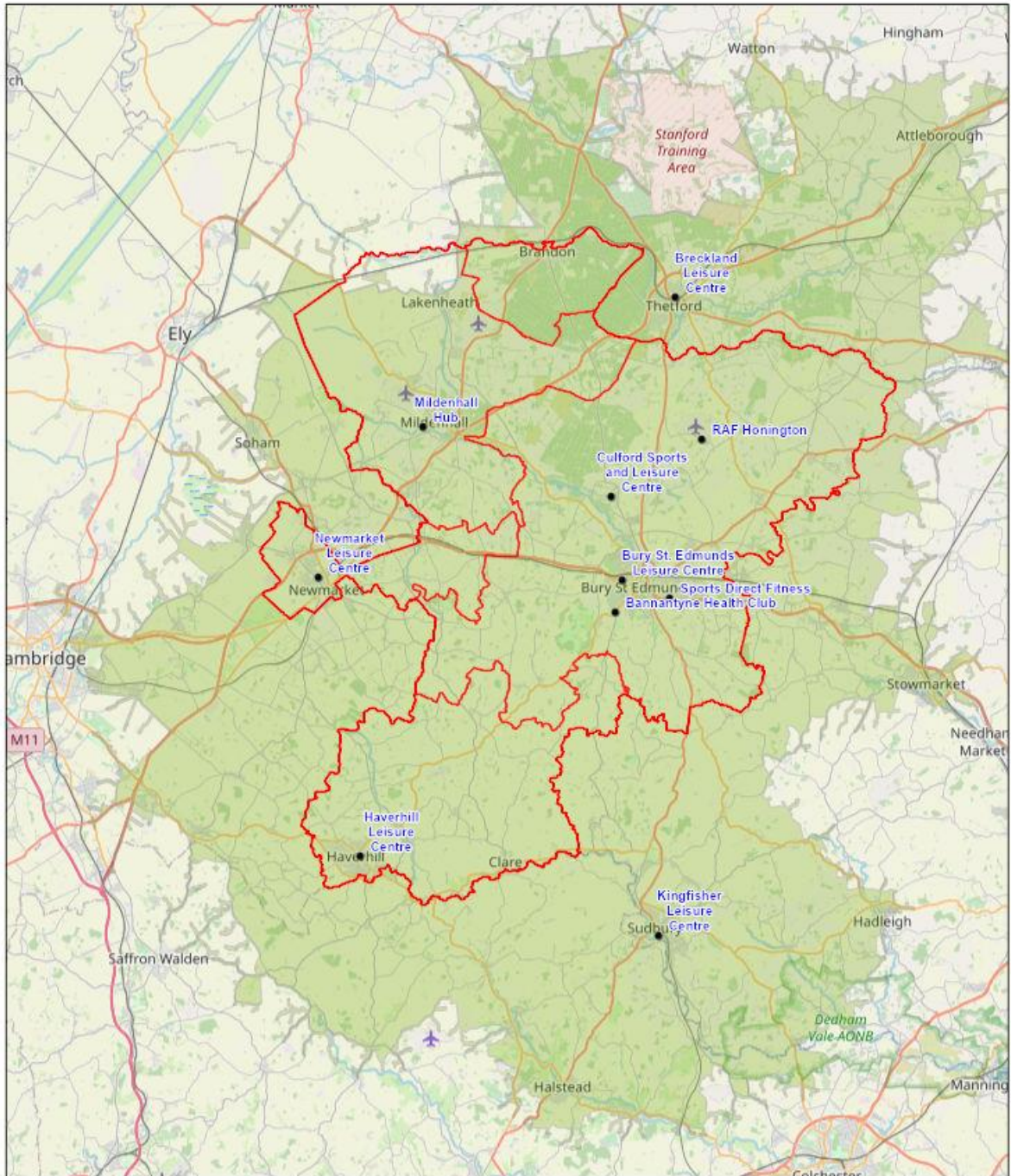
The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to ‘very good’, 4 to ‘good’, 3 to ‘average’ (highlighted in yellow below), 2 to ‘poor’ (highlighted in red below) and 1 to ‘very poor’. The ratings for the swimming pools in West Suffolk are shown in the table below.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Pool area</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Disability Access</i>	<i>Maintenance</i>	<i>General access</i>
Bannantyne Health Club	5	5	5	5	5
Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre	5	4	5	5	4
Culford Sports and Leisure Centre	5	5	5	5	4
Haverhill Leisure Centre	5	5	5	5	5
Mildenhall Hub	5	5	5	5	5
Newmarket Leisure Centre	5	5	5	5	5
RAF Honington	3	4	4	4	3
Sports Direct Fitness	5	5	4	5	4

6.4 Accessibility

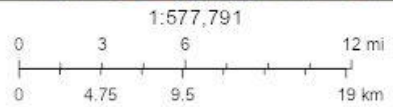
Based on Sport England research, the ‘effective catchment’ for indoor swimming pools is 20 minutes driving time. The whole populated area of the district is within 20-minutes’ drive time of at least one pool.

WEST SUFFOLK - Swimming Pools within 20 Minutes Drive



7/16/2021

- SUB AREAS Brandon, Mildenhall, Newmarket, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill
- Swimming Pools within 20 minutes
- WEST SUFFOLK BOUNDARY
- 20.0 Minutes



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6.5 Availability

The table below identifies the opening hours, usage arrangements, pricing and used capacity in the peak periods.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Opening hours and basis of use</i>	<i>Pricing</i>	<i>Peak usage</i>
Bannantyne Health Club	Mon-Fri 6am - 10pm Sat-Sun 7am - 10pm Members only	Membership £58 per month	60%
Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri: 6am - 9pm Sat-Sun: 8am - 4pm Membership and 'Pay-and-play'	Membership £32 per month Adult swim £5.50 Junior swim £4.50 Concession swim £4.30	70%
Culford Sports and Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri 5pm - 10pm Sat 8.30am - 5pm Sun 8.30am - 9pm Members only	Membership Adult £37 per month Junior £19 per month	55%
Haverhill Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri: 6am - 9pm Sat-Sun: 8am - 4pm Membership and 'Pay-and-play'	Membership £32 per month Adult swim £5.50 Junior swim £4.50 Concession swim £4.30	70%
Mildenhall Hub	Mon-Fri 6am - 10pm Sat-Sun 8am - 6pm 'Pay-and-play' and lessons	Adult swim £5.50 Junior swim £4.50 Concession swim £4.30	70%
Newmarket Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri 6am - 10pm Sat 7am - 6pm Sun 8am - 6pm 'Pay-and-play' and lessons	Adult swim £5.50 Junior swim £4.50 Concession swim £4.30	70%
RAF Honington	Mon-Fri 5pm - 7pm Sat 10am - 12pm Club block bookings and lessons	Whole pool £80 per hour	100%
Sports Direct Fitness	Mon-Fri 6.30am - 8pm Sat-Sun 8am - 4pm Members only	Membership £58 per month	60%

6.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are eight community accessible facilities with swimming pools in West Suffolk.
- All aspects of the quality of most facilities is 'good' or better.
- The whole population of the district is within 20 minutes' drive time of a pool.
- Sport England recognises a measure of 'comfortable capacity', where a swimming pool is regarded as effectively fully utilised when peak usage levels reach 70%. Four of the eight pools in the district are currently used to the 'comfortable capacity' figure.

6.7 Current demand for swimming pools

6.7.1 Expressed demand

Expressed community use demand for swimming pools in West Suffolk is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>% Peak utilisation</i>
Bannantyne Health Club	60%
Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre	70%
Culford Sports and Leisure Centre	55%
Haverhill Leisure Centre	70%
Mildenhall Hub	-
Newmarket Leisure Centre	70%
RAF Honington	100%
Sports Direct Fitness	60%

6.7.2 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to users of swimming pools from within the study area which takes place outside of the area. The following pools with community ‘pay-and-play’ accessibility are located in adjacent local authority areas, close enough to the district boundary to provide usage opportunities for West Suffolk residents.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Distance from West Suffolk</i>
Breckland Leisure Centre	Croxton Road, Thetford IP24 1JD	2.5 miles
Kingfisher Leisure Centre	Station Rd, Sudbury CO10 2SU	5 miles

6.7.3 Unmet demand

The high levels of peak-time usage of pools in the district, together with consultation responses from swimming clubs who are unable to access sufficient pool time suggest that there is unmet demand at present. Abbeyfield Leisure which operates five of the pools in the district, says that it is unable to fully meet current demand for swimming in all formats.

6.8 West Suffolk Sports Facilities Strategy

The ‘*West Suffolk Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2015 - 2031*’ (2015) identifies indoor sports facilities needs in the two former districts that now comprise West Suffolk. The key findings in relation to swimming pools were as follows:

- There is sufficient provision to meet both current and future swimming needs in St Edmundsbury.
- There is a current and future under-supply of swimming pool provision in Forest Heath.
- The ASA has identified the need for increased swimming pool provision in Forest Heath.
- There is a need to start planning now for investment in existing pool facilities, all of which are ageing, in particular Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre and Haverhill Leisure Centre.

- The priority for significant investment is Mildenhall Swimming Pool. This should be replaced. The development opportunity to achieve this is the Mildenhall Hub.

The findings of the strategy were informed in part by the outputs of Sport England’s Facilities Planning Model (FPM). The FPM is a computer model that compares the supply of facilities with demand, to calculate shortfalls. The findings of the FPM ‘run’ for swimming pools in 2025 in the two former districts that now comprise West Suffolk were as follows:

- **Forest Heath:** Swimming pools in Forest Heath were assessed to be at operating at just above ‘comfortable capacity’, based upon the following evaluation:
 - **Supply-demand balance:** The FPM calculates that the supply of swimming pool space in the peak period in Forest Heath is equivalent to 621sq.m, whilst demand is for 676sq.m. This suggests a deficit of 55 (equivalent to 0.17 25m x 6lane pools).
 - **Used peak capacity:** Average peak utilisation rates for pools in the district are 83%, which is well above Sport England’s ‘comfortable capacity’ figure of 70%. This suggests that there is no spare capacity to accommodate additional demand.
 - **Satisfied demand:** The FPM supports this conclusion, calculating that 85% of demand for sports halls in the district is met by current provision.
- **St. Edmundsbury:** Sports halls in St. Edmundsbury were assessed to be at operating at well within ‘comfortable capacity’, based upon the following evaluation:
 - **Supply-demand balance:** The FPM calculates that the supply of swimming pool space in the peak period in St. Edmundsbury is equivalent to 1,575sq.m, whilst demand is for 1,155sq.m. This suggests a surplus of 420sqm (equivalent to 1.29 25m x 6-lane pools).
 - **Used peak capacity:** Average peak utilisation rates for swimming pools in the district are 54%, which is well below Sport England’s ‘comfortable capacity’ figure of 70%. This suggests that the current number of community-accessible pools can comfortably meet projected demand in 2025.
 - **Satisfied demand:** The FPM supports this conclusion, calculating that 91% of demand for pools in the district is met by current provision.

The implications of the FPM runs for swimming pool provision in West Suffolk are as follows:

- If provision in the two former districts is aggregated for West Suffolk, for the new district as a whole there is adequate swimming pool provision.
- However, since the FPM runs were undertaken in 2015 the replacement of the former Mildenhall Pool with expanded provision at the Mildenhall Hub has eliminated the deficit of pool space in that part of West Suffolk.

6.9 Assessments of need in neighbouring areas

The table below summarises strategic assessments of swimming pool needs in neighbouring areas.

<i>Local Authority</i>	<i>Facilities priorities</i>	<i>Implications for West Suffolk</i>
East Cambridgeshire	The 'East Cambridgeshire Indoor Sports Needs Assessment and Action Plan' (2015) states that supply of swimming pools in the district will meet all demand until 2026, but with no appreciable spare capacity.	There is no spare capacity that might meet surplus demand from the Newmarket or Mildenhall areas.
South Cambridgeshire	The 'Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2015 - 2031' (2016) identifies that South Cambs has the fourth-lowest provision of pools of any local authority in England and needs five additional 6-lane 25m indoor pools by 2031. It exports 6,237 swims per week.	South Cambridgeshire exports significant amounts of demand to pools in Newmarket and Mildenhall.
Braintree	The 'Braintree Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Study' (2017) states that 'the existing supply of community swimming pools space appears sufficient to meet current demand, based on all available evidence'.	The study shows that Braintree residents in the north of the district use the pool at Haverhill Leisure Centre.
Mid-Suffolk	The 'Mid-Suffolk Leisure Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Update' (2021) identifies an over-supply of 350sq.m of pool space both currently and in 2036, but states that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'There is a theoretical oversupply based on the estimated capacity during peak times across all of the facilities against estimated peak time demand'. • 'However, the total water space also includes a pool at MoD Wattisham with limited community access and three small pools that currently only offer swimming lessons and a members only health club and spa facility'. 	There is exported demand to pools in the Bury St. Edmunds area. New housing developments in Mid-Suffolk (Thurston) are within 20-minutes' drive time of Bury Leisure Centre and existing Thurston residents already utilise WSC's facilities as they are the closest to them.
Babergh	The 'Babergh Leisure Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Update' (2021) identifies an over-supply of 817sq.m of pool space both currently and in 2036, but states that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'There is a theoretical oversupply based on the estimated capacity during peak times across all of the facilities against estimated peak time demand'. • 'However, a large proportion of the existing supply of pool space is located on school sites with limited public access'. 	The location of provision is too distant to meet needs from West Suffolk.
Breckland	Breckland Council's 'Evidence Base for Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities' (2017) identified the need to provide a 20m x 4-lane pool in Swaffham to meet unmet needs by 2031.	The location of new provision is too distant to meet needs from West Suffolk.
Kings Lynn and West Norfolk	The Council does not have a current assessment of indoor sports facilities needs.	No assessment

6.10 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in West Suffolk, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. Swimming pools have a role to play in this, given the breadth of appeal to all age groups.

6.11 Sport-specific priorities

<i>Facilities priorities</i>	<i>Implications for West Suffolk</i>
Swim England's 'Towards a Nation Swimming: A Strategic Plan for Swimming in England 2017 - 2021' (2017) includes a commitment to 'working with providers to create a swimming environment that is more inclusive and exceeds the expectations of swimmers' and to 'substantially increase the number of people able to swim'.	No specific local facilities priorities in West Suffolk. Ensure facilities are designed to promote swimming with a focus on swimming rather than splash or leisure

Consultation with Swim England's Facilities Officer identified the following issues:

- **Pool supply:** Applying Sport England's 'Facilities Planning Model' (FPM) data, Swim England calculates that swimming pool provision in the district totals 1,683sq.m, scaled for hours available for community use. However, this assessment predated the provision of the new pools at the Mildenhall Hub, which created a net gain of 247.5sq.m of water space, taking the total district provision to 1,930.5sq.m. Also, the FPM does not recognise the difference between main swimming pool and leisure water as part of the calculation. The provision at Bury Leisure Centre currently accounts for 716.5 sq. m of which 140sq.m is leisure space.
- **Pool demand:** The FPM data suggests that demand for swimming pool space in the district is 1,823sq.m, taking account of a 'comfortable capacity' factor of 70%.
- **The balance between supply and demand:** Based on the figures above, adjusted for the new pools at the Mildenhall Hub, there is spare capacity of 107.5sq.m of pool space in West Suffolk, but this includes 140 sq.m of leisure water space.
- **Education sites:** Relationships will need to be maintained and possibly improved to keep public access at educational facilities and seek more accessible pool time where allowable.
- **Commercial facilities:** Membership prices should be monitored and maintained at an affordable price for the community.
- **Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre:** Swim England stated that 'we feel that the main concern for the area would be the age of a key facility such as Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre'.

6.12 Future demand for swimming pools

6.12.1 Population growth

Two scenarios are considered:

- The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 190,680 by 2040, an increase of 11,635 or 6.5%.
- A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population of 213,159 by 2040, an increase of 34,114 or 19.1%.

6.12.2 Participation rates

One factor in considering future sports participation rates is to track historical trends, as a guide to possible future developments.

- **National trends:** Sport England’s ‘Active Lives’ survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for swimming at national level since 2015:

<i>Nov 2015- Nov 2016</i>	<i>May 2016- May 2017</i>	<i>Nov 2016- Nov 2017</i>	<i>May 2017- May 2018</i>	<i>Nov 2017- Nov 2018</i>	<i>May 2018- May 2019</i>	<i>Nov 2018- Nov 2019</i>	<i>May 2019- May 2020</i>	<i>% Change</i>
11.0%	10.8%	10.2%	10.0%	10.5%	10.4%	9.3%	8.9%	-2.1%

- **Local trends:** Sport England’s ‘Active Lives’ survey recorded the proportion of the adult (16+) population who are active for at least 150 minutes per week in West Suffolk between 2015 and the present. The results are tabulated below and show that rates have increased significantly between 2015 and 2020:

<i>Nov 2015- Nov 2016</i>	<i>May 2016- May 2017</i>	<i>May 2017- May 2018</i>	<i>May 2018- May 2019</i>	<i>May 2019- May 2020</i>	<i>% Change</i>
55.4%	60.6%	61.7%	61.2%	64.4%	+9.0%

6.12.3 The impact of coronavirus

Sport England’s ‘Active Lives’ survey analysed the effects of covid-19 on participation rates in sport and physical activity in the initial period of the pandemic (March - May 2020), which provides some pointers to the possible longer-term impact on activity patterns. The key findings were as follows:

- All formal indoor and outdoor sports facilities were closed in this period and social distancing measures meant that team sports were prohibited.
- Despite large numbers of adults switching into alternative activities, the overall number of regularly active adults fell due to the disruption caused by the pandemic when there were fewer opportunities to be active.
- During the mid-March to mid-May period, the number of active adults nationally (defined as taking at least 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity exercise) fell by 7.1%, or just over 3 million, whilst inactivity levels rose by 7.4% or 3.4 million adults.
- Walking, running and cycling all increased participation rates marginally, but activities dependent on formal facilities like pools fell by 56%.

The long-term implications of covid-19 on participation patterns and demand for facilities like swimming pools are still being assessed, but it is likely that some sports will struggle to recover their pre-pandemic participation rates, due to former participants who have altered their exercise patterns during lockdown periods not reverting to their former habits.

6.12.4 Future projections

Sport England has developed the Sport Facility Calculator (SFC), to help to quantify how much additional demand for key community facilities like swimming pools, will be generated by population increases. The SFC uses Sport England survey data on who uses facilities and applies this to the population profile of the local area. This builds up a profile of usage, which can be then applied to estimate how much demand any given population would generate. For the purposes of projecting future demand in West Suffolk, two scenarios are considered:

- The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 190,680 by 2040, an increase of 11,635 or 6.5%. Based upon this, the SFC calculates demand for an additional 116.29sq.m of pool space, which is equivalent to 2.19 lanes of a 25 metre pool (equivalent to 0.55 indoor pools).
- A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population of 213,159 by 2040, an increase of 34,114 or 19.1%. Based upon this, the SFC calculates demand for an additional 343.62sq.m of pool space, which is equivalent to 6.47 lanes of a 25 metre pool (equivalent to 1.62 indoor pools).

6.13 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Peak capacity use of four pools in the district is at or above Sport England's 70% 'comfortable capacity' figure, which indicates that there is limited scope to accommodate more demand at these sites.
- Sport England's Sport Facility Calculator projects demand for an additional 116.29sq.m of pool space, which is equivalent to 2.19 lanes or 0.55 indoor pools for the lower population projection or 6.47 lanes or 1.62 indoor pools for the higher population projection.

6.14 The balance between swimming pool supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between swimming pool supply and demand in West Suffolk:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough facilities with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the facilities fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the facilities in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the facilities available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

6.15 Quantity

6.15.1 Current needs

Current swimming pools in West Suffolk are assessed to be at operating at around ‘comfortable capacity’ based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used peak capacity:** Based on Sport England’s Facilities Planning Model (FPM) calculations, there is spare capacity of 107.5sq.m of pool space in West Suffolk (equivalent to a 2-lane x 25m pool).
- **Mildenhall Hub:** The new pools at Mildenhall Hub have collectively added 472.5sq.m of pool space to the overall capacity, although this needs to be offset by the loss of 225sq.m of pool space at the former Mildenhall Swimming Pool, which it replaced. This comprises a net gain of 247.5sq.m in relation to the FPM calculations.
- **Leisure water:** Sport England’s Facilities Planning Model does not recognise the difference between main swimming pool and leisure water as part of the calculation. The current Bury Leisure Centre facility provides 140sq.m of leisure water which provides minimal value in supporting the strategic objective of increasing the number of people able to swim.

6.15.2 Future needs

The quantity of swimming pools required to meet future needs has been assessed as an additional 116.29sq.m of pool space, which is equivalent to 2.19 lanes of a 25 metre pool (equivalent to 0.55 indoor pools) based on the lower population estimate or 343.62sq.m of pool space, which is equivalent to 6.47 lanes of a 25 metre pool (equivalent to 1.62 indoor pools). This is based upon:

- **Demand increases:** The district’s population is projected to increase by between 11,635 and 34,114 by 2040. This will represent an increase of 6.5% to 19.1% over the mid-2018 population estimate.
- **Participation trends:** Based on national and local sports participation trends, for the purposes of forecasting future demand the likeliest scenario is for participation rates to remain at their current levels.
- **Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre:** The Centre is due to be re-located to a site on Western Way and re-providing pools with the equivalent of 716.5sq.m of water space will be important to meet current and future needs. The Western Way development offers the opportunity to ensure that the new water space is configured in a way to maximise the efficiency of the operation and increase the opportunities for people to learn to swim, whilst meeting the current and future needs of the community and maximising the use of renewable energy solutions.

6.16 Quality

6.16.1 Current quality

There are no current critical quality issues at any swimming pool sites in the district.

6.16.2 Future quality

Three pools in the district are more than 20 years old, so will likely need to be replaced within the lifespan for the lifespan of the assessment.

6.17 Accessibility

6.16.1 Current accessibility

All parts of the district are within the 20-minute drivetime catchment of the nearest swimming pool. Provision within sub-areas is relatively equitable and whilst there is no pool in Brandon, needs are served by a facility in Thetford.

6.16.2 Future accessibility

To ensure that there is adequate accessibility to swimming pools in the future, an appropriate level of developer contributions will be required to upgrade existing facilities and/or to provide new ones, appropriately located in relation to the new population.

6.18 Availability

6.17.1 Current availability

Three pools in the district are only accessible on a membership basis and the pool at RAF Honington is available for community use on a very restrictive basis.

