

VALE OF WHITE HORSE

Leisure and Sports Facilities Study 2013 - 2031

DRAFT UPDATED REPORT

November 2014



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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1. This Leisure and Sports Facilities Study update covers the period up to 2031. It is a revision and extension from 2029 to 2031 of the adopted Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy of 2013. The update is required because it is now expected that there will be a requirement for around 7,430 more homes in the period up to 2031 than were anticipated in the draft local plan, which was published in 2013.
2. The housing growth will be distributed across the Vale, but the balance of new housing will be in the east of the district, particularly around Didcot. The housing site options were contained within the Housing Delivery Update of February 2014 which has since been subject to consultation. Following the consultation, the main housing site options have now been refined to 21 sites, and the location and size of each have been individually considered within this Study, along with the Vale wide overview for each type of sports facility.
3. The demographics behind the study have also been updated, with new information being provided by Oxfordshire County Council Research and Intelligence Unit in June 2014. These take into account the anticipated growth of the Vale in the period up to 2031.
4. As with the adopted 2013 Strategy, a key driver is the effective delivery of leisure services across the Vale of White Horse District, and a need to ensure that a strategic network of facilities are in place to cater for the needs of the current and expected future population. The Study will also provide the evidence base for relevant planning policies contained within the Local Plan, giving guidance on the phasing of facilities to meet new growth, and the priorities for other investment.
5. This Leisure and Sports Facilities Study addresses the major facilities used by the community for sport and physical activity, and specifically includes:
 - Sports halls
 - Swimming pools
 - Artificial grass pitches
 - Athletics tracks
 - Health and fitness provision
 - Indoor bowls centres
 - Indoor tennis centres
 - Outdoor tennis (based on the 2008 standards)
 - Multi use games areas (based on the 2008 standards)
 - Squash
 - Grass playing pitches (based on the 2008 standards)
6. The Vale is currently undertaking a further piece of work which addresses Playing Pitches (using the updated Sport England Guidance), tennis courts, MUGAs, village/community halls, children's play and open space. The findings from this new study will update the relevant sections of this report once adopted.

7. The 2013 Strategy was consulted upon widely in the autumn of 2012 and generally received very positive support. The scope of the consultation included all sports clubs and sports organisations such as Sport England and the Oxfordshire Sports Partnership, parish and town councils and community organisations. The full draft strategy document together with the executive summary and short community summary were made available on the Vale's website. Feedback on the Strategy was encouraged both by completion of an on-line survey and written feedback. A full list of those consulted on the draft Strategy is provided as Appendix 8.
8. Because of the wide ranging and relatively recent consultation with stakeholders and other interests, no general consultation has been undertaken on this update. However where specific consultations about the impact of housing proposals and planning applications have been undertaken by Nortoft on behalf of the Vale of White Horse District Council, these have been used to inform the new recommendations.
9. The Vale of White Horse covers an area of 580 sq km and extends from the edge of Oxford in the north east to almost the edge of Swindon in the south west. The north east of the district contains part of the Oxford Green Belt and in the south the Downs form part of the North Wessex Downs AONB. The Vale also contains part of the Great Western Community Forest. The River Thames on the northern and part of the eastern boundary of the district is highly valued for leisure and recreation and for its contribution to the Vale's attractive landscape. Just over half of the Vale's residents live in the five main settlements of Abingdon, Botley, Faringdon, Grove and Wantage.
10. The key drivers behind the study are:
 - The proposed major areas of housing growth planned around Didcot, Wantage, Grove, Faringdon and Harwell, together with other smaller areas of growth scattered across the authority
 - The need to identify what additional sports facilities needs there will be, linked directly to the housing proposals
 - The need for the authority to develop a new Local Plan and its policies, in line with the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework
 - The need to make effective use of mechanisms to lever funds from developers, linked directly to the new housing
 - The need to respond to any forecast changes in age structure of the population
 - The need to consider trends in sports participation
 - The need to deal with the age and condition of some of the facilities
 - The need to consider the future options in relation to major facilities.

THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

11. The priorities of the Vale of White Horse are set out in a number of key policy documents and these provide the justification for the authority's and its partners' investment in sport and active recreation. These policy documents include the Corporate Plan, the Community Strategy, the Local Plan, the Corporate Equality Action Plan, and the Market Town Action Plan. Also crucial for the delivery of the proposals are the planning policies which will help to identify sites for sport and recreation and generate funds towards their development.
12. Both the Corporate Plan and the Community Strategy give very strong weight to the importance of sport, recreation, and the health and well-being of the community. Specific measures of success contained within the Corporate Plan of 2012-16 include: the satisfaction ratings for the sports centres, an options study for the future of Wantage Leisure Centre (by end of 2012), and securing funds from developers to meet the costs of the related sports and recreation provision.
13. The Community Strategy 2008-2016 includes very strong themes supporting sport and active recreation and health and well-being, as well as wider leisure, culture and the environment. Specific measures of success include the number of adults participating in sport, and the number of young people taking part in positive leisure time activities. Relevant extracts from both the Corporate Plan and the Community Strategy are provided in Appendix 1.

Planning Policies

14. The planning policy framework lying behind this study has several elements, one of which is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and related National Planning Guidance (NPG), but the others are more local.

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

15. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in March 2012 brought in a fundamental change to the strategic planning system. The Framework is much simpler than the previous planning policy framework, and the more detailed policy documents, for example the set of Planning Policy Guidance Notes, have been dropped. This includes the Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 on Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation of 2002, which had been the main national policy guidance up to the release of the NPPF. The policies within the new NPPF which related specifically to leisure, sport and recreation are summarised in Appendix 2.
16. NPPF advises that new Local Plans produced by each planning authority should set the strategic priorities for the area which specifically includes leisure development and "the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities". The policies need to be based on an adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence base, including in relation to housing, and the environment (historic, health and well-being). This Leisure and Sports Facilities Study will form one part of the evidence base for the emerging Vale of White Horse Local Plan.

17. Local planning authorities are encouraged to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, including specifically in relation to leisure and to community infrastructure. This report therefore also takes into consideration the cross-border implications of sport and recreation provision, which is a very significant issue for the Vale, particularly on its eastern edge.
18. Under NPPF Para 73 it states that:

“Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision are required”.
19. Of particular importance at this time is the extent of the proposed growth in housing both within and around Didcot, which straddles the border of Vale and South Oxfordshire. As this area is complex and the impact of the housing growth will be very significant, this Study update has specifically considered a Didcot Leisure Sub Area as a separate element for each of the main facility types. Appendix 9 brings together these findings for the Didcot Leisure Sub Area. It should be noted that the Sub Area report was completed prior to the increase in housing numbers proposed at Milton Heights, from 300 to 400, however there is no very significant impact on the findings of this report.
20. At the other side of the Vale is Swindon, which has new leisure centre provision linked to the major planned growth on the eastern edge of the town. The proposals at Swindon will have some impact upon the overall sports requirements for the Vale, as the drive time catchment area of the proposed new leisure centre in Swindon includes Faringdon and some of the western edge of the Vale district. The proposals for Swindon are however still at a relatively early stage, and not yet confirmed, so the longer term impact on the Vale’s leisure provision is, as yet, difficult to assess.

National Planning Practice Guidance

21. National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG 003: Reference ID: 23b-003-20140306) states:

“ Policies for seeking obligations should be set out in a development plan document to enable fair and open testing of the policy at examination. Supplementary planning documents should not be used to add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development and should not be used to set rates or charges which have not been established through development plan policy”.
22. This Leisure and Sports Facilities Study is founded on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for sports and recreation facilities, and opportunities for new

provision as required by NPPF para 73. The key policies/recommendations should be set out as part of the new Local Plan, so as to enable fair and open testing of the policy at examination.

The Local Plan 2011 (adopted 2006)

23. The main generic policies in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 (adopted 2006) relevant to open space, sport and recreation provision are:

- Local Plan Policies L1 and L7, which protect local leisure facilities, playing fields and play space unless there is no longer a need for the facility or an alternative provision of equal or better quality is made available.
- Local Plan Policies H5 and H7, which set out a list of spaces and facilities to be provided in association with the proposed major developments at Didcot and Grove respectively.
- Local Plan Policy H23, which addresses open space in new developments.
- Local Plan Policy DC8, which aims to ensure an adequate and timely supply of social and physical infrastructure to meet the needs of the occupiers or users of new development. Policy DC8 of the Local Plan 2011 specifically provides that:

“Development will only be permitted where the necessary social and physical infrastructure and service requirements of future occupiers and/or users of the development are: Available at a suitable standard or; Will be provided in association with the development or; Can be secured or improved to a suitable standard through an appropriate financial contribution from the developers or landowners. Services and infrastructure must be provided in time to ensure coordination between their provision and needs arising from the development, where appropriate commuted sums to cover maintenance will also be sought from developers or landowners.”

Policy DC8 preamble states *“The Council considers it essential to ensure that where the existing infrastructure and services are unable to cope satisfactorily with new development, the developers or landowners must provide the necessary new facilities on or off the site or make a financial contribution to enable existing facilities to be improved.”*

24. The Council assessed the saved Policy DC8 for consistency with NPPF and found it to be consistent. It is also clear that the Local Plan sets out that it can seek on and off-site contributions for appropriate open space, sports and recreation facilities, and that future leisure and sports strategy work (at the time an Open Space SPD, subsequently the 2013 Strategy Leisure and Sports Strategy, and now this 2014 update) would inform the detail. Thus it meets the needs of PPG 003/23b-003-20140306) where it states:

“Policies seeking obligations should be set out in a development plan document ... Supplementary Planning Documents should not be used .. to set out rates or charges which have not been established through development plan policy”

25. A table which reviews the consistency of each of the planning policies in the 2011 Local Plan is provided in Appendix 10.

26. This Leisure and Sports Facilities Study once adopted will become lead policy on the back of the old Local Plan and is part of the evidence base of the emerging new Local Plan. It is in line with the NPPF/NPG, and it is essential that the recommendations in this study are fully included within the new Local Plan, as required by PPG 003.
27. The Local Plan 2011 was subject to examination by an inspector who reported in 2006. In relation to sport and recreation and the provision of facilities, the most pertinent comment was made in relation to Grove, where accessible and appropriate leisure facilities were noted as being one of the essential elements of a new sustainable community.

SPD Open Space, Sport and Recreation Future Provision (2008)

28. The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) of 2008 draws much of its detailed standards recommendations from the Kit Campbell Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision Strategy Background Report (January 2009). The SPD now requires updating in the light of the findings and recommendations contained within the 2013 Strategy, this Study, and the forthcoming further evidence base work on playing fields and smaller sport and recreation facilities.

Former Airfield West of Grove Development Principles and Guidelines SPG (2006)

29. The purpose of this Supplementary Planning Guidance was to explain in greater detail the principles set out in policy H5 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 (adopted 2006). The planning application for the development of the site was submitted to the Vale in 2012 but as at the end of July 2014 was still to be determined.

VoWH Leisure and Sports Facility Strategy (2013)

30. The Leisure and Sports Facility Strategy (June 2013) is in policy terms linked back to the Local Plan 2011, and was formally adopted by the Council (Cabinet minutes of meeting held on Friday 7 June 2013. Minute Ca.6 “Resolved to adopt the leisure and sports facilities study 2013-2029”). It was subject to substantial consultation, exceeding the requirements set out in the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement. Consultation responses were taken into account, changes made, and the final report was presented to, and scrutinised by the Council’s Cabinet, following which it was adopted by the Council.
31. The weight and compliance of the adopted Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy, its calculations and methodology has been recent tested at Appeal and found sound in terms of CIL compliancy and s106 contributions (Appeal Ref: APP/V3120/A/13/2203341 Stanford in the Vale Decision March 2014).

Joint Didcot Infrastructure Delivery Plan Live Document (2011)

32. This formed part of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy submission but was a joint infrastructure plan for Didcot for the two authorities; the Vale of White Horse and

South Oxfordshire. It is a live document which is expected to be updated throughout the plan period. It is designed to link to the development of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), to which both authorities have committed themselves to introduce.

33. The key points to note in the IDP are:

- The development of a new leisure centre, likely to be in the north east which is expected to draw contributions from developments in the Vale
- The development of a new secondary school in Great Western Park close to the Vale boundary
- The proposed provision of:
 - 2 x MUGAs at Great Western Park, at a rate of 1 per 5000 people.
 - 4 x tennis courts plus improvements at other courts (no location given)
 - 2 x AGPs (at least one of which will be 3G) (no location given)

34. The IDP is a live document and therefore changes can be made to the proposals. The findings of this report in relation to the Didcot Leisure Sub Area, brought together as Appendix 9, will enable the IDP to be updated.

Other infrastructure delivery plans

35. All infrastructure delivery plans will need to fully include the findings of this Leisure and Sports Facilities Study, including those that form the evidence base for the CIL.

Main areas of housing growth (Local Plan 2021 as at July 2014)

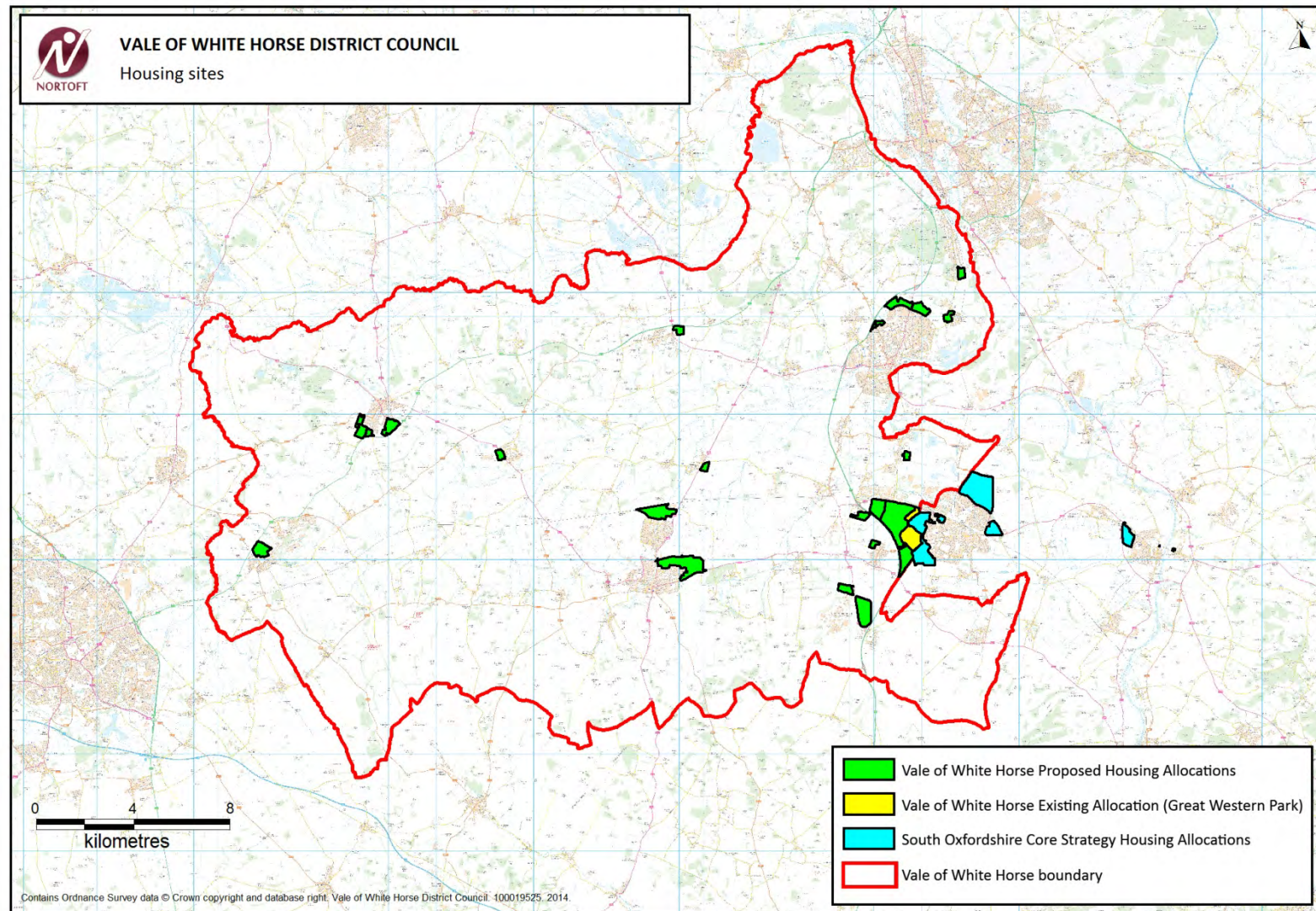
36. The main areas of housing growth in the Vale are proposed to be at Grove Airfield (2500 dwellings) and the sites now identified through the Housing Delivery Update process. As at October 2014 the proposed list of sites and number of dwellings is provided as Figure 1, the Final Site Package, with the relevant strategy sub-area identified.

Figure 1: Final Site Package

Site No.	Location of Site	Number of units proposed	Sub-area
1	North West of Abingdon-on-Thames	200	Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe
2	North of Abingdon-on-Thames	800	Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe
3	South of Kennington	270	Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe
4	North-West of Radley	240	Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe
5	East of Sutton Courtenay	220	South East Vale
6	East of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor	280	Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe
7	Milton Heights	400	South East Vale
8	Valley Park	At least 2550	South East Vale
9	North-West of Valley Park	800	South East Vale
10	West of Harwell	200	South East Vale
11	East of Harwell Campus	850	South East Vale
12	North-West of Harwell Campus	550	South East Vale
13	South of East Hanney	200	Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe
14	Crab Hill (North East Wantage and South East Grove)	1500	South East Vale
15	Monks Farm (North Grove)	750	South East Vale
16	Land South of Park Road, Faringdon	350	Western Vale
17	West of Stanford in the Vale	200	Western Vale
18	South of Faringdon	200	Western Vale
19	South-West of Farringdon	200	Western Vale
20	North of Shrivenham	500	Western Vale
21	East of Coxwell Road, Faringdon	200	Western Vale

37. It should be noted that both Figure 1 and the map in Figure 2 which shows the locations of each of these housing areas, excludes the Grove Airfield site. It also excludes other sites with outline or full planning permission which are outside of these main housing growth locations.

Figure 2: Housing locations – final sites package map



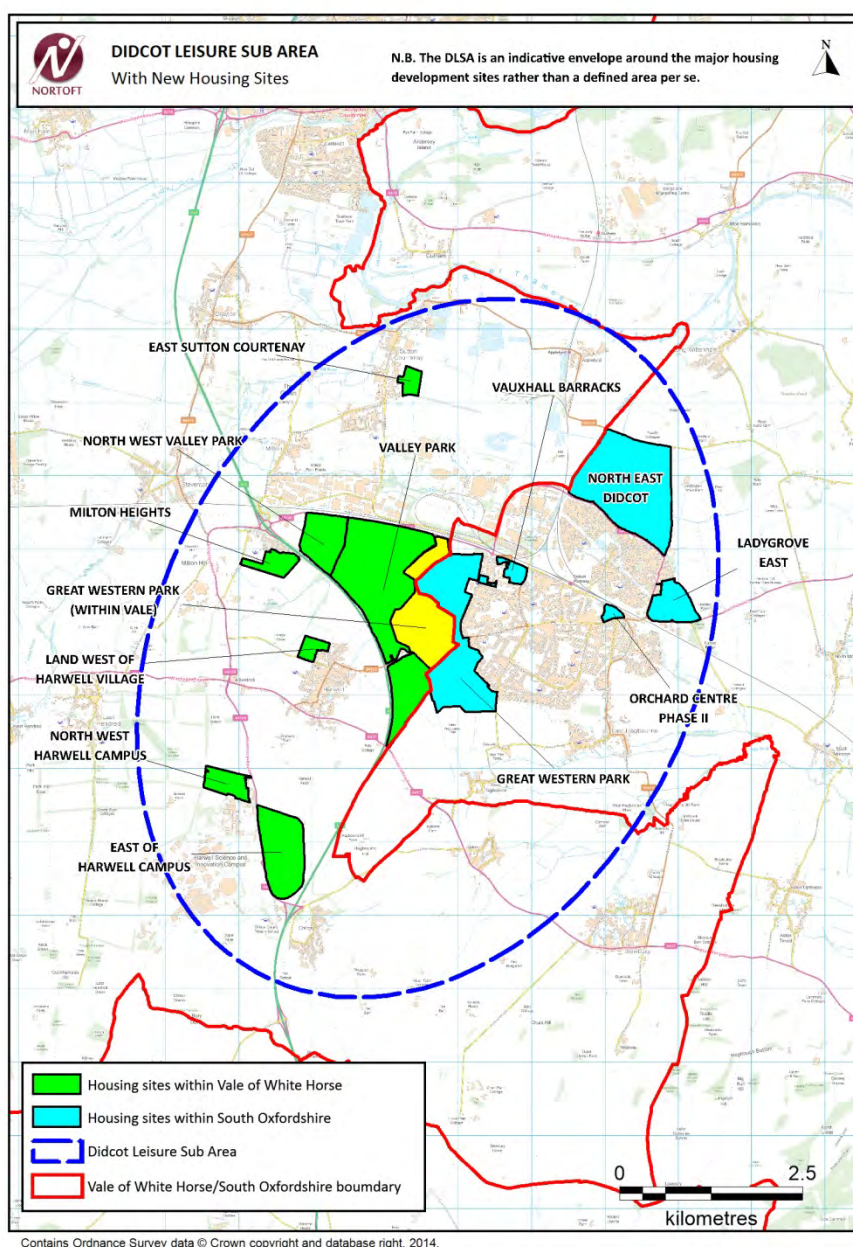
Didcot Leisure Sub Area

38. The Vale of White Horse Council (“the Vale”) and South Oxfordshire Council are working closely together across their boundaries to plan for leisure and sport in the Didcot area, where there are significant levels of planned housing growth. The joint area is called the Didcot Leisure Sub Area (DLSA) and broadly covers the new housing growth in and around Didcot, recognising that the new residents will use facilities within their travel area regardless of administrative boundaries. It is important to note that the DLSA is an indicative envelope around the major new development sites, rather than a defined catchment area per se. For example once South Oxfordshire’s new housing locations around Didcot are further advanced, the indicative envelope may change. A detailed report on the DLSA is found in Appendix 9. It should be noted that the Didcot Sub Area report was completed prior to the increase in dwelling numbers at Milton Heights, from 300 to 400. This increase does not significant impact upon the findings or proposals contained in the sub area report.