6.17.2 Future availability

Additional pool capacity should be created for swimming on a non-membership basis and for club swimming.

6.19 The options for securing additional swimming pool capacity

The options for securing existing and additional swimming pool capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

6.18.1 Protect

Protecting the existing pools through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

6.18.2 Provide

Future demand relating to the lower population projections can be accommodated by existing spare capacity, but to sustain this position the current pool space at Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre (716.5sq.m) will need to be re-provided when the facilities are redeveloped. This redevelopment creates an opportunity to ensure that the water space is configured in a way to increase the efficiency of the operation, increase the opportunities for people to learn to swim, whilst meeting the needs of the community and maximising the use of renewable energy solutions. The facility could increase the swimming provision to an 8 lane 25m pool and reconfigure the leisure water. To meet the needs of the higher population projections, an additional four-lane 25m pool will be required by 2040. The optimum location of this will depend upon the location of housing developments, but per capita levels of pool space provision in the district are currently lowest in the Haverhill sub-area.

6.18.3 Enhance

Ensuring that pool quality is enhanced when opportunities arise.

6.20 Action Plan

6.20.1 Introduction

The tables below set out the suggested action plan for swimming pools to guide the implementation of the Assessment.

6.20.2 Key strategic actions

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Protection of existing swimming pools	Retain the inclusion of a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing swimming pools.	WSC	-	-	High
Funding for future swimming pool needs	Ensure that provision is made to secure developer contributions towards new, reconfigured and improved facilities.	WSC	Developers	-	High

6.20.3 Site-specific opportunities for consideration

<i>Site</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Bannantyne Health Club	No current issues.	No action required.	-	-	-	-
Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre	The Leisure Centre is due to be re-provided at Western Way.	Re-provide and re-configure 716sq.m of water space as part of the Leisure Centre redevelopment, including the provision of an 8-lane 25m pool.	WSC	-	TBC	High
Culford Sports and Leisure Centre	No formal Community Use Agreement.	Consider the merits of a formal Community Use Agreement	WSC	Culford School	-	Medium
Haverhill Leisure Centre	No current issues.	No action required.	-	-	-	-
Mildenhall Hub	No current issues.	No action required.	-	-	-	-
Newmarket Leisure Centre	No current issues.	No action required.	-	-	-	-
RAF Honington	No formal Community Use Agreement.	Consider the merits of a formal Community Use Agreement	WSC	MoD	-	Medium
Sports Direct Fitness	No current issues.	No action required.	-	-	-	-

7 HEALTH AND FITNESS

Key findings:

- **Quantity:** There are 21 publicly accessible health and fitness facilities currently available in West Suffolk, collectively comprising 1,465 equipment stations and 22 studios, plus five facilities with no public access. There is a need to provide extra health and fitness capacity equivalent to 127 equipment stations to meet additional needs to 2040.
- **Quality:** The quality of all aspects of most facilities is ‘very good’ or ‘good’. although disabled access is poor at two of the smaller commercially-run gyms.
- **Accessibility:** The whole population is within 20 minutes driving time of the nearest health and fitness facility, but per capita levels of provision are low in the Mildenhall sub-area.
- **Availability:** Nine facilities offer ‘pay-and-play’ public access, but some of the other facilities offer a ‘day pass’ arrangement, allowing short-term access to non-members.

7.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of health and fitness facilities in West Suffolk. Health and fitness facilities are defined as community accessible facilities with a range of exercise equipment.

7.2 Quantity

7.2.1 Health and fitness facilities with community use

The location and number of stations at facilities with community use in West Suffolk is as follows:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Stations</i>	<i>Studios</i>	<i>Sub-area</i>
Bannantyne Health Club	Horringer Court, Bury St. Edmunds IP29 5PH	60	20m x 10m	Bury St. Edmunds
Brandon Leisure Centre	Church Road, Brandon IP27 0JB	65	20m x 10m	Brandon
Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre	Beeton’s Way, Bury St. Edmunds IP33 3TT	110	20m x 10m 12.5m x 12m 12m x 9m	Bury St. Edmunds
Culford Sports and Leisure	Culford IP28 6TX	12	12m x 10m 10m x 10m	Bury St. Edmunds
Feelgood Fitness	Helions Bumpstead Road, Haverhill CB9 7AA	42	18m x 10m 9m x 5m	Haverhill
Fitta Bodies Gym	Thingoe Hill, Bury St. Edmunds IP32 6BE	155	-	Bury St. Edmunds
Gainsborough Health Club	Cavendish Road, Cavendish CO10 8BW	18	-	Haverhill
Haverhill Leisure Centre	Lordscroft Lane, Haverhill CB9 0ER	100	12m x 8m 10m x 10m 10m x 10m	Haverhill

Site	Address	Stations	Studios	Sub-area
Lynx Fitness (Brandon)	Wimbledon Avenue, Brandon IP27 0NZ	45	-	Brandon
Mildenhall Hub	Sheldrick Way, Mildenhall IP28 7JX	100	20m x 12m 15m x 10m	Mildenhall
Moreton Hall Health Club	Mount Road, Bury St. Edmunds IP32 7BL	104	15m x 18m	Bury St. Edmunds
Newmarket Leisure Centre	Exning Road, Newmarket CB8 0EA	46	25m x 15m 25m x 15m	Newmarket
Pure Gym	Ehringshausen Way, Haverhill CB9 8QJ	220	-	Haverhill
Real Bodies Fitness	Hollands Road, Haverhill CB9 8PJ	54	15m x 10m	Haverhill
Skyliner Sports Centre	Rougham Tower Ave., Bury St. Edmunds IP32 7QB	45	15m x 10m	Bury St. Edmunds
Sports Direct Fitness	Eastlea Road, Bury St. Edmunds IP32 7BY	62	15m x 10m	Bury St. Edmunds
Swallow Leisure	Fornham St. Martin IP28 6JQ	40	-	Bury St. Edmunds
The Edge Fitness Club	Bury Road, Newmarket CB8 7BX	30	15m x 7.5m	Newmarket
The Gym Group	Robert Boby Retail Park, Bury St. Edmunds IP33 3DD	100	-	Bury St. Edmunds
The Haberdens	Rougham Road, Bury St. Edmunds IP33 2RN	20	-	Bury St. Edmunds
X-treme Fitness Centre	Victoria Way, Newmarket CB8 7SH	55	12m x 8m	Newmarket
TOTAL	-	1,465	22	-

7.2.2 Health and fitness facilities without community use

There are five health and fitness facilities with no community use in West Suffolk.

Site	Address	Stations	Sub-area
King Edward VI School	Grove Road, Bury St. Edmunds IP33 3BH	20	Bury St. Edmunds
RAF Honington	Green Lane, Honington IP31 1EE	62	Bury St. Edmunds
RAF Lakenheath	Building 917, Lakenheath IP27 9PN	110	Mildenhall
St. Benedict's School	Beeton's Way, Bury St. Edmunds IP32 6RH	11	Bury St. Edmunds
Stoke College	Ashen Lane, Stoke-by-Clare CO10 8JE	5	Haverhill
TOTAL	-	206	-

7.2.3 Sub-area analysis

The distribution of fitness facilities with community use by sub-area in West Suffolk is as follows:

Sub-area	Sub-area population 2020	No. stations	Stations per capita	No. Studios	Studios per capita
Bury St. Edmunds	74,671	708	1: 105	9	1: 8,297
Newmarket	22,141	131	1: 169	4	1: 5,535
Haverhill	38,032	434	1: 88	6	1: 6,639
Mildenhall	34,260	100	1: 343	2	1: 17,130
Brandon	9,941	110	1: 90	1	1: 9,941
WEST SUFFOLK	179,045	1,465	1: 122	22	1: 8,138

7.3 Quality

7.3.1 The criteria assessed

The quality of health and fitness facilities was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were evaluated were as follows:

- **Fitness facilities:** The overall condition, mix of cardio-vascular and resistance equipment, lighting and ambience.
- **Changing facilities:** Capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- **Disability access:** Provision of disability-specific equipment and disabled access throughout the facility.
- **General access:** Car parking, lighting, signposting and proximity to public transport.

7.3.2 The basis of the ratings

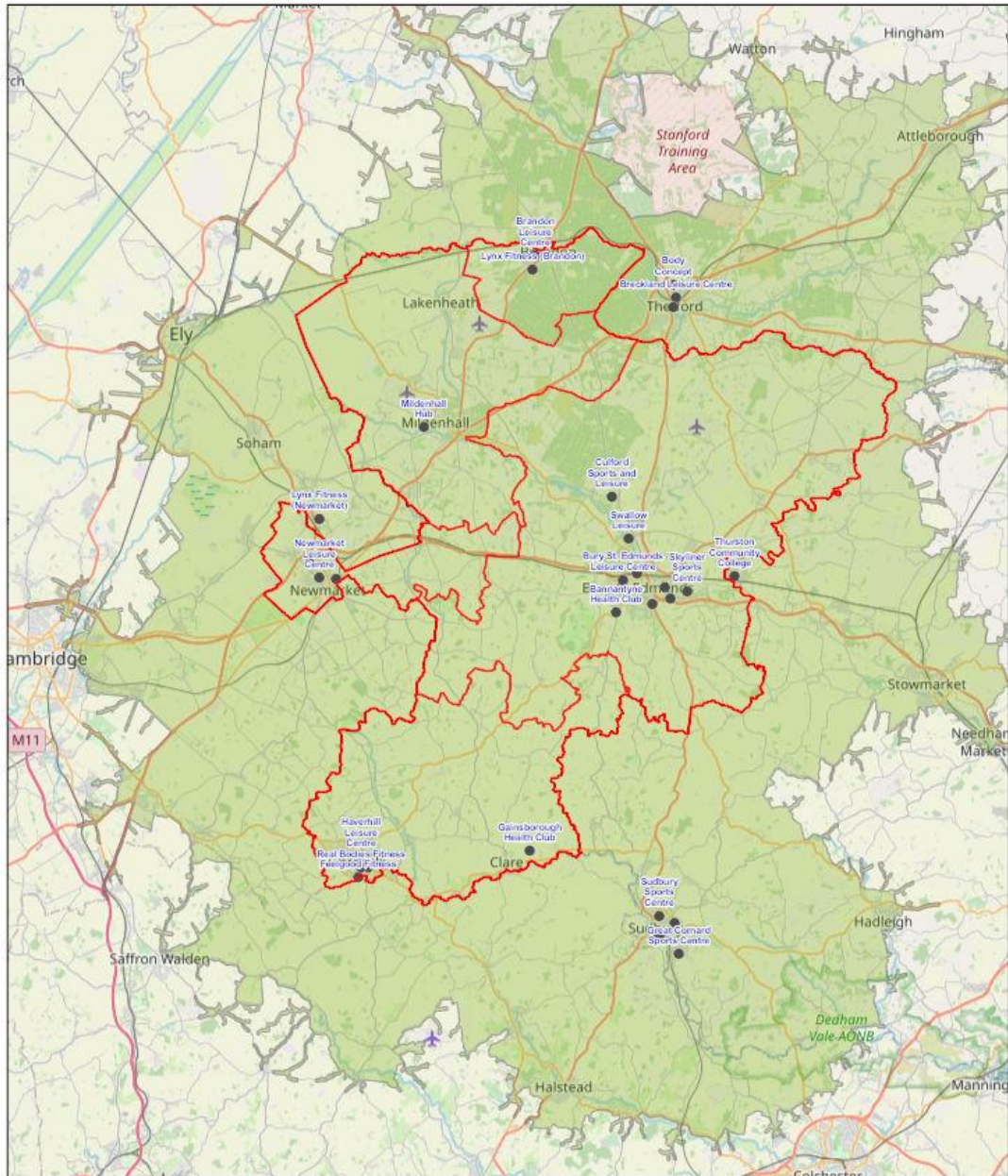
The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to ‘very good’ (highlighted in green below), 4 to ‘good’ (also highlighted in green below), 3 to ‘average’ (highlighted in yellow below), 2 to ‘poor’ (highlighted in red below) and 1 to ‘very poor’.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Fitness facilities</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Disability Access</i>	<i>General access</i>
Bannantyne Health Club	5	5	5	5
Brandon Leisure Centre	5	5	5	4
Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre	4	4	4	4
Culford Sports and Leisure	5	5	5	4
Feelgood Fitness	5	5	4	4
Fitta Bodies Gym	3	4	3	4
Gainsborough Health Club	3	4	3	4
Haverhill Leisure Centre	5	5	5	5
Mildenhall Hub	5	5	5	5
Moreton Hall Health Club	5	5	4	5
Lynx Fitness	5	4	4	4
Newmarket Leisure Centre	5	5	5	5
Pure Gym	5	4	5	5
Real Bodies Fitness	4	4	2	4
Skyliner Sports Centre	5	5	5	5
Sports Direct Fitness	5	5	4	5
Swallow Leisure	4	5	4	4
The Edge Fitness Club	5	5	4	4
The Gym Group	5	5	4	5
The Haberden	4	4	3	4
X-treme Fitness Centre	4	4	2	4

7.4 Accessibility

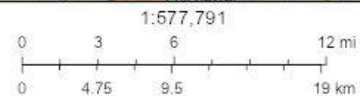
Based on Sport England research, the ‘effective catchment’ for health and fitness facilities is 20 minutes driving time. The whole population of the district is within 20-minutes’ drive of a health and fitness facility.

WEST SUFFOLK - Health and Fitness Centres within 20 Minutes Drive



7/16/2021

- SUB AREAS Brandon, Mildenhall, Newmarket, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill
- revised health and fitness
- WEST SUFFOLK BOUNDARY
- 20.0 Minutes



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7.5 Availability

The table below identifies the opening hours, usage arrangements and pricing (shown as monthly direct debit costs to facilitate comparison).

Facility	Opening hours and basis of use	Pricing
Bannantyne Health Club	Mon-Fri 6am - 10pm Sat-Sun 7am - 10pm Members only	Membership £58 per month
Brandon Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri 7am - 12.15pm and 4pm - 9pm Sat-Sun 8am - 12.30pm Membership and 'Pay-and-play'	Membership £32 per month Individual session £10 adult £4.60 concessions £5.50 juniors
Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri: 6am - 9pm Sat-Sun: 8am - 4pm Membership and 'Pay-and-play'	Membership £32 per month Individual session £10 adult £4.60 concessions £5.50 juniors
Culford Sports and Leisure	Mon-Fri 5pm - 10pm Sat 8.30am - 5pm Sun 8.30am - 9pm Members only	Membership Adult £37 per month Junior £19 per month
Feelgood Fitness	Mon-Fri 6.30am - 9pm Sat-Sun 8am - 1pm Members only	Membership Adult £15 per month
Fitta Bodies Gym	Mon-Fri 9am - 9pm Sat-Sun 10am - 2pm Membership and 'Pay-and-play'	Membership £34 per month Session £5
Gainsborough Health Club	Mon-Fri 9am - 8pm Sat-Sun 8am - 7pm Members only	Membership £44 per month
Haverhill Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri: 6am - 9pm Sat-Sun: 8am - 4pm Membership and 'Pay-and-play'	Membership £32 per month Individual session £10 adult £5.50 juniors
Lynx Fitness (Brandon)	Mon-Fri 6am - 9pm Sat-Sun 8am - 4pm Membership and 'Pay-and-play'	Membership £35 per month Session £7
Mildenhall Hub	Mon-Fri 6am - 10pm Sat-Sun 8am - 6pm Membership and 'Pay-and-play'	Membership £32 per month Individual session £10 adult £5.50 juniors
Moreton Hall Health Club	Mon-Fri 6.30am - 10pm Sat-Sun 8am - 8pm Membership and 'Pay-and-play'	Membership £29.50 per month Session £7.50
Newmarket Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri: 6am - 9pm Sat-Sun: 8am - 4pm Membership and 'Pay-and-play'	Membership £32 per month Individual session £10 adult £5.50 juniors
Pure Gym	Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week Members only	Membership £12.99 per month
Real Bodies Fitness	Mon-Fri 6am - 9.30pm Sat-Sun 8am - 2pm Members only	Membership £20.99 per month

Facility	Opening hours and basis of use	Pricing
Skyliner Sports Centre	Mon-Fri 7am - 12pm and 4pm - 9.30pm Sat-Sun 8am - 4pm Membership and 'Pay-and-play'	Membership £32 per month Individual session £10 adult £5.50 juniors
Sports Direct Fitness	Mon-Fri 6.30am - 10pm Sat-Sun 8am - 4pm Members only	Membership £20 per month
Swallow Leisure	Mon-Fri 6.30am - 9pm Members only	Membership £43 per month
The Edge Fitness Club	Mon-Fri 6.30am - 9.30pm Sat-Sun 8am - 8pm Membership and 'Pay-and-play'	Membership £67 per month Session £7.50
The Gym Group	Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week Members only	Membership £19.99 per month
The Haberdern	Mon-Fri 8am - 9pm Sat-Sun 9am - 6pm Members only	Membership £12 per month
X-treme Fitness Centre	Mon-Fri 7am - 9pm Sat-Sun 9am - 2pm Members only	Membership £30 per month

7.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are 21 publicly accessible health and fitness facilities currently available in West Suffolk, collectively comprising 1,465 equipment stations and 22 studios. These range from small 'boutique' facilities to large clubs and include national chains and local, owner-run gyms.
- The quality of facilities is generally 'good', although disabled access is poor at two of the smaller commercially-run gyms.
- The whole population of the district is within 20-minutes' drive time of a facility.
- Nine facilities offer 'pay-and-play' public access, but many of the remaining facilities offer a 'day pass' arrangement, allowing short-term access on a non-membership basis.
- Membership charges vary between £13 and £58 per month, although there are discounted introductory offers at many facilities. There are varying approaches to membership terms with some operators insisting on minimum term contracts whilst others allow month by month membership with the ability to cancel at any time.

7.7 Current demand for health and fitness facilities

7.7.1 Expressed demand

The 2019 'State of the UK Fitness Industry' report' (undertaken before the covid-19 pandemic) reveals that the UK health and fitness industry is continuing to grow (for the first time in 2018 the number of clubs exceeded 7,000) with more members and a greater market value than ever before. Over the twelve-month period to the end of March 2019, there were increases of:

- 2.9% in the number of fitness facilities.
- 4.7% in the number of members.
- 4.2% in overall market value.

For the first time ever, health and fitness members exceeded 10 million. 1 in 7 people in the UK is a member of a gym, an all-time penetration rate high of 15.4%. The low-cost market with its large membership numbers, online joining, long opening hours and low-prices has continued to expand rapidly. The private low-cost sector now accounts for 12% of the total number of private clubs, 13% of the private market value and 32% of the private sector membership.

- Pure Gym and GLL remain the UK's leading private and public operators (by number of gyms and members). In 2018, Pure Gym became the first operator to reach 200 clubs and this year they are joined by GLL (with 203 gyms).
- Local fitness facility operators all indicated that there was an overall growth in the market (although no actual figures were given due to commercial sensitivity) although it is highly competitive and gyms are having to work hard to maintain their share of the market. Members are now more sophisticated and willing to switch between clubs. Operators are having to develop a wider range of fitness products including individual, health-related programmes and app-based fitness regimes and to vary and update their classes on a regular basis to keep up to date with changing fashions.

7.7.2 Spare capacity

Consultation with local health and fitness facility operators revealed that there is some spare capacity at peak periods. All but the smallest operators emphasise 'no waiting' as a selling point to prospective members. Peak time spare capacity is assessed to be around 10%.

7.7.3 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to users of health and fitness facilities from within the study area which takes place outside of the area. The following facilities are located in adjacent local authority areas, close enough to the district boundary to provide usage opportunities for West Suffolk residents.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Distance from West Suffolk</i>
Lynx Fitness (Newmarket)	Lynx Business Park, Snailwell CB8 7NY	0.5 miles
Thurston Community College*	Norton Road, Thurston IP31 3PB	0.5 miles
Breckland Leisure Centre	Croxton Road, Thetford IP24 1JD	2.5 miles
Body Concept	Roman Way, Thetford IP24 1XB	2 miles
Kingfisher Leisure Centre	Station Rd, Sudbury CO10 2SU	5 miles
Great Cornard Sports Centre	Head Lane, Sudbury CO10 0JU	5 miles
Sudbury Sports Centre	Tudor Rd, Sudbury CO10 1NW	5 miles
Snap Fitness (Thetford)	Bridge Street, Thetford IP24 1AD	1.5 miles
Zest Health and Fitness	Milner Rd, Sudbury CO10 2XG	5 miles

* Available on a block-booked basis only through the school.

7.7.3 Unmet demand

UK Active has devised a model that provides guidance on the supply of health and fitness stations against the current anticipated demand. The model uses national data from fitness facility operators, with the most recent local data for health and fitness participation from the ‘Active Lives’ survey. The model anticipates a need for 1,237 fitness stations, which compares with actual supply of 1,465 stations, indicating a notional surplus of 228 stations.

<i>Element</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Number</i>
West Suffolk adult population	-	144,272
% health and fitness participants	15.4%	22,218
Average visits per week	2.4	55,323
No. visits at peak period	65%	34,660
Capacity in one hour of peak time	28	1,237
No. stations required at peak time	-	1,237

7.8 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in West Suffolk, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. Health and fitness facilities have a particular role to play, given the breadth of appeal to all age groups.

7.9 West Suffolk Sports Facilities Strategy

The ‘West Suffolk Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2015 - 2031’ (2015) identifies indoor sports facilities needs in the two former districts that now comprise West Suffolk. The strategy identified as need for an additional 126 fitness stations by 2031.

7.10 Assessments of need in neighbouring areas

The table below summarises strategic assessments of health and fitness facilities needs in neighbouring areas.

<i>Local Authority</i>	<i>Facilities priorities</i>	<i>Implications for West Suffolk</i>
East Cambridgeshire	The ‘East Cambridgeshire Indoor Sports Needs Assessment and Action Plan’ (2015) states that ‘there is a current undersupply of larger (20+ station) suites that are more accessible at peak times of 28 stations, which increases to 138 stations in 2026’.	There is no spare capacity that might meet surplus demand from the Newmarket or Mildenhall areas.
South Cambridgeshire	The ‘Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2015 - 2031’ (2016) identifies that ‘there is an under supply of 203 community accessible fitness stations and by 2031 this increases to 326’.	There is no spare capacity that might meet surplus demand from the Newmarket or Mildenhall areas.
Braintree	The ‘Braintree Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Study’ (2017) states that ‘it will be important for sufficient provision to be made to accommodate an increase in demand from a growing population’.	No exported demand to West Suffolk is identified, although it is likely Braintree residents will access facilities in Haverhill.
Mid-Suffolk	The ‘Mid-Suffolk Leisure Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Update’ (2021) identifies that ‘there are 11 facilities with community access and 485 stations in total which is sufficient to meet current and future demand’.	The closure of the facility at Thurston Sports Centre is likely to divert demand to facilities in Bury St. Edmunds.

Local Authority	Facilities priorities	Implications for West Suffolk
Babergh	The 'Babergh Leisure Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Update' (2021) identifies that 'there are 9 facilities with community access and 331 stations in total. There is current undersupply of 81 equipment stations. Facilities are concentrated in the areas with the highest population density and there is no health and fitness provision north of Sudbury'.	Four facilities in Sudbury, are likely to attract some demand from the Cavendish and Clare areas in West Suffolk.
Breckland	Breckland Council's 'Evidence Base for Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities' (2017) identified that 'the health and fitness offer at Breckland Leisure Centre is being improved'.	The expanded provision is likely to meet some demand from the Brandon sub-area.
Kings Lynn and West Norfolk	The Council does not have a current assessment of indoor sports facilities needs.	No assessment

7.11 Sport-specific priorities

There are no strategic priorities for developing health and fitness facilities in West Suffolk.

7.12 Future demand for health and fitness facilities

7.12.1 Population growth

Two scenarios are considered:

- The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 190,680 by 2040, an increase of 11,635 or 6.5%.
- A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population of 213,159 by 2040, an increase of 34,114 or 19.1%.

7.12.2 Participation rates

One factor in considering future sports participation rates is to track historical trends, as a guide to possible future developments.

- **National trends:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for fitness activities since 2016:

May 2016- May 2017	Nov 2016- Nov 2017	May 2017- May 2018	Nov 2017- Nov 2018	May 2018- May 2019	Nov 2018- Nov 2019	May 2019- May 2020	% Change
29.5%	29.7%	29.7%	30.0%	30.4%	30.8%	30.4%	+0.9%

- **Local trends:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey recorded the proportion of the adult (16+) population who are active for at least 150 minutes per week in West Suffolk between 2015 and the present. The results are tabulated below and show that rates have increased significantly between 2015 and 2020:

Nov 2015- Nov 2016	May 2016- May 2017	May 2017- May 2018	May 2018- May 2019	May 2019- May 2020	% Change
55.4%	60.6%	61.7%	61.2%	64.4%	+9.0%

7.12.3 The impact of coronavirus

Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey analysed the effects of covid-19 on participation rates in sport and physical activity in the initial period of the pandemic (March - May 2020), which provides some pointers to the possible longer-term impact on activity patterns. The key findings were as follows:

- All formal indoor and outdoor sports facilities were closed in this period and social distancing measures meant that team sports were prohibited.
- Despite large numbers of adults switching into alternative activities, the overall number of regularly active adults fell due to the disruption caused by the pandemic when there were fewer opportunities to be active.
- During the mid-March to mid-May period, the number of active adults nationally (defined as taking at least 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity exercise) fell by 7.1%, or just over 3 million, whilst inactivity levels rose by 7.4% or 3.4 million adults.
- Walking, running and cycling all increased participation rates marginally, but activities dependent on formal facilities like pools fell by 56%.
- 25% of people regularly undertook home fitness workouts during lockdown periods, far above the UK's gym membership penetration level of 15.6%.

The long-term implications of covid-19 on participation patterns and demand for fitness facilities are still being assessed, but it is likely that some sports will struggle to recover their pre-pandemic participation rates, due to former participants who have altered their exercise patterns during lockdown periods not reverting to their former habits.

7.12.4 Future projections

Two scenarios are considered:

- **ONS Projections:** The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 190,680 by 2040, an increase of 11,635 or 6.5%. Based on current demand for 1,237 equipment stations effective spare capacity of 10% at local facilities in the peak period (equivalent to 124 stations). Population growth of 6.5% will create a demand for an additional 62 stations by 2040. Participation increases of 17% will create demand for a further 172 stations by 2040, creating total additional demand for 234 stations.

<i>Element</i>	<i>No. stations</i>
Existing stations	1,465
Existing peak demand	1,237
Existing spare capacity	224
Population increase (6.5%)	62
Participation increase (17%)	172
No. stations required at peak time by 2040	1,471
Surplus(+)/deficit(-)	-6

- **Housing projections:** A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population of 213,159 by 2040, an increase of 34,114 or 19.1%. Based on current demand for 956 equipment stations effective spare capacity of 10% at local facilities in the peak period (equivalent to 96 stations). Population growth of 19.1% will create a demand for an additional 183 stations by 2040. Participation increases of 17% will create demand for a further 172 stations by 2040, creating total additional demand for 355 stations.

<i>Element</i>	<i>No. stations</i>
Existing stations	1,465
Existing peak demand	1,237
Existing spare capacity	224
Population increase (19.1%)	183
Participation increase (17%)	172
No. stations required at peak time by 2040	1,592
Surplus(+)/deficit(-)	-127

7.13 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Demand for health and fitness facilities in West Suffolk equates to 1,237 equipment stations, based upon the UK Active market calculation.
- With 1,465 stations at facilities in West Suffolk, there is spare capacity equivalent to 224 stations.
- Based on the lower population projections, additional demand for 234 stations by 2040 will require the provision of an additional 6 equipment stations.
- Based on the higher population projections, additional demand for 355 stations by 2040 will require the provision of an additional 127 equipment stations.

7.14 The balance between health and fitness supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between health and fitness facility supply and demand in West Suffolk:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough facilities with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the facilities fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the facilities in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the facilities available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

7.15 Quantity

7.15.1 Current needs

Current health and fitness facilities in West Suffolk are assessed to be operating with around 10% spare capacity in the peak, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used peak capacity:** Current peak capacity averages 90% across all facilities.
- **Unmet demand:** There is assessed spare capacity equivalent to 128 fitness stations.

7.15.2 Future needs

The quantity of health and fitness provision required to meet future needs for the lower population projections has been assessed as equivalent to 1,471 fitness stations by 2040 and 1,592 fitness stations for the higher population estimate, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Demand increases:** The district's population is projected to increase by between 11,635 and 34,114 by 2040. This will represent an increase of 6.5% to 19.1% over the mid-2018 population estimate.
- **Participation trends:** Based on national and local sports participation trends, for the purposes of forecasting future demand health and fitness participation rate increases of 1% per annum have been projected to match recent trends.
- **Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre:** The Centre is due to be re-located to a site on Western Way and re-providing health and fitness facilities with the equivalent of 110 equipment stations and three studios will be important to meet current and future needs.

7.16 Quality

7.16.1 Current quality

The quality of all aspects of facilities is rated as at least 'good' at all facilities.

7.16.2 Future quality

In a highly competitive market, commercial health and fitness providers place a premium on equipment innovation and facility quality, so it seems reasonable to assume that local provision will continue to be upgraded regularly.

7.17 Accessibility

7.17.1 Current accessibility

The whole population is within 20 minutes driving time of the nearest health and fitness facility. Provision varies markedly between sub-areas, with Mildenhall having the lowest per capita levels of provision.

7.17.2 Future accessibility

Commercial health and fitness operators are likely to ensure that additional facilities are provided that are well-located in relation to new housing developments.

7.18 Availability

7.18.1 Current availability

Membership charges vary between £13 and £58 per month, although there are discounted introductory offers at many facilities. There are varying approaches to membership terms with some operators insisting on minimum term contracts whilst others allow month by month membership with the ability to cancel at any time.

7.18.2 Future availability

With a competitive local market, it seems unlikely that cost will be a barrier to accessibility in the future. However, less affluent residents may be discouraged by long-term contracts and the comparative paucity of 'pay-and-play' facilities.

7.19 The options for securing additional health and fitness capacity

The options for securing existing and additional health and fitness facility capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

7.19.1 Protect

Protecting existing health and fitness facilities through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, including those with membership-only access, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

7.19.2 Provide

There is a need to provide extra health and fitness capacity equivalent to 106 equipment stations to meet additional needs to 2040 based on the lower population projections and 227 equipment stations based upon the higher population estimates.

7.19.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing health and fitness capacity for people with disabilities.

7.20 Action Plan

7.19.1 Introduction

The tables below set out the suggested action plan for health and fitness facilities to guide the implementation of the Assessment.

7.20.1 Key strategic actions

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Protection of existing health and fitness facilities.	Retain the inclusion of a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing health and fitness facilities.	WSC	-	-	High

7.20.2 Site-specific opportunities for consideration

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Based on the lower population projections, a need for an additional 6 fitness stations by 2040 once existing spare capacity is utilised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that existing spare capacity is used effectively. • Encourage the provision of additional facilities to meet future demand. 	All providers	-	-	High
Based on the higher population projections, a need for an additional 127 fitness stations by 2040 once existing spare capacity is utilised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that existing spare capacity is used effectively. • Encourage the provision of additional facilities to meet future demand. 	All providers	-	-	High
Poor disabled access at certain private centres in the district.	Encourage all sites to provide equipment that is suitable for disabled users.	All providers	-	-	High
Funding for future health and fitness needs.	Ensure that provision is made to secure developer contributions towards new and improved facilities.	WSC	-	-	High

8 SQUASH COURTS

Key findings:

- **Quantity:** There are five squash facilities with community access in West Suffolk, collectively containing 13 squash courts. There is sufficient spare capacity to meet additional demand to 2040.
- **Quality:** The quality of all the facilities is ‘good’.
- **Accessibility:** The whole of West Suffolk is within 20-minutes’ drive time of a squash court, apart from rural areas in the north of the Mildenhall sub-area and south-east of the Haverhill sub-area.
- **Availability:** Five courts are available on a ‘pay-and-play’ basis.

8.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of squash courts in West Suffolk. Squash courts are defined as specialist courts for squash and racketball, complying with regulation dimensions.

8.2 Quantity

8.2.1 Squash Courts with Community Use

The location and number of squash courts with community use and actively being used for squash in West Suffolk is as follows. All facilities have secured community access:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Courts</i>	<i>Year built</i>	<i>Sub-area</i>
Brandon Leisure Centre	Church Road, Brandon IP27 0JB	1	1991	Brandon
Haverhill Leisure Centre	Lordscroft Lane, Haverhill CB9 0ER	2	2009	Haverhill
Moreton Hall Health Club	Mount Road, Bury St. Edmunds IP32 7BL	4	2006	Bury St. Edmunds
Newmarket Leisure Centre	Exning Road, Newmarket CB8 0EA	4	2009	Newmarket
Risbygate Sports Club	Westley Road, Bury St. Edmunds IP33 3RR	2	2012	Bury St. Edmunds

8.2.2 Recently decommissioned/disused Squash Courts

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Courts</i>	<i>Year built</i>	<i>Sub-area</i>
Dome Leisure Centre	Bury Road, Mildenhall IP28 7HT	3	1984	Mildenhall

8.2.3 Squash Courts without Community Use

The location and number of squash courts without community use in West Suffolk is as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Courts</i>	<i>Year built</i>	<i>Sub-area</i>
RAF Honington	Green Lane, Honington IP31 1EE	3	2012	Bury St. Edmunds

8.2.4 Sub-area analysis

The distribution of squash courts with community use and used by sub-area in West Suffolk is as follows. It shows that levels of provision vary widely in geographical terms.

<i>Sub-area</i>	<i>Sub-area population 2020</i>	<i>No. courts</i>	<i>Courts per capita</i>
Bury St. Edmunds	74,671	6	1: 12,445
Newmarket	22,141	4	1: 5,535
Haverhill	38,032	2	1: 19,016
Mildenhall	34,260	0	-
Brandon	9,941	1	1: 9,941
WEST SUFFOLK	179,045	13	1: 13,773

8.3 Quality

8.3.1 The criteria assessed

The quality of squash courts was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were assessed to give a single overall score for each squash facility were the court surface, changing provision, line markings, walls, disability and general access and fitness for purpose.

8.3.2 The basis of the ratings

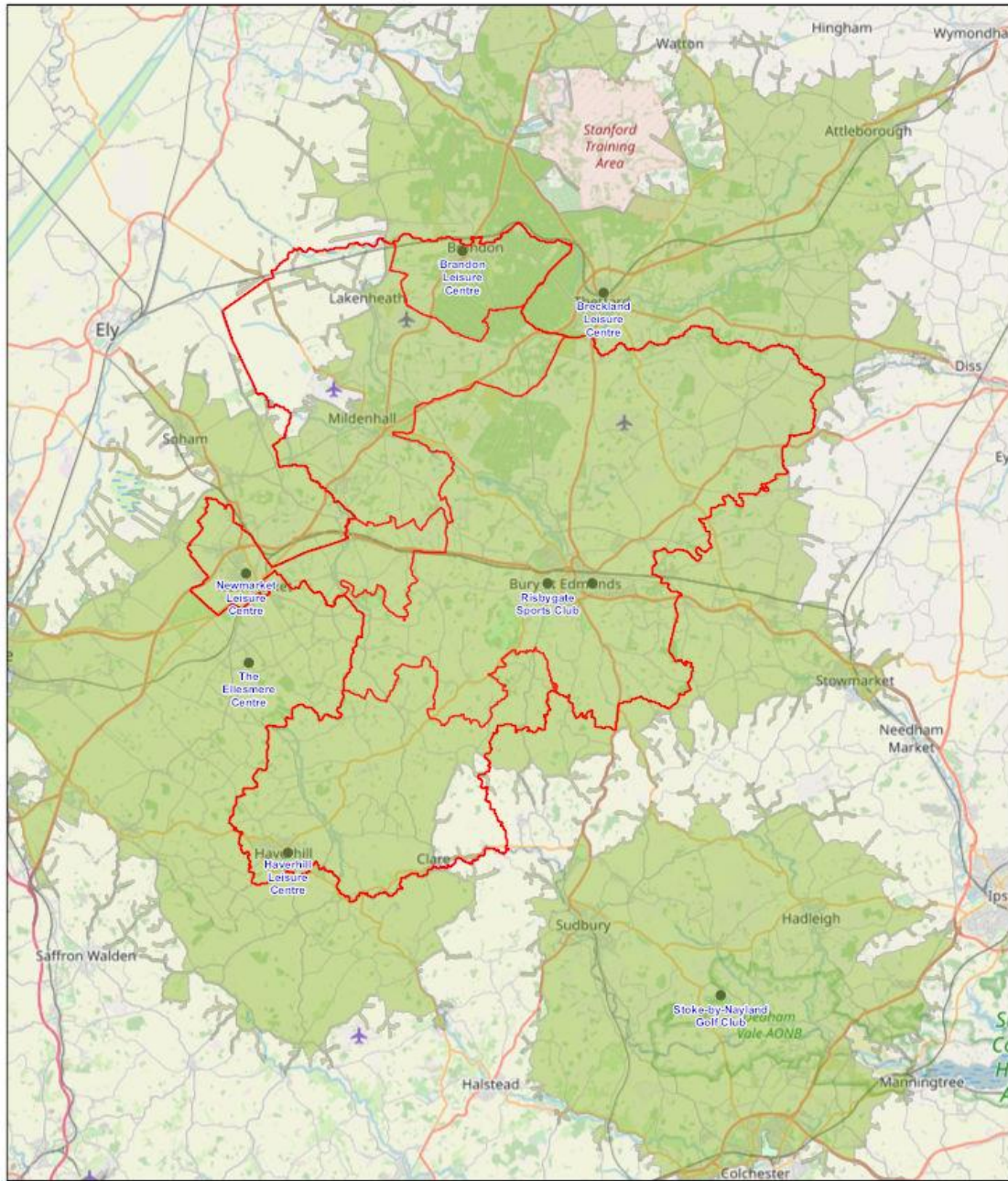
The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to ‘very good’, 4 to ‘good’ (highlighted in green below), 3 to ‘average’, 2 to ‘poor’ and 1 to ‘very poor’. The ratings for the squash courts in West Suffolk are shown in the table below.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Courts</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Disability Access</i>	<i>General Access</i>
Brandon Leisure Centre	5	5	5	4
Haverhill Leisure Centre	4	5	5	5
Moreton Hall Health Club	5	5	4	5
Newmarket Leisure Centre	4	5	5	5
Risbygate Sports Club	4	4	4	4

8.4 Accessibility

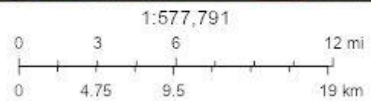
Based on Sport England research, the ‘effective catchment’ for squash courts is 20 minutes driving time. The whole population of the district is within 20-minutes’ drive time of a squash court, with the exception of rural areas to the north of Clare and north-west of Mildenhall.

WEST SUFFOLK - Squash Courts within 20 Minutes Drive



7/20/2021

- SUB AREAS Brandon, Mildenhall, Newmarket, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill
- 20.0 Minutes
- SQUASH COURTS
- WEST SUFFOLK BOUNDARY



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8.5 Availability

The table below identifies the opening hours, usage arrangements, pricing and used capacity in the peak period.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Opening hours and basis of use</i>	<i>Pricing</i>	<i>Peak usage</i>
Brandon Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri 7am - 12.15pm 4pm - 9pm Sat-Sun 8am - 12.30pm 'Pay-and-play'	£9.80 per hour.	50%
Haverhill Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri: 6am - 9pm Sat-Sun: 8am - 4pm 'Pay-and-play'	£9.80 per hour.	40%
Moreton Hall Health Club	Mon-Fri 6.30am - 10pm Sat-Sun 8am - 8pm Membership and 'Pay-and-play'	Membership £29.50 per month Session £7.50	65%
Newmarket Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri: 6am - 9pm Sat-Sun: 8am - 4pm 'Pay-and-play'	£9.80 per hour.	50%
Risbygate Sports Club	Sun-Sat 9am - 10.30pm Membership	Annual adult membership £166 Annual junior membership £49.80	60%

8.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are 13 squash courts with community use and used for squash in West Suffolk.
- England Squash calculates that there should be one squash court per 10,000 people in England, based upon existing levels of provision. Current per capita levels of provision in West Suffolk are one court per 13,773 people, which is below the national average.
- The quality of all facilities is rated as at least 'good'.
- 'Pay-and-play' squash courts are available at four sites.

The whole district is within the drivetime catchment of a squash court, with the exception of rural areas to the north of Clare and north-west of Mildenhall.

8.7 Current demand for squash courts

8.7.1 Expressed demand

Peak period demand at Squash courts in West Suffolk shows has substantial spare capacity.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Peak usage</i>
Brandon Leisure Centre	50%
Haverhill Leisure Centre	40%
Moreton Hall Health Club	65%
Newmarket Leisure Centre	50%
Risbygate Sports Club	60%

8.7.2 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to users of squash courts from within the study area which takes place outside of the area. The following facilities are located in adjacent local authority areas, close enough to the district boundary to provide usage opportunities for West Suffolk residents.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Distance from West Suffolk boundary</i>
The Ellesmere Centre	Ley Road, Stetchworth CB8 9TS	2 miles
Stoke-by-Nayland Golf Club	Keeper's Lane, Stoke-by-Nayland CO6 4PZ	2.5 miles
Breckland Leisure Centre	Croxton Road, Thetford IP24 1JD	2.5 miles

8.7.3 Unmet demand

Unmet demand involves two components:

- Demand that cannot be met within a facility catchment due to excess demand for that facility.
- Demand that cannot be met because it is located outside the catchment of a facility.

There is no evidence of any unmet demand.

8.8 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in West Suffolk, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. As a specialist activity, squash is likely to have limited appeal to new sports participants.

8.9 West Suffolk Sports Facilities Strategy

The *West Suffolk Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2015 - 2031* (2015) identifies indoor sports facilities needs in the two former districts that now comprise West Suffolk. The strategy stated that:

- Existing squash courts should be retained where possible, to ensure public access is retained.
- 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.

8.10 Assessments of need in neighbouring areas

The table below summarises strategic assessments of squash court needs in neighbouring areas.

<i>Local Authority</i>	<i>Facilities priorities</i>	<i>Implications for West Suffolk</i>
East Cambridgeshire	The <i>East Cambridgeshire Indoor Sports Needs Assessment and Action Plan</i> (2015) states that 'The demand for squash is falling, across the country and district, resulting in unused capacity at peak times. There is no need for additional squash facilities in the District'.	There is some capacity that might meet surplus demand from the Newmarket or Mildenhall areas.

Local Authority	Facilities priorities	Implications for West Suffolk
South Cambridgeshire	The 'Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2015 - 2031' (2016) identifies that there is 'no need for additional squash courts has been identified in the area'.	There is spare capacity that might meet surplus demand.
Braintree	The 'Braintree Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Study' (2017) states that 'existing facilities are very well used and it will be important to continue to review the level of provision'.	There is no evidence of exported demand from Braintree.
Mid-Suffolk	The 'Babergh and Mid-Suffolk Leisure Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Review' (2021) does not include an assessment of squash court needs.	No assessment
Babergh	The 'Babergh and Mid-Suffolk Leisure Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Review' (2021) does not include an assessment of squash court needs.	No assessment
Breckland	Breckland Council's 'Evidence Base for Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities' (2017) identified that 'there is no identified need to provide further squash courts in Breckland up to 2031'.	There is spare capacity that might meet surplus demand from the Brandon sub-area.
Kings Lynn and West Norfolk	The Council does not have a current assessment of indoor sports facilities needs.	No assessment

8.11 Sport-specific priorities

England Squash and Racketball's 'Game Changer: Participation Strategy' (2015) contains the following material of relevance to squash court provision:

Facilities priorities	Implications for West Suffolk
England Squash and Racketball's 'Game Changer: Participation Strategy' (2015) states that 'although we support the development of facilities, our resources cannot create a significant impact on the thousands of courts in the country. Our past efforts to support court development have been beneficial but limited'.	There is a limited role for the governing body in promoting squash court provision.

Consultation with the Chairman of Suffolk Squash identified the following issues:

- 'The England Squash strategy is being updated right now and is focussing on the Recover and Reinvent chapter in the Sport England document'.
- 'In general, England Squash, the Eastern Region and the County Associations are not directly concerned with the provision of facilities but seek to keep facilities viable by encouraging play. Prior to lockdown that was by supporting three key initiatives, juniors, women and Squash 57 (aka Racketball). Additionally we are currently supporting 'bounce back' plans for the reopening of facilities post-lockdown'.
- 'In terms of clubs, the main one in West Suffolk is Moreton Hall Leisure Club in Bury St Edmunds. In surrounding areas, Diss, Cambridge and Ipswich are the main centres'.