Developers’ contributions

39. This Leisure and Sports Facilities Study has considerable weight as a material consideration in plan making, decision taking, and at appeal as it identifies the specific needs for sports facilities based on detailed assessments of quantitative and qualitative issues in the Vale. It meets the CIL tests of the NPPF/NPG, so in the period up to its formal adoption, the draft Study will have increasing weight as it goes through the formal planning processes.
40. Up until the introduction of CIL in the Vale of White Horse, the standards set out in this Leisure and Sports Facilities Study, which identifies the specific needs for sports facilities based on detailed assessments of quantitative and qualitative issues, will be used to inform the expectations on developers in the district. After the introduction of CIL there will be different mechanisms.

Figure 3: Didcot Leisure Sub Area map



41. When developer contributions are being sought for individual applications the Council will take into account the NPPF/NPG policy that planning obligations (including developer contributions) should only be sought where they meet all three tests of NPPF, related to CIL Reg 122. These are:

Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms

If the sport infrastructure is not provided the impact of the proposal will be unacceptable as it will not meet the needs of the relevant policies, and will lead to increased pressure on the existing facilities, for example by taking them beyond their capacity or increasing the need for refurbishment and/or extension of the facility.

Directly related to the development

The amount of demand which will be generated by the development is identified through estimating the number of residents living in the number of dwellings, multiplied by the Vale's local housing multiplier, and applying the Vale's demographic profile. The impact on the local infrastructure will then be determined based on how the development relates to the catchment area for each particular facility, and the existing and future expected balance in the supply of that facility with the new demand. The process for calculating the infrastructure needs is based on the Vale's demographic profile, the use of various modelling based on rates of participation, and the assessment of facilities local to the development including their accessibility, hours of opening, and quality.

The contributions sought for sport and recreation will therefore be directly related to the development.

Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development

With a known demand for sport and recreation facilities directly related to the development as described above, and an assessment of the impact of the development on the supply and demand balance caused by the development, the contributions sought can be both fairly and reasonably assessed to be in scale and kind to the development.

Planning Practice Guidance

42. The Planning Practice Guidance reaffirms the importance of meeting these tests, PPG (para 004) states:

"Does the local planning authority have to justify its requirements for obligations?"

"In all cases, including where tariff style charges are sought, the local planning authority must ensure that the obligation meets the relevant tests for planning obligations in that they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development, and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind. Planning obligations should not be sought – on for instance, public art – which are clearly not necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms. The Government is clear that obligations must be fully justified and evidenced..."

43. The emerging Local Plan specifies policies relating to developer contributions for social infrastructure (paragraph 4.2 CS Policy 7). "Social infrastructure" includes all of the sport and recreation infrastructure and needs, as identified in this Leisure and Sports Facilities Study. This Study, is to be the relevant evidence base which will be used to inform the live Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

CIL and Pooled Developer Contributions

44. Developer contributions can be secured for sport and leisure through Planning Obligations (s106 agreements) until 6th April 2015. Where a CIL has not been formally adopted and operational, before the current deadline of 6th April 2015, then the CIL transitional arrangements come into effect within an authority. Transitional arrangements mean that planning obligations (s106 agreements) can still be made but only be pooled from up to 5 developments.
45. If contributions have already been made from developments in the past (from 2010) towards a facility, then these count towards the 5 (Planning Act 2008, CIL Regulations 2010, as amended 2011). After April 2015 (and until a CIL is adopted) care should therefore be taken to choose which developments are used to secure s106 contributions.
46. Once adopted, CIL can enable the delivery of new or improved infrastructure needed to support the development generally e.g. a new leisure centre or tennis courts. Without a CIL in place the ability of the Council to secure developer contributions can be expected to be restricted, and this would probably lose very significant amounts of contributions to sport and leisure facilities.
47. CIL has not replaced s106 agreements entirely. Developers will still be required to mitigate the specific and direct impact of the development proposed through either a planning condition, for example to provide youth facilities on site, or by a planning obligation, for example to replace a specific sports facility lost as part of the development and needing to be replaced elsewhere.

Making the case for sport facilities under CIL

48. It is intended that developers' contributions (CIL or otherwise) will be used to fund infrastructure. Sport is essential to community well-being and health, as well as wider economic benefit and job creation, and should have equal importance in the discussions as do other community facilities, such as health and education.
49. In relation to monies potentially generated from developers' contributions/CIL, it will be essential to identify and justify specific schemes (maintenance, repair, replacement or new build), cost them and prioritise. This will be needed both for the larger strategic facilities such as swimming pools, sports halls and artificial pitches, and local facilities such as outdoor tennis courts, skate parks and community halls.
50. The most effective approach to identifying the amount of potential developers' contributions for sports halls, pools, AGPs and indoor bowls is via the Sport England Sports Facilities Calculator. The Council will therefore use this tool to generate the expectations on developers for these specific facility types.
51. In relation to cross-border co-operation, there are currently no Local Authority mechanisms in place which would enable developer contributions from the Vale to be

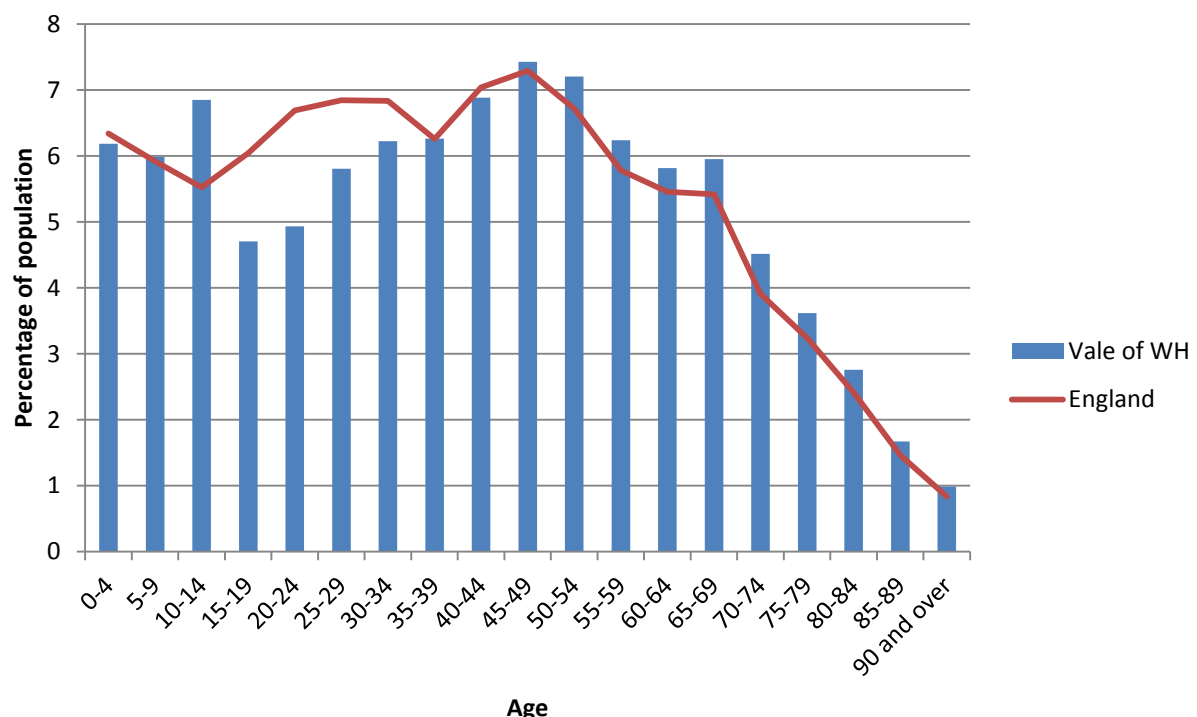
contribute towards other authorities in relation to sports facilities, or vice versa. This will need to be addressed if the cross-boundary contributions are to be secured which will be required for the implementation of the Didcot Infrastructure Development Plan (as updated by the recommendations of this Study).

Population Characteristics and Change

Current population and growth from housing

52. The total population in 2014 (as provided by Oxfordshire County Council) was estimated to be 124,665 and there is expected to be growth in the period up to 2031. This is primarily on the eastern side of the Vale and around Wantage/ Grove, although there are expected to be some significant increases at Faringdon, with smaller pockets of growth elsewhere. Details about the larger areas of planned housing growth are given later in this section.
53. The population structure of the Vale is slightly different from that of the England average as at 2014, and this has an impact on the demand for some of the sports facilities. Figure 4 illustrates the current population profile, and the dip in the number of those aged 15 through to 35 years should be noted. This dip is particularly important for the demand for sports halls and in relation to the grass pitch sports of football and rugby.

Figure 4: Vale population structure compared to England



Population forecasts

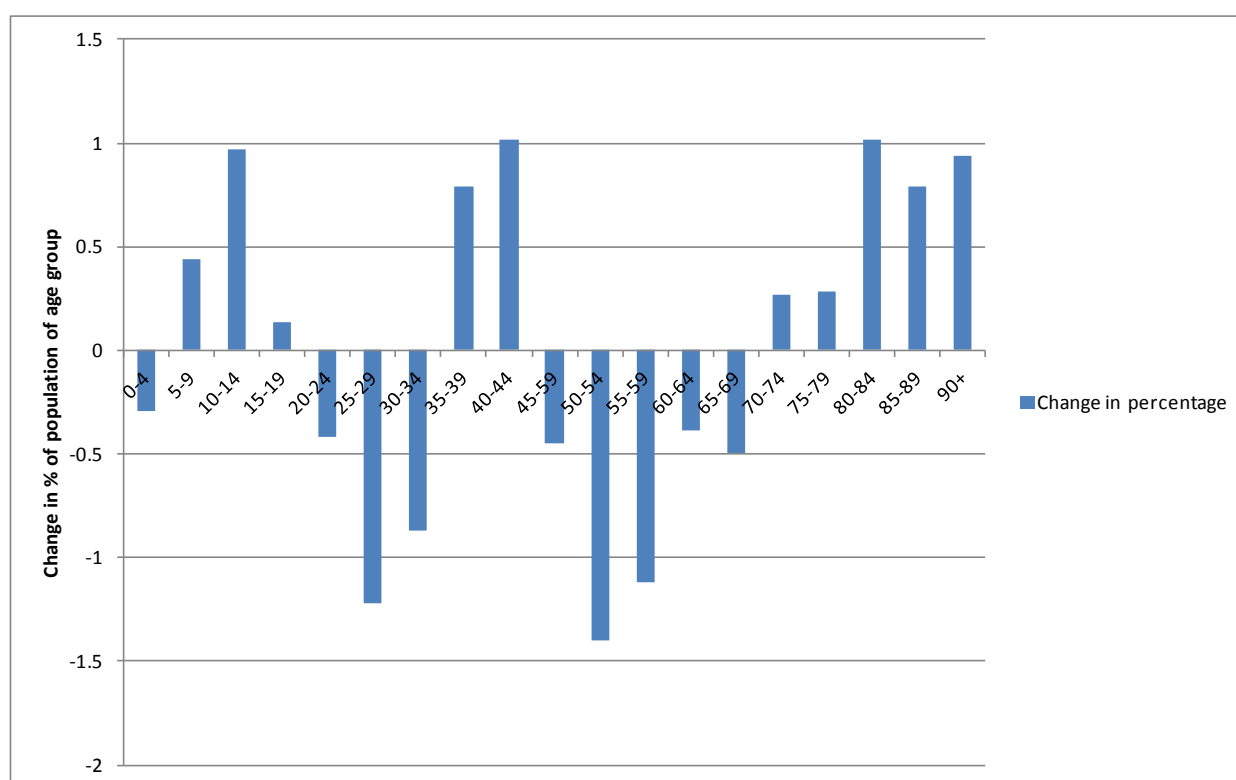
54. Figure 5 provides the forecast population up to 2031, which shows that there is expected to be an increase of around 45,300 extra people in the Vale by this time. These figures are based on the most recent population forecasts from Oxfordshire County Council which include the expected populations from the proposed Local Plan new housing sites. The populations for development sites are assumed to have the same characteristics as the overall population forecast from OCC, and the housing multiplier which has been used is 2.39 persons per dwelling.

Figure 5: Population estimates up to 2031

	Male	Female	District Total
2014	61792	62788	124580
2021	75849	78089	153939
2026	81054	84071	165124
2031	82998	86873	169872

55. The changes in the balance of the population can be illustrated by comparing the percentage of the population in each 5 year age band, and Figure 8 compares 2014 with 2031. This suggests that although there will not be major changes in the population structure, there will be:
- more children and teenagers
 - more people aged 35-45 years
 - more people aged 70+ years
 - that the dip in those aged approximately 20-35 years will continue, and that there will also be a fall in the number of people aged 45-69 years.

Figure 6: Change in population 2014-2031



Socio-economic factors

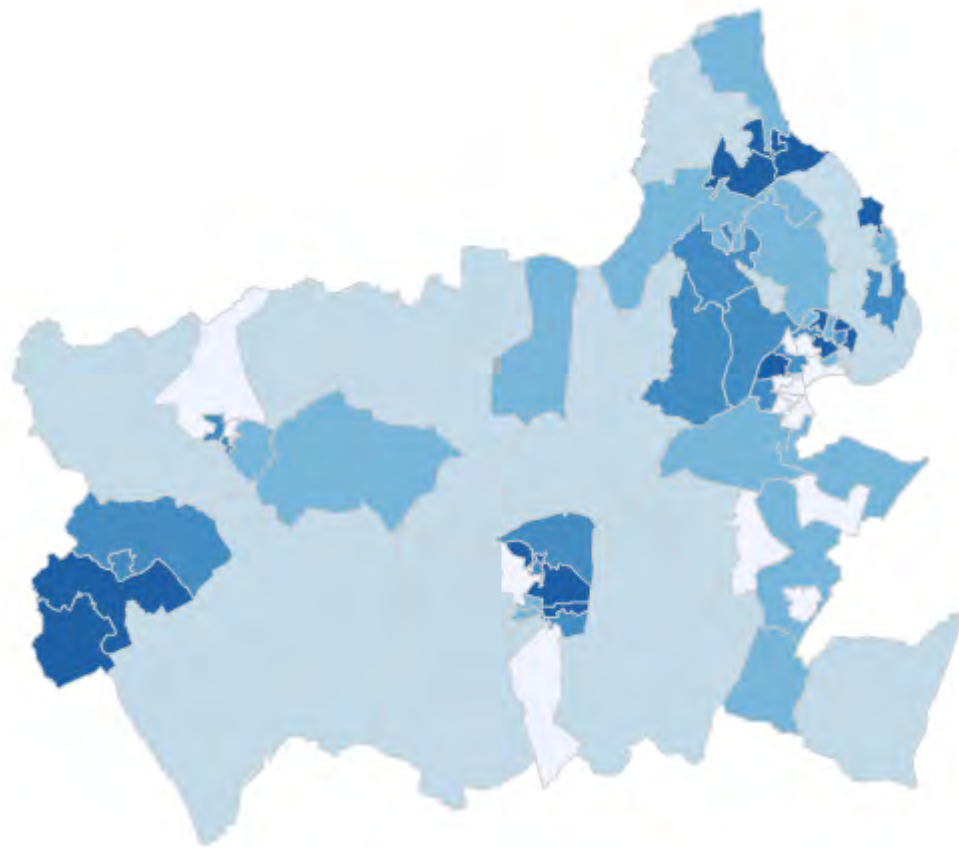
Transport

56. The Vale of White Horse is made up of a mix of both urban and rural areas. It borders Swindon, a major urban centre to the south west and has good links to the national trunk road network.
57. When considering access to sport and recreation facilities, the network of provision is critical as most people will travel a maximum of 20 minutes to reach a facility. With the good road network of the district, about half the district is within 20 minutes of a major centre by car, with the remainder of the district being no more than a 40 minutes car journey.
58. For town centres, about 75% of residents are within 15 minutes drive of a town centre and the remainder within 25 minutes. However by bus, only about 30% of the district is within a 60 minute bus journey.

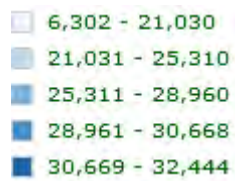
Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

59. While generally the Vale of the White Horse is an affluent area (it is ranked 333 out of 353 in England on the Index of Multiple Deprivation), there are some pockets of deprivation, illustrated by the map in Figure 7. In this map the darker the area, the higher the level of deprivation.

*Figure 7: Map of Index of Multiple Deprivation
(from Oxfordshire Observatory)*



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Health

60. The Department for Health's 2012 Health Profile for the Vale of White Horse has the following summary for the district:
- The health of people in Vale of White Horse is generally better than the England average. Deprivation is lower than average, however about 2,200 children live in poverty. Life expectancy for both men and women is higher than the England average.
 - Life expectancy is 4.2 years lower for men in the most deprived areas of Vale of White Horse than in the least deprived areas.
 - Over the last 10 years, all cause mortality rates have fallen. Early death rates from cancer and from heart disease and stroke have fallen and are better than the England average.
 - About 13.2% of Year 6 children and 14% of all children are classified as obese, although this is lower than the average for England or the South East.
 - Estimated levels of adult physical activity and obesity (20.9%) are better than the South East or England average.
 - Priorities in Vale of White Horse include tackling obesity, increasing physical activity levels, reducing high risk alcohol behaviour and encouraging more smoking quitters.
61. The cost of physical inactivity per 100,000 people based on estimates by the British Heart Foundation (source: Sport England Local Profile Tool) in 2009/10 was £1,350,500, so totals around £1.64m per year for the Vale.

PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION

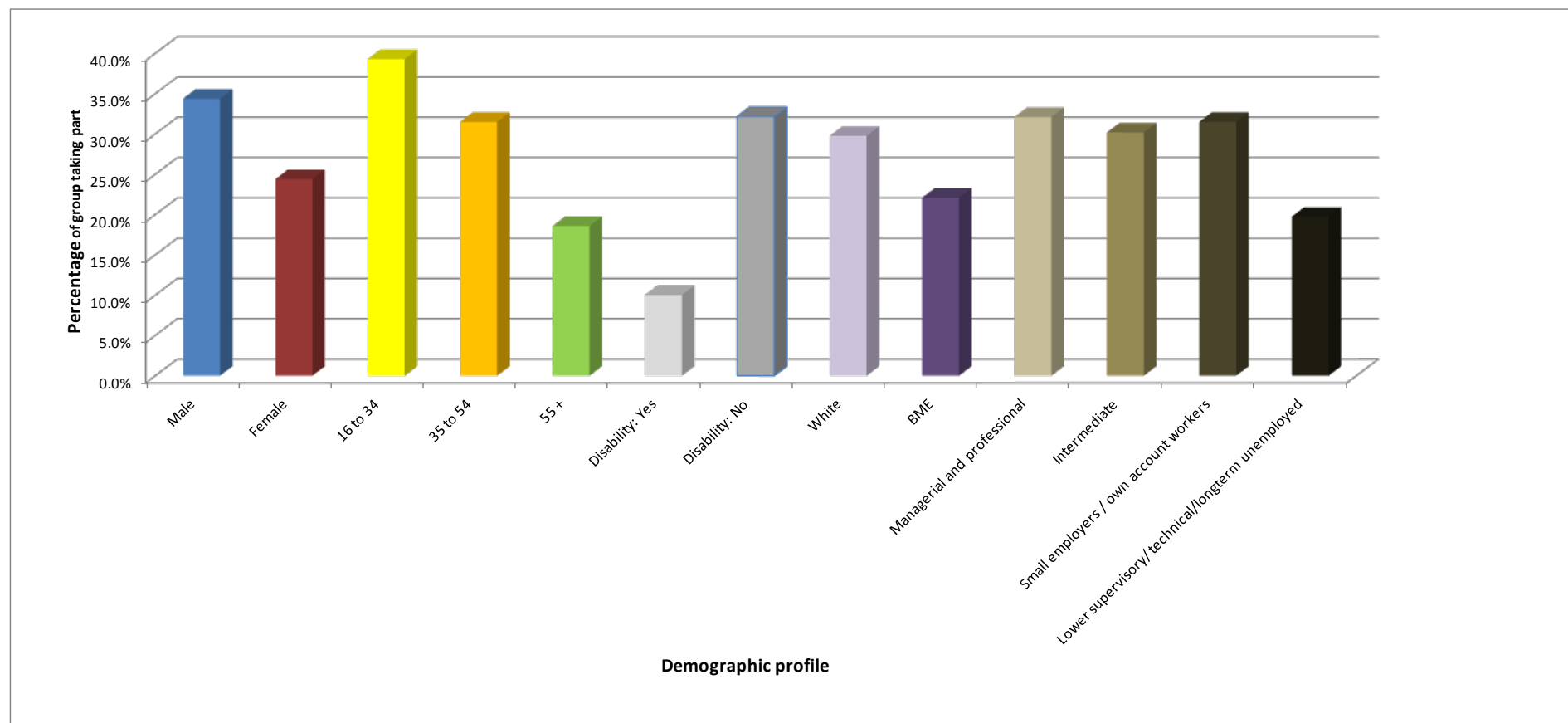
62. Sport England has a rolling survey of participation in sport, the Active People Survey (APS). The key findings for APS 8, up to April 2014 have recently been released. These show that, adults in the Vale are more active more regularly than the national average (i.e. more people are participating at least 3 times a week), and that there are fewer people taking no exercise than the national average. However there has been no significant change within the Vale in the rate of participation at the once a week or three times a week level since 2005-06.

Figure 8: Rates of participation by adults aged 16+ years

% participation in sport and active recreation	Vale of White Horse % participation	Change since 2005-06 in Vale of White Horse	Comment
3 x 30 minutes per week	29.2%	No change	National rate is 17.4%
1 x 30 minutes per week	35.2%	No change	National rate 36%
No activity	37.1%	Not known	National rate is 57.4%

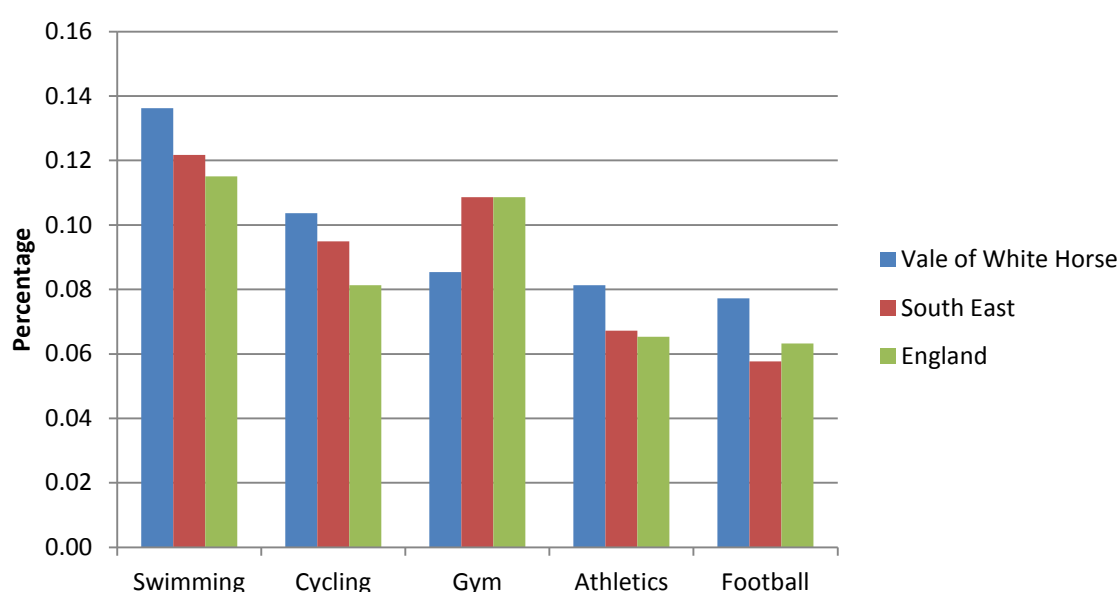
63. Overall there has been no significant change in the rates of regular participation (once a week) between 2005 and 2014.
64. Figure 9 shows the rates of participation at 3 x 30 minutes between April 2012 and April 2014 across the different demographic groups in the Vale of White Horse. The key factors emerging are:
- More males than females are active
 - Participation rates fall with age
 - Those with a disability are less likely to take part than those without
 - The non-white community is less likely to active take part in activity
 - Those people from the lower socioeconomic groups are less active .

Figure 9: Demographics and rates of activity in Vale 2012-2014



65. Figure 10 shows the level of participation in the top five sports of swimming, cycling, gym, athletics (including all running) and football. Other than for gym, the rates of participation are higher than the national and regional averages, which probably reflect a combination of low levels of deprivation together with very good access to facilities, particularly swimming pools. The lower rate of participation in gym may reflect the need for more accessible fitness facilities, as identified in the Health and Fitness section of this Study.

*Figure 10: Participation in top 5 sports
percentage of adults taking part at least once a month*



66. The APS information is also a useful source of data about the characteristics of people taking part in each sport or type of active recreation. It forms the basis of market segmentation for sport (see below), and also provides a valuable tool for assessing what facilities are likely to be best supported within each area. Relevant APS sports specific information (from Sport England's Sport Facts) is given in Appendix 3 together with a summary of the socio-economic classification.

Market Segmentation

67. Sport England has developed nineteen sporting segments to help understand individuals' attitudes and motivations to sports and physical activity and this tool is a useful extension of the other socio-economic mapping available from elsewhere. The information used to develop these segments is derived from information sourced primarily from the Active People Survey, but also from the census, and supplemented with information from other market research surveys.
68. The intelligence provided by the Market Segmentation tool helps in the understanding of why particular sports have more demand than others in an authority, and highlights any significant differences in areas across the authority. In turn this will help to identify which facility types should be the highest priority in each area. The nineteen segments are as follows in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Market Segments

Segment	Type of person	Name
1	Competitive Male Urbanites	Ben
2	Sports Team Lads	Jamie
3	Fitness Class Friends	Chloe
4	Supportive Singles	Leanne
5	Career Focused Females	Helena
6	Settling Down Males	Tim
7	Stay at Home Mums	Alison
8	Middle England Mums	Jackie
9	Pub League Team Mates	Kev
10	Stretched Single Mums	Paula
11	Comfortable Mid-Life Males	Philip
12	Empty Nest Career Ladies	Elaine
13	Early Retirement Couples	Roger & Joy
14	Older Working Women	Brenda
15	Local 'Old Boys'	Terry
16	Later Life Ladies	Norma
17	Comfortable Retired Couples	Ralph & Phyllis
18	Twilight Year Gents	Frank
19	Retirement Home Singles	Elsie & Arnold

69. Each of the nineteen segments is identified as having different characteristics in relation to patterns of physical activity. Appendix 4 provides more detail on the types of activities which appeal to each, and their motivation for participating in sport. The market segmentation data is available at local authority level as well as lower and middle super output areas.
70. Sport England expects the use of the Market Segmentation tool as part of the assessment process for all sports strategies, and here the information has been used in two ways. Firstly, an authority-wide overview of the total population as a pie-chart

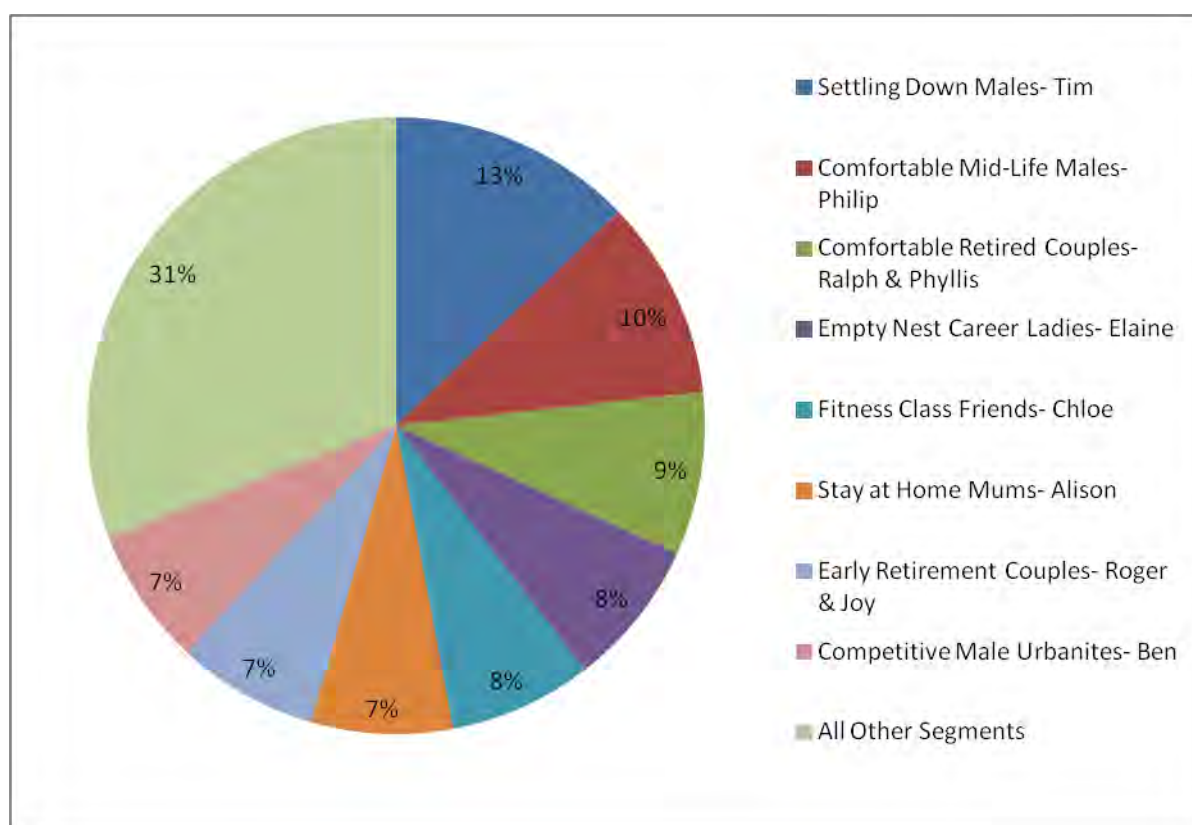
(Figure 13), and secondly the geographical distribution of dominant market segments by Middle Super Output Area (MSOA), illustrated by the map at Figure 14.

71. It is important to note from the pie chart in Figure 13 that there are some market segments which do not appear on the map in Figure 14. This is because although they are distributed widely across the authority, they do not dominate in any one area. The largest market segments across the authority as a whole, and the sports to which they are attracted are given in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Largest market segments (whole authority) and sports that appeal

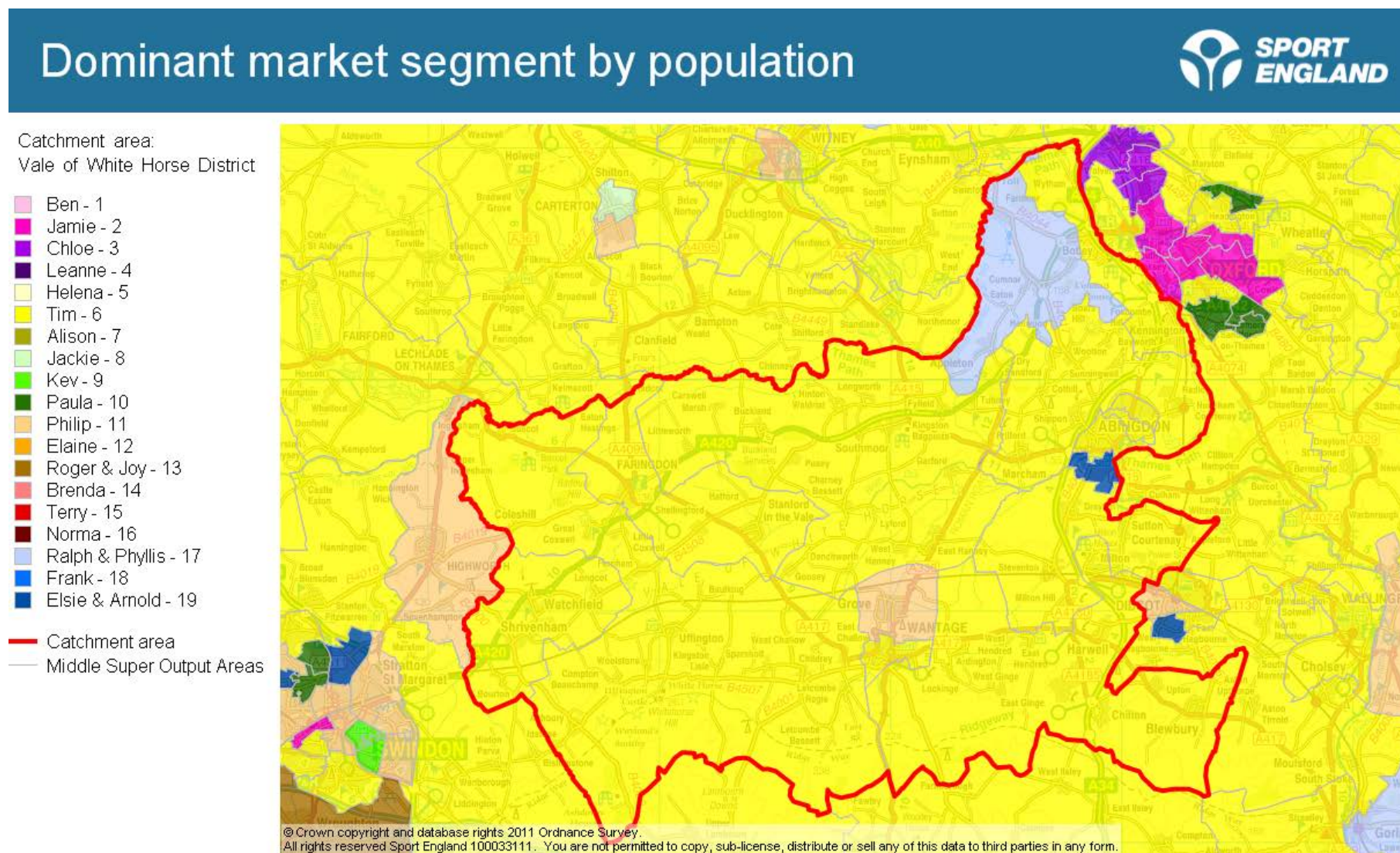
Segment	Sports which appeal	
Settling Down Males-Tim	Canoeing Cricket Cycling Squash	Skiing Golf Football
Comfortable Mid-life Males-Philip	Sailing Football Badminton Cycling	Gym Jogging Golf Cricket
Comfortable Retired Couples-Ralph & Phyllis	Bowls Golf Tennis Table Tennis Snooker	Walking Fishing Swimming
Empty Nest Career Ladies-Elaine	Swimming Walking Aqua Aerobics Step machine	Yoga Horse riding Pilates Gym
Fitness Class Friends-Chloe	Body Combat Netball Swimming Pilates	Gym Running Tennis Aqua Aerobics
Stay at Home Mums-Alison	Swimming Badminton Aerobics Pilates	Tennis Cycling Horse-riding Exercise bike
Early Retirement Couples-Roger & Joy	Swimming Walking Aqua Aerobics Bowls	Sailing Golf Shooting Fishing
Competitive Male Urbanites-Ben	Rugby Cricket Squash Climbing	Windsurfing Gym Tennis Football

Figure 13: Largest market segments (whole authority)



72. Figure 14 maps the dominant market segments in each MSOA across the district. It is clear that the Settling Down Males group dominate most of the district. As a result, activities such as cycling are more popular than in other areas of the country.
73. It should be noted that the Market Segmentation tool is a snap-shot of the current picture, and unfortunately is not available for forecasting. However it is likely that the general picture presented by this map will remain largely valid, although the groups will age in many areas.

Figure 14: Market Segmentation map



Community Desires

74. This section draws out the main themes and issues which emerged from the consultations with the community and with stakeholders.

2013 Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy

75. The consultation on the 2013 Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy ran for 4 weeks in November and December 2012, and both individuals and organisations responded. The organisations were:

- Active Nation
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Abingdon Fencing Club
- Didcot Cricket Club
- Pathfinders Youth Canoe Club Abingdon
- Grove Parish Council
- Appleton with Eaton Tennis Club
- Wantage Tennis Club
- The Park Squash Club
- Soll Leisure Group
- Berks and Bucks FA
- Sport England
- Oxfordshire Sports Partnership
- Kemp and Kemp (Grove Airfield Planning Agent)

76. Please see Appendix 8 for full details of the consultation plan.

Findings

77. 82% of respondents agreed that sports facilities in the Vale were generally good. Those that did not agree mainly lived in smaller settlements in the rural areas where there are fewer facilities. These people usually have to travel to Abingdon, Faringdon or Wantage. The need for extra indoor tennis courts and indoor bowls was not seen as very important, with most people having no particular view on either of those facility types. More and better facilities for the local community, for example football at Shrivenham/Watchfield were highlighted in both this consultation and in feedback on the Participation Action Plan.

Wantage and Grove

78. The facilities that were seen as very important for Wantage and Grove were swimming pools, sports halls, health and fitness gyms and artificial grass pitches. A teaching pool and activity hall were also seen as important.

79. The majority of people thought that new residents on the west of Didcot (Great Western Park/Valley Park) would mainly travel to Didcot for sports facilities rather than Wantage and Grove, or to Abingdon. However it was still expected that some people would travel to Wantage/Grove, to Abingdon, and also to Oxford.
80. It was felt that the standards for outdoor tennis, MUGAs and playing pitches needed to be reviewed, particularly for Wantage and Grove, due to the large housing growth proposed.
81. The support for joint use sports facilities with schools was generally supported.

Faringdon

82. Well over half the people that responded to the question about the need for an artificial grass pitch in Faringdon said they did not know whether one was needed or not, with only a small number holding the view that a pitch was definitely needed.

Abingdon

83. The fact there were no new sports facilities being proposed for Abingdon was generally accepted, although some respondents thought Abingdon did need new facilities such as: an additional skate park; extension of the existing sports centre to cater for additional fitness classes and/or martial arts, and tennis. One respondent thought a review of the current outdoor swimming facility should be undertaken and it is described in the response as being dilapidated.
84. Improvements at the Southern Town Park were flagged as a high priority by the clubs responding to the Participation Action Plan.

Local Facilities

85. The majority of respondents thought that grass playing pitches and multi use games areas were very important local facilities, and outdoor tennis courts as important. Other facilities that people would like to see in their local area included:
- Skate park
 - Fitness trail with running track
 - New sports not currently catered for e.g. lacrosse, handball
 - Green gym
 - Teaching pool at Wantage
 - Cycle track
 - Gymnastics facility
 - Boxing facility
 - Angling pond
 - Pitch and putt
 - Running facility (not an athletics track)
 - Indoor sports facility geared up for elderly/disabled

- Secure and floodlit MUGA
- Floodlighting of existing outdoor tennis courts
- Safe cycle paths linking villages
- Dedicated 5-6 court badminton centre
- Better access to river for recreational use

Other Consultation Responses

86. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) expected that most, if not all secondary schools and a significant number of primary schools will convert to academy status. OCC advises that the Department for Education (DfE) encourages the community use of academy facilities and as such can be written into academy funding agreements. Should an academy want to later withdraw community use, it would have to agree to the alteration to its Funding Agreement with the DfE.
87. OCC also felt that the Strategy should also actively promote the use of the rights of way networks for sport and leisure recreation.
88. Sport England (SE) welcomed the Strategy and recommended that it should be endorsed by the Local Strategic Partnership as well as by the Council. A stronger identification of the potential partnerships for the delivery of the future sports facilities would be welcomed.

Participation Action Plan 2012-2018

89. The South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils joint arts, sports and leisure Participation Action Plan aims to increase opportunities which encourage residents to take part in local sports, arts and leisure activities in the period up to 2018. The Strategy completed its public consultation phase before Christmas 2012 and is being implemented, with annual action plans.

90. The Council wishes to encourage participation because:

By encouraging both residents, and visitors to our districts, to participate in any activity that improves their well being and inspires and motivates them to embrace new opportunities, we will increase their enjoyment, confidence and independence, and help to create a sense of belonging and community sustainability. We will help people come together to improve the quality of their own lives and encourage local initiatives to make a real difference in our communities.