8.12 Future demand for squash courts

8.12.1 Population growth

Two scenarios are considered:

- The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 190,680 by 2040, an increase of 11,635 or 6.5%.
- A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population of 213,159 by 2040, an increase of 34,114 or 19.1%.

8.12.2 Participation rates

- **National trends:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for squash at national level since 2015:

<i>Nov 2015- Nov 2016</i>	<i>May 2016- May 2017</i>	<i>Nov 2016- Nov 2017</i>	<i>May 2017- May 2018</i>	<i>Nov 2017- Nov 2018</i>	<i>May 2018- May 2019</i>	<i>Nov 2018- Nov 2019</i>	<i>May 2019- May 2020</i>	<i>% Change</i>
1.0%	0.9%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	-0.4%

- **Local trends:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey recorded the proportion of the adult (16+) population who are active for at least 150 minutes per week in West Suffolk between 2015 and the present. The results are tabulated below and show that rates have increased significantly between 2015 and 2020:

<i>Nov 2015- Nov 2016</i>	<i>May 2016- May 2017</i>	<i>May 2017- May 2018</i>	<i>May 2018- May 2019</i>	<i>May 2019- May 2020</i>	<i>% Change</i>
55.4%	60.6%	61.7%	61.2%	64.4%	+9.0%

8.12.3 The impact of coronavirus

Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey analysed the effects of covid-19 on participation rates in sport and physical activity in the initial period of the pandemic (March - May 2020), which provides some pointers to the possible longer-term impact on activity patterns. The key findings were as follows:

- All formal indoor and outdoor sports facilities were closed in this period and social distancing measures meant that team sports were prohibited.
- Despite large numbers of adults switching into alternative activities, the overall number of regularly active adults fell due to the disruption caused by the pandemic when there were fewer opportunities to be active.
- During the mid-March to mid-May period, the number of active adults nationally (defined as taking at least 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity exercise) fell by 7.1%, or just over 3 million, whilst inactivity levels rose by 7.4% or 3.4 million adults.
- Walking, running and cycling all increased participation rates marginally, but activities dependent on formal facilities like squash courts fell by 56%.

The long-term implications of covid-19 on participation patterns and demand for facilities like squash courts are still being assessed, but it is likely that some sports will struggle to recover their pre-pandemic participation rates, due to former participants who have altered their exercise patterns during lockdown periods not reverting to their former habits.

8.12.4 Future projections

National squash participation rates have been falling in recent years but offset against a rise in general activity rates in West Suffolk over the same period, it would therefore be reasonable to assume that demand for squash will remain static until 2040, whilst population growth of 6.5% based on the lower population estimates and 19.1% based upon the higher estimates will increase demand for squash court capacity by a similar amount.

8.13 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Squash participation rates in West Suffolk are projected to remain static until 2040.
- Population growth of 6.5% or 19.1% in West Suffolk by 2040 is likely to increase demand for squash court capacity by a similar amount.

8.14 The balance between squash court supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between squash court supply and demand in West Suffolk:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough courts with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the courts fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the courts in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the courts available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

8.15 Quantity

8.15.1 Current needs

Current squash courts in West Suffolk are collectively assessed to be at operating with spare capacity, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used peak capacity:** The courts in the district are currently collectively used to 52.5% capacity in the peak period.
- **Unmet demand:** There is no evidence of any unmet demand.
- **Changes in supply:** There are no known planned changes to supply.

8.15.2 Future needs

Spare capacity at the existing courts should be able to accommodate all additional future demand, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Demand increases:** The district's population is projected to increase by between 11,635 and 34,114 by 2040. This will represent an increase of between 6.5% and 19.1% over the mid-2018 population estimate.
- **Participation trends:** Based on national and local sports participation trends, for the purposes of forecasting future demand the likeliest scenario is for participation rates to remain at their current levels.
- **Additional needs:** With spare capacity at present, no additional courts will be required by 2040.

8.16 Quality

8.16.1 Current quality

There are no quality issues relating to the squash courts in West Suffolk, although the position should be kept under review.

8.16.2 Future quality

Assuming that existing providers continue to invest in maintaining and improving their facilities and that this process can be assisted with funding from developer contributions in the future, it seems reasonable to assume that local provision will continue to be upgraded regularly.

8.17 Accessibility

8.17.1 Current accessibility

The whole population is within 20 minutes driving time of the nearest squash court, with the exception of rural areas to the north of Clare and north-west of Mildenhall.

8.17.2 Future accessibility

Since the current facilities are geographically relatively well-located to serve districtwide needs, they will continue to serve future needs.

8.18 Availability

8.18.1 Current availability

Pay-and-play' squash courts are available at three leisure centre sites.

8.18.2 Future availability

It is reasonable to assume that similar usage arrangements will be offered in the future..

8.19 The options for securing additional squash court capacity

The options for securing existing squash court capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

8.19.1 Protect

Protecting existing squash courts through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

8.19.2 Provide

Future demand relating to population growth will not require the provision of additional squash courts.

8.19.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing squash courts by ensuring that the courts and ancillary facilities receive regular maintenance and improvements.

8.20 Action Plan

The table below sets out the suggested action plan for squash courts to guide the implementation of the Assessment.

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Protection of existing squash courts.	Retain the inclusion of a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing squash courts.	WSC	-	-	High
Existing spare capacity can meet future demand by 2040.	Retain the inclusion of a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing squash courts.	WSC	-	-	High
Maintaining existing squash courts	Encourage existing providers to maintain existing courts to sustain and improve current quality.	WSC	Court providers	Dependent on the scale and nature of provision.	High

9 INDOOR TENNIS COURTS

Key findings:

- **Quantity:** There are nine indoor tennis courts in West Suffolk. There is sufficient spare capacity to cater for all additional demand to 2040.
- **Quality:** The quality of the indoor courts is ‘good’.
- **Accessibility:** The whole district population is within 30-minutes drivetime of an indoor court apart from rural areas in the north and west of the Mildenhall sub-area and south-east of the Haverhill sub-area.
- **Availability:** There is no ‘pay-and-play’ access to the indoor courts in the district.

9.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of indoor tennis courts in West Suffolk. Indoor tennis halls are defined as specialist permanent or temporary indoor facilities with appropriate playing surface, line markings, nets and court dimensions for tennis.

9.2 Quantity

9.2.1 Indoor Tennis Courts with Community Use

There is one permanent facility with indoor tennis courts with community use in West Suffolk, with a second facility at Newmarket that is covered seasonally.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Courts</i>	<i>Sub-area</i>	<i>Community use</i>
Culford Sports and Tennis Centre	Culford School, Culford IP28 6TX	4 acrylic 2 tarmac	Bury St. Edmunds	Unsecured
Newmarket Tennis Club	Hamilton Road, Newmarket CB8 0NQ	3 tarmac	Newmarket	Secured

9.2.2 Sub-area analysis

The distribution of indoor tennis courts with community use by sub-area in West Suffolk is as follows:

<i>Sub-area</i>	<i>Sub-area population 2020</i>	<i>No. courts</i>	<i>Courts per capita</i>
Bury St. Edmunds	74,671	6	1: 12,445
Newmarket	22,141	3	1: 7,308
Haverhill	38,032	0	-
Mildenhall	34,260	0	-
Brandon	9,941	0	-
WEST SUFFOLK	179,045	9	1: 19,894

9.3 Quality

9.3.1 The criteria assessed for indoor courts

The quality of indoor tennis courts was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit. The criteria that were assessed were as follows:

- **The court:** The overall condition, playing surface, clear span roof height, lighting, spectator provision, equipment and fitness for purpose.
- **Changing facilities:** The capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- **Disability access:** The extent of full disabled access to the facility, including the provision of access ramps, dedicated changing, toilets and car parking.
- **General access:** Car parking, signposting, external lighting and proximity to public transport.

9.3.2 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to ‘very good’ (highlighted in green below), 4 to ‘good’ (also highlighted in green below), 3 to ‘average’, 2 to ‘poor’ and 1 to ‘very poor’.

9.3.3 Indoor court assessment

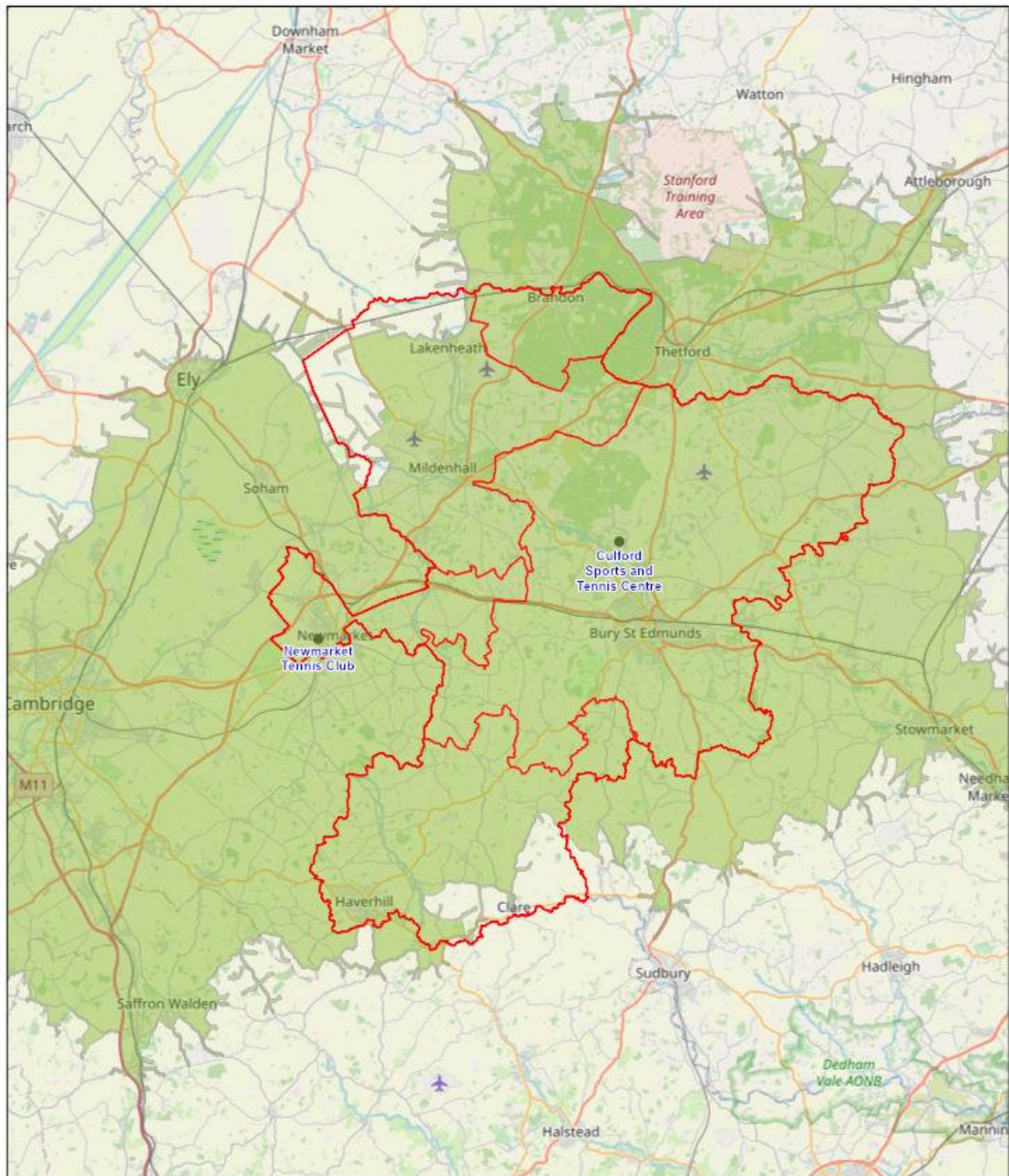
The ratings for the indoor tennis courts in West Suffolk are shown in the table below.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Courts</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Disability Access</i>	<i>General access</i>
Culford Sports and Tennis Centre	5	5	5	4
Newmarket Tennis Club	5	5	5	5

9.4 Accessibility

Based on LTA research, the ‘effective catchment’ for indoor tennis courts is 30 minutes driving time. The whole population of the district is within 30-minutes’ drive time of an indoor tennis court, with the exception of an area to the east of Haverhill, west of Mildenhall and north of Lakenheath.

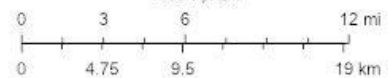
WEST SUFFOLK - Indoor Tennis Facilities within 30 Minutes Drive



7/20/2021

1:577,791

- SUB AREAS Brandon, Mildenhall, Newmarket, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill
- 30.0 Minutes
- INDOOR TENNIS
- WEST SUFFOLK BOUNDARY



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9.5 Availability

The table below identifies the basis of use and cost of indoor tennis court usage in West Suffolk:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Opening hours and basis of use</i>	<i>Pricing</i>	<i>Peak use</i>
Culford Sports and Tennis Centre	Mon-Fri 5pm - 10pm Sat 8.30am - 5pm Sun 8.30am - 9pm Members only	Membership Adult £250 annually, Junior £125 per annum	80%
Newmarket Tennis Club	Mon-Sun 8am - 10pm Members only	Membership. Adult £295 per annum Junior £52 per annum	80%

9.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are nine indoor tennis courts in West Suffolk with community access.
- The quality of all indoor courts is ‘very good’.
- The whole population of the district is within 30-minutes’ drive time of an indoor tennis court, with the exception of an area to the east of Haverhill, west of Mildenhall and north of Lakenheath.
- There is no ‘pay-and-play’ access to the indoor courts in the district.

9.7 Current demand for indoor tennis courts

9.7.1 Expressed demand

Peak period demand at the indoor courts in the district is relatively high at 80%.

9.7.2 Displaced demand

There are no facilities in adjacent local authority areas that are close enough to the district boundary to provide usage opportunities for West Suffolk residents.

9.7.3 Unmet demand

There is no evidence of any unmet demand in the district.

9.8 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in West Suffolk, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. As an activity appealing to both genders and most age groups, tennis is likely to have some appeal to new and lapsed sports participants.

9.9 Assessments of need in neighbouring areas

The table below summarises strategic assessments of indoor tennis needs in neighbouring areas.

<i>Local Authority</i>	<i>Facilities priorities</i>	<i>Implications for West Suffolk</i>
East Cambridgeshire	The 'East Cambridgeshire Indoor Sports Needs Assessment and Action Plan' (2015) states that 'the majority of residents in the District live within a 20 minute drive time of indoor tennis courts located in neighbouring local authorities'.	The indoor courts in Newmarket meet some needs from East Cambridgeshire.
South Cambridgeshire	The 'Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2015 - 2031' (2016) identifies that 'the proposed development of an indoor tennis centre at the University of Cambridge has potential to address the current under-supply of provision, if appropriate community access is provided'.	The current deficit of provision is likely to lead to some exported demand from South Cambs to the Newmarket facility.
Braintree	The 'Braintree Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Study' (2017) states that 'Braintree hosts one indoor tennis facility. Although this is an excellent facility, its location and membership status may not make it accessible to the majority of Braintree residents'.	There is no evidence of exported demand from Braintree.
Mid-Suffolk	The 'Babergh and Mid-Suffolk Leisure Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Review' (2021) does not include an assessment of indoor tennis needs.	No assessment
Babergh	The 'Babergh and Mid-Suffolk Leisure Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Review' (2021) does not include an assessment of indoor tennis needs.	No assessment
Breckland	Breckland Council's 'Evidence Base for Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities' (2017) identified that 'the recommendation is not to consider provision of an indoor tennis centre, until there is an increase in tennis participation and a viable club base that can create sufficient demand for at least 2 indoor courts'.	There may be some exported demand from Breckland.
Kings Lynn and West Norfolk	The Council does not have a current assessment of indoor sports facilities needs.	No assessment

9.10 Sport-specific priorities

The Lawn Tennis Association's strategic plan 2019 - 2023 'Tennis for Britain' (2019) contains the following priorities:

<i>Facilities priorities</i>	<i>Implications for West Suffolk</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visibility: Broaden relevance and increase visibility of tennis all year round to build engagement and participation with fans and players. • Innovation: Innovate in the delivery of tennis to widen its appeal. • Investment: Support community facilities and schools to increase the opportunities to play. • Accessibility: Make the customer journey to playing tennis easier and more accessible for anyone. 	Some opportunities to improve local facilities, linked to tennis participation programmes.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement: Engage and collaborate with everyone involved in delivering tennis in Britain, particularly coaches and volunteers, to attract and maintain more people in the game. • Performance: Create a pathway for British champions that nurtures a diverse team of players, people and leaders. • Leadership: Lead tennis in Britain to the highest standard so it is a safe, welcoming, well-run sport. 	
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Consultation with the Lawn Tennis Association’s Participation Development Manager identified the following issues:

- ‘The LTA’s vision for tennis which has recently been introduced following a major consultative process. The vision is ‘Tennis Opened Up’ and the mission is to grow tennis by making it more relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable. Strategic initiatives at county and national level aim to support this’.
- The LTA’s ‘*Transforming Tennis Together*’ programme will invest £125 million over 10-years to improve local tennis facilities, with a target to double the number of children and casual adults playing tennis.
- The LTA wants to work with local networks, to promote a joined up, transformational improvement to existing facilities, largely through increasing the number of courts that are floodlit and covered but also courts that can be booked online.

9.11 Future demand for indoor tennis courts

9.11.1 Population growth

Two scenarios are considered:

- The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 190,680 by 2040, an increase of 11,635 or 6.5%.
- A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population of 213,159 by 2040, an increase of 34,114 or 19.1%.

9.11.2 Participation rates

- **National trends:** Sport England’s ‘*Active Lives*’ survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for tennis at national level since 2015:

<i>Nov 2015- Nov 2016</i>	<i>May 2016- May 2017</i>	<i>Nov 2016- Nov 2017</i>	<i>May 2017- May 2018</i>	<i>Nov 2017- Nov 2018</i>	<i>May 2018- May 2019</i>	<i>Nov 2018- Nov 2019</i>	<i>May 2019- May 2020</i>	<i>% Change</i>
2.0%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	1.7%	1.7%	1.6%	1.6%	-0.4%

- **Local trends:** Sport England’s ‘*Active Lives*’ survey recorded the proportion of the adult (16+) population who are active for at least 150 minutes per week in West Suffolk between 2015 and the present. The results are tabulated below and show that rates have increased significantly between 2015 and 2020:

<i>Nov 2015- Nov 2016</i>	<i>May 2016- May 2017</i>	<i>May 2017- May 2018</i>	<i>May 2018- May 2019</i>	<i>May 2019- May 2020</i>	<i>% Change</i>
55.4%	60.6%	61.7%	61.2%	64.4%	+9.0%

9.11.3 The impact of coronavirus

Sport England's *'Active Lives'* survey analysed the effects of covid-19 on participation rates in sport and physical activity in the initial period of the pandemic (March - May 2020), which provides some pointers to the possible longer-term impact on activity patterns. The key findings were as follows:

- All formal indoor and outdoor sports facilities were closed in this period and social distancing measures meant that team sports were prohibited.
- Despite large numbers of adults switching into alternative activities, the overall number of regularly active adults fell due to the disruption caused by the pandemic when there were fewer opportunities to be active.
- During the mid-March to mid-May period, the number of active adults nationally (defined as taking at least 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity exercise) fell by 7.1%, or just over 3 million, whilst inactivity levels rose by 7.4% or 3.4 million adults.
- Walking, running and cycling all increased participation rates marginally, but activities dependent on formal facilities like indoor tennis courts fell by 56%.

The long-term implications of covid-19 on participation patterns and demand for facilities like indoor tennis courts are still being assessed, but it is likely that some sports will struggle to recover their pre-pandemic participation rates, due to former participants who have altered their exercise patterns during lockdown periods not reverting to their former habits.

9.11.4 Future projections

National tennis participation rates have been falling in recent years but offset against a rise in general activity rates in West Suffolk over the same period, it would therefore be reasonable to assume that demand for tennis will remain static until 2040, whilst population growth of 6.5% or 19.1% will increase demand for indoor tennis capacity by a similar amount.

9.12 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Tennis participation rates in West Suffolk are projected to remain static until 2040.
- Population growth of 6.5% or 19.1% in West Suffolk by 2040 is likely to increase demand for indoor tennis court capacity by a similar amount.

9.13 The balance between indoor tennis court supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between indoor tennis court supply and demand in West Suffolk:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough courts with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the courts fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the courts in the right location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the courts available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

9.14 Quantity

9.14.1 Current needs

Current indoor tennis courts in West Suffolk are operating with limited spare capacity, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used capacity:** Peak usage rates at both sites are 80%.
- **Satisfied demand:** There is no evidence of unmet demand in the district.

9.14.2 Future needs

Spare capacity at the existing indoor and outdoor tennis courts should be able to accommodate all additional future demand, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Demand increases:** The district's population is projected to increase by between 11,635 and 34,114 by 2040. This will represent an increase of between 6.5% and 19.1% over the mid-2018 population estimate.
- **Participation trends:** Based on national and local sports participation trends, for the purposes of forecasting future demand the likeliest scenario is for participation rates to remain at their current levels.
- **Additional needs:** With some spare capacity at present, no additional courts will be required by 2040.

9.15 Quality

9.15.1 Current quality

The quality of the indoor courts is 'good'.

9.15.2 Future quality

It seems reasonable to assume that the courts at both sites will continue to be maintained to a high standard.

9.16 Accessibility

9.16.1 Current accessibility

The whole population of the district is within 30-minutes' drive time of an indoor tennis court, with the exception of an area to the east of Haverhill, west of Mildenhall and north of Lakenheath.

9.16.2 Future accessibility

The location of proposed new development in the district is such that the future population will also be within 30-minutes drivetime of an indoor court.

9.17 Availability

9.17.1 Current availability

There is no 'pay-and-play' access to the indoor courts.

9.17.2 Future availability

Negotiating additional hours of community use at the courts would improve future availability.

9.18 The options for securing additional indoor tennis court capacity

The options for securing existing and additional indoor tennis court capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

9.18.1 Protect

Protecting existing indoor tennis courts through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

9.18.2 Provide

With current spare capacity, all extra demand can be accommodated by the existing courts.