91. The Participation Action Plan takes into account the unique characteristics of the Vale (and South Oxfordshire) communities and draws direction from a number of agencies and organisations at the national, regional and county levels. There are five aims which will underpin the annual action plans. These are:

Aim one: increase participation in arts, sport and active recreation by raising awareness among residents of activities and opportunities taking place in their local community

Aim two: work in partnership to promote and enhance existing provision, to maximise resources and to reduce inequalities

Aim three: ensure good quality arts, sports and leisure provision by encouraging investment in leisure and culture and accessing funding to support future development

Aim four: capitalise on opportunities created from high profile national and international events to increase both participation and volunteering across the districts

Aim five: increase usage and range of activities at Wantage Civic Hall and Cornerstone

92. The Participation Action Plan recognises the current challenges arising because of the economic downturn and the changes within the partner organisations such as schools, the health service and youth services. Local government has traditionally been the primary investor and deliverer of the services to local communities, but there is now a need to work more in partnership with other organisations. Partners in the sport and leisure sector are seen as including amongst others: leisure providers, clubs, event organisers, national governing bodies of sport, Oxfordshire Sports Partnership, parish and town councils, schools and Sport England.
93. The delivery of the Participation Action Plan will be via annual action plans linked to the five aims.

Aim 1

- Create opportunities for youngsters to try new sports and join new clubs to nurture a lifelong involvement in their chosen sport.
- Identify sustainable opportunities for increased participation in sport and active recreation that will appeal to all sectors of the community (e.g. running school holiday sports programmes, community games and workplace activities).

Aim 2

- Work in partnership to promote and enhance existing provision.
- Ensure representation on Oxfordshire Sports Partnership groups.
- Support the Sports Network to enable partnerships to grow and resources to be used effectively.
- Work with schools to encourage participation in competitive sport.
- Create a positive place to participate and reduce inequalities.
- Increase the involvement of underrepresented groups.

Aim 3

- Ensure a legacy from the GO Active project by making the activities devised by the coordinators and activators remain sustainable beyond the limitations of the projects existing funding.
- Research external funding opportunities and work in partnership to access it.
- Support local clubs and voluntary groups to access funding.
- Ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place to achieve increased participation.
- Offer guidance to clubs and voluntary groups to enable them to achieve sustainable activities and strengthen the infrastructure for sport and active recreation.

Aim 4

- Promote volunteer engagement, development and retention.
- Work with schools and higher education to bring volunteers into the work place and work with them on individual projects.
- Maximise the long term opportunities created by London 2012.

Aim 5

- Create a vision for Wantage Civic Hall to give it a clear identity and make it the heart of the Wantage community.
- Increase usage of WCH through a planned timetable of improvements to both the physical building and the activities it offers.
- Operate the building in a cost effective manner.

94. The consultation feedback was positive support for the Participation Action Plan. Some of the most relevant comments which can be used to guide the Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy were:
- The facility vision and extension of usage in Aim 5 should apply to all the leisure centres.
 - Faringdon has been paid too little attention.
 - There is a need to provide better for the rural communities, particularly those without access to a car.
 - Shrivenham and Watchfield should have better facilities for local people, particularly football.
 - A priority should be to support local clubs and groups e.g. via grants programme for both facilities and activities.
 - Ensure that the proposed sports facilities for Great Western Park are completed and opened for community use.
 - The leisure centre operators should be more accountable generally.
 - Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association should be considered as one of the partners.
 - The Southern Town Park in Abingdon should be a high priority for investment as it has large active clubs but there are site issues and the current lease is too short to enable bids to be made for external funding.

95. This feedback has been used to help guide the priorities for investment, particularly in the Implementation section of this strategy.

Vale of White Horse Residents' Panel Survey, December 2011

96. The Vale residents' survey of December 2011 included a number of questions about the levels of activity of individuals, barriers to participation, satisfaction with existing facilities and opportunities, and aspirations. The key findings included:
- 46% of respondents said that they had done at least 3 x 30 minutes of moderate activity in the preceding week. Comment: This is much higher than the Active People Survey, possibly because the criteria is not restricted to the Sport England definition of sport and active recreation.
 - Just over half of the respondents are happy with the amount of physical activity they do, but the rest would like to do more. People aged under 45 years, those who work and those with children were least happy with the amount of exercise they took.
 - The main barriers to more participation are, in decreasing order:
 - No time available
 - It costs too much
 - Nothing suitable close to home
 - No one to go with
 - Childcare if difficult/costly
 - Not interested in any of the options available

Comment: This reflects the usual findings for this type of survey. The survey identified no specific actions which could be taken to encourage people to exercise regularly, with the exception of a need to look at value for money.

97. Most people are at least fairly satisfied about the facilities in the leisure centres, the variety of different activities in the district, the cost of participating and the provision of suitable activities. The provision of sports and leisure facilities is the 4th most important service the council offers, after waste and recycling, reducing crime and keeping the area clean.
98. There are some differences between where people currently take part in activities, and where they would prefer to. The most notable differences between the answers given are:
- More people would like to use the leisure centres and community centres/village halls.
 - People would prefer to use their home and the outdoors less than they do now.
 - Generally more women and people with children want to use a leisure centre.

- Community centres and village halls are particularly important for people outside of the main towns.
99. The peak periods for demand are weekday evenings and mornings and afternoons at the weekend. *Comment: follows national participation patterns used for FPM analysis*
100. The activities which people would be most interested in taking part in, in decreasing order are:
- Walking
 - Swimming
 - Pilates
 - Dance
- Comment: the wording of this question may have influenced the responses received, as may have the demographics of the survey respondees which had fewer under 45s than over 45s, but responses from men and women were evenly split.*
101. The findings from the Residents' Panel are general and confirm the importance of sport and recreation in the Vale, including the services which the council provides. The emphasis on swimming as a very important activity for everyone helps to make the case for continued investment in pools. The other particularly notable point is the relative importance of community and village halls, a theme which also emerges from similar studies elsewhere. Although not included within the brief for this report, retaining and improving the opportunities and facilities at village halls and community centres should be a high priority for the future.

Wantage and Grove Survey, March 2011

102. This survey was undertaken by Alpha Research in March 2011, and included amongst other specifics an assessment of leisure needs. About half of the respondents had used Wantage Leisure Centre in the 12 months preceding the survey and a strong theme emerged from the comments received about the need to improve it, by modernisation or refurbishment. There was also some desire to reduce the entrance fee for all or to introduce concessions. Most comments related to the need to improve the pool and also its changing facilities. More varied programming and longer opening hours were also flagged as needed. About 1/3rd of people would also be interested in using a gym.

The Leisure Centres

103. This section of the report brings together information about the main leisure centres in Vale, for which the Council has direct responsibility. These centres are located at Abingdon, Wantage, and Faringdon.
104. The success of the leisure facility network in the Vale depends in large part on the ability of the facilities to be maintained to a high standard. This means that the facilities, where they are to be retained, need to be fully maintained, repaired and renewed (and potentially replaced) with current specific known costs. The Council therefore regularly undertakes formal condition surveys of the facilities and plans maintenance as required.
105. A leisure centre might usually be expected to require a major refurbishment, or potentially a re-build replacement after about 20 years, and developer contributions from new development in the catchment are justified to support these costs as the new residents from the new housing will place increasing pressures on the facility network.

White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre, Abingdon

106. The facility was built in 2002. The centre had a total attendance of 804,331 visits over the period April 2013-March 2014 and the usage for the main facility elements were:

Figure 15: White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre throughput

Facility elements	Number of visits Apr 13 – Mar 14
Swimming pool (excl schools)	231277
Sports Hall	53822
Gym	246149
Aerobics	95647
Squash and table tennis	7159
Tennis indoor	37430
Tennis outdoor	10125

107. The centre has seen an increase in the usage since 2010-11, with swimming visits excluding schools having increased from 183,376 i.e. an increase of 126%, and gym from 178,064, an increase of 134%. The sports hall has seen a fairly steady level of demand as has the outdoor tennis, whilst the indoor tennis, squash and table tennis have increased slightly.
108. The latest conditions survey was undertaken in February 2013, which was a visual inspection. Works have been undertaken in 2014 and the car park has also been

extended. The remaining costs identified in the 2013 condition survey were around £173,000 for the years 2013-2018, and £251,000 for the period 2019-2023.

Faringdon Leisure Centre

109. This is a dual use facility and the swimming pool was built in 1997, with the sports hall in 1990. The centre had a total attendance of 140,098 visits over the period April 2013-March 2014 and the usage for the main facility elements were:

Figure 16: Faringdon Leisure Centre throughput

Facility elements	Number of visits Apr 13 – Mar 14
Swimming pool (excl schools)	116,788
Sports Hall	11,231
Health and Fitness	25,404
Activity Room	14,802
Squash and table tennis	8,299

110. The centre has seen an increase in the usage since 2010-11, with swimming visits excluding schools having increased from 63,308 i.e. an increase of 184%, and health and fitness from 19,521, an increase of 130%. The activity room has seen increased use, as has squash and table tennis. The sports hall however appears to have experienced a fall in usage, but this may be a matter of accounting for the block bookings.
111. The health and fitness provision at Faringdon is running at close to full throughout much of the peak period, and users have previously been set a maximum time limit in the fitness gym. There is physical space to expand the gym if this is justified.
112. The most recent condition survey was undertaken in February 2013 and identified a need for £451,070 worth of refurbishment works over the period up to 2023. In 2014 new boilers and a control panel was installed at a cost of £38,385. The works on the building fabric and mechanical items are estimated to be spread across the period, with around £241,000 in the period up to 2018, and a further £170,500 in the period up to 2023.
113. There is a identified need to extend the current facilities at Faringdon, and there are emerging proposals to extend the fitness gym and to develop an artificial grass pitch on the site. There is also a need to provide additional car park space.

Wantage Leisure Centre

114. The dual use leisure centre was built in 1976. The centre had a total attendance of 208,015 visits over the period April 2013-March 2014 and the usage for the main facility elements were:

Figure 17: Wantage Leisure Centre throughput

Facility elements	Number of visits Apr 13 – Mar 14
Swimming pool (excl schools)	86,116
Sports Hall	29,205
Health and Fitness	32,475
Activity Room	26,120
Hard courts (aka all weather pitch)	2,599

115. The centre has seen a fall in usage since 2010-11, which was 251,160. The swimming visits have increased however from 56,787, an increase of 152%, the health and fitness has increased by 134%.
116. A visual inspection of the existing Wantage Leisure Centre was undertaken in October 2012. The cost of addressing the maintenance defects and to deal with the aging building immediately and in year 1 were estimated to be around £1.1m, however with notable caveats to this figure. These caveats are based on the fact that the condition survey was a visual inspection only, and that this inspection may not have identified other significant issues, for example, the presence of asbestos. A further £560,000 is estimated to be likely to be required between years 2 and 10.
117. The Wantage Leisure Centre site is a joint use facility which is intensively used by King Alfred's school during the school day. The significant sports facility issues flagged by the school head teacher and/or by the operators were:
- A lack of suitable changing for the public during the school day as only the "sauna" changing is available but this is limited in space, mixed sex, and of poor quality.
 - A lack of studio space during the school day for community use, with access only to the smaller room on the 1st floor.
 - Inadequate catering (vending only).
 - Limited community access to the pool during the school day.
 - Lack of changing for the school, in particular need for separate muddy change.
 - Public viewing of sports hall by public during school hours.
 - Inability to separate school use from public in pool changing areas during public session/school switch-over times.
118. The other major physical issues associated with the existing site are the very significant lack of car park spaces and traffic congestion on Portway Road at each end of the school day. In relation to car parking, a facility of this size would normally

be expected to be provided with 182 spaces, but the current car park has a total capacity of 66, and only 30 of these are dedicated to the Leisure Centre.

119. If the 3G pitch was also developed at the back of the leisure centre, the planning permission requires the development of a further 32 car park and 5 motorcycle spaces. The options for providing the additional car parking both for the leisure centre and the 3G pitch have not been considered in detail, but may impact upon both the Armoury and the Sixth Form building.

Tilsley Park

120. The facility comprising the athletics track, two sand based artificial grass pitches and three small sided 3G artificial grass pitches. The site was transferred to Abingdon School in September 2014 on a 125 year lease. The school will be required to retain community use of the site and sports facilities, and is wholly responsible for the maintenance of them, including the resurfacing of the track in due course and the re-carpeting of the artificial grass pitches.
121. The centre had a total attendance of 110,935 visits over the period April 2013-March 2014 and the usage for the main facility elements were:

Figure 18: Tilsley Park throughput

Facility elements	Number of visits April 2013 – March 2014
AGPs sand x 2	43,353
AGPs 3G small size x 3	28,646
Athletics Track	36,210

122. The centre had seen a fall in usage since 2010-11, which was 203,028. However over this time there had been a gradual increase in the usage of the athletics track, which had risen from 18,522 visits in 2010-11. There had however been a fall of around 7,504 visits to the sand based AGPs, a fall of 2,439 visits to the 3G small size pitches (though they were out of use during re-carpeting, for part of October 2013).
123. The latest visual conditions survey on the building was carried out in July 2012 and this did not identify any major problem areas with the buildings although there was a general need for redecoration. Items which would cost more than £5000 and which are likely to need attention within 5 years included: replacement boilers, water heaters and air handling, plus attention to the flat roof. The total costs of the remedial work within the next 5 years on the building was estimated to be around £58,000.
124. The 8-lane athletics track which is currently certificated as Grade A was refurbished in 2009 and will be due for full track resurfacing by around 2019. The England Athletics Strategic Facility Plan of 2012-17 estimates this cost to be around £290,000 at 2012 prices.

125. The sand dressed AGPs were re-carpeted in October 2013 at a cost of £345,000. These would be expected to require repeat re-carpeting in another 10 years, so around 2023.
126. The small sided football boxes were built in 2005, and will require re-carpeting shortly if they are retained, but the school is currently actively considering converting them to one large size 3G, and then developing further small sided AGPs elsewhere on site.

SECTION 2: FACILITY ASSESSMENT

Introduction and baseline data

127. This Leisure and Sports Facilities Study addresses the major facilities used by the community for sport and physical activity, and specifically includes the following facility types. Each has been separately assessed to derive updated standards of provision.
- 3+ badminton court sports halls
 - Swimming pools greater than 100 sq m
 - Artificial grass pitches
 - Athletics tracks
 - Health and fitness provision
 - Indoor bowls centres
 - Indoor tennis centres
 - Outdoor tennis
 - Multi use games areas (MUGAs)
 - Squash
 - Grass playing pitches
128. The baseline built facilities data has been drawn from Sport England's Active Places Power and Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (which should be very largely the same).
129. The built facility exceptions are Multi Use Games Areas and outdoor tennis courts, which do not appear in the Sport England datasets. The baseline information for these facilities has therefore been taken from a report dated January 2009 and produced by Kit Campbell Associates, the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy, Background Study. This is the same situation for the grass playing pitches.
130. The assessment work behind the Kit Campbell Background Study was undertaken over the period 2006-2008, and this included detailed site assessments of most large sports facilities, playing fields and green space areas. Consultation with the town and parish councils and with the Vale residents, via the Vale Voice was undertaken during 2006/07 to help inform the modelling outputs generated from the site assessments. As the consultation undertaken by Kit Campbell has not been updated, where appropriate, reference has been made in this report to the consultation findings contained within the Background Study.
131. The Background Study outputs included standards for quality, quantity and accessibility, which in turn were used to inform the 2008 Supplementary Planning Document, Open Space Sport and Recreation Future Provision. The scope of the Kit Campbell study was wider than this Leisure and Sports Facilities Study as it also encompassed a number of open space typologies, from allotments to natural green space.

The Vale and the adjoining authorities

132. As people are not restricted to using sports facilities within their own authority and most people will travel up to about 20 minutes, there is often a large amount of cross-over from one authority to another - “importation” and “exportation” of demand. Why people use one facility rather than another can depend upon a host of factors from the quality/age/design of the facility, its programming, easy of travel to it including parking, the costs or hire charges; to whether a club is welcoming. Fundamentally too, the actual capacity of the facility to cope with the number of people coming through the door, either on a session basis or at peak time.
133. This cross-border movement can be estimated by some of the facility assessment tools, and is supported by the new National Planning Policy Framework. In some instances, good provision elsewhere outside the authority may mean that it is not required within the authority.
134. Unfortunately there are no assessment tools available which can consider potential scenarios for the whole authority where facilities have yet to be built. This means that it is not possible to quantitatively assess the overall potential impact on the Vale of the new proposed facilities (and their possible variations) at Didcot and Swindon. At this stage it is only possible to broadly estimate the potential impacts.
135. The known proposals in South Oxfordshire and Swindon are detailed below. However these are at an early stage and the actual locations, facility mix and availability for community use are still to be fully determined.

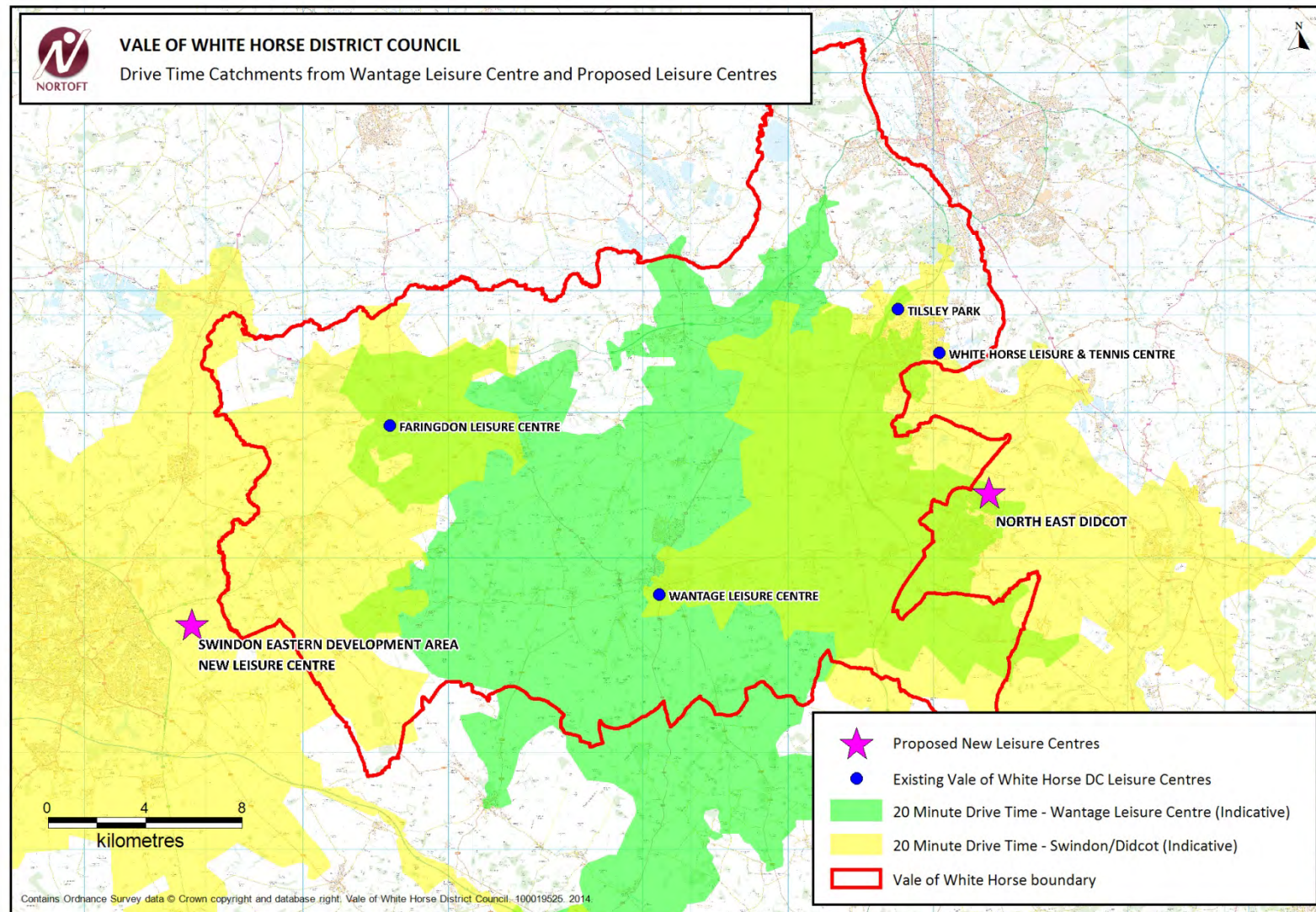
South Oxfordshire – Didcot

136. The following proposals were contained within the Joint Didcot Infrastructure Delivery Plan of March 2011:
- New leisure centre (North East Didcot)
 - Swimming pool
 - 8 court sports hall
 - Squash courts
 - Fitness facilities
 - New or expanded secondary school at Great Western Park
 - Possibly additional (4th) secondary school for Didcot (location and tbc)
 - 2 x artificial grass pitches (locations tbc)
 - 4 x tennis courts (location tbc)
137. The proposals in the Infrastructure Development Plan are changing to reflect the most recent growth proposals for housing in and around Didcot. The latest situation is considered within this report as part of the Didcot Sub Area proposals, but these are likely to change again once the housing proposals in South Oxfordshire are clearer, and any changes to the housing proposals on the Vale side of Didcot are known.

Swindon

138. The Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 anticipates growth on the eastern side of Swindon of around 8160 dwellings. Associated with this growth and at an early stage in the planning process are new sports facilities. A leisure centre is proposed to be built in the Eastern Development Area comprising 25m pool, sports hall, health and fitness and possibly an AGP. The site is relatively close to Shrivenham.
139. Other additional sports facilities are also proposed but the details of these have yet to be confirmed.
140. A map showing the potential overlap of the new Didcot North East leisure centre with Wantage Leisure Centre is provided as Figure 19.

Figure 19: Wantage Leisure Centre and potential new leisure centres overlap



Dual use on school sites

141. There has been a long history of the dual use of school sites for sport by the community and the leisure centres at Wantage and Faringdon operate on this basis. However the community use agreements have not been updated since the schools involved have moved to academy status.
142. It is expected that the Faringdon site will continue to be a dual use facility into the longer term, and it is therefore essential that this facility has a fully up to date Community Use Agreement which secures the long term future of the site.
143. The future of the community use at the existing Wantage Leisure Centre is probably less critical in the medium-longer term as there is a firm proposal to develop a new wet/dry leisure centre in the Wantage/Grove area. Once open, it is anticipated that this facility will enable the existing Leisure Centre to be transferred over to the school, who are likely to operate the dry side facilities on a block booking basis. There is still however a need to ensure that the sports hall and squash courts are retained for community use, so a replacement and much simpler Community Use Agreement will be needed. The future of the swimming pool is still to be determined, but is anticipated would no longer be the responsibility of the District Council.
144. Where new schools are proposed to be developed linked to the new housing growth these will be via the academy route. This is relevant for the Grove Airfield and Great Western Park developments on the edge of Didcot, and potentially in relation to a further secondary school which may be developed linked with the wider growth around the Didcot area. For these new schools, the responsibility for the community use becomes wholly that of the individual school's governors, who will not have been appointed at the early planning stages. Community use of new school sites cannot therefore be assumed and alternative approaches are therefore preferred. One option is where a leisure centre is developed on an adjacent site to the school and the control lies with the local authority. In this model, the school buys in the sports facility time needed to fulfil its curriculum requirements.
145. Where community use is planned into a site and the school is a key part of the sports facilities network, Community Use Agreements are needed to secure this use in the long term.

Methodology

146. The assessment of each facility type draws on a number of different elements:
- The theoretical demand for facilities based on various modelling tools;
 - The results of consultation (drawn from the Kit Campbell report and more recent consultations);
 - Issues associated with facility quality, accessibility for the community etc;
 - The future population characteristics;
 - The authority's policies on participation, and sports development objectives;
 - The resources which may be available to meet the future requirements;
 - National governing body strategic requirements.
147. As each assessment is based on a number of factors which can change over time, the recommendations contained within this Study will need to be kept under review. Of particular importance would be any significant changes in the proposed housing numbers or locations, which would result in a changed level of demand. On the facility supply side, changes to the independent schools sector might have a major impact on community sport in the Vale because several of the significant sports facilities are controlled by them. As there are no formal agreements with these independent schools regarding community access to facilities, there is no long term guarantee that they will be available.

Modelling tools

148. There is no one theoretical modelling tool which provides the answer to facility planning. A number of different tools need to be employed and the results of each synthesised together to provide an estimate for the authority.
149. The following paragraphs provide a detailed explanation of each methodology.

Facilities Planning Model

150. The Facilities Planning Model (FPM) has been developed as a planning tool by Sport England for the strategic assessment of the community needs for swimming pools, sports halls and large size artificial grass pitches. The modelling provides an objective assessment of the balance between the supply of the sports facilities and the demand for them at "peak time", which is in the evenings Monday-Friday, and during the daytime at weekends.
151. The FPM assessments take into account key factors influencing participation at the local level, including; the age profile of residents, levels of deprivation, and car ownership. In relation to the individual facilities, it can take into account the hours actually available to the community and weight the facilities for their attractiveness (usually associated with the age of the facility). More details on the FPM are included in Appendix 6.

152. The FPM tool is much more sophisticated than the Active Places Power tools available on the Sport England interactive web-site, although it is only available for halls, pools, AGPs. For these facility types no additional analysis of the *current* balance in supply and demand has therefore been undertaken.
153. Sport England undertakes a “national run” of each facility type early in the calendar year, based on the facility information known to them and standardised parameters. This gives a good current picture of provision, but does not forecast future demand. The key findings from the 2014 national assessments are included in the sports halls, swimming pools and AGP sections below.
154. The FPM is not able to provide an authority-wide forecast of demand-supply and therefore alternative methodology and modelling is required. The FPM however can be useful for “testing” local facility proposals to take account of population changes in specific areas (such as around one town), and also specific facility proposals, such as closures or new facilities. This scenario testing is available through Sport England, and might be a useful follow-up to this work in specific locations where there are a number of facility options potentially available.

Nortoft Calculator

155. Nortoft has developed a calculator which forecasts future need for each facility type based upon both changes in the population and the anticipated growth in participation. In this study it has been used for the built facilities.
156. The Nortoft Calculator is a simplistic tool and is not formally endorsed by Sport England. It treats each facility type on a ‘provision per 1000’ basis and the authority as an island, and no account has been taken of facility quality. The Nortoft Calculator also has no spatial element to it. These restrictions mean that, as with the other theoretical modelling, the findings of the Calculator should be reviewed in the light of the results from the other modelling, and also the feedback from consultation.
157. The provision per 1000 calculations use the relevant South East region average as a multiplier (unless stated otherwise), and the “starting point” for the current provision for halls, pools and AGPs is that identified in the relevant FPM reports as being the publicly available facility supply, scaled by the hours available in the peak period. This means for instance, that school sports halls which are only available for a small number of hours per week are treated on a very different basis from sports halls on leisure centre sites which have no restrictions on community use.
158. The population base for each of the milestone years is based on the latest forecast from Oxfordshire County Council, and includes all of the anticipated housing growth in the Vale up to 2031.

159. The agreed rate of additional participation per annum applied to the Calculator is 0.5%. This is a 8.5% increase over and above the demand expected to be generated from the population growth alone. The justification behind the 0.5% increase in participation is given in detail below, see Growth in participation per annum sub-section (para 178)..
160. The Nortoft Calculator is useful because it enables:
- Updated facility provision information to be included with immediate effect (without the need to wait for Active Places to be formally updated);
 - Facilities other than those held on the Active Places database to be treated in a similar way (although comparison with other authorities is not possible at this time, as the information is not available);
 - 'Testing' of facility scenarios, by including /excluding facilities;
 - 'Testing' of different total population scenarios;
 - 'Testing' of the implications of increasing demand for facilities (e.g. at 1% per annum, or other figure if the client wishes);
 - 'Testing' using standards derived from benchmark authorities, or against the national or regional rates of provision.

It also:

- Can provides an initial, automatically calculated assessment of future provision needs for each facility type;

Sports Facilities Calculator

161. The Sports Facility Calculator (SFC) has been developed by Sport England to help local planning authorities quantify how much additional demand for the key community sports facilities (swimming pools, sports halls, indoor bowls and artificial grass pitches) is generated as a result of new growth linked to specific development locations. It has been used to help local authorities in infrastructure planning, devising supplementary planning documents, negotiating Section 106 agreements, and in preparing for CIL.
162. The calculations are based on the estimated populations for each housing area once the build has been completed, by using the agreed housing multiplier for Vale of 2.39 persons per dwelling.
163. The SFC gives the user the ability to consider the impact of changes to demand, for example, to reflect the sport development policies and objectives relating to increased participation. The SFC enables the user to increase demand in 5% blocks, therefore the calculations for the period up to 2031 have been increased by 10%. The 10% figure was chosen because this is the nearest rounded figure to the 108.5% participation growth objective of the Study.

164. Whilst the SFC can be used to estimate the swimming, sports hall, indoor bowls and AGP needs for discrete areas of population such as sustainable urban extensions, it cannot be used for whole local authorities or strategic sports facility gap analysis, since it has no spatial dimension. It should be noted as well that the figure that is produced is a total demand figure for the chosen population and does not take account of:
- Facility location compared to demand
 - Capacity and availability of facilities
 - Cross boundary movement of users
 - Travel networks and topography
 - Attractiveness and quality of facilities.
165. The costs automatically generated by the SFC are currently based on the 4th quarter 2013.

Active Places Power

166. As the FPM tool is much more sophisticated than the APP tools, APP has only been used for facilities other than sports halls, pools and AGPs. The 2014 version of Active Places Power does not now enable the mapping of personal share nor travel time to facilities. As these were included in the 2013 Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy, the sections have been retained in this Study but have not been updated.

Provision per 1000 population

167. This tool is available for most built sports facilities, and is an estimate of the number or area of facilities against the population within an administrative area. This is expressed as a unit of a facility for example, for athletics tracks by the number of lanes. It is a simple tool which is a useful starting point for assessing the provision of facilities within an authority.
168. Active Places Power also enables benchmarking of levels of facility per 1000 head of population across similar authorities by using CIPFA comparator groupings and also with South Oxfordshire, the South East regional and England as a whole.
169. The main disadvantage with this tool is that it treats each authority in isolation. No account is taken of facilities just over the border or of any movement of people in and out of the authority. It also takes no account of commuter or tourist demand.
170. The Nortoft Calculator uses the regional rate of provision per 1000 generated through Active Places Power as one of the elements in the future assessment of need for facilities other than sports halls, pools and AGPs.

Personal Share of Facilities

171. This tool was previously available from Sport England for swimming pools, sports halls and indoor bowls. This has been used for indoor bowls only in this Study as the FPM assessment is available for halls and pools.
172. This tool shows the relative availability of facilities for the residents of each super output area. It takes into account the amount of facility space at peak time, the characteristics of the authority's population, and the distance to facilities. This is a more sophisticated tool than the local supply and demand balance, and is particularly useful for mapping.
173. This assessment does not treat the authority as an island – it takes account of facilities over the border, and demand coming into the authority from surrounding areas. However, it is still unable to take account of commuter or tourist demand.

Travel time maps

174. Using the previous Active Places Power tool, it was possible to produce maps which indicated the **approximate** travel times by car to a range of facilities, taking account of facilities in adjoining authorities. Maps were produced for facility types other than halls, pools and AGPs which are better addressed by the FPM.
175. Sport England research has identified that the maximum travel time to most built facilities is about 20 minutes, usually either on foot or by car. This criterion has therefore been used in this report as the basis for determining whether facilities are sufficiently accessible.

Comparator authorities

176. Sport England recommends the use of the CIPFA grouping of authorities to enable comparisons. The 'Nearest Neighbour' model was developed by CIPFA (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) to aid local authorities in comparative and benchmarking exercises. It is widely used across both central and local government. The model uses a number of variables alongside the traditional distance method to calculate similarity between local authorities. Examples of these variables include population, unemployment rates, tax base per head of population, council tax bands and mortality ratios. For the purposes of this Study, comparison has also been made with South Oxfordshire because of the geographical closeness and cross border issues.
177. The local authorities that are 'similar' to the Vale of White Horse are:
 - East Hampshire
 - East Hertfordshire
 - Test Valley

Growth in participation per annum

178. An important consideration in the modelling to assess future facility needs is to determine what the likely growth in participation each year will be. This will impact upon the overall level of demand for each facility type. Participation rates in adult sport (16 years and over) is monitored nationally by Sport England through their Active People Survey. This is the mechanism which the Vale also uses to assess the success of the Community Strategy policy objective of; getting more people active, and more people active more often.
179. The Active People Survey has effectively shown no change in the rates of overall participation in sport and active recreation over the last few years, and this is mirrored by the fact that very few national governing bodies have seen an increase in their sport's rate of participation. However there has at the same time, been a significant year on year increase in the usage of most of the Vale's leisure centre facilities. It is likely that the increased use of the Council's facilities is a combination of factors, for example: a decrease in the use of other facilities (commercial, independent schools etc), better programming and better "offer" from the Council facilities, a switch by users to "managed" facilities from more informal e.g. from running on roads to running at athletics tracks etc, fewer people being "exported" to facilities over the border, and some people using the facilities more often e.g. from once to twice a week.
180. The rates of participation in "trendy" activities will fluctuate from year to year as the activities gain popularity then reduce again. However most of these use activity room type spaces or programmed time in the pools, rather than taking up significantly more pool or hall time, so the overall strategic planning for facilities tends to be largely unaffected.
181. A 0% growth rate in participation per annum is however too limited, particularly with the long term youngish age profile of the authority, and the relative affluence of the area. Taking this approach would also mean that the authority would fail to plan for sufficient facility space to allow for any growth in participation, directly counter to the Corporate Plan and Community Plan objectives in relation to raising levels of activity.
182. On this basis it is suggested that the modelling should use a 0.5% growth rate in participation per annum i.e. a growth of 8.5% from 2014 to 2031, on top of the current rates of demand. This has been applied to all facility use across all of the built sports facilities within the authority area.

Community priorities for participation

183. The 2013 Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy was consulted upon widely with a range of interests including local sports organisations, town and parish councils, the Oxfordshire Sports Partnership and Sport England. The feedback from this

consultation informed the Strategy, and more detail about the findings from the consultation are provided in the Community Desires section above (see para 75 onwards).

184. Also influencing the priorities for the future are those identified in the Participation Action Plan which was consulted upon in parallel with the Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy. More details of the Aims and priorities are again provided in the Community Desires section above (para 89 on).
185. The 2013 strategy also drew on the Residents Panel Survey of December 2011 (para 96) and on local consultation about the growth of Wantage/Grove of March 2011 (para 102).
186. In terms of other previous consultations, reference is also made in this Study where appropriate to the findings contained in the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision Strategy Background Report by Kit Campbell Associates of January 2009. Work on the Kit Campbell report was undertaken over the period 2006-2008, and this included consultation with the town and parish councils and with the Vale residents, via the Vale Voice during 2006/07.

National Governing Body facility strategies

187. Where relevant, national governing body facility aspirations have been referred to as part of this strategy.

Costs of facility development

188. The estimated costs of facility development are primarily taken from the Sport England website, which is regularly updated. The rounded costs are based on typical schemes funded through the Lottery, and CAD layouts developed in accordance with Sport England Design Guidance Notes. At the time of the Study update the latest available costs base was the 4th quarter 2013.
189. The Sports Facilities Calculator also uses the same cost base but generates a regional cost estimate by applying the Building Cost Information Service's (RICS) Pricing Adjustment Factors.
190. A copy of the Sport England 4th quarter 2013 costs list for the different types of sports facility is provided in Appendix 7.
191. Almost all of the facilities proposed within the Study appear in the Sport England costs list, other than for the athletics local training facility and health and fitness provision. The costs of local training facilities are dependent upon the design of facility developed, and there are a number of alternatives, as illustrated by the Sport England Design Guidance Note for Athletics (2008). Because of the wide range in potential costs, the cost of a training facility with a J track has been estimated at around £500,000.

192. Health and fitness provision is usually either provided on a commercial basis or is an integral part of a leisure centre. Health and fitness has not therefore been separately costed within this report.
193. Where a new leisure centre is developed, the total costs of its development are often less than the sum of the costs of the individual facilities. The potential cost of a new replacement leisure centre for Wantage/Grove is therefore based on the similar schemes elsewhere, including the estimated costs for the proposed Didcot North East leisure centre and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Centre at Rugby.

Didcot Leisure Sub Area

194. The key findings and recommendations in this Study consider specifically the area around Didcot where the Vale of White Horse District Council ("the Vale") and South Oxfordshire District Council are working closely together across their boundaries to plan for leisure and sport as the area has significant levels of planned housing growth.
195. The joint area is called the Didcot Leisure Sub Area (DLSA) and broadly covers the new housing growth in and around Didcot, recognising that the new residents will use facilities within their travel area regardless of administrative boundaries.
196. It is important to note that the DLSA is an indicative envelope around the major new development sites, rather than a defined catchment area. Once South Oxfordshire's new housing locations around Didcot are further advanced the indicative envelope may change.
197. Where appropriate the proposed developers' contributions arising from the Vale area have been nominally split, 50% to Vale facilities, and 50% to those in South Oxfordshire. The confirmation of this approach to developers' contributions will however be needed by the Councils, as a formal policy.

Summary

198. The recommendations in this study are based on an updated facilities assessment taking account of: the results of theoretical modelling; new housing growth figures; changes in the existing population; trends in participation in sport and recreation; priorities and issues in relation to increasing participation; an assessment of what monies may be realisable from the housing growth; the implications of the new National Planning Policy Framework in relation to cross-boundary working; and, the financial restrictions and opportunities faced by the authority and its partners.

SPORTS HALLS

Introduction

199. The standard methodology for measuring sports halls is by the number of badminton courts contained within the floor area. However it is recognised that there is extensive use of these types of facility by a wide range of other sports including basketball, volleyball, handball etc. Sports halls are generally considered to be of greatest value if they are of at least 3+ badminton court size, and with sufficient height to allow games such as badminton to be played.
200. A spread of 4 court halls is often the most effective way of achieving the greatest accessibility for general community use. However, the space required for many indoor team games exceeds the space provided by a standard 4 court hall and in general terms the higher the standard of play the larger the space required. At higher levels of performance the playing area is usually the same size but increased safety margins and clear height may be required, as well as additional space requirements for spectators, teams and officials during competitions. Larger halls i.e. 6 plus courts are therefore able to accommodate higher level training and/or competition as well as meeting day to day needs.
201. Larger halls (6 plus badminton courts) may also provide the option for more than one pitch/court which increases flexibility for both training and competition. The following table (Figure 20), taken from the Sport England Design Guidance Note on Sports Hall Design and Layouts (2012) identifies the hall size required to accommodate a range of sports at different levels of play. This updates previous guidance. There is also now a strong recommendation for a slightly larger size 4-court hall for schools, to enable more community use as well as more flexibility for education. The new minimum size proposed for 4-court halls by Sport England is 34.5m x 20.0m x 7.5 m, rather than the previous standard of 33m x 18m x 7.5 m.

Active People Survey findings

202. Sports halls are used for a wide range of sports and activities, see Figures 20 and 21. Sport England's Active People Survey 7 shows that in relation to national participation rates on average once per week, there has been decrease in the main hall sports of badminton, basketball and volleyball since 2005-06.

Figure 20: Sports halls sizes

Overview of numbers of courts* / levels of play for nominal hall sizes						
Sport and level of play category**	4 Court hall (34.5 x 20.0 x 7.5 m)	5 Court hall (40.6 x 21.35 x 7.5 m)	8 Court hall (40.0 x 34.5 x 6.3 m)	10 Court hall (40.6 x 42.7 x 9.0 m)	12 Court hall (60.0 x 34.5 x 9.0 m)	15 Court hall (64.05 x 40.6 x 9.0 m)
General notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unless noted otherwise all sizes include for team / officials zones but DO NOT include for any spectator provision. The number of courts noted for each hall size does not take into account the additional option of inclusion of 'Show Court' overlays. 						
Badminton (with 1 dividing net per 4 or 5 court module)						
International ¹	4 ²⁺³	4 ²	8 ²	8	12	12
Premier ¹	4 ²	5 ²	8 ²	10	12	15
Club ¹	4	5	8	10	12	15
Community ¹	4	5	8	10	12	15
¹ Excludes officials zone. ² Requires a clear height of 9.0 m. ³ It is assumed that division nets are excluded.						
Basketball						
International	-	-	1	1	2	2
Premier	-	-	1	1	2	2
Club	1	1	2	2	3	3
Community ⁴	1	1	2	2	3	3
Reduced court size ⁵	2	2	4	4	6	6
⁴ Excludes team / officials zone. ⁵ Excludes team / officials zone.						
Cricket practice / Indoor cricket						
Community ⁶	4	4	8	8	12	12
⁶ Includes allowance for a central 3.4 m wide (minimum) clear zone for basketball goals within each 4 or 5 court module.						
Gymnastics						
International	-	-	-	O	P	P
Premier	P	P	1	1/2P	1/3P	1/3P
Club	P	1	1	1/2P	1/3P	1/3P
Community	1	1	2	2	3	3
The new hall sizes provide more space for all the gymnastics disciplines.						
Five-a-side football / Futsal						
International	-	-	P	P	1	1
Premier	P	P	1	1	3	3
Club	1	1	2	2	3	3
Community	1	1	2	2	3	3
The new hall sizes provide more space for Five-a-side football / Futsal.						
Handball						
International	-	-	-	1	1	1
Premier	-	1	1	2	1	3
Club	-	1	1	2	1	3
Community	1	1	2	2	3	3
The new hall sizes provide more space for Handball.						
Indoor hockey						
International	-	-	-	1	1	1
Premier	-	P	P	1	1	1
Club	-	P	P	1	1	1
Community	1 Unihoc	1 Unihoc	1 Unihoc	2	1	2
The new hall sizes provide more space for Indoor Hockey.						
Korfball						
International	-	-	-	-	1	1
Premier	-	-	1	1	1	2
Club	-	-	1	1	1	2
Community	1	1	2	2	3	3
The new hall sizes provide more space for Korfball.						
Netball						
International ^{7/8}	0	0	1	1	1	1
Premier	0	1 ⁹	1	2 ⁹	1	3 ¹⁰
Club	1 ¹¹	1 ⁹	2 ¹⁰	2 ⁹	3 ¹¹	3 ¹⁰
Community	1	1	2	2	3	3
⁷ A practice area will be required close to the international competition court. ⁸ For International and Super League consult with England Netball on space required for tv equipment and anticipated club specific spectator requirements. ⁹ The hall / module width needs to be increased to 23.35 m to allow for a 2.0 m wide team / officials zone which cannot be accommodated in the standard size hall. ¹⁰ Excludes team / officials zone which must be accommodated by increasing the hall size and/or by sharing team/official zones between multiple courts. ¹¹ Where netball is not the primary sport, by agreement, England Netball will allow club netball to be played in this size hall, with reduced run-offs and no team and official zones.						
Sports hall athletics						
International	-	-	-	P	1P	1P
Premier	P	P	2P	2P	3P	3P
Club	P	P	2P	2P	3P	3P
Community	P	P	2P	2P	3P	3P
The new hall sizes provide more space for all the athletics disciplines.						
Volleyball						
International	0	0	1	1	2	2
Premier	1	1	2	2	3	3
Club	1	1	2	2	3	3
Community ⁴	1	1	2	2	3	3
Training courts ⁴	2P	2P	4P	4P	6P	6P
⁴ Excludes team / officials zone. ⁴ Excludes team / officials zone.						