9.18.3 Enhance

Enhancing access to the existing indoor tennis courts capacity by negotiating additional hours of community use.

9.19 Action Plan

9.19.1 Introduction

The tables below set out the suggested action plan for indoor tennis facilities to guide the implementation of the Assessment.

9.19.2 Key strategic actions

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Protection of existing indoor tennis courts.	Consider the inclusion of a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing indoor tennis courts.	WSC	-	-	High
Existing spare capacity can meet future demand by 2040.	Consider the inclusion of a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing indoor tennis courts.	WSC	-	-	High
Maintaining existing indoor tennis courts	Encourage existing providers to maintain existing courts to sustain and improve current quality.	WSC	Court providers	Dependent on the scale and nature of provision.	High

9.19.3 Site-specific opportunities for consideration

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
No formal Community Use Agreement at Culford School	Consider the merits of a formal Community Use Agreement	WSC	Culford School	-	Medium

10 INDOOR BOWLS FACILITIES

Key findings:

- **Quantity:** There are four indoor bowls facilities in West Suffolk, collectively comprising 14 rinks. There is sufficient spare capacity at existing indoor facilities to cater for all additional demand to 2040.
- **Quality:** The quality of all facilities is generally good.
- **Accessibility:** The whole district population is within the 30-minute drivetime catchment of an indoor bowls facility.
- **Availability:** The facilities all operate on a membership basis, although Risbygate Sports Club allows 'pay-and-play' access at off-peak times.

10.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of indoor bowls facilities in West Suffolk. Indoor bowls halls are defined specialist indoor facilities with appropriate playing surface and rink dimensions for bowls.

10.2 Quantity

10.2.1 Indoor Bowls Facilities with Community Use

There are four indoor bowls facilities in West Suffolk. All have secured community access:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Rinks</i>	<i>Sub-area</i>
Haverhill Indoor Bowls Club	Manor Road, Haverhill CB9 0EP	4	Haverhill
Lakenheath Indoor Bowls Club	Back Street, Lakenheath IP27 9HN	3	Mildenhall
Risbygate Sports Club	Westley Road, Bury St. Edmunds IP33 3RR	4	Bury St. Edmunds
West Row Indoor Bowls Club	Beeches Road, West Row IP28 8NY	3	Mildenhall

10.2.2 Sub-area analysis

The distribution of indoor bowls facilities (and the integral number of rinks) with community use by sub-area in West Suffolk is as follows:

<i>Sub-area</i>	<i>Sub-area population 2020</i>	<i>No. rinks</i>	<i>Rinks per capita</i>
Bury St. Edmunds	74,671	4	1: 18,668
Newmarket	22,141	0	-
Haverhill	38,032	4	9,508
Mildenhall	34,260	6	5,710
Brandon	9,941	0	-
WEST SUFFOLK	179,045	14	1: 12,789

10.3 Quality

The quality of the indoor bowls facilities was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit. The criteria that were assessed were as follows:

- **The green:** The overall condition, lighting, spectator provision, equipment storage and fitness for purpose.
- **Changing facilities:** The capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- **Disability access:** The extent of full disabled access to the facility, including the provision of access ramps, dedicated changing, toilets and car parking.
- **General access:** Car parking, signposting, external lighting and proximity to public transport.

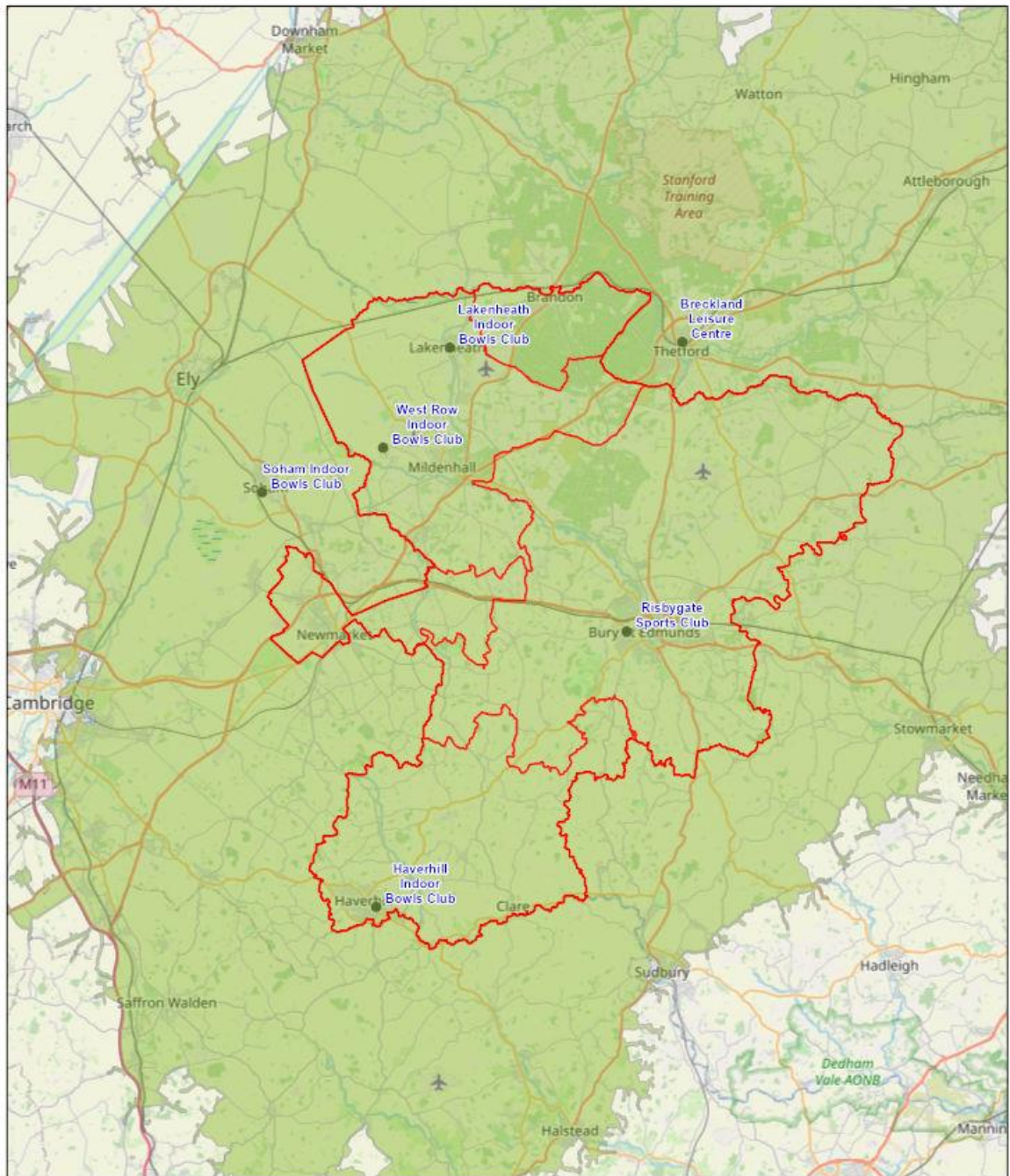
The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to ‘very good’ (highlighted in green below), 4 to ‘good’ (also highlighted in green below), 3 to ‘average’ (highlighted in yellow below), 2 to ‘poor’ (highlighted in red below) and 1 to ‘very poor’. The ratings for the indoor bowls facilities in West Suffolk are shown in the table below.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Disability Access</i>	<i>General access</i>
Haverhill Indoor Bowls Club	5	5	4	4
Lakenheath Indoor Bowls Club	5	5	3	3
Risbygate Sports Club	5	5	4	3
West Row Indoor Bowls Club	4	4	4	3

10.4 Accessibility

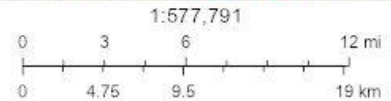
Based on Sport England research, the ‘effective catchment’ for indoor bowls facilities (defined as the time/distance travelled and the prevailing mode of transport used by up to 90% of facility users) is 30 minutes driving time. The whole population of the district is within 30-minutes’ drive time of an indoor bowls green.

WEST SUFFOLK - Indoor Bowls within 30 Minutes Drive



7/20/2021

- SUB AREAS Brandon, Mildenhall, Newmarket, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill
- 30.0 Minutes
- INDOOR BOWLS
- WEST SUFFOLK BOUNDARY



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10.5 Availability

The table below identifies the basis of use of the indoor bowls facilities in West Suffolk.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Opening hours and basis of use</i>	<i>Pricing</i>	<i>Peak use</i>
Haverhill Indoor Bowls Club	Mon-Sun 10.30am - 10.30pm Members only	Annual membership Adults £50 Juniors £16	70%
Lakenheath Indoor Bowls Club	Mon-Sun 10am - 10.45pm Members only	Annual membership Adults £30 Juniors £5	63%
Risbygate Sports Club	Mon-Sun 9am - 10.30pm Members and 'pay-and-play'	Annual membership Adults £80 Juniors £24 'Pay-and-play' £6 for 2 hours	65%
West Row Indoor Bowls Club	Mon-Sun 9am - 10pm Members only	Annual membership Adults £50 Juniors £20	38%

10.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are four indoor bowls facilities in West Suffolk, collectively comprising 14 rinks.
- The quality of the facilities is 'good'.
- The whole population is within 30-minutes' drive of an indoor bowls facility.
- The facilities all operate on a membership basis, although Risbygate Sports Club allows 'pay-and-play' access at off-peak times.

10.7 Current demand for bowls facilities

10.7.1 Expressed demand

The membership of each indoor bowls club in West Suffolk is tabulated below. Sport England's *Indoor Bowls Guidance Note* (2005) stipulates that full capacity is reached at 80 - 100 members per rink. This suggests that expressed demand amounts to around 70% based on 100 members per rink.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>No. members</i>	<i>% capacity</i>
Haverhill Indoor Bowls Club	280	70%
Lakenheath Indoor Bowls Club	189	63%
Risbygate Sports Club	260	65%
West Row Indoor Bowls Club	115	38%

10.7.2 Displaced demand

The following facilities are located in adjacent local authority areas, close enough to the district boundary to provide usage opportunities for West Suffolk residents.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Distance from West Suffolk boundary</i>
Soham Indoor Bowls Club	College Close, Soham CB7 5HP	2.5 miles
Breckland Leisure Centre	Croxton Road, Thetford IP24 1JD	2.5 miles

10.7.3 Unmet demand

There is no evidence of any unmet demand in the district.

10.8 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in West Suffolk, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. As an activity appealing primarily to older age groups, bowls is likely to have some appeal to new and lapsed sports participants in an expanding proportion of the population.

10.9 Assessments of need in neighbouring areas

The table below summarises strategic assessments of indoor bowls needs in neighbouring areas.

<i>Local Authority</i>	<i>Facilities priorities</i>	<i>Implications for West Suffolk</i>
East Cambridgeshire	The 'East Cambridgeshire Indoor Sports Needs Assessment and Action Plan' (2015) states that 'both current and future demand for indoor bowls facilities in the District is met'.	There is spare capacity that might meet surplus demand from the Newmarket or Mildenhall areas.
South Cambridgeshire	The 'Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2015 - 2031' (2016) identifies that 'although no need has been identified at the current time to develop additional facilities, as there is capacity in the two existing centres, this will need to be reviewed in the future, as the population grows'.	The existing facilities are too distant to serve needs from South Cams.
Braintree	The 'Braintree Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Study' (2017) states that 'although there may be a theoretical demand for an indoor bowls facility within the local authority, this does not appear to be evidenced by local opinion'.	Braintree has no facilities so residents in the north of the district are likely to use Haverhill IBC.
Mid-Suffolk	The 'Babergh and Mid-Suffolk Leisure Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Review' (2021) does not include an assessment of indoor bowls needs.	No assessment
Babergh	The 'Babergh and Mid-Suffolk Leisure Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Review' (2021) does not include an assessment of indoor bowls needs.	No assessment
Breckland	Breckland Council's 'Evidence Base for Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities' (2017) identified that 'the supply of indoor bowling centres is more than sufficient to meet current demand and can accommodate a very large increase in membership. Overall there is more than sufficient provision of indoor bowling centres in Breckland to 2031'.	There is spare capacity to meet some demand from the Brandon sub-area.
Kings Lynn and West Norfolk	The Council does not have a current assessment of indoor sports facilities needs.	No assessment

10.10 Sport-specific priorities

Consultation with Bowls England and the local clubs identified the following issues:

- The current West Suffolk facilities serve all local needs.
- Membership numbers have remained broadly static for the past five years.

10.11 Future demand for bowls

10.11.1 Population growth

Two scenarios are considered:

- The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 190,680 by 2040, an increase of 11,635 or 6.5%.
- A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population of 213,159 by 2040, an increase of 34,114 or 19.1%.

10.11.2 Participation rates

- **National trends:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for bowls at national level since 2015:

<i>Nov 2015- Nov 2016</i>	<i>May 2016- May 2017</i>	<i>Nov 2016- Nov 2017</i>	<i>May 2017- May 2018</i>	<i>Nov 2017- Nov 2018</i>	<i>May 2018- May 2019</i>	<i>Nov 2018- Nov 2019</i>	<i>May 2019- May 2020</i>	<i>% Change</i>
0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%	-0.3%

- **Local trends:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey recorded the proportion of the adult (16+) population who are active for at least 150 minutes per week in West Suffolk between 2015 and the present. The results are tabulated below and show that rates have increased significantly between 2015 and 2020:

<i>Nov 2015- Nov 2016</i>	<i>May 2016- May 2017</i>	<i>May 2017- May 2018</i>	<i>May 2018- May 2019</i>	<i>May 2019- May 2020</i>	<i>% Change</i>
55.4%	60.6%	61.7%	61.2%	64.4%	+9.0%

10.11.3 The impact of coronavirus

Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey analysed the effects of covid-19 on participation rates in sport and physical activity in the initial period of the pandemic (March - May 2020), which provides some pointers to the possible longer-term impact on activity patterns. The key findings were as follows:

- All formal indoor and outdoor sports facilities were closed in this period and social distancing measures meant that team sports were prohibited.
- Despite large numbers of adults switching into alternative activities, the overall number of regularly active adults fell due to the disruption caused by the pandemic when there were fewer opportunities to be active.

- During the mid-March to mid-May period, the number of active adults nationally (defined as taking at least 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity exercise) fell by 7.1%, or just over 3 million, whilst inactivity levels rose by 7.4% or 3.4 million adults.
- Walking, running and cycling all increased participation rates marginally, but activities dependent on formal facilities like indoor bowls halls fell by 56%.

The long-term implications of covid-19 on participation patterns and demand for facilities like indoor bowls halls are still being assessed, but it is likely that some sports will struggle to recover their pre-pandemic participation rates, due to former participants who have altered their exercise patterns during lockdown periods not reverting to their former habits.

10.11.4 Future projections

Sport England has developed the Sport Facility Calculator (SFC), to help to quantify how much additional demand for key community facilities like indoor bowls halls, will be generated by population increases. The SFC uses Sport England survey data on who uses facilities and applies this to the population profile of the local area. This builds up a profile of usage, which can be then applied to estimate how much demand any given population would generate. This demand is then converted into the quantity of facilities needed and expressed as rinks to define indoor bowls needs. For the purposes of projecting future demand in West Suffolk, two scenarios are considered:

- The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 190,680 by 2040, an increase of 11,635 or 6.5%. Based upon this, the SFC calculates demand equivalent to an additional 0.85 indoor bowls rinks (equivalent to 0.14 of a 4-rink facility) in West Suffolk by 2040.
- A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population of 213,159 by 2040, an increase of 34,114 or 19.1%. Based upon this, the SFC calculates demand equivalent to an additional 2.52 indoor bowls rinks (equivalent to 0.42 of a 4-rink facility) in West Suffolk by 2040.

10.12 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Expressed demand for indoor bowls in West Suffolk has remained static in recent years, despite a downward trend nationally.
- Utilisation rates at the West Suffolk facilities average around 70% in the peak period, meaning that there is substantial spare capacity to accommodate additional demand.
- Population growth of 6.5% in West Suffolk by 2040 is likely to increase demand for indoor bowls capacity by a similar amount, assuming static participation rates in the future.
- Based on the lower population projections, there will be demand equivalent to an additional 0.85 indoor bowls rinks (equivalent to 0.14 of a 4-rink facility) in West Suffolk by 2040.
- Based on the higher population projections, there will be demand equivalent to an additional 2.52 indoor bowls rinks (equivalent to 0.42 of a 4-rink facility) in West Suffolk by 2040.

10.13 The balance between bowls supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between indoor bowls supply and demand in West Suffolk:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough greens with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the greens fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the greens in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the greens available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

10.14 Quantity

10.14.1 Current needs

Current indoor bowls facilities serving West Suffolk are assessed to be at operating with spare capacity, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used capacity:** Utilisation rates at the West Suffolk facilities average just under 60% in the peak period, meaning that there is substantial spare capacity to accommodate additional demand.
- **Satisfied demand:** There is no evidence of unmet demand in the district.

10.14.2 Future needs

Spare capacity at the existing indoor bowls facilities should be able to accommodate all additional future demand, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Demand increases:** The district's population is projected to increase by between 11,635 and 34,114 by 2040. This will represent an increase of between 6.5% and 19.1% over the mid-2018 population estimate.
- **Participation trends:** Local bowls participation rates have been projected to remain static until 2040.
- **Additional indoor bowls needs:** The Sport Facility Calculator assesses that the extra demand for indoor bowls is equivalent to 0.85 indoor rinks. Current spare capacity at the existing facilities in West Suffolk is sufficient to accommodate all additional demand to 2040.

10.15 Quality

10.15.1 Current quality

The quality of facilities is generally 'good'.

10.15.2 Future quality

All providers will need to continue to invest in maintaining and improving their facilities.

10.16 Accessibility

10.16.1 Current accessibility

The whole population is within 30-minutes' drive of an indoor bowls facility.

10.16.2 Future accessibility

Providing there are no further facility closures, the current geographical spread of facilities will meet the needs of the increased population by 2040.

10.17 Availability

10.17.1 Current availability

The facilities all operate on a membership basis, although Risbygate Sports Club allows 'pay-and-play' access at off-peak times.

10.17.2 Future availability

It is reasonable to assume that a similar balance of arrangements for use will be offered in the future.

10.18 The options for securing additional indoor bowls capacity

The options for securing existing and additional bowls capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

10.18.1 Protect

Protecting the existing indoor bowls facilities through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

10.18.2 Provide

With spare capacity at both the existing facilities, all additional demand can be accommodated by current spare capacity.

10.18.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing indoor bowls facility capacity by ensuring that the playing surfaces and ancillary facilities receive regular maintenance and improvements.

10.19 Action Plan

The table below sets out the suggested action plan for indoor bowls facilities to guide the implementation of the Assessment.

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Protection of existing indoor bowls facilities.	Consider the inclusion of a policy in the Local Plan to protect all indoor bowls facilities.	WSC	-	-	High
Existing spare capacity can meet future demand by 2040.	Maintain existing facilities to sustain and improve current quality.	Indoor bowls clubs	-	-	High

11 INDOOR NETBALL FACILITIES

Key findings:

- **Quantity:** Netball is played indoors at five sports halls in the district. Existing facilities will cater for future demand to 2040.
- **Quality:** The quality of all aspects of all sports halls is rated as ‘standard’ or better, with the exception of the tarmac floor and air handling at Samuel Ward. No quality issues have any impact upon either capacity or usage levels at present.
- **Accessibility:** The whole district population is within the 20-minute drivetime catchment of a sports hall used for netball apart from rural areas in the west of the Brandon sub-area, north of the Mildenhall sub-area, the east of the Haverhill sub-area and east and south of the Bury St. Edmunds sub-area.
- **Availability:** All facilities are available for hire at reasonable rates and the opening hours are consistent with the needs of netball.

11.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of indoor netball facilities in West Suffolk. Indoor netball is generally accommodated in non-specialist sports halls.

11.2 Quantity

Sports halls in West Suffolk that are used regularly for indoor netball are as follows:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Sub-area</i>	<i>Community use</i>
County Upper School	Beeton’s Way, Bury St. Edmunds IP32 6RF	34.5m x 20m	Bury St. Edmunds	Unsecured
Culford Sports Centre	Culford IP28 6TX	39m x 22m	Bury St. Edmunds	Unsecured
Mildenhall Hub	Sheldrick Way, Mildenhall IP28 7JX	35m x 20m	Mildenhall	Secured
Newmarket Leisure Centre	Exning Road, Newmarket CB8 0AE	32m x 18m	Newmarket	Secured
Samuel Ward Academy	Chalkstone Way, Haverhill CB9 0LD	45m x 35m	Haverhill	Unsecured

11.2.1 Sub-area analysis

The distribution of sports halls used for netball by sub-area in West Suffolk is as follows:

<i>Sub-area</i>	<i>Sub-area population 2020</i>	<i>No. halls</i>	<i>Halls per capita</i>
Bury St. Edmunds	74,671	2	1: 37,336
Newmarket	22,141	1	1: 22,141
Haverhill	38,032	1	1: 38,032
Mildenhall	34,260	1	1: 34,260
Brandon	9,941	0	-
WEST SUFFOLK	179,045	5	1: 44,761

11.3 Quality

The quality of sports halls in West Suffolk with netball use was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were evaluated were as follows:

- **Playing area:** The overall condition, playing surface, clear span roof height, lighting, spectator provision, equipment and fitness for purpose.
- **Changing facilities:** The capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- **Disability access:** The extent of full disabled access to the facility, including the provision of access ramps, dedicated changing, toilets and car parking.
- **Maintenance and cleanliness:** The quality of maintenance and cleanliness standards.
- **General access:** Car parking, signposting, external lighting and proximity to public transport.