* Indicative court numbers are an update of the previous revision and should be checked against the space requirements for the individual sports to be accommodated.

** See Appendix 4 of 'Developing the Right Sports Hall' for guidance on the level of play category for each sport.

*** P = Below space standard for competition play recommended by the governing body, but suitable for practice and training.

Figure 21: Most popular sports hall activities

Activity	Sport hall visits (%)
Badminton	24.4
Keep fit/aerobics/step/yoga	23.6
Indoor 5-a-side football/futsal	18.3
Martial arts	6.3
Carpet/mat/short bowls	6.1
Gymnastics	3.6
Basketball	2.3
Netball	2.1
Table tennis	1.9
Dance	1.8
Trampolining	1.8
Indoor hockey	1.6
Tennis/short tennis	1.5
Roller skating/roller blading	1.2
Indoor cricket	1.0
Multi-sport session	0.7
Racquetball	0.6
Volleyball	0.6
Others	0.6

Source: Sports Hall Design and Layout Sport England (2012) based on Survey of Sports Halls and Swimming Pools in England (1999)

Current and future provision

203. In the Vale of White Horse the sports hall provision is well distributed across the towns and larger settlements, and there is a mixture of hall sizes including a 6 and an 8 court hall. There are 13 sites in total available to the community, of which three are the main leisure centres, five are independent school sites, and the rest on school or college sites. There is also a 9 court hall at King Alfred's Community and Sports College in Wantage, but this is a "dome" structure which only has temporary planning permission (renewed for 5 years in 2012). There is no current community use of the dome and it is not included in the modelling because it is a temporary structure.
204. The list of current facilities is given in the table Figure 22, which also includes the number of hours available is, as recorded by Sport England for the Facilities Planning Model.
205. In association with the planned growth at Grove Airfield, a new secondary school is proposed. It is not yet determined if the 4 court hall at the new site will have community use outside of school time as the details are still being developed, but if

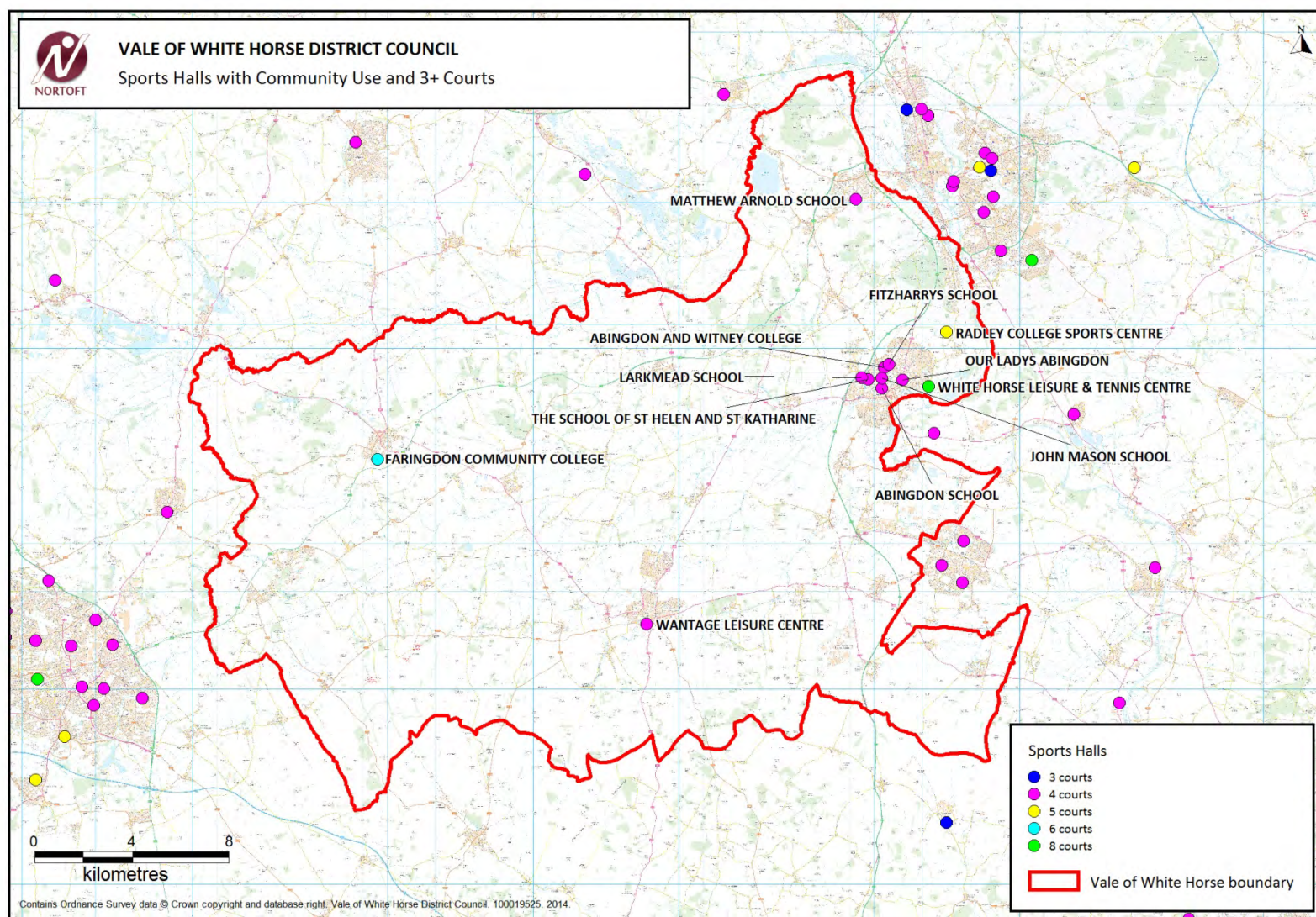
community use is enabled, this will be school managed and likely to be on a block booking basis.

206. A new secondary school is confirmed as being planned for the Great Western Park development in Didcot, which also is expected to take pupils from the strategic housing growth area of the adjacent Valley Park. No details are yet available, but all secondary schools are required to have a sports hall and hard play areas. There may or may not be community use of these facilities. A further (4th) secondary school for Didcot may also be developed, but its confirmation and potential location are awaited.
207. Also planned for Didcot is a new leisure centre which will be sited in the major housing development area of the north east of the town. This is proposed to have a 6 court hall.
208. In Swindon a new leisure centre is proposed in the Eastern Development Area, potentially with a 6 court sports hall, 25m swimming pool, and health and fitness suite.
209. Figure 23 below shows the location and size of the sports halls in the Vale of White Horse and surrounding local authorities.

Figure 22: Sports halls- current provision and community use

Site Name	Number of Badminton Courts	Ownership Type	Access Type	Included in modelling	Number of hours avail per week in peak period
ABINGDON AND WITNEY COLLEGE - ABINGDON CAMPUS	4	Further Education	Sports Club / Community Association	√	18
ABINGDON PREPARATORY SCHOOL	4	EY Setting	Sports Club / Community Association	√	10 (now closed)
ABINGDON SCHOOL	4	Independent School	Sports Club / Community Association	√	18
FARINGDON LEISURE CENTRE	6	School	Pay and Play	√	38
FITZHARRYS SCHOOL	4	School	Sports Club / Community Association	√	33
JOHN MASON SCHOOL	4	School	Sports Club / Community Association	√	38
KING ALFREDS COMMUNITY AND SPORTS COLLEGE (WEST SITE)	9	School	Private Use		
LARKMEAD SCHOOL	4	School	Sports Club / Community Association	√	33
MATTHEW ARNOLD SCHOOL	4	School	Sports Club / Community Association	√	18
OUR LADYS ABINGDON	4	Independent School	Sports Club / Community Association	√	22
PARKLANDS CAMPUS	3	Special School	Private Use		
RADLEY COLLEGE SPORTS CENTRE	5	Independent School	Pay and Play	√	38
THE DEFENCE ACADEMY	3	MOD	Private Use		
THE SCHOOL OF ST HELEN AND ST KATHARINE	4	Independent School	Sports Club / Community Association	√	20
WANTAGE LEISURE CENTRE	4	School	Pay and Play	√	38
WHITE HORSE LEISURE & TENNIS CENTRE	8	Local Authority	Pay and Play	√	38

Figure 23: Sports Halls map (existing)



Modelling

210. A number of different modelling tools are used to assess future needs, and the results for sports halls are set out below. The details about each of the modelling tools are provided in the Methodology section above.

Facilities Planning Model

211. The findings from the Facilities Planning Model can generally be considered reasonably robust, however the following change to the facility list needs to be taken into account:
- The Abingdon Prep School facilities are no longer available on a regular basis for community use
212. Sport England undertakes a “national run” of each facility type early in the calendar year, based on the facility information known to them and standardised parameters. This gives a good current picture of provision. More details about the FPM are provided in Appendix 6, but the table (Figure 24) below highlights some of the most important sports hall parameters used in the model. This identifies the number of hours that facilities are expected to be open to cover the “peak period”, what the “peak period” is, how long people are usually willing to travel to a sports hall etc.

Figure 24: Facilities Planning Model key parameters halls

At one Time Capacity	20 users per 4-court hall, 8 per 144 sq m of ancillary hall.
Catchments	<p>Car: 20 minutes</p> <p>Walking: 1.6 km</p> <p>Public transport: 20 minutes at about half the speed of a car</p> <p>NOTE: Catchment times are indicative, within the context of a distance decay function of the model.</p>
Peak Period	<p>Weekday: 17:00 to 22:00</p> <p>Saturday: 09:30 to 17:30</p> <p>Sunday: 09:00 to 14:30, 17:00 to 19:30</p> <p>Total: 40.5 hours</p>
Percentage in Peak Period	60%
Utilised capacity considered “busy”	80% = “comfort factor”

213. The main findings from the FPM model for the Vale of White Horse are a valuable assessment of the current facility provision in the district, despite the closure of Abingdon Prep School. These can be summarised as:

- Although there are 67 badminton courts’ of sports hall space, only 48 courts are available at peak time for community use. (Now reduced further due to Abingdon school’s changes).
- This gives a current total supply of 5.5 courts per 1000, which is above the average both for Oxfordshire as a whole (4.9 per 1000) and the south east region (4.3 per 1000). When the hours that the facilities are open is taken into consideration “scaled with hours”, and with a current population of the district of 124,580, this gives a rate of provision of 0.39 courts per 1000. This compares to both a regional and national average rate of provision of 0.28 courts per 1000 when scaled with hours.
- The total current demand at peak time is for 34 courts, including allowance for the “comfort factor” i.e. halls are expected to run at 80% full, not 100%. However, this demand is not evenly spread across the authority.

- 94% of people wanting to use a sports hall have access to one. Most of those people who cannot get access do not have a car and their nearest hall is too far to walk to. The total unmet demand is less than 2 badminton courts and this is spread across all of the authority.
- Residents of Wantage, Grove and Botley have the least good access to sports halls, but there is no one place where the total extra current demand is more than about ½ of a badminton court.
- There is net “export” of demand from the authority as a whole of about 705 visits per week.
- Wantage Leisure Centre is estimated by the FPM to be running at 100% full, with a throughput at community time of 46,949 visits a year. This compares to the actual throughput in 2013-14 of 29,205 visits to the sports hall plus 26,033 to the activity hall, giving a total throughput of around 55,325. This suggests that Wantage is running even fuller than the FPM is calculating.
- The White Horse Tennis and Leisure Centre at Abingdon is estimated by the FPM to be running at 59% full with an annual throughput of 97,706. This compares to the actual throughput for 2013-14 of 53,822 visits to the sports hall and 95,647 for aerobics, giving a throughput total of 149,469. This suggests that the facility is running at about 150% more than the FPM is suggesting, so is also likely to be running close to or beyond what Sport England considers to be “busy”.
- The Faringdon Leisure Centre is estimated to be running at 60% full with a throughput of 41,096 visits a year. The actual throughput for 2013-14 was 11,231 visits to the sports hall and 26,033 to the activity room, giving a total throughput of 55,325. Again this suggests that the FPM is significantly underestimating the usage of this centre.
- Fitzharry’s school is estimated to be running at about 38% full, and The School of St Helen and Katherine at about 29%. Throughput information is not available for the school facilities, so the accuracy of the FPM assessment is not possible to assess.

214. Given the cross-boundary issues around Didcot and the substantial growth in housing planned both within the Vale and within South Oxfordshire centred around the town, it is also important to consider the facility network in that part of South Oxfordshire. The FPM model for the South Oxfordshire area around Didcot suggests that:

- Didcot Leisure Centre is running at 81%
- Didcot Girls School is running at 52%
- Willowbrook Leisure Centre is running at 85%

215. The FPM therefore suggests that there two of the three facilities are already running at rates that are considered more than “full”. However there is just sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the existing population. This means however that there is effectively no spare capacity within the existing facilities to meet the needs of the new communities planned in and around Didcot, so additional sports hall space is required.
216. In summary the FPM modelling suggests that there is an excellent level of provision of sports halls at the present time, which meets almost all of the demand, particularly if users have access to a car. Wantage, Grove and Botley currently have a small amount of unmet demand, and the Wantage Leisure Centre is running at 100% full at peak time (when 80% is usually considered full).
217. However the estimated usage of the facilities by the FPM is actually lower for all of the leisure centres than the actual usage figures for 2013-14, so there is less “spare capacity” than the FPM suggests which could cater for the demand arising from new housing.

Nortoft Calculator

218. The Nortoft Calculator forecasts future need for facilities based upon both changes in the population and the anticipated growth in participation of 0.5% per annum. The findings from the Nortoft Calculator (Figure 25) suggest that on *average across the authority*, only four additional badminton courts of sports hall space is required up to 2031, largely because the authority already has a much higher level of supply of space per 1000 than either the regional or national averages. This does not however identify the implications at local level such as the particular pinch points caused by the existing lack of provision and new housing growth as around Wantage/Grove.

Figure 25: Nortoft Calculator results- sports halls

Assessment of change in facilities required - based on projected population increase													
Vale of White Horse Local Authority Population Projections													
	2014	2021	2026	2031									
Population	124,580	153,939	165,124	169,872									
Facility type	Authority	Unit of measurement	No of units	Current units per 1000	South East provision per 1000	Change in provision required to bring levels in line with South East average (with assumed 0.5% increase in participation per year)				Total provision proposed (existing plus new)			
						2014	2021	2026	2031	2014	2021	2026	2031
Sports Halls England average = 0.28 SE average = 0.28		Courts	48	0.39	0.28								
	Whole Authority					-13	-3	1	4	35	45	49	52

Sports Facilities Calculator

219. To assess the demand for sports halls arising directly from the main housing developments, Sport England's Sports Facilities Calculator is the most appropriate and accurate modelling tool and has therefore been used instead of a standard of provision. A 10% increase for participation growth over the period 2014-31 has been applied as this is the best fit for the modelling of the 0.5% participation increase per year, which is the adopted strategic rate of increase.
220. Each of the 22 separate housing sites in the Local Plan 2021 "Final Sites Package" (see para 36) has been assessed using the SFC, see Appendix 11 for copies of the individual site calculations. Altogether the 11,560 new dwellings with their 27,628 additional residents will generate around 8 badminton courts worth of new demand.
221. The demand from the Grove Airfield development also needs to be taken into consideration as this will generate a requirement of approximately 1.7 courts. This requirement needs to be met via the 4-court sports halls proposed in the Wantage/Grove area. This need cannot be met at the proposed community hub in Grove Airfield because this facility will not be large enough (at the proposed 2-court size) to cater for many sports hall sports.
222. The demand for sport hall space arising from each development needs to be considered in relation to both the secure community sports hall space available which is most easily accessible to the development and, within the wider context of housing development across Vale. For example the impact on the leisure facilities at Wantage/Grove will be from all of the housing developments within the facility's drive time catchment, though in practice there will be overlapping drive time catchments for the leisure centres in Vale. This step in the assessment is considered in the Modelling Findings below.

Comparator authorities' provision

223. Using the data available on Active Places it is possible to compare the levels of facility provision per 1,000 head of population for the Vale of White Horse with other authorities. The following table, Figure 26 compares the district with the CIPFA authorities, with South Oxfordshire, the South East Region and England as a whole. It considers the number of sports halls with public access of 3 badminton courts and above, but no account is taken in the table of the number of hours the facilities are available to the community, so only very broad comparisons can be made.
224. This very simplistic approach suggests that the Vale has amongst the highest rates provision per 1000, with only South Oxfordshire having more.

Figure 26: Sports halls - comparator authorities

Local authority	Source of population data	Population as at 2014	Number of courts (halls of more than 3 courts only)	Provision per 1000
VOWH	OCC	124,580	59	0.47
S Oxon	ONS	136,758	68	0.50
East Hampshire	ONS	117,513	53	0.45
East Hertfordshire	ONS	141,940	53	0.37
Test Valley	ONS	117,691	52	0.44
South East	ONS	8,852,000	3,305	0.37
England	ONS	55,227,900	18,809	0.35

Summary of modelling findings

225. At present there are 48 badminton courts available at peak time, and there is generally a high level of existing provision in the Vale, which means that most people with access to a car can reach a facility. The Nortoft Calculator suggests that although there is currently some “spare capacity”, this will be used up over the period up to 2031 as the new housing is developed, and some new provision will be needed.
226. This additional provision will be needed in particular for the Wantage/Grove area and around Didcot. At Wantage the FPM suggests that the facility is already at capacity, and this is more than confirmed by the throughput figures for the leisure centre. Furthermore the new housing growth from Grove Airfield, Crab Hill and Monks Farm alone will bring additional demand for up to 3.2 badminton courts. The justification for a new 4 large size court hall with full community access is therefore clear, together with the retention of community use of the existing leisure centre sports hall and the sports hall at the proposed secondary school at Grove Airfield. Both of the school facilities would be expected to be made available on a block booking basis and managed by the schools themselves.
227. The proposed community hub in Grove Airfield with its hall of about 2 court size cannot be considered as contributing to the sports hall needs for sport as this type of facility is too small to enable a range of activities to take place. For this reason the developers at Grove Airfield have already agreed to contribute to both facilities.
228. The 6 court sports hall at Faringdon is currently estimated to be running at 38% full by the Sport England Facility Planning Model, but again current throughput is higher than this. The extra demand from the new housing sites close to Faringdon generate approximately 1 extra badminton court of demand. Given the size of the sports hall,

there may be sufficient space to cater for this demand within the existing facility although other site issues will need to be resolved such as limited car parking.

229. The 8 court hall at the White Horse Tennis and Leisure Centre is similarly estimated to be running at 38% full by the FPM, but this appears to be an underestimate. The new housing growth around Abingdon is expected to generate around 1.6 courts of demand, so there appears to be sufficient capacity on this site to cater for the new demand here.
230. The assessment of the need around Didcot is more complex as this needs to take into account both the housing within Vale and that within South Oxfordshire, the proposed school facility at Great Western Park and the new leisure centre at Didcot North East. A separate report on the Didcot Leisure Sub Area has been produced (see Appendix 9), but in summary its findings are that the current sports hall network will need enhancing as housing growth takes place. If community use of the existing leisure centre and schools continue, and community use is legally secured for adequate sized and adequately accessible community use at the current and planned school sites (at Great Western Park and potentially another new secondary school), then there should be sufficient provision of sports halls up to 2031.
231. Community Use Agreements to ensure community use of school sites and sports facilities are needed where the facilities are important to the overall sports facility network. The parties to such agreements are usually the school involved and the district council though may also involve any grant aid organisation such as Sport England, and the county council.
232. If adequate community dual use of the two new school sports is not legally secured, then it will be necessary to provide the sports hall space elsewhere with two new large four court sports halls on new housing sites. Given the current location of sports halls, including the planned new Didcot North East leisure centre, the preferred alternative locations are within the proposed Valley Park and East of Harwell Campus housing sites, both of which are within the Didcot Leisure Sub Area.
233. The future residents of the new planned housing areas around Harwell and the western side of Valley Park will be able to reach both the proposed new leisure centre in the Wantage/Grove area and other sports hall facilities in Didcot within approximately the same travel time, so it is proposed that developers' contributions from the Vale area are allocated 50% towards the proposed new leisure centre in the Wantage/Grove area and 50% towards enhanced community sports facilities in Didcot.