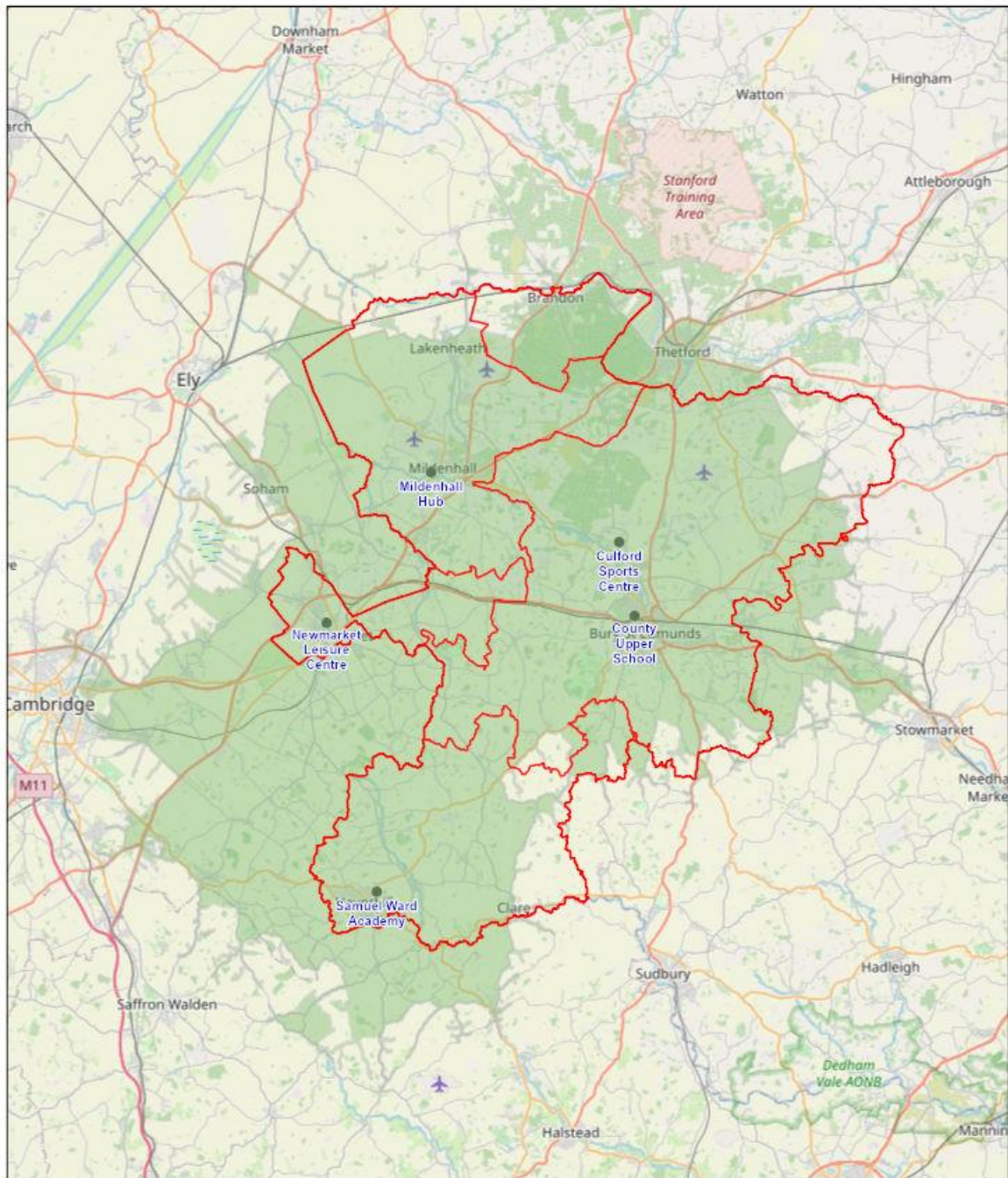
The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to ‘very good’ (highlighted in green below), 4 to ‘good’ (also highlighted in green below), 3 to ‘average’, 2 to ‘poor’ and 1 to ‘very poor’. The ratings for the sports halls in West Suffolk are shown in the table below.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Playing area</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Disability Access</i>	<i>Maintenance</i>	<i>General access</i>
County Upper School	4	3	4	4	4
Culford Sports Centre	5	4	4	5	4
Mildenhall Hub	5	5	5	5	5
Newmarket Leisure Centre	5	5	5	5	5
Samuel Ward Academy	2	4	4	4	4

11.4 Accessibility

The ‘effective catchment’ for sports halls (defined as the time/distance travelled and the prevailing mode of transport used by up to 90% of facility users) is 20 minutes driving time. The whole population of the district is within 20-minutes’ drive of at least one sports hall used for netball, with the exception of sparsely populated rural areas in the north, south and east of the district.

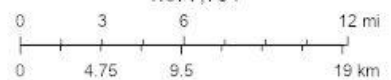
WEST SUFFOLK - Indoor Netball Facilities 20 Minutes Drive



7/20/2021

1:577,791

- SUB AREAS Brandon, Mildenhall, Newmarket, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill
- 20.0 Minutes
- INDOOR NETBALL
- WEST SUFFOLK BOUNDARY



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11.5 Availability

The table below identifies the basis of use of sports halls for netball in West Suffolk.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Opening hours and basis of use</i>	<i>Pricing and booking arrangements</i>	<i>Peak period usage levels</i>
County Upper School	Mon-Fri 6pm - 10pm Sat-Sun 10am - 6pm Block bookings only	Whole hall £50 per hour. Advance bookings only by email or phone.	65%
Culford Sports and Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri 5pm - 10pm Sat-Sun 8.30am - 5pm Membership only	Membership Adult £37 per month Junior £19 per month	50%
Mildenhall Hub	Mon-Fri 5pm - 10pm Sat-Sun 9am - 2pm Casual use and block bookings	Whole hall £40 per hour. Bookings in person, on-line or by phone.	-
Newmarket Leisure Centre	Mon-Fri 6am - 9pm Sat-Sun 8am - 4pm Casual use and block bookings	Whole hall £40 per hour. Bookings in person, on-line or by phone.	70%
Samuel Ward Academy	Mon-Fri 6am - 12pm, 4pm - 9pm Sat-Sun 8am - 4pm Block bookings only	Whole hall £50 per hour Advance bookings only by email or phone.	65%

11.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- Five sports halls are used for netball West Suffolk. Only two have secured community use.
- The quality of all aspects of all sports halls is rated as ‘standard’ or better, with the exception of the tarmac floor and air handling at Samuel Ward. No quality issues have any impact upon either capacity or usage levels at present.
- The whole population of the district is within 20-minutes’ drive of at least one sports hall used for netball, with the exception of sparsely populated rural areas in the north, south and east of the district.

11.7 Current demand for netball facilities

11.7.1 Local club demand

Netball clubs in West Suffolk and the indoor courts where they play are as follows:

<i>Club</i>	<i>Courts</i>	<i>Teams</i>
Breckland Netball Club	Mildenhall Hub (indoors)	1 senior 1 junior
<i>Burwell Netball Club</i>	Newmarket Leisure Centre	1 senior
Cockfield Netball Club	Culford Sports Centre	3 senior 3 junior
Havebury Netball Club	Culford Sports Centre	2 senior
Haverhill Netball Club	Samuel Ward Academy	2 senior 2 junior

<i>Club</i>	<i>Courts</i>	<i>Teams</i>
Jetts Netball Club	Culford Sports Centre	2 senior 3 junior
Jubilee Netball Club	Culford Sports Centre	2 senior 1 junior
Newmarket Netball Club	Newmarket Leisure Centre	1 senior
Moreton Hall Netball Club	King Edward V School	3 senior 2 junior
Phoenix Flames Netball Club	<i>Thurston Community College</i>	2 senior
Rougham Harriers Netball Club	Culford Sports Centre	1 senior
Swifts Netball Club	Culford Sports Centre	1 senior

11.7.2 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to users of netball courts from within the study area which takes place outside of the area. There is no evidence of displaced demand.

11.7.3 Unmet demand

There is no evidence of any unmet demand.

11.8 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in West Suffolk, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. As a sport with versions of the game appealing to most age groups, netball is likely to have some appeal to new and lapsed sports participants.

11.9 Assessments of need in neighbouring areas

There are no assessed needs specifically for indoor netball in neighbouring areas. However, the table below summarises strategic assessments for sports halls in general in neighbouring areas.

<i>Local Authority</i>	<i>Facilities priorities</i>	<i>Implications for West Suffolk</i>
East Cambridgeshire	The 'East Cambridgeshire Indoor Sports Needs Assessment and Action Plan' (2015) states that supply of sports halls in the district exceeds demand and therefore 'it is anticipated that there will be a surplus of sports halls in the District by 2026'.	There is some spare capacity that might meet surplus demand from the Newmarket area.
South Cambridgeshire	The 'Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2015 - 2031' (2016) identifies a need for two additional sports halls by 2031, primarily associated with demand from new housing developments to the north and west of Cambridge.	There is no current spare capacity to meet demand from West Suffolk and the location of new provision is too distant to meet needs.
Braintree	The 'Braintree Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Study' (2017) states that 'the existing supply of community sports halls is not quite sufficient to meet current estimated demand, although the unmet demand is not focussed on any particular geographic area'.	There is no current spare capacity to meet demand and the location of new provision is too distant to meet needs from West Suffolk.

Local Authority	Facilities priorities	Implications for West Suffolk
Mid-Suffolk	The 'Mid-Suffolk, Leisure Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Update' (2021) identifies that sports hall supply and demand are currently balanced, with a deficit of one badminton court in 2036. The assessment states that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Sports hall provision is heavily reliant upon education sites (4 of the 7 identified), limiting access during the day and providing the Council with limited control in how they are managed in terms of community use'. • 'The age and condition of the only fully publicly accessible sports halls at Mid Suffolk LC and Debenham LC is also an issue and the current oversupply could shift to an undersupply if facilities reach the end of their economic life or deteriorate in quality to such extent as to significantly impact upon their ability to meet the needs of users'. 	There is no current spare capacity to meet demand and the location of provision is too distant to meet needs from West Suffolk.
Babergh	The 'Babergh Leisure Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Update' (2021) identifies over-supply of 20 badminton courts both currently and in 2036, but states that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'The total supply of sports halls across the district is sufficient to meet current and future estimated demand'. • 'However, a key challenge for sports hall provision in the district is that all of these are on education sites, limiting access during the day and providing the Council with limited control in how they are managed in terms of community use'. • 'The age and condition of a number of sports halls is also an issue and the current oversupply could shift to an undersupply if facilities reach the end of their economic life or deteriorate in quality to such extent as to significantly impact upon their ability to meet the needs of users'. 	There is some spare capacity to meet demand but the location of provision is too distant to meet needs from West Suffolk.
Breckland	Breckland Council's 'Evidence Base for Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities' (2017) identified the need re-provide sports halls in Attleborough and Swaffham and for a new sports hall in Dereham by 2031.	There is no current spare capacity to meet demand from West Suffolk.
Kings Lynn & West Norfolk	The Council does not have a current assessment of indoor sports facilities needs.	No assessment

11.10 Sport-specific priorities

England Netball's 'Vision, Mission and Strategic Goals' (2016) has the following facilities objectives:

Facilities priorities	Implications for West Suffolk
In partnership with Badminton England and England Basketball actively influence the development of, and access to community facilities in common priority areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a new network of appropriate standard indoor netball facilities through a partnership with the English Cricket Board. • Increase and enhance the network of County and Regional Netball Centres providing central venue homes for netball. • Support the provision of Intensive Netball Training Centres offering high quality netball environments for performance athletes. 	No specific local facilities priorities in West Suffolk

Consultation with England Netball highlighted the following issues:

- ‘Bee Netball’ is aimed at 5 to 11 year olds as an introduction to the sport, although there are no local opportunities in West Suffolk whilst the scheme is piloted.
- Traditional 7-A-Side Netball is played by over 180,000 women every week. All age ranges and levels of ability are catered for with traditional netball - from primary school children to people playing in local leagues, plus returning players through to regional or premier league right up to elite international athletes - anyone can play the game at the level that suits them. There are five affiliated clubs in West Suffolk at present.
- ‘Back to Netball’ is aimed at lapsed participants and provides a gentle reintroduction to the sport. All five clubs in West Suffolk offer ‘Back to Netball’ opportunities.
- Walking Netball has evolved from a growing demand for walking sports. Often, one of netball’s strengths is that people never forget playing the sport and the memories as well as the love for the game never leave. Walking Netball is a slower version of the game - it is netball, but at a walking pace. The game has been designed so that anyone can play it regardless of age or fitness level. Jetts Netball Club offers Walking Netball opportunities in conjunction with Abbeycroft Leisure.

11.11 Future demand for netball

11.11.1 Population growth

Two scenarios are considered:

- The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 190,680 by 2040, an increase of 11,635 or 6.5%.
- A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population of 213,159 by 2040, an increase of 34,114 or 19.1%.

11.11.2 Participation rates

- **National trends:** Sport England’s ‘Active Lives’ survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for netball at national level since 2015:

<i>Nov 2015- Nov 2016</i>	<i>May 2016- May 2017</i>	<i>Nov 2016- Nov 2017</i>	<i>May 2017- May 2018</i>	<i>Nov 2017- Nov 2018</i>	<i>May 2018- May 2019</i>	<i>Nov 2018- Nov 2019</i>	<i>May 2019- May 2020</i>	<i>% Change</i>
0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	-0.1%

- **Local trends:** Sport England’s ‘Active Lives’ survey recorded the proportion of the adult (16+) population who are active for at least 150 minutes per week in West Suffolk between 2015 and the present. The results are tabulated below and show that rates have increased significantly between 2015 and 2020:

<i>Nov 2015- Nov 2016</i>	<i>May 2016- May 2017</i>	<i>May 2017- May 2018</i>	<i>May 2018- May 2019</i>	<i>May 2019- May 2020</i>	<i>% Change</i>
55.4%	60.6%	61.7%	61.2%	64.4%	+9.0%

11.11.3 The impact of coronavirus

Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey analysed the effects of covid-19 on participation rates in sport and physical activity in the initial period of the pandemic (March - May 2020), which provides some pointers to the possible longer-term impact on activity patterns. The key findings were as follows:

- All formal indoor and outdoor sports facilities were closed in this period and social distancing measures meant that team sports were prohibited.
- Despite large numbers of adults switching into alternative activities, the overall number of regularly active adults fell due to the disruption caused by the pandemic when there were fewer opportunities to be active.
- During the mid-March to mid-May period, the number of active adults nationally (defined as taking at least 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity exercise) fell by 7.1%, or just over 3 million, whilst inactivity levels rose by 7.4% or 3.4 million adults.
- Walking, running and cycling all increased participation rates marginally, but activities dependent on formal facilities like sports halls fell by 56%.

The long-term implications of covid-19 on participation patterns and demand for facilities like sports halls are still being assessed, but it is likely that some sports will struggle to recover their pre-pandemic participation rates, due to former participants who have altered their exercise patterns during lockdown periods not reverting to their former habits.

11.11.4 Future projections

National netball participation rates have been broadly static in recent years but offset against a rise in general activity rates in West Suffolk over the same period, it would therefore be reasonable to assume that demand for netball will remain steady until 2040, whilst population growth of 6.5% or 19.1% will increase demand for indoor netball court capacity by a similar amount.

11.12 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Expressed demand for netball in West Suffolk is currently steady.
- Population growth of 6.5% or 19.1% in West Suffolk by 2040 is likely to increase demand for indoor netball capacity by a similar amount, assuming static participation rates in the future.

11.13 The balance between netball supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between indoor netball court supply and demand in West Suffolk:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough courts with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the courts fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?

- **Accessibility:** Are the courts in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the courts available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

11.14 Quantity

11.14.1 Current needs

Current indoor netball facilities serving West Suffolk are assessed to have some spare capacity, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used capacity:** The average peak utilisation rates for sports halls used for netball in West Suffolk is 65%, which is well within the ‘comfortable capacity figure of 80%.
- **Unmet demand:** There is no evidence of unmet demand for indoor netball provision in West Suffolk.

11.14.2 Future needs

Additional indoor netball facilities will be required to meet future demand, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Demand increases:** Population growth of 6.5% or 19.1% in West Suffolk by 2040 is likely to increase demand for indoor netball capacity by a similar amount, assuming static participation rates in the future.
- **Existing indoor capacity:** Based upon a population increase of 11,635 people in the district by 2040 and sports participation rates remaining at current levels, there is current spare capacity in sports halls in the district to meet existing netball needs, so additional provision will not be required by 2040 to meet the extra demand arising from population growth and existing unmet demand.
- **Additional needs:** Based upon a population increase of 34,114 people in the district by 2040 and sports participation rates remaining at current levels, Sport England’s Sport Facility Calculator projects demand for an additional 9.21 badminton courts, which is equivalent to 2.3 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access. This would require the provision of one additional four-badminton court sized sports hall with the balance of additional need met by the existing spare capacity.

11.15 Quality

11.15.1 Current quality

The quality of all aspects of all sports halls used for netball is rated as ‘standard’ or better, with the exception of the tarmac floor and air handling at Samuel Ward. No quality issues have any impact upon either capacity or usage levels at present.

11.15.2 Future quality

All providers will need to continue to invest in maintaining and improving their facilities, but it seems reasonable to assume that local provision will continue to be upgraded regularly.

11.16 Accessibility

11.16.1 Current accessibility

The whole population of the district is within 20-minutes' drive of at least one sports hall used for netball, with the exception of sparsely populated rural areas in the north, south and east of the district.

11.16.2 Future accessibility

Providing there are no facility closures, the current geographical spread of facilities will meet the needs of the increased population by 2040.

11.17 Availability

11.17.1 Current availability

All facilities are available for hire at reasonable rates and the opening hours are consistent with the needs of netball.

11.17.2 Future availability

It is reasonable to assume that a similar balance of arrangements will be offered in the future.

11.18 The options for securing additional indoor netball capacity

The options for securing existing and additional indoor netball facilities capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

11.18.1 Protect

Protecting existing facilities used for indoor netball through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

11.18.2 Provide

Ensuring that any new sports halls meet the minimum size requirements for netball (34.5m x 20m) will be important.

11.18.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing netball facility capacity by ensuring that the courts and ancillary facilities receive regular maintenance and improvements.

11.19 Action Plan

11.19.1 Introduction

The tables below set out the suggested action plan for indoor tennis facilities to guide the implementation of the Assessment.

9.19.2 Key strategic actions

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Protection of existing indoor netball facilities.	Consider the inclusion of a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing indoor netball facilities.	WSC	-	-	High
Based on the lower population projections, existing spare capacity can meet future demand by 2040.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that existing spare capacity is used effectively. • Maintain existing halls to sustain and improve current quality. 	All providers	-	-	High
Based on the higher population projections, a need for an additional one additional sports hall is needed by 2040.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that existing spare capacity is used effectively. • Encourage the provision of additional facilities to meet future demand. 	All providers	-	-	High

9.19.3 Site-specific opportunities for consideration

<i>Site</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
County Upper School	Unsecured community use	Consider the merits of a formal Community Use Agreement	WSC	County Upper School	-	Medium
Culford School	Unsecured community use	Consider the merits of a formal Community Use Agreement	WSC	Culford School	-	Medium
Samuel Ward Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsecured community use • Poor quality floor and air handling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the merits of a formal Community Use Agreement • Improve floor quality and air handling 	Samuel Ward Academy	-	TBC	Medium

12 GYMNASTICS FACILITIES

Key findings:

- **Quantity:** There are three specialist gymnastics facilities in West Suffolk, supplemented by gymnastics use of non-specialist provision, including sports halls. There is evidence of unmet demand and extra capacity will be needed to meet additional demand to 2040.
- **Quality:** The quality of all aspects of the facilities are rated as at least ‘good’
- **Accessibility:** All the district is within 20 minutes driving time of a specialist or non-specialist facility apart from rural areas in the west of the Mildenhall sub-area, west of the Newmarket sub-area, the north-east of the Bury St. Edmunds sub-area and the east of the Haverhill sub-area.
- **Availability:** The main availability issues are caused by the excess of demand over facilities supply.

12.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of gymnastics facilities in West Suffolk. Specialist gymnastics facilities are defined as permanently rigged, built facilities that cater for the needs of gymnastics and trampolining. Non-specialist facilities comprise sports halls and smaller halls that accommodate gymnastics and trampolining on a regular basis, involving the temporary installation of equipment.

12.2 Quantity

12.2.1 Gymnastics facilities with community use

The purpose-built gymnastics facilities in West Suffolk are detailed below.

<i>Club</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Sub-area</i>
Breckland Forest Gymnastics Club	Wimbledon Avenue, Brandon IP27 0NZ	Brandon
Bury Spectrum Gymnastics Club	Northern Way, Bury St. Edmunds IP32 6NH	Bury St. Edmunds
Haverhill Gymnastics Club	Hollands Road, Haverhill CB9 8PR	Haverhill

12.2.2 Sub-area analysis

The distribution of specialist gymnastics facilities by sub-area in West Suffolk is as follows:

<i>Sub-area</i>	<i>Sub-area population 2020</i>	<i>No. facilities</i>	<i>Facilities per capita</i>
Bury St. Edmunds	74,671	1	1: 74,671
Newmarket	22,141	0	-
Haverhill	38,032	1	1: 38,032
Mildenhall	34,260	0	-
Brandon	9,941	1	1: 9,941
WEST SUFFOLK	179,045	3	1: 59,682

12.3 Quality

The quality of facilities used by gymnastics clubs was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all sites. The criteria that were assessed were as follows:

- **The hall:** The quality of the activity space, including lighting and storage facilities.
- **The equipment:** The quality of the equipment, matted areas and foam-filled pits.
- **Changing facilities:** The capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- **Disability access:** The extent of full disabled access to the facility, including the provision of access ramps, dedicated changing, toilets and car parking.
- **General access:** Parking, signage and proximity to public transport.

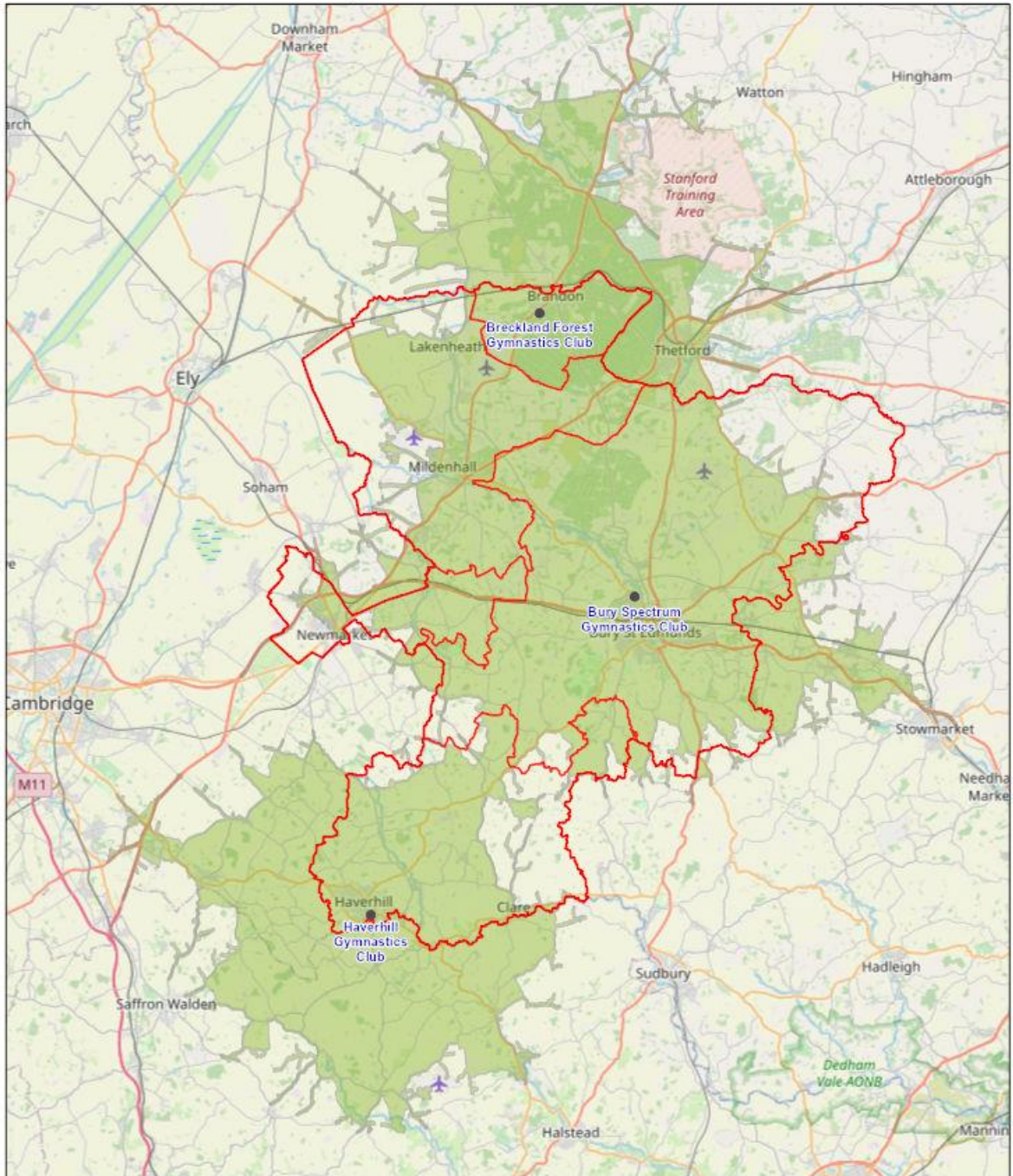
The criteria were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to 'very good' (highlighted in green below), 4 to 'good' (also highlighted in green below), 3 to 'average', 2 to 'poor' and 1 to 'very poor'.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Hall</i>	<i>Equipment</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Disability access</i>	<i>General access</i>
Breckland Forest Gymnastics Club	5	5	5	5	5
Bury Spectrum Gymnastics Club	3	5	4	4	4
Haverhill Gymnastics Club	4	4	4	4	5

12.4 Accessibility

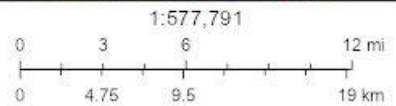
The 'effective catchment' for gymnastics facilities is 20 minutes driving time. The whole population is within 20-minutes' drive of at least one specialist facility, with the exception of sparsely populated rural areas in the north, south and east of the district.

WEST SUFFOLK - Gymnastics Facilities within 20 Minutes Drive



7/20/2021

- SUB AREAS Brandon, Mildenhall, Newmarket, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill
- GYMNASTICS
- 20.0 Minutes
- WEST SUFFOLK BOUNDARY



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12.5 Availability

The table below identifies the opening hours and gymnastics usage of the specialist facilities:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Opening hours and basis of use</i>	<i>Pricing</i>	<i>Peak use</i>
Breckland Forest Gymnastics Club	Mon 4.45pm - 9pm Weds 5pm - 8pm Thurs 5pm - 8.30pm Fri 9.15am - 10.15am 1pm - 2pm Members and classes only	Varies	75%
Bury Spectrum Gymnastics Club	Mon 10.30am - 8.30pm Tues 12.30pm - 8.30pm Weds 10.30am - 8.30pm Thurs 3.30pm - 8.30pm Fri 12.30pm - 8.30pm Sat 8.30am - 4.30pm Sun 9.30am - 1.30pm Members and classes only	Varies	90%
Haverhill Gymnastics Club	Mon 3.30pm - 8.30pm Tues 10am - 8.30pm Weds 3.30pm - 8.30pm Thurs 3.30pm - 8.30pm Fri 9am - 8.30pm Sat 9am - 8.30pm Sun 11am - 3.30pm Members and classes only	Monthly prices for hours per week: 1 hour: £24 2 hours: £46 3 hours: £55 4 hours: £60 5 hours: £72 6 hours: £84	90%

12.6 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are three specialist gymnastics facilities in West Suffolk.
- The quality of most aspects of all facilities used is rated as at least 'good'.
- The whole population is within 20 minutes driving time of a specialist facility, with the exception of sparsely populated rural areas in the north, south and east of the district.

12.7 Current demand for Gymnastics

12.7.1 Expressed demand

There are four gymnastics clubs in West Suffolk:

- **Breckland Forest Gymnastics Club:** The club has 58 members. It has no current waiting list.
- **Bury Spectrum Gymnastics Club:** The club has 723 members and has a current waiting list of 130.
- **Haverhill Gymnastics Club:** The club has 412 members with a waiting list of 250.

- **Newmarket Gymnastics Club:** The club has 75 members and is based in a non-specialist facility at The Racing Centre. It has no current waiting list.

12.7.2 Displaced demand

There are no facilities in adjacent local authority areas that are close enough to the district boundary to provide usage opportunities for West Suffolk residents.

12.7.3 Unmet demand

Unmet demand involves two components:

- Demand that cannot be met within a facility catchment due to excess demand for that facility.
- Demand that cannot be met because it is located outside the catchment of a facility.

Bury Spectrum GC has a waiting list of 130 (equivalent to 18% of the overall membership) and Haverhill GC has a waiting list of 250 (equivalent to 60.7% of the overall membership) indicating significant unmet demand in the district.

12.8 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in West Suffolk, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. Gymnastics appeals to young people in particular and from that perspective it offers one option in the campaign against childhood obesity.

12.9 West Suffolk Sports Facilities Strategy

The *West Suffolk Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2015 - 2031* (2015) identifies indoor sports facilities needs in the two former districts that now comprise West Suffolk. The strategy identified a need for increased access to dedicated facilities for club use and significant potential for a dedicated hall in Newmarket.

12.10 Assessments of need in neighbouring areas

The table below summarises strategic assessments of gymnastics needs in neighbouring areas.

Local Authority	Facilities priorities	Implications for West Suffolk
East Cambridgeshire	The <i>East Cambridgeshire Indoor Sports Needs Assessment and Action Plan</i> (2015) does not include an assessment of gymnastics needs.	No assessment
South Cambridgeshire	The <i>Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2015 - 2031</i> (2016) identifies that 'British Gymnastics does not identify the need for any additional specialist gymnastics facilities'.	No impact on provision in West Suffolk.
Braintree	The <i>Braintree Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Study</i> (2017) does not include an assessment of gymnastics facility needs.	No assessment

<i>Local Authority</i>	<i>Facilities priorities</i>	<i>Implications for West Suffolk</i>
Mid-Suffolk	The 'Babergh and Mid-Suffolk Leisure Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Review' (2021) does not include an assessment of gymnastics needs.	No assessment
Babergh	The 'Babergh and Mid-Suffolk Leisure Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Review' (2021) does not include an assessment of gymnastics needs.	No assessment
Breckland	Breckland Council's 'Evidence Base for Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities' (2017) does not include an assessment of gymnastics needs.	No assessment
Kings Lynn and West Norfolk	The Council does not have a current assessment of indoor sports facilities needs.	No assessment

12.11 Sport-specific priorities

12.11.1 Strategy

British Gymnastics strategic priorities in its 'Strategic Framework 2017 - 2021' outlined are:

- Diversify sources of revenue to develop and grow the provision of gymnastics.
- Build the capacity and grow the demand in gymnastics.
- Raise the profile and increase the appeal of gymnastics.

British Gymnastics' 'Facility Strategy 2017 - 2021' (2017) identifies a range of facilities options:

<i>Facilities priorities</i>	<i>Implications for West Suffolk</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standalone dedicated facilities - Achievable for most clubs. Can provide for participation and competition. • Multi-venue dedicated facilities - For large club-based organisations looking to further expand opportunities. • Dedicated facility as part of a multi-sport venue - Most likely to be local authority-based projects. • Non-dedicated space as part of leisure centre - Ideal for club delivery and mass participation activities. • Satellite venues - Opportunities for clubs to scale up their programmes and increase activity options. • Non-dedicated spaces in leisure centres - Ideal for introductory level, mass participation programmes. 	There is no geographic focus to the British Gymnastics Facility Strategy. Focus is based on need, suitability and partners' ability to support a project to successful completion.

12.10.2 Consultation with British Gymnastics

Consultation with British Gymnastics' Business Support Officer (Facilities) identified that:

- ‘There is demand for more gymnastics opportunities and the majority of clubs have waiting lists, collectively amounting to 1 million people. Research also shows that a further 1.9 million would like to participate but are not currently, not on a waiting list’.
- ‘A key part of British Gymnastics’ strategy is to support clubs moving into their own dedicated facility, offering more time and space for classes. Approximately 30 clubs moved into their own spaces last year and British Gymnastics expects this trend to continue’.
- ‘There is limited provision of access to facilities within West Suffolk with clubs having waiting lists restricting access to gymnastic activities’.
- ‘Bury Spectrum GC currently leases an 8,000sq.ft facility on Northern Way, Bury St. Edmunds. It reached capacity in 2019 with almost 900 members and reports a waiting list of 130. It needs a building in excess of 12,000sq.ft to facilitate future growth and with its current lease coming to an end in December 2021 it has been looking for alternative sites to rent. The club has engaged with the council to look at opportunities on existing leisure sites, including extensions, which have proved cost prohibitive. The pandemic has negatively affected its cash reserves, so the club is seeking a short term renewal of its current lease while it re-builds finances and tries to source alternative facility arrangements. Although this should provide immediate security, the facility is not ideal both in layout design and age/state of repair’.
- ‘Haverhill Gymnastics Club rents a 10,000sqft facility on Hollands Road, Haverhill. It is part way through a 10-year lease and has just had a significant rent increase. It is actively looking for opportunities to increase its capacity both now and when its lease ends in 2026. It achieved 500 members in 2017 and has a waiting list of 250. Its pre-school programme has come to a bottle neck and is no longer able to feed into recreational classes due to the latter being at capacity. It has been in talks with the council to look at new-build opportunities on the Samuel Ward School site which have not come to fruition. The club may look at multisport/multi activity opportunities and sees the benefit of a potential community hub to tie in the with the residential development and projected population increase in the area. Currently 75% of new enquiries are from people moving into the area’.
- ‘Both Bury Spectrum and Haverhill are on our facility project list and are actively seeking to forward plan to enable an increase in capacity we would welcome both the support of their existing facilities and development of any future projects. In addition to adequate training space regional competitions and events are run across multiple sites due to the lack of a facility which can accommodate all disciplines. Any future developments in the area should take this into consideration’.
- ‘Breckland Forest Gymnastics Club runs from a dedicated facility on Wimbledon Avenue, Brandon. Although it is not registered on our facility project list, safeguarding its current facility is of importance to British Gymnastics’.

12.12 Future demand for Gymnastics

12.12.1 Population growth

Two scenarios are considered:

- The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 190,680 by 2040, an increase of 11,635 or 6.5%.
- A projection based on assessed housing needs predicts a population of 213,159 by 2040, an increase of 34,114 or 19.1%.

12.12.2 Participation rates

- **National trends:** Sport England’s ‘Active Lives’ survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for gymnastics at national level since 2015:

<i>Nov 2015- Nov 2016</i>	<i>May 2016- May 2017</i>	<i>Nov 2016- Nov 2017</i>	<i>May 2017- May 2018</i>	<i>Nov 2017- Nov 2018</i>	<i>May 2018- May 2019</i>	<i>Nov 2018- Nov 2019</i>	<i>May 2019- May 2020</i>	<i>% Change</i>
0.6%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	-0.1%

- Figures supplied by British Gymnastics suggest that participation in gymnastics is increasing, contrary to the ‘Active Lives’ figures which are for adults only. British Gymnastics membership reached 390,500 in 2017 and increased by about 12% in the period 2013-17.
- **Local trends:** Sport England’s ‘Active Lives’ survey recorded the proportion of the adult (16+) population who are active for at least 150 minutes per week in West Suffolk between 2015 and the present. The results are tabulated below and show that rates have increased significantly between 2015 and 2020:

<i>Nov 2015- Nov 2016</i>	<i>May 2016- May 2017</i>	<i>May 2017- May 2018</i>	<i>May 2018- May 2019</i>	<i>May 2019- May 2020</i>	<i>% Change</i>
55.4%	60.6%	61.7%	61.2%	64.4%	+9.0%

12.12.3 The impact of coronavirus

Sport England’s ‘Active Lives’ survey analysed the effects of covid-19 on participation rates in sport and physical activity in the initial period of the pandemic (March - May 2020), which provides some pointers to the possible longer-term impact on activity patterns. The key findings were as follows:

- All formal indoor and outdoor sports facilities were closed in this period and social distancing measures meant that team sports were prohibited.
- Despite large numbers of adults switching into alternative activities, the overall number of regularly active adults fell due to the disruption caused by the pandemic when there were fewer opportunities to be active.
- During the mid-March to mid-May period, the number of active adults nationally (defined as taking at least 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity exercise) fell by 7.1%, or just over 3 million, whilst inactivity levels rose by 7.4% or 3.4 million adults.
- Walking, running and cycling all increased participation rates marginally, but activities dependent on formal facilities like gymnastics facilities fell by 56%.

The long-term implications of covid-19 on participation patterns and demand for gymnastics facilities are still being assessed, but it is likely that some sports will struggle to recover their pre-pandemic participation rates, due to former participants who have altered their exercise patterns during lockdown periods not reverting to their former habits.

12.12.4 Future projections

National gymnastics participation rates have been increasing in recent years, alongside a rise in general activity rates in West Suffolk over the same period, it would therefore be reasonable to assume that demand for gymnastics will increase by around 1% per annum until 2040, whilst population growth of 6.5% or 19.1% will increase demand for gymnastics facilities capacity by a similar amount.

12.13 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- In line with national trends, expressed demand for gymnastics in West Suffolk is increasing, but is constrained by a lack of specialist facilities supply at present.
- Population growth of 6.5% or 19.1% in West Suffolk by 2040 will increase demand for gymnastics facilities capacity by a similar amount.

12.14 The balance between gymnastics facilities supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between gymnastics facilities supply and demand in West Suffolk:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough facilities with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the facilities fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the facilities in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the facilities available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

12.15 Quantity

12.15.1 Current needs

Current gymnastics facilities in West Suffolk are assessed to be at operating at full capacity based upon the following evaluation:

- **Unmet demand:** Bury Spectrum GC has a waiting list of 130 (equivalent to 18% of the overall membership) and Haverhill GC has a waiting list of 250 (equivalent to 60.7% of the overall membership) indicating significant unmet demand in the district.

- **Changes in supply:** Bury Spectrum GC and Haverhill GC are both currently seeking to identify new premises with additional space to address the unmet demand.

12.15.2 Future needs

There is insufficient capacity to accommodate all additional future demand, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Demand increases:** The district's population is projected to increase by between 11,635 and 34,114 by 2040. This will represent an increase of between 6.5% and 19.1% over the mid-2018 population estimate.
- **Participation trends:** In line with national trends, expressed demand for gymnastics in West Suffolk is projected to increase by 1% per annum to 2040 (18% in total).
- **Additional needs:** Based upon the above, there will be demand for additional gymnastics facilities capacity in West Suffolk by 2040. This will most likely need to be provided through new specialist facilities with additional capacity, although sports halls with spare capacity might accommodate some of the demand.

12.16 Quality

12.16.1 Current quality

All aspects of the facilities used for gymnastics in West Suffolk are rated as at least 'good' quality, with the exception of the hall at Bury Spectrum GC which is only 'average'.

12.16.2 Future quality

It is assumed that local providers will continue to invest in maintaining and improving their facilities, so if this process can be assisted with funding from developer contributions in the future, it seems reasonable to assume that local provision will continue to be upgraded regularly.

12.17 Accessibility

12.17.1 Current accessibility

All of the population is within 20-minutes' drive of at least one specialist gymnastics facility providing gymnastics, with the exception of sparsely populated rural areas in the north, south and east of the district.

12.17.2 Future accessibility

The current facilities are geographically well-located and will continue to serve districtwide needs.

12.18 Availability

12.18.1 Current availability

All local clubs have membership fees that are set at reasonable rates, but the main availability issues are caused by the excess of demand over facilities supply.

12.18.2 Future availability

It is reasonable to assume that similar membership arrangements will be offered in the future. If an additional capacity is provided, the additional capacity will improve availability.

12.19 The options for securing additional gymnastics facilities

The options for securing existing and additional facilities capacity for gymnastics to meet current and future needs are as follows:

12.19.1 Protect

Protecting the existing facilities used for gymnastics through the Local Plan will be key to securing local provision, by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

12.19.2 Provide

There is demand for additional facilities capacity for gymnastics in West Suffolk by 2040. This will most likely need to be provided through new specialist facilities with additional capacity, although sports halls with spare capacity might accommodate some of the demand, as could a new sports hall in Newmarket.

12.19.3 Enhance

Ensuring that existing facilities used for gymnastics receive regular maintenance and improvements.

12.20 Action Plan

The table below sets out the suggested action plan for gymnastics facilities to guide the implementation of the Assessment.

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Protection of existing specialist gymnastics facilities.	Consider the inclusion of a policy in the Local Plan to protect the existing specialist gymnastics facilities.	MVDC	-	-	High
All current facilities need to be maintained and improved.	Maintain existing halls to sustain and improve current quality.	Facility providers	-	-	High
Additional specialist gymnastics facilities required to meet current and future needs.	Examine the feasibility of further extensions to the existing specialist facilities.	Local gymnastics clubs	British Gymnastics	TBC	High

13 SUB-AREA ASSESSMENT

13.1 Introduction

This section contains a collective assessment of needs in each sub-area for all types of sports facilities for both the higher and lower population projections. To meet the needs of the higher population projections, an additional four-lane 25m pool will be required by 2040. The optimum location of this will depend upon the location of housing developments, but per capita levels of pool space provision in the district are currently lowest in the Haverhill sub-area

13.2 Bury St. Edmunds sub-area

Current provision and future needs in the Bury St. Edmunds sub-area are as follows:

<i>Facility type</i>	<i>Current assessment</i>	<i>Future needs - Lower projections</i>	<i>Future needs - Higher projections</i>
Sports halls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: 5 sports halls collectively comprising 21 badminton courts. Per capita levels of provision above the district average. 38% spare capacity in the peak period. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: 3 with unsecured community access. 	<p>Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sports hall at Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre is re-provided. • Existing facilities are maintained. • Community access is maintained. 	<p>Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sports hall at Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre is re-provided. • Existing facilities are maintained. • Community access is maintained.
Swimming pools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: 8 pools at 5 sites collectively comprising 1,561sq.m of water space. Per capita levels of provision above the district average. 30% spare capacity in the peak period. • The Western Way development creates an opportunity to retain water space whilst ensuring that it is configured to maximise the efficiency of the operation whilst meeting the needs of the community and maximising the use of renewable energy solutions. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: 2 with unsecured community access. 	<p>Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pools at Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre are re-provided, including an 8-lane 25m pool. • Existing facilities are maintained. • Community access is maintained. 	<p>Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pools at Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre are re-provided, including an 8-lane 25m pool. • Existing facilities are maintained. • Community access is maintained.
Health and fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: All facilities collectively comprising 608 stations and 9 studios. Per capita levels of provision above the district average. Spare capacity of 61 stations in the peak period. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: 6 facilities are subject to membership arrangements, but 'pay-and-play' available at 3. 	<p>An additional 46 stations needed in the sub-area by 2040, provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 110 stations and 3 studios at Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre are re-provided. • Existing spare capacity of 61 stations is used. • Existing facilities are maintained. 	<p>An additional 98 stations needed in the sub-area by 2040, provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 110 stations and 3 studios at Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre are re-provided. • Existing spare capacity of 61 stations is used. • Existing facilities are maintained.

<i>Facility type</i>	<i>Current assessment</i>	<i>Future needs - Lower projections</i>	<i>Future needs - Higher projections</i>
Squash courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: One facility with 2 courts. Per capita levels of provision below the district average. 35% spare capacity in the peak period. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Rural parts in the south-east of the sub-area are outside the drive time catchment. • Availability: Courts available for 'pay-and-play'. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.
Indoor tennis courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: No facilities in the sub-area, but needs are met by Culford Sports and Tennis Centre. Per capita levels of provision below the district average. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Rural parts in the south of the sub-area are outside the drive time catchment. • Availability: Facility is subject to membership arrangements. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.
Indoor bowls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: One facility with 4 rinks. Per capita levels of provision above the district average. 30% spare capacity in the peak period. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: Facility is subject to membership arrangements. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.
Indoor netball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: One sports hall with 6 courts. Per capita levels of provision above the district average. 35% spare capacity in the peak period. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Rural parts in the south-east of the sub-area are outside the drive time catchment. • Availability: Facility has unsecured community access. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing facilities are maintained. • Community access is maintained. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing facilities are maintained. • Community access is maintained.
Gymnastics facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: One specialist facility. Per capita levels of provision above the district average. Unmet demand equivalent to 61% of membership. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Rural parts in the east of the sub-area are outside the drive time catchment. • Availability: Facility is subject to membership arrangements. 	Additional capacity is needed to meet existing and future needs, either through a further extension to the existing facility or a new facility with more capacity.	Additional capacity is needed to meet existing and future needs, either through a further extension to the existing facility or a new facility with more capacity.