Recent consultation findings

234. The consultations on the draft 2013 Leisure and Sports Facilities generally confirmed the view that the facilities in the Vale were on the whole, good. New sport hall space was seen as very important for Wantage and Grove. One consultee would like additional sports hall space of at least 5 court size for badminton. However, given

that the county badminton performance centre is at Abingdon, this is unlikely to be a priority.

- 235. Priorities emerging from the Council's Participation Action Plan mainly focus on the programming opportunities for all age groups and on getting people who are less active, more so. The partnerships with the schools and operators at the joint use facilities will be an important consideration for the future.
- 236. The Vale Residents' Panel survey and the Wantage and Grove survey, both in 2011 confirmed the importance of leisure centres and other sports facilities to the community. Although people are generally satisfied with the quality of the provision, there is a recognised need to improve the Wantage Leisure Centre.

Kit Campbell Background Study (January 2009)

- 237. The Kit Campbell Background Study suggested that there was a good level of provision, and recommended that a 15 minute travel time would be appropriate, based on the response from consultees.
- 238. The consultation findings reported in the Background Study based on a surveys undertaken in 2006, suggested that additional sports hall space or improved sports hall provision was needed.
- 239. The Kit Campbell Background Study also noted that the Wantage Leisure Centre was "showing its age" and its future needed to be considered in the light of planned growth for the Grove and Wantage areas. The options suggested for further consideration were: a larger centre on a site accessible to both Grove and Wantage ideally on a dual use basis; or to upgrade it and provide a separate facility to serve Grove.
- 240. The planning recommendation in the Kit Campbell report is 0.05 sq m of court per person, giving a quantity standard of 0.1 sq m of building per person. This equates to a standard of approximately 0.6 courts per 1000.

Comment and need for updating

- 241. The planning standards contained within the 2008 SPD and derived from the Kit Campbell Background Report now require revision. The travel time standard in the SPD is 15 minutes which is significantly less than the accepted 20 minutes travel time for sports halls. This in turn would require more facilities placed closer together.
- 242. The standard of provision of 0.6 courts per 1000 is of limited value in determining future provision needs. It does not take into sufficient account the number of hours any facility is available for community use. The 0.6 courts per 1000 is well above the rates of provision in the rest of the county or region and is likely to be financially unsustainable as facilities would be used at less than capacity.

243. Revised planning standards for quantity and accessibility are therefore required.

National Governing Body strategies

244. The most prominent sports in sports halls in the Vale are badminton and small-sided football/futsal.
245. In relation to badminton designated High Performance Centre for Oxfordshire is at Abingdon School. The Badminton England, the national governing body's National Facilities Strategy 2012-16 provides the framework for investment priorities. Badminton uses the specially designed (and painted) sports hall at the school on three weekday evenings a week plus two hours on Sundays. There is no badminton facility strategy setting down other priorities for the Vale.
246. Futsal, the indoor version of the football is growing quickly as a sport. The larger 4-court hall size now recommended by Sport England, is the preferred minimum hall size for the sport. This use of sports halls is often a key contributor to the income from the community. At present there are no Football Association strategies to guide investment in the Vale in relation the futsal.
247. Basketball is played at Abingdon and Witney College and at Faringdon Leisure Centre, but there are no facility strategies from the national governing body, Basketball England, for the sport to guide investment at the Vale level.
248. Although there are a number of other sports and activities which use sports halls and some have specific design requirements, none have facilities strategies with investment priorities of specific relevance to Vale.

Market Segmentation implications

249. The Market Segmentation findings (para 67 on) suggest that sports halls may used by the largest market segment groups for adults for: indoor cricket practice, 5-a-side football, netball and badminton. These uses tend to reflect much of the programmed time for this type of facility.

Development of a planning standard

250. The planning standards are derived from a synthesis of the findings from the modelling, consultation responses, and the policy decisions of the authority including in relation to the sports development objective of increasing activity levels.

Rate of provision per 1000

251. The current rate of provision is calculated on the capacity of sports halls actually available in the peak period (the Sport England “scaled by hours” figure), rather than the total amount of facilities available. The modelling findings and consultation feedback shows that the existing rate of provision is higher than the current demand for sports hall space in the Vale. It is therefore proposed to develop a standard for new development rather than one for the whole authority.
252. The modelling findings of the SFC suggest that a rate of provision per 1000 for individual housing developments should be 0.29 per 1000, based on the population profile for 2031 and a participation rate of growth 10% over the period. It is therefore proposed that the rate of provision should be 0.29 courts per 1000 population for the period up to 2031.

Standard for accessibility

253. The majority of sports hall users in the Vale will travel by car, and national research shows that sports halls have an approximate drive time catchment of 20 minutes. A formal planning standard of 20 minutes drive time is therefore appropriate, and the existing geographical spread of facilities meets this accessibility requirement.

Standard for design and quality

254. The third element of the planning standards is that of quality and design. The quality and design of facilities should reflect current best practice, including design guidance from Sport England and the national governing bodies. This should apply to refurbishment proposals as well as new build.

Planning standard summary

255. The planning standard is therefore proposed as:
- 0.29 badminton courts per 1000 (fully available to the community at peak time i.e. weekday evenings and weekends)
 - A drive time standard of 20 minutes.
 - Design and quality standard to meet Sport England or the relevant national governing body standards.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Current supply and demand

256. Sports halls are one of the primary sports facilities for community activity because they can provide a venue for many different activities. There are currently a number of community accessible sports halls across the Vale. The sports hall at the White Horse Tennis and Leisure Centre at Abingdon is fully available to the community, but the other facilities are available on a dual use basis. At the present time there are sufficient sports halls to meet the needs of the Vale but there is a need to review the dual use agreement at Faringdon as this is now out of date.

Future requirements

257. Although there appears to be almost sufficient sports hall capacity across the Vale as a whole to cater for all of the additional demand from the housing growth, the natural population growth and increase in participation, there is actually a specific need around Wantage and Grove, and around Didcot.
258. The Wantage Leisure Centre has insufficient capacity to cater for the additional demand which will arise the housing growth at Grove Airfield, Monks Farm and Crab Hill plus the other smaller developments within the catchment. At least one new large size 4 court sports hall is therefore required in the Wantage/Grove area, along with some retained community use of the existing Wantage Leisure Centre sports hall (once transferred to the school) and the new Grove Airfield school. It is assumed that the school facilities would be made available in the evenings and weekends on a block booking basis to clubs. The proposed leisure centre in the Wantage/Grove area will be intensively managed with pay and play opportunities and access during the day time, as well as accommodating clubs.
259. The future facility requirements arising from the housing growth in the Vale part of the Didcot Leisure Sub Area are likely to be met by both the proposed new leisure centre in the Wantage/Grove area, and leisure facilities within Didcot. This is because much of the housing growth within Vale is within the 20 minute drive time catchment of both the proposed new Wantage/Grove site, and the Didcot facilities. Developers' contributions could therefore be allocated to facilities in both districts, and a 50%:50% split may be one of the simplest ways of achieving this. However no formal policy decisions have yet been made about cross border developer contributions by either the Vale or White Horse or South Oxfordshire District Councils.

Recommendations

260. The existing sports halls at the White Horse Tennis and Leisure Centre and Faringdon Leisure Centre should be retained.

261. A new wet/dry leisure centre with 4 court hall should be developed in the Wantage/Grove area as proposed by the Vale of White Horse District Council. When the site has been determined this may require an appropriate policy within the Local Plan to enable built sports facilities on the site.
262. There is a need to confirm the design and facility mix for the proposed new leisure centre in the Wantage/Grove area, including pool, sports hall, and health and fitness, to confirm the funding requirements and expectations on both the Council and developers. The objective should be to open the facility by 2019.
263. Developers' contributions from the catchment area of the proposed new leisure centre in the Wantage/Grove area should be directed towards this facility.
264. The existing sports hall at the Wantage Leisure Centre should be transferred to the school but community use retained for weekday evenings and weekends on a block booking basis.
265. Funds secured from developers for housing growth around Wantage/Grove, and those arising from the developments within Vale which are within the Didcot Leisure Sub Area may be directed towards the proposed new Wantage/Grove leisure centre.
266. Some of the developers' contributions from within the Didcot Leisure Sub Area might also be allocated towards enhanced and new facilities within South Oxfordshire if a policy decision is made to do so, as outlined in paragraph 259 above.
267. Within the Didcot Leisure Sub Area, two of the following facilities are required in addition to the proposed Didcot North East leisure centre Leisure Centre:
- large size 4 court hall at Great Western Park secondary school; or
 - a new leisure centre site with a large size 4 court hall, close to Didcot/Harwell; or
 - large size 4 court sports facilities at further new school site (if confirmed).
 - Improvements to support on-going community use are also required for the existing Didcot Leisure Centre, Didcot Girls School, and Wilowbrook School.
268. Funds secured from developers' contributions for housing growth around Abingdon, Botley and Faringdon should be directed towards improvements at their closest leisure centre site, where such contributions meet the CIL compliance tests.
269. Sport England's Sports Facilities Calculator will be used to determine the level of contributions expected from each development, where such contributions are justified.
270. Dual use/joint use agreements (or updated agreements) which protect community use in the long term are required for Faringdon Leisure Centre, Wantage Leisure Centre, Grove Airfield secondary school, Great Western Park secondary school, and any further new secondary school to be developed in the future. Some of these will

be managed (indirectly) by the Vale of White Horse District Council, whilst others will be managed in house by the schools themselves.

271. FPM scenario testing which can take account of specific local issues should be considered to reconfirm the facility proposals for the proposed new Wantage/Grove leisure centre, and for the options around Didcot.
272. Planning standards for new housing are proposed as:
- 0.29 courts per 1000 fully available at peak time i.e. weekday evenings and weekends to the community.
 - 20 minutes drive time catchment
 - Design Standard: to reflect current best practice, Design Guidance Notes from Sport England and National Governing Body technical guidance. The four court halls with community use should be of the larger size recommended by Sport England.

SWIMMING POOLS

Introduction

273. Swimming pools might be considered the most important sports facility type in the Vale as they are used by most of the community, from the very youngest through to people in old age.
274. There is a mix of public and private water space within the Vale, with the three local authority pools representing about 45% of the total pool space available to the community. Most of the other pools are on education sites – independent sector schools, further education, and schools which were previously under Oxfordshire LEA, totalling about further 45% of the total space available. The remaining 10% of total pool space is provided by two commercial pools.

Pool design and activities

275. As with sports halls, the aspiration to make swimming as accessible as possible to the largest number of people possible would suggest that a network of small pools would be best. However, small pools limit flexibility in terms of the range of activities that can be undertaken, the ability to operate more than one activity at any time and the level of performance that can be accommodated. They can also be more expensive to operate relative to large pools. General community needs should also be balanced with the wider sports development requirements, including support to clubs to offer opportunities in a wide range of pool-based activities such as:
- Swimming
 - Water Polo
 - Synchronised Swimming
 - Canoeing
 - Lifesaving
 - Diving
 - Sub Aqua
276. In general terms, the higher the level of performance, the greater the demands on pool size, depth and specific competition requirements (spectator capacity and specialist equipment). For example, a 25m x 6 lane pool can accommodate local/club level swimming galas but a 25m x 8 lane pool with electronic timing is required for county galas and league events.
277. Moveable bulkheads that can sub-divide pools and moveable floors that can vary water depth can significantly increase a pool's flexibility.
278. Teaching or learner pools provide the opportunity to offer a wide range of activities catering for the maximum number of users possible. Teaching pools can be maintained at a slightly higher temperature than main pools making them suitable

for use by young children, non-swimmers and those with a disability. They offer income generating potential not only through pool parties and other hirings, but also by reducing the impact on programming in the main pool. A teaching pool significantly enhances the local authority's ability to deliver its Learn to Swim programme and therefore it is seen as desirable that there should be at least one in each major centre of population.

- 279. A typical 25m x 6 lane pool is approximately 325m². With the addition of a learner pool this would typically increase by 160m² giving a total water space area of 485m².
- 280. In determining the best locations for new swimming pool provision a number of factors need to be considered. Ideally they should also be accompanied by other facilities such as a fitness suite to help ensure financial viability, and/or adjacent to school sites where both school and community use can be easily facilitated.

Active People Survey findings

- 281. Nationally over 2.8 million adults are swimming at least once a week, but the number of people swimming has fallen between 2007/08 and 2012/13, particularly amongst those from the lower socio-economic backgrounds. The age of swimmers is reasonably evenly split across adults, but more women swim (approx 2/3rds) than men (1/3rd) and there are more in the higher socio-economic groups.

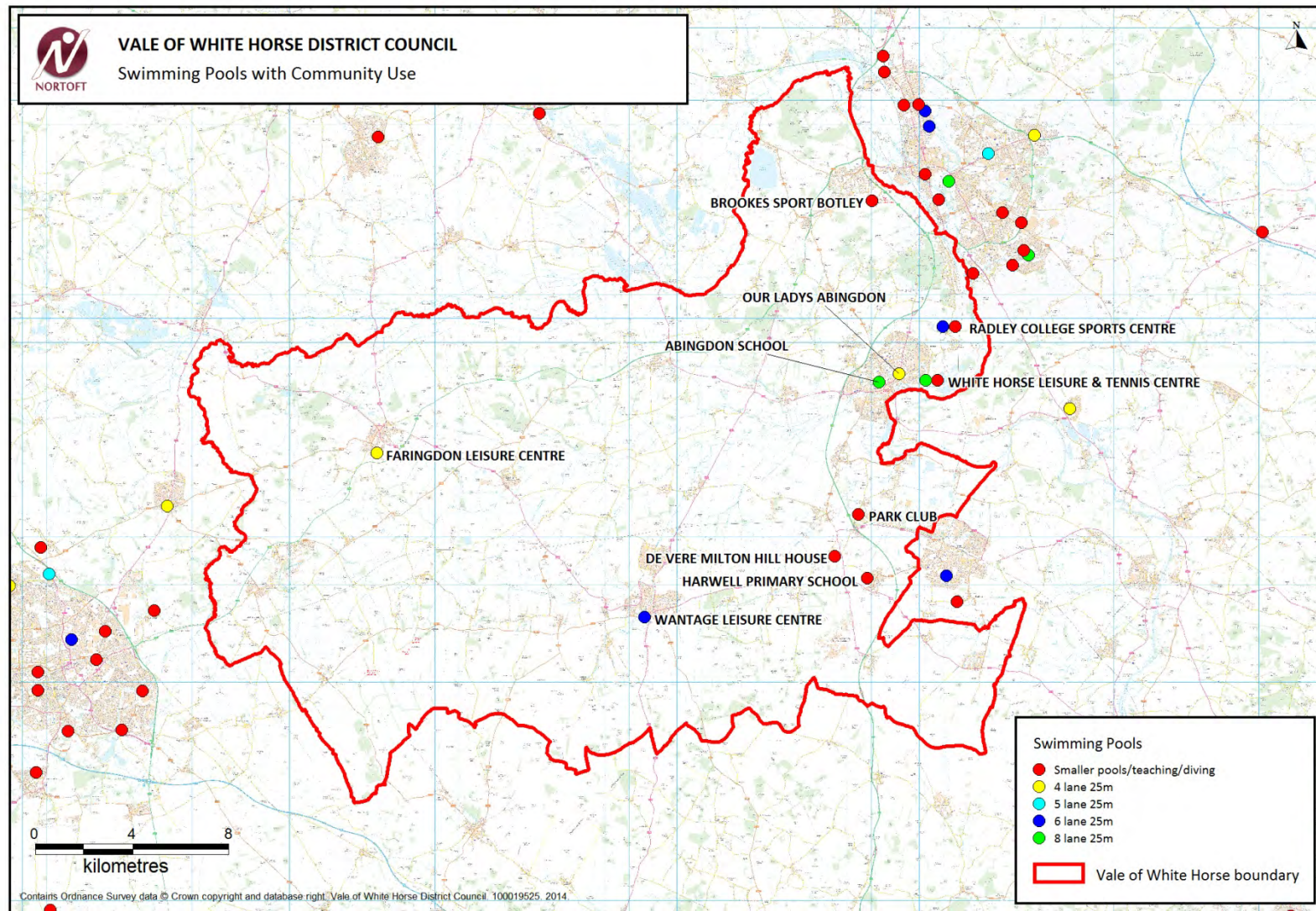
Current and future provision

- 282. Figure 27 shows all of the indoor water space in the Vale of White Horse, and identifies those pools which are above 100m² which are included in the modelling. A new pool of 25m x 6 lane plus teaching pool is proposed at the new leisure centre in the Wantage/Grove area, as a replacement for the existing Wantage Leisure Centre pool, but no other new pools are planned or expected to be open to the community in the future. Outside the district a new pool is proposed at the new leisure centre in Didcot North East. This will have a 25 m x 8 lane main pool, 20m x 10m teaching pool and 81 sq m of leisure water.
- 283. A new pool of 25 m pool is also proposed for Swindon within the Eastern Development Area.
- 284. Figure 28 below shows the location and size of the swimming pools available for community use in the Vale as well as those that are in the surrounding authorities.
- 285. In relation to the quality of the facilities, full conditions surveys are available for Wantage Leisure Centre, Faringdon and the White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre. More information about the findings of the conditions surveys are provided in the Leisure Centre section above and in Appendix 5.

Figure 27: Swimming pools- current provision in Vale of White Horse

Site Name	Number of Lanes	Area (sq m)	Ownership Type	Access Type	Included in modelling
Main/General					
ABINGDON PREPARATORY SCHOOL	-	100	EY Setting	Sports Club / Community Association	✓
ABINGDON SCHOOL	8	410	Independent School	Sports Club / Community Association	✓
BROOKES SPORT BOTLEY	3	213	Higher Education Institutions	Pay and Play	✓
DE VERE MILTON HILL HOUSE	-	200	Commercial	Registered Membership use	✓
CHANDLINGS SCHOOL	-		Independent School	Private Use	
FARINGDON LEISURE CENTRE	4	263	School	Pay and Play	✓
OUR LADYS ABINGDON	4	200	Independent School	Sports Club / Community Association	✓
PARK CLUB	4	80	Commercial	Registered Membership use	✓
RADLEY COLLEGE SPORTS CENTRE	6	300	Independent School	Pay and Play	✓
WANTAGE LEISURE CENTRE	6	313	School	Pay and Play	✓
WHITE HORSE LEISURE & TENNIS CENTRE	-	180	Local Authority	Pay and Play	✓
WHITE HORSE LEISURE & TENNIS CENTRE	8	450	Local Authority	Pay and Play	✓
Learner/Teaching/Training					
COTHILL HOUSE SCHOOL	-		Independent School	Private Use	
HARWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL	-		School	Sports Club / Community Association	
Diving					
RADLEY COLLEGE SPORTS CENTRE	-	100	Independent School	Pay and Play	✓

Figure 28: Swimming pools



Modelling

286. A number of different modelling tools are used to assess the future needs for sports facilities. The results for swimming pools are set out below.

Facilities Planning Model

287. The findings from the Facilities Planning Model (FPM) can generally be considered reasonably robust, however the following change to the facility list needs to be taken into account:
- The Abingdon Prep School facilities are no longer available on a regular basis for community use for which the FPM estimated an annual throughput of about 6150 visits to the pool.
288. Sport England undertakes a “national run” of each facility type early in the calendar year, based on the facility information known to them and standardised parameters. This gives a good current picture of provision, but does not forecast future demand. More details about the FPM are provided in Appendix 6, but the table below (Figure 29) highlights some of the most important parameters used in the model in relation to pools. In particular the accessibility criteria of 20 minutes travel time. This figure is not fixed as the formula behind the FPM uses a distance decay function, however 20 minutes as a catchment area is generally considered a good “rule of thumb”.

Figure 29: Facilities Planning Model key parameters pools

At one Time Capacity	0.16667 per square metre = 1 person per 6 square meters
Catchments	<p>Car: 20 minutes</p> <p>Walking: 1.6 km</p> <p>Public transport: 20 minutes at about half the speed of a car</p> <p>NOTE: Catchment times are indicative, within the context of a distance decay function of the model.</p>
Duration	60 minutes for tanks and leisure pools
Peak Period	<p>Weekday: 12:00 to 13:30, 16:00 to 22.00</p> <p>Saturday: 09:00 to 16:00</p> <p>Sunday: 09:00 to 16:30</p>
Percentage in Peak Period	<p>Total: 52 Hours</p> <p>63%</p>
Utilised capacity considered "busy"	70% = "comfort factor"

289. The FPM national assessment for 2014 gives a useful indication of the current supply and demand for swimming. The following are the key points from the FPM results, provided by Sport England.