13.3 Haverhill sub-area

Current provision and future needs in the Haverhill sub-area are as follows:

<i>Facility type</i>	<i>Current assessment</i>	<i>Future needs - Lower projections</i>	<i>Future needs - Higher projections</i>
Sports halls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: 4 sports halls collectively comprising 16 badminton courts. Per capita levels of provision well above the district average. 40% spare capacity in the peak period. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: All have unsecured community access. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing facilities are maintained. • Community access is maintained. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing facilities are maintained. • Community access is maintained.
Swimming pools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: 2 pools at one site collectively comprising 455sq.m of water space. Per capita levels of provision well below the district average. 30% spare capacity in the peak period. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: Haverhill Leisure Centre has full community access. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided existing facilities are maintained.	Potential location of additional pool space subject to growth patterns across the district: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing facilities are maintained. • Community access is maintained.
Health and fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: 5 facilities collectively comprising 434 stations and 6 studios. Per capita levels of provision well above the district average. Spare capacity of 43 stations in the peak period. • Quality: Poor disabled access at Real Bodies gym. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: All facilities are subject to membership arrangements, but 'pay-and-play' available at one. 	An additional 23 stations needed in the sub-area by 2040, provided that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing spare capacity of 43 stations is used. • Existing facilities are maintained. 	An additional 49 stations needed in the sub-area by 2040, provided that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing spare capacity of 43 stations is used. • Existing facilities are maintained.
Squash courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: One facility with 2 courts. Per capita levels of provision below the district average. 35% spare capacity in the peak period. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Rural parts in the south-east of the sub-area are outside the drive time catchment. • Availability: Courts available for 'pay-and-play'. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.
Indoor tennis courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: No facilities in the sub-area, but needs are met by Culford Sports and Tennis Centre. Per capita levels of provision below the district average. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Rural parts in the south of the sub-area are outside the drive time catchment. • Availability: Facility is subject to membership arrangements. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.

<i>Facility type</i>	<i>Current assessment</i>	<i>Future needs - Lower projections</i>	<i>Future needs - Higher projections</i>
Indoor bowls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: One facility with 4 rinks. Per capita levels of provision above the district average. 30% spare capacity in the peak period. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: Facility is subject to membership arrangements. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.
Indoor netball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: One sports hall with 6 courts. Per capita levels of provision above the district average. 35% spare capacity in the peak period. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Rural parts in the south-east of the sub-area are outside the drive time catchment. • Availability: Facility has unsecured community access. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing facilities are maintained. • Community access is maintained. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing facilities are maintained. • Community access is maintained.
Gymnastics facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: One specialist facility. Per capita levels of provision above the district average. Unmet demand equivalent to 61% of membership. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Rural parts in the east of the sub-area are outside the drive time catchment. • Availability: Facility is subject to membership arrangements. 	Additional capacity is needed to meet existing and future needs, either through a further extension to the existing facility or a new facility with more capacity.	Additional capacity is needed to meet existing and future needs, either through a further extension to the existing facility or a new facility with more capacity.

13.4 Newmarket sub-area

Current provision and future needs in the Newmarket sub-area are as follows:

<i>Facility type</i>	<i>Current assessment</i>	<i>Future needs - Lower projections</i>	<i>Future needs - Higher projections</i>
Sports halls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: One sports hall with 4 badminton courts. Per capita levels of provision well below the district average. Limited spare capacity in the peak period - an additional sports hall should be provided subject to detailed feasibility work. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: The facility has secured community access. 	Existing capacity can meet future needs, provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing facilities are maintained. • Community access is maintained. • An additional sports hall is provided. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing facilities are maintained. • Community access is maintained. • An additional sports hall is provided.
Swimming pools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: 2 pools at one site collectively comprising 409sq.m of water space. Per capita levels of provision close to the district average. 30% spare capacity in the peak period. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: The facility has secured community access. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided existing facilities are maintained.	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided existing facilities are maintained.

<i>Facility type</i>	<i>Current assessment</i>	<i>Future needs - Lower projections</i>	<i>Future needs - Higher projections</i>
Health and fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: 3 facilities collectively comprising 131 stations and 4 studios. Per capita levels of provision below the district average. Spare capacity of 13 stations in the peak period. • Quality: Poor disabled access at X-treme Fitness Centre. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: All facilities are subject to membership arrangements, but 'pay-and-play' available at one. 	<p>An additional 13 stations needed in the sub-area by 2040, provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing spare capacity of 13 stations is used. • Existing facilities are maintained. 	<p>An additional 28 stations needed in the sub-area by 2040, provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing spare capacity of 13 stations is used. • Existing facilities are maintained.
Squash courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: One facility with 2 courts. Per capita levels of provision above the district average. 50% spare capacity in the peak period. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: Courts available for 'pay-and-play'. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.
Indoor tennis courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: One facility providing 3 courts. Per capita levels of provision above the district average. 20% spare capacity in the peak period. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: Facility is subject to membership arrangements. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.
Indoor bowls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: No facilities in the sub-area, but needs are met by West Row Indoor Bowls Club which has 37% spare capacity in the peak period. Per capita levels of provision below the district average. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: Facility is subject to membership arrangements. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.
Indoor netball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: One sports hall with 4 courts. Per capita levels of provision above the district average. 30% spare capacity in the peak period. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: The facility has secured community access. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing facilities are maintained. • Community access is maintained. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing facilities are maintained. • Community access is maintained.
Gymnastics facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: No facilities in the sub-area, but needs are met by Newmarket Gymnastics Club. Per capita levels of provision below the district average. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Rural parts in the west of the sub-area are outside the drive time catchment. • Availability: Facility is subject to membership arrangements. 	Additional capacity is needed to meet existing and future needs, either through a further extension to the existing facility or a new facility with more capacity.	Additional capacity is needed to meet existing and future needs, either through a further extension to the existing facility or a new facility with more capacity.

13.5 Mildenhall sub-area

Current provision and future needs in the Mildenhall sub-area are as follows:

<i>Facility type</i>	<i>Current assessment</i>	<i>Future needs - Lower projections</i>	<i>Future needs - Higher projections</i>
Sports halls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: One sports hall with 4 badminton courts. Per capita levels of provision well below the district average. • Quality: Good quality new facility at Mildenhall Hub. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: The facility has secured community access. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided existing facilities are maintained.	An additional 2 badminton courts could be added to the Hub, subject to demand, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing facilities are maintained. • Community access is maintained.
Swimming pools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: 2 pools at one site collectively comprising 485sq.m of water space. Per capita levels of provision below the district average. • Quality: Good quality new facility at Mildenhall Hub. • Accessibility: Rural parts in the north of the sub-area are outside the drive time catchment. • Availability: The facility has secured community access. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided existing facilities are maintained.	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided existing facilities are maintained.
Health and fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: One facility with 100 stations and 2 studios. Per capita levels of provision well below the district average. Spare capacity of 10 stations in the peak period. • Quality: Good quality new facility at Mildenhall Hub. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: The facility is available for ‘pay-and-play’ and has secured community access. 	An additional 20 stations needed in the sub-area by 2040, provided that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing spare capacity of 10 stations is used. • Existing facilities are maintained. 	An additional 43 stations needed in the sub-area by 2040, provided that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing spare capacity of 10 stations is used. • Existing facilities are maintained.
Squash courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: No facilities in the sub-area, but needs are met by courts in Brandon and Newmarket which have 50% spare capacity in the peak period. Per capita levels of provision below the district average. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Rural parts in the north of the sub-area are outside the drive time catchment. • Availability: Courts available for ‘pay-and-play’. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.
Indoor tennis courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: No facilities in the sub-area, but needs are met at Newmarket Tennis Club. Per capita levels of provision below the district average. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Rural parts in the north and west of the sub-area are outside the drive time catchment. • Availability: Facility is subject to membership arrangements. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.

<i>Facility type</i>	<i>Current assessment</i>	<i>Future needs - Lower projections</i>	<i>Future needs - Higher projections</i>
Indoor bowls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: 2 facilities collectively with 6 rinks. Per capita levels of provision well above the district average. Spare capacity of 50% in the peak period. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: Facilities are subject to membership arrangements. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.
Indoor netball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: One sports hall with 4 courts. Per capita levels of provision above the district average. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Rural parts in the north of the sub-area are outside the drive time catchment. • Availability: The facility has secured community access. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided existing facilities are maintained.	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided existing facilities are maintained.
Gymnastics facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: No facilities in the sub-area, but needs are met by Breckland Forest Gymnastics Club in Brandon. Per capita levels of provision below the district average. • Quality: Rural parts in the north and west of the sub-area are outside the drive time catchment. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: Facility is subject to membership arrangements. 	Additional capacity is needed to meet existing and future needs, either through a further extension to the existing facility or a new facility with more capacity.	Additional capacity is needed to meet existing and future needs, either through a further extension to the existing facility or a new facility with more capacity.

13.6 Brandon sub-area

Current provision and future needs in the Brandon sub-area are as follows:

<i>Facility type</i>	<i>Current assessment</i>	<i>Future needs - Lower projections</i>	<i>Future needs - Higher projections</i>
Sports halls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: There are no four-court halls in the sub-area (Brandon has a two-court hall), but needs are met by sports halls in Mildenhall and Thetford. Per capita levels of provision below the district average. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: The facilities have secured community access. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided existing facilities are maintained.	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided existing facilities are maintained.
Swimming pools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: No facilities in the sub-area, but needs are met by pools in Mildenhall and Thetford. Per capita levels of provision below the district average. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs,	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: The facilities have secured community access. 	provided existing facilities are maintained.	provided existing facilities are maintained.
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<i>Facility type</i>	<i>Current assessment</i>	<i>Future needs - Lower projections</i>	<i>Future needs - Higher projections</i>
Health and fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: 2 facilities with 110 stations and 2 studios. Per capita levels of provision well above the district average. Spare capacity of 11 stations in the peak period. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: One facility is available for ‘pay-and-play’ and both have secured community access. 	<p>An additional 6 stations needed in the sub-area by 2040, provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing spare capacity of 11 stations is used. • Existing facilities are maintained. 	<p>An additional 13 stations needed in the sub-area by 2040, provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing spare capacity of 11 stations is used. • Existing facilities are maintained.
Squash courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: One court. Per capita levels of provision above the district average. Spare capacity of 50% in the peak period. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: Courts available for ‘pay-and-play’. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided existing facilities are maintained.
Indoor tennis courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: No facilities in the sub-area, but needs are met by Culford Sports and Tennis Centre. Per capita levels of provision below the district average. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: Facility is subject to membership arrangements. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.
Indoor bowls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: No facilities in the sub-area, but needs are met at Lakenheath IBC. Per capita levels of provision below the district average. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. • Availability: Facility is subject to membership arrangements. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided that existing facilities are maintained.
Indoor netball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: No facilities in the sub-area, but needs are met by sports halls in Mildenhall and Thetford. Per capita levels of provision below the district average. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Rural parts in the west of the sub-area are outside the drive time catchment. • Availability: The facilities have secured community access. 	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided existing facilities are maintained.	Existing spare capacity can meet future needs, provided existing facilities are maintained.
Gymnastics facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity: One facility. Per capita levels of provision are above the district average. • Quality: No critical issues. • Accessibility: Full geographical coverage. 	Additional capacity is needed to meet existing and future needs, either through a further extension to the existing facility	Additional capacity is needed to meet existing and future needs, either through a further extension to the existing facility

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability: Facility is subject to membership arrangements. 	or a new facility with more capacity.	or a new facility with more capacity.
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14 POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1 Introduction

This section contains policies and recommendations for the protection, enhancement and provision of sports facilities in West Suffolk.

14.2 Policy context

The recommendations made in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which stipulates that existing sports facilities, should not be built upon unless:

- An assessment has taken place which has clearly shown the facility to be surplus to requirements, or;
- The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality, in a suitable location, or;
- The development is for alternative sport and recreation provision, the needs for which clearly outweighs the loss.

14.3 Protect

14.3.1 Recommendation 1: Safeguarding existing provision

The West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment comprises a robust and evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for sports facilities in the district. The Assessment has identified a need for all current facilities to be retained, on the basis of the specific identified roles that each can play in delivering the needs of sport in the district both now and in the future. It is therefore recommended that existing planning policies continue to support the retention of all sites, based upon the evidence in the Sports Facilities Assessment.

14.3.2 Recommendation 2: Community access to education sports facilities

A significant proportion of some types of sports facility in West Suffolk are located on school sites. Most of these facilities are not subject to formal Community Use Agreements and external use could, therefore in theory be withdrawn at any time. Some education sports facilities have no community use at all at present, which does not optimise the use of public resources. Furthermore, the management arrangements for many school sports facilities with external use are not conducive to maximising that use. It is therefore recommended that:

- Efforts are made to secure formal Community Use Agreements at existing education sports facilities.
- Community Use Agreements become a standard condition of planning consent at all new education sports facilities, along with a design and specification that is consistent with maximising school and community use.

- Community Use Agreements become a standard condition of receiving funding from developer contributions to improve or enhance the capacity of existing sports facilities on education sites, to meet the additional demand arising from housing developments.
- Support be offered to schools with their community use management arrangements.

14.4 Enhance

14.4.1 Recommendation 3: Capacity improvements

Some of the current demand for sports facilities in West Suffolk can be accommodated through enhancements to existing facilities that will facilitate extra usage at existing sites. It is recommended that the action plan in the West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment used as the basis for prioritising facilities enhancements that will help to alleviate the current identified and future projected deficits.

14.4.2 Recommendation 4: Developer contributions (enhancements)

Some of the additional demand arising from the proposed housing development and the related population growth in West Suffolk, can be accommodated through enhancements to existing sports facilities. It is therefore recommended that:

- The action plan in the West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment be used as the basis for determining facility enhancements that demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments.
- An appropriate level of financial contributions should then be sought under Section 106 or CIL arrangements, using Sport England’s Sports Facility Calculator tool, to cover the capital and revenue implications of the enhancements.

14.5 Provide

14.5.1 Recommendation 6: New sports facilities

Whilst spare capacity in most types of sports facility can meet current and future needs to 2040, specific shortfalls identified in the West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment by an evidence-based needs assessment that would best be met through new provision include:

<i>Facility type</i>	<i>Current surplus or deficit</i>	<i>Additional needs - Lower population</i>	<i>Additional needs - Higher population</i>
Sports halls	Spare capacity	0.78 four-badminton court-sized sports hall with full community access met by current spare capacity	2.3 four-badminton court sized sports halls with full community access, met by one new facility plus current spare capacity.
Swimming pools	Spare capacity equivalent to 107.5sq.m	116.3 sq.m of pool space met by current spare capacity	343.6 sq.m of pool space met by the equivalent of one new 4-lane 25m pool plus current spare capacity.

<i>Facility type</i>	<i>Current surplus or deficit</i>	<i>Additional needs - Lower population</i>	<i>Additional needs - Higher population</i>
Health and fitness	Spare capacity equivalent to 128 equipment stations	234 fitness stations, with 128 met by current spare capacity and 106 new equipment stations	355 fitness stations, with 128 met by current spare capacity and 227 new equipment stations
Squash courts	Spare capacity	Additional needs met by current spare capacity	Additional needs met by current spare capacity
Indoor tennis courts	Spare capacity	Additional needs met by current spare capacity	Additional needs met by current spare capacity
Indoor bowls	Spare capacity	0.85 of a rink met by current spare capacity	2.52 of a rink met by current spare capacity
Indoor netball	Spare capacity	Additional needs met by current spare capacity	Additional needs met by current spare capacity
Gymnastics facilities	Additional capacity needed	Extension to the existing specialist facilities	Extension to the existing specialist facilities

It is recommended that West Suffolk Council should play an active role in encouraging the provision of these facilities, in conjunction with other local stakeholders.

14.5.2 Recommendation 7: Developer contributions (new provision)

Some of the additional demand arising from the proposed housing development in West Suffolk can be accommodated through the provision of new sports facilities. It is therefore recommended that:

- The action plan in the West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment be used as the basis for determining new facility provision that demonstrably relates to the scale and location of specific developments.
- An appropriate level of financial contributions should then be sought under Section 106 or CIL arrangements, using Sport England's Sports Facility Calculator tool, to cover the capital and revenue implications of providing the facilities.

15 IMPLEMENTING AND REVIEWING THE ASSESSMENT

15.1 Introduction

This section identifies the applications of the West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment and the mechanisms for reviewing it to ensure that it remains robust and up-to-date.

15.2 Assessment implementation

The success of the West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment will be determined by how it is used. While the use of the Assessment should be led by West Suffolk Council, its application and delivery will also be the responsibility of the other key local stakeholders including:

- **Abbeycroft Leisure:** The Council's appointed leisure contractor runs the main leisure facilities in the district.
- **Schools:** State and private secondary schools are major sports facilities providers in the district, although not all provision is fully community accessible.
- **Sports clubs:** Voluntary sector sports clubs provide and run a range of mostly smaller facilities.
- **Commercial providers:** The commercial sector has a significant presence in West Suffolk. Several of the major fitness companies including Bannatyne, Pure Gym and Anytime Fitness have facilities in the district.

15.3 Assessment applications

The West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment has a number of applications:

15.3.1 Sports development planning

The West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment can be applied to help:

- Highlight, justify and make the case for sports development activities with particular sports, groups and clubs and in particular areas.
- Identify current and future trends and changes in the demand for individual sports and how they are played.
- Inform the work, strategies and plans of sporting organisations active in the area.
- Advocate the need to work with specific educational establishments to secure community use of their site(s).
- Develop and/or enhance school club links by making the best use of school sites where they have spare capacity and are well located to meet demand.

15.3.2 Planning policy

The West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment can be applied to help:

- Develop new, and review the effectiveness of existing, local planning policy (e.g. Local and Neighbourhood Plans) in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- The implementation of local planning policy to meet the needs of the community in line with the NPPF.

15.3.3 Planning applications

The West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment can be applied to help:

- Inform the development of planning applications which affect existing and/or proposed new sports facilities provision.
- Inform pre-application discussions to ensure any subsequent planning applications maximise their benefit to sport and are developed in line with national and local planning policy.
- Sports clubs and other organisations provide the strategic need for development proposals thereby potentially adding support to their application(s) and saving them resources in developing such evidence.
- West Suffolk Council to assess planning applications affecting existing and/or proposed new playing sports facilities provision in line with national and local planning policy.
- Sport England and other parties respond to relevant planning application consultations.

The West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment can also be applied to help West Suffolk Council to meet other relevant requirements of the NPPF including:

- Taking account of and supporting local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.
- Delivering the social, recreational, cultural facilities and services the community needs.
- Planning positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives, principles and policies of the framework.
- Working with public health leads and health organisations to understand and take account of the health status and needs of the local population, including expected future changes, and any information about relevant barriers to improving health and well-being.

15.3.4 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment can be applied to help:

- Advocate the need for sports facilities provision to be taken into account when the local authority is developing and/or reviewing an approach to the CIL (Charging Schedule and Infrastructure Delivery Plan) and the wider benefits of doing so (e.g. improving health and wellbeing).
- Provide prioritised infrastructure requirements for sports facilities provision including deliverable sport, area and site-specific projects with costings (where known).

15.3.5 Funding bids

The West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment can be applied to help:

- Provide the evidence base and strategic need to support funding bids by a range of parties to a variety of potential funding sources.
- Inform potential bidders of the likely strategic need for their project.

15.3.6 Facility and asset management

The West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment can be applied to help:

- Ensure a strategic approach is taken to the provision and management of sports facilities.
- Inform the current management, strategies and plans of sports facility providers e.g. local authorities (within the study area and neighbouring areas), leisure trusts and educational establishments.
- Share knowledge of how sites are managed and maintained, the lessons learnt and good practice.
- Highlight the potential of asset transfers and ensure any proposed are beneficial to all parties.
- Provide additional protection for particular sites over and above planning policy, for example through deeds of dedication.
- Resolve issues around security of tenure.

15.3.7 Public health

The West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment can be applied to help:

- Understand how the community currently participates in sport, the need for sports facilities and how this may evolve.
- Raise awareness of and tackle any barriers to people maintaining and increasing their participation.
- Highlight and address any inequalities of access to provision within the study area.

- Provide evidence to help support wider health and well-being initiatives.

15.3.8 Co-ordinating resources and investment

The West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment can be applied to help:

- Raise awareness of the current resources and investment (revenue and capital) going into the management, maintenance and improvement of sports facilities provision.
- Co-ordinate the current and any future resources and investment to ensure the maximum benefit to sport and that value for money is secured.
- Ensure the current and any future resources and investment are complimentary and do not result in their inefficient use.

15.3.9 Capital programmes

The West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment can be applied to help:

- Provide the evidence base to justify the protection and investment in sports facilities provision.
- Influence the development and implementation of relevant capital programmes (e.g. school refurbishment and new build programmes).

15.4 Monitoring delivery

A process should be put in place to ensure regular monitoring of how the recommendations and action plan are being delivered. This monitoring should be led by West Suffolk Council and supported by all members of, and reported back to, the steering group. Understanding and learning lessons from how the West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment has been applied should also form a key component of monitoring its delivery.

15.5 Keeping the Assessment robust and up-to-date

Along with ensuring that the West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment is used and applied, a process should be put in place to keep it robust and up to date. This will expand the life of the Assessment providing people with the confidence to continue to both use it and attach significant value and weight to its key findings and issues, along with its recommendations and actions. Sport England advocates that the Assessment should be reviewed on an annual basis from the date it is formally signed off by the steering group. This will help to maintain the momentum and commitment built up when developing the Assessment. Taking into account the time to develop the West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment this should also help to ensure that the original supply and demand information is no more than two years old without being reviewed.

The annual review should highlight:

- How the delivery of the recommendations and action plan has progressed and any changes required to the priority afforded to each action (e.g. the priority of some may increase following the delivery of others).
- How the Assessment has been applied and the lessons learnt.
- Any changes to particularly important facilities and/or sites in the area (e.g. the most used or high-quality sites for a particular sport) and other supply and demand information, what this may mean for the overall assessment work and the key findings and issues.
- Any development of a specific sport or particular format of a sport.
- Any new or emerging issues and opportunities.

15.6 Assessment implementation

To support the delivery of the actions in all the facility-specific chapters, West Suffolk Council in consultation with stakeholders should prepare a short-term action plan identifying priorities and actions for year one of the strategy delivery. The action plans in the West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment provide a long list of prioritised actions, but many will not be applicable, appropriate or manageable to deliver initially.