- Taking into consideration the hours that pools are made available to the public, the accessible swimming space is 2,136 sq m (inclusive of the Abingdon Prep School pool).
- This however still gives a current water space (scaled by hours) provision per 1000 of 17.14 sq m, compared to the south east regional average of 11.49 sq m, and a national average of 10.57 sq m per 1000.

- The estimated amount of demand at the peak time is for 1,301.4 sq m of water space (inclusive of the “comfort factor”) which is based on 7,895 visits per week in the peak period.
- Around 96% of those potentially wishing to swim can access a pool.
- There is currently plenty of capacity at peak time within Vale to cater for all the potential demand, but the location of the pools mean that some people without a car are unable to access them within walking time, and a very small number of residents are unable to access a pool even by car.
- About 79% of all swimming trips arising from the authority area are catered for within the authority.
- There is an approximate balance between the number of people travelling outside of the authority to reach a pool, and those coming into Vale.
- The pool space is not currently used to the maximum, with an average use across the Vale of 40%. This will have increased slightly with the loss of the Abingdon Prep school pool.
- The FPM estimates that the White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre is running approximately 36% full at peak time, with 148,847 visits per year. This compares to the actual throughput for 2013-14 of 231,277 visits, or more than 155% greater than the FPM estimate.
- The FPM estimates that the Wantage Leisure Centre pool at is running at 62% at peak time, with an annual throughput of 110,257 visits, but the actual throughput for 2013-14 was only 86,116. This is significantly lower.
- The model estimates that Faringdon pool is running at 40% used capacity at peak time, or a throughput of 65,656 visits, but the actual throughput for 2013-14 was 116,788 visits. Faringdon pool is therefore running much fuller than the FPM suggests.
- Overall across the authority, there is extremely good access to swimming pool space.
- At the present time there is no one location where an additional pool community pool (20 m or more in size) could be justified.

290. The FPM seems to be underestimating the usage of the White Horse and Faringdon leisure centres but overestimating the usage of Wantage. This may reflect the facility issues at Wantage – the lack of a teaching pool, poor car parking, and the age and quality of the facility overall. Some of the Wantage catchment overlaps with that of the Abingdon pool, so the greater attractiveness of the newer pool at White Horse is probably also a factor.

Nortoft Calculator

291. As the FPM figures for the supply of water space are reasonably accurate, the Nortoft Calculator uses this figure as the starting point for the supply of facilities in the Vale. To keep the average South East figure comparable, the water space scaled by hours figure, rather than the total amount of water space per 1,000 has been used.
292. The Nortoft Calculator forecasts future need for swimming pool space based upon both changes in the population and the anticipated growth in participation. The population figure used is that produced by Oxfordshire County Council based on the predicted housing growth.
293. The Nortoft Calculator findings confirm the current surplus of swimming pool space across the Vale as a whole, as identified by the FPM. If the existing access to the non-public pools continues as now, even by 2031 there will still be an overall surplus of swimming pool space across the authority. (See Figure 30). However it should be noted that the Nortoft Calculator does not take account of the supply-demand situation outside of the Vale's borders, so for example excludes consideration of the relatively low level of swimming pool space in South Oxfordshire.
294. Based on the Nortoft Calculator findings, there would be no justification for any large new public pool, assuming that most of the current access arrangements to the independent school sites are retained and/or slightly extended, and that the commercial facilities also remain in the longer term.
295. However the distribution of pool space across the authority will continue to be an issue, and the site issues at Wantage will be exacerbated as the population grows in the Wantage/Grove area. There is therefore a case for replacing the Wantage pool and adding some additional pool capacity there, via a teaching pool.

Figure 30: Nortoft Calculator results- swimming pools

Assessment of change in facilities required - based on projected population increase													
Vale of White Horse Local Authority Population Projections													
	2014	2021	2026	2031									
Population	124,580	153,939	165,124	169,872									
Facility type	Authority	Unit of measurement	No of units	Current units per 1000	South East provision per 1000	Change in provision required to bring levels in line with South East average (with assumed 0.5% increase in participation per year)				Total provision proposed (existing plus new)			
						2014	2021	2026	2031	2014	2021	2026	2031
Swimming Pools England average = 10.57 SE average = 11.49	Whole Authority	m ²	2135.6	17.14	11.49	-704	-305	-124	-18	1431	1831	2011	2118

Sports Facilities Calculator

296. To assess the demand for swimming pool water space arising directly from the main new housing developments, Sport England's Sports Facilities Calculator is the most appropriate and accurate modelling tool. A 10% increase for participation growth over the period 2014-31 has been applied as this is the best fit for the modelling of the 0.5% participation increase per year, which is the adopted strategic rate of increase.
297. Each of the 22 separate housing sites in the Local Plan 2021 "Final Sites Package" (see para 36) has been assessed using the SFC, see Appendix 11 for copies of the individual site calculations. Altogether the 11,560 new dwellings with their 27,628 additional residents will generate around 313 sq m water space of new demand.
298. The demand from the Grove Airfield development additionally needs to be taken into consideration as this will generate a requirement of approximately 68 sq m of water space. The Grove Airfield site is not included within the Final Sites Package as this is already further forward in the planning process.
299. The demand for swimming pool space arising from each development needs to be considered in relation to both the secure community swimming pool space available which is most easily accessible to the development and, within the wider context of housing development across Vale. For example the impact on the leisure facilities at Wantage/Grove will be from all of the housing developments within the facility's drive time catchment, though in practice there will be overlapping drive time catchments for the other leisure centres in Vale. This step in the assessment is considered in the Modelling Findings below.

Comparator authorities' provision

300. Using the scaled by hours water space figure from the Facilities Planning Model, it has been possible to calculate the levels of total water space provision per 1,000 head of population for the Vale, South Oxfordshire, the south east region and England as a whole, see Figure 31.

Figure 31: Swimming pools - comparator authorities

	Source of population data	Population	Water space scaled by hours (sq m)	Water space in sq m per 1000
VOWH	OCC	124,580	22,135.6	17.14
S Oxon	ONS	136,758	1,077.6	7.88
South East	ONS	8,852,000	101,703.2	11.49
England	ONS	54,227,900	572,971.8	10.57

301. This table again suggests that the Vale is better supplied with swimming pools than South Oxfordshire, and the average for the south east and England as a whole. The FPM scaled by hours figures for the CIPFA comparator authorities is not currently

available as part of the FPM report and it has not therefore been possible to include this information in the table.

Summary of modelling findings

302. The FPM suggests that there is currently a high level of water space provision in the Vale, and that there is no justification at this time for additional water space. However it is clear that the actual levels of use of the pools at the White Horse Tennis and Leisure Centre and Faringdon pools are well above the FPM estimated figure, whilst the Wantage pool is not performing to the same degree.
303. For the period up to 2031, the Nortoft Calculator also suggests that with the existing high level of swimming pool space available to the community, that no major new additional swimming pool provision will be required.
304. However the facility issues at Wantage Leisure Centre and the extra demand which would be placed on it from the growth around Wantage/Grove and to a slightly lesser extent from Harwell and Valley Park, plus additional demand from extra participation expected in the period up to 2031, justifies a replacement 25m x 6 lane pool plus teaching pool, as proposed at the new leisure centre in the Wantage/Grove area. This pool is expected to be filled close to capacity by 2031 by the current and new populations around its catchment area. The pool at the proposed new leisure centre in the Wantage/Grove area should include a moveable floor to maximise its flexibility.
305. Based on the currently proposed housing growth in Vale, there does not appear that there would be sufficient demand to justify retaining for community use the existing pool at Wantage Leisure Centre, once the new leisure centre pool is open.
306. In relation to the Didcot Leisure Sub Area, a separate report has been produced (see Appendix 9). Many of the residents of the new developments would be within the 20 minute drive time catchment for both the proposed new pool at the Wantage/Grove leisure centre and proposed Didcot North East leisure centre Leisure Centre, so could go to either facility, or to Didcot Wave. The proposed facility mix at the new Didcot North East leisure centre includes: 25 m x 8 lane main pool, 20m x 10m teaching pool and 81 sq m leisure water. If developed at this size, the total water space on the new site would be 706 sq m. Together with the other pools in the area, but excluding the Didcot Wave, this would give almost sufficient pool space up to 2031 (80 sq m deficit). This small deficit should be able to be absorbed by a combination of the new Wantage/Grove pool and the White Horse Tennis and Leisure Centre.
307. Should the new Didcot pool be developed at a smaller size, there are a number of alternative options:
- Develop the new Didcot North East leisure centre with a 25m x 6 lane pool and renovate the Didcot Wave; or

- Develop the new Didcot North East leisure centre with a 25m x 6 lane pool and identify a new 25m x 6 lane pool elsewhere, probably in the Valley Park or Ease of Harwell areas (if the decision is made to close Didcot Wave)
308. Elsewhere in the Vale, including around Abingdon, Faringdon, and Botley, there is sufficient capacity to meet all of the extra demand from both the new housing growth and extra participation (at a rate of 0.5% per annum) up to 2031. However, this assumes that a significant proportion of the non-public pool supply remains open to the community for the same amount of time, and on the same terms as at present.
309. It is therefore proposed that contributions from developments will be requested where this meets CIL compliance tests on the following basis:
- In the Wantage/Grove area towards the new leisure centre.
 - In the Vale part of the Didcot Leisure Sub Area, 50% towards the new leisure centre in the Wantage/Grove area and 50% towards the sports facilities in Didcot.
 - Elsewhere, towards the refurbishment of the existing facilities, against a prioritised costed list of works.

Recent consultations

310. Overall amongst adults, swimming is the most important sport in the Vale (see Participation statistics para 65), and will therefore continue to be a high priority within the Participation Action Plan, seeking in particular to make more people more active, and to attract those people not currently active to become so.
311. The consultation on the 2013 Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy confirmed that the swimming pool issues at Wantage/Grove were a high priority to be addressed, and that a proportion of the new residents on the western edge of Didcot may be attracted to the facilities at Wantage/Grove.
312. The Vale Residents' Panel survey and the Wantage and Grove survey, both in 2011, confirm the importance of leisure centres and other sports facilities to the community. Although people are generally satisfied with the quality of the provision, there is a need to improve the Wantage Leisure Centre pool which received particular comment in the Wantage and Grove survey.

Kit Campbell Background Study (January 2009)

313. The Kit Campbell Background Study report was based on the 8 indoor pools available to the community in 2007/08, which together gave a total water area of 2,130 sq m.

- 314. The Kit Campbell report concluded that there was a good balance between the supply of pool space and the demand at the time of the report (2008/09) but that the loss of the St Mary's pool would lead to a deficit of about 100 sq m. Its proposed closure should therefore be matched with new provision elsewhere. The Kit Campbell report did not specifically forecast future requirements, but expected that there would be a need for additional water space because of the sports development policies encouraging more swimming participation.
- 315. Consultation on the use of swimming pools suggested that the travel time should be 15 minutes to pools, and there was a general feel from the consultation with the town and parish councils that more swimming pool space should be made available.
- 316. The standard proposed by Kit Campbell was a water area of 0.014 sq m per person, which, differently written is 14 sq m per 1000. The accessibility standard proposed was 15 minutes.

Comment and need for updating

- 317. The proposed quantitative planning standard from the Background Study is significantly above the national and regional levels of swimming pool provision. It is lower than the actual standard of provision in the Vale but, if applied, would be likely to mean that swimming pools would still be running well below their potential capacity and therefore financial viability.
- 318. The demand for swimming has fallen in recent years nationally, so more useful would be a standard of provision which reflects the amount of facility actually needed by the community now and up to 2031, and the real level of availability of the facilities to the community at peak time.
- 319. The travel time proposed in the Background Report is not confirmed by the research behind the Facilities Planning Model, which clearly shows that the travel time catchment is approximately 20 minutes. Keeping a 15 minute travel time standard would have the effect of increasing pool supply in the western half of the authority area.
- 320. Revised planning standards for quantity and accessibility are therefore required.

National Governing Body strategy

- 321. The ASA is the national governing body for swimming and the lead for facility strategies. As the Vale is well provided for swimming, none of the pools is identified as a current priority for investment.

Market Segmentation implications

322. The Sport England Market Segmentation analysis suggests that several of the segments currently enjoy swimming and find swimming appealing, particularly amongst women. This again helps to confirm the importance of providing accessible swimming opportunities across the authority.

Development of a planning standard

323. The planning standards are derived from a synthesis of the findings from the modelling, consultation responses, and the policy decision about the growth of participation. It also assumes that the current flow of swimming pool users across the borders of the authority will remain for the foreseeable future.

Standard for quantity

324. A planning standard to be applied to new developments which simply reflects the level of current provision across the district would not be appropriate because the level of provision appears to be higher than is justified by the needs of the community at this time. It is therefore proposed to apply a standard only to new developments, where the amount of provision for swimming pool space and the associated developers' contributions will be determined by the number of people who will be living in the development, using the relevant population profile as at 2031 plus a percentage increase for participation. The Sports Facility Calculator gives a required rate of provision of **11.36 sq m water space per 1000**.

Standard for accessibility

325. The majority of swimming pool users in the Vale will travel by car for up to 20 minutes. A drive time catchment of 20 minutes is therefore appropriate.

Standard for design and quality

326. The third element of the planning standards is that of quality and design. The quality and design of facilities should reflect current best practice, including design guidance from Sport England, the ASA and other relevant national governing bodies.
327. The new replacement pool at the proposed Wantage/Grove leisure centre should have:
- 25 m x 6 lane main pool suitable for training and competition with electronic timing
 - 1.8 deep throughout with a moveable floor up to 0.9 m
 - 94 approx fixed seats with room for movable seats up to 250 people
 - Wide deck
 - Teaching pool

328. The planning standards for new housing are therefore proposed as:

- 11.36 sq m water space per 1000 (fully available to the community at peak time i.e. weekday evenings and weekends)
- 20 minutes drive time catchment
- Design and quality standard to meet Sport England and the relevant national governing body standards.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Current supply and demand

329. Across the Vale there are three public pools, at Abingdon, Wantage and Faringdon. These together with a mixture of independent school and commercial pools provide a good network of opportunities, and in fact more water space than is actually required by the community at this time. The pools at Abingdon and Faringdon are used to a much greater intensity than the Sport England FPM model suggests, whilst the pool at Wantage is performing less well, probably because of the site problems such as very limited car parking, as well as the age of the facility itself and the lack of a teaching pool.
330. The pool at White Horse Tennis and Leisure Centre is in good condition and the poolside lockers and changing have recently been refurbished. The Faringdon pool has a greater requirement for remedial works.

Future requirements

331. At Wantage, the site issues plus the lack of pool space to cater for the new demand arising from the housing growth in and around Wantage and Grove and expectations that the demand for swimming in the leisure centres will continue to grow, has led to a decision to develop a new wet/dry pool at the proposed Wantage/Grove leisure centre. This will be a replacement 25m x 6 lane pool with teaching pool. It is not proposed to retain the existing pool at the Wantage Leisure Centre for community use once the new pool is available.
332. The future facility requirements arising from the housing growth in the Vale part of the Didcot Leisure Sub Area are likely to be met by both the proposed new leisure centre in the Wantage/Grove area, and swimming pool(s) within Didcot. This is because much of the housing growth within Vale is within the 20 minute drive time catchment of both the proposed new Wantage/Grove site, and the Didcot facilities. Developers' contributions could therefore be allocated to facilities in both districts, and a 50%:50% split may be one of the simplest ways of achieving this. However no formal policy decisions have yet been made about cross border developer

contributions by either the Vale or White Horse or South Oxfordshire District Councils.

Recommendations

333. The existing swimming pools at the White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre and Faringdon Leisure Centre should be retained for community use.
334. A new wet/dry leisure centre with 25 m x 6 lane pool with teaching pool should be developed at the proposed Wantage/Grove leisure centre, as proposed by the Vale of White Horse District Council. It will be necessary to make an appropriate amendment within the Local Plan to enable built sports facilities on this site. The facility should have:
- 25 m x 6 lane main pool suitable for training and competition with electronic timing
 - 1.8 deep throughout with a moveable floor up to 0.9 m
 - 94 approx fixed seats with room for movable seats up to 250 people
 - Wide deck
 - Separate teaching pool
335. The design and facility mix needs to be confirmed for the proposed new Wantage/Grove leisure centre site through the next stage of project development. The objective should be to open the facility by 2019.
336. The existing pool at the Wantage Leisure Centre be excluded from any future Community Use Agreement for the site.
337. Funds secured from developers for housing growth around Wantage/Grove, and those arising from the developments within Vale which are within the Didcot Leisure Sub Area may be directed towards the proposed new Wantage/Grove leisure centre.
338. Some of the remaining developers' contributions from within the Didcot Leisure Sub Area might also be allocated towards enhanced and new facilities within South Oxfordshire if a policy decision is made to do so, as outlined in paragraph 332 above, in particular:
- Development of the proposed North East Didcot Leisure Centre with 25 m x 8 lane main pool, 20m x 10m teaching pool and 81 sq m leisure water.
- or
- If the new Didcot pool is developed at a smaller size, either:
 - Develop the new Didcot leisure centre with a 25m x 6 lane pool and renovate/improve the Didcot Wave
- or

- Develop the new Didcot leisure centre with a 25m x 6 lane pool and identify a new 25m x 6 lane pool elsewhere as part of a new leisure centre (if the decision is made to close the Didcot Wave).
339. Funds secured from developers' contributions for housing growth around Abingdon, Botley and Faringdon should be directed towards improvements at the closest current or proposed leisure centre site, where such contributions meet the CIL compliance tests.
 340. Sport England's Sports Facilities Calculator will be used to determine the level of contributions expected from each development, where such contributions are justified.
 341. If opportunities arise to legally protect or formalise the community use at the independent education sites, these should be taken as the pools play an important role in the network.
 342. FPM scenario testing should be considered to reconfirm the facility proposals for the proposed new Wantage/Grove leisure centre and for the options around Didcot.
 343. The planning standards for new housing are therefore proposed as:
 - 11.36 sq m water space per 1000 (fully available to the community at peak time i.e. weekday evenings and weekends)
 - 20 minutes drive time catchment
 - Design and quality standard to meet Sport England and the relevant national governing body standards.

ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCHES

Introduction

344. The provision of artificial grass pitches (AGPs) in Vale is geographically uneven, with almost all of the provision being down the eastern side of the district. Compared to many areas, the provision of 3G pitches, the preferred surface for football, is also low.
345. In terms of demand from sports, community hockey is now solely played on artificial surfaces, football is increasingly using these pitches for training and matches and there is strong growth in small sided versions of the game, and rugby has just started using artificial surfaces for matches although the preferred surface for the community game is natural grass.
346. AGPs are often considered revenue generators so can be an important source of income for schools, clubs and leisure centres. However all too often insufficient money is set aside to re-carpet the pitch at the end of its lifespan (often about 10 years) so issues arise in terms of maintaining and retaining the facility.

Pitch types

347. There are three main types of Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs): sand based/sand filled; 3G; and water based. These pitches can withstand high levels of use if they are maintained carefully, but are only really of value to the community if they are floodlit to enable evening use.
- **Sand dressed/sand filled (sand based)** pitches have a short pile, which is most suited to hockey but can be used for football and non-contact rugby training. This is the most common surface for school sites, and the longest established. There are currently 3 pitches of this type available to the community in the Vale, but only two have floodlights.
 - The sand dressed pitches are England Hockey Board (EHB) Category 2 pitches and are approved for hockey within the FIH global/national parameters. The Tilsley Park pitches are this standard.
 - The sand-filled surfaces are EHB Category 3 surfaces within the FIH national parameter. The Radley College pitch is this standard.
 - **3G or rubber crumb** which has a long pile and is the preferred surface for football and rugby (with enhanced specification), but has limited use for hockey as an EHB Category 4 pitch. There is one full-size 3G pitch in the Vale, at Radley College. A new full size 3G pitch is proposed at Wantage, adjacent to the Leisure Centre as a partnership between Wantage Town FC and the school. This proposal has achieved planning permission but has not yet started construction. There are also 3 small size 3G pitches at Tilsley Park which may be relocated and the site of the existing pitches used for a full size 3G pitch.

- **Water based** pitches have a specialist hockey surface but can also be used for football and non-contact rugby training. These are EHB Category 1 pitches. The nearest water-based pitches to the Vale currently are located at the Oxford University Sports Complex, and the Reading Cricket and Hockey Club.
348. The demand for AGPs is one of the fastest growing of all sports facilities, and the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) are responding to this with 'new' surfaces and new competition rules. AGPs are also vital for many clubs for training, even if matches are played on grass. The guidance from Sport England and the NGBs ('Selecting the Right Artificial Surface', 2010) provides more detail on the types of surface and their expected use (see Figure 32 below). However this advice may now be becoming superseded by emerging policy from England Hockey, the FA, and RFU which may put much more emphasis on sports specific surfaces rather than shared surfaces.
349. AGPs are seen as a major benefit for schools, both in the public and independent sectors. Many schools therefore have aspirations for AGPs as do the higher and further education sectors.
350. The majority of community demand for AGP time comes from football, particularly the small sided senior game. This type of football is often unaffiliated and run independently from the Football Association.

Figure 32: AGP surfaces and use by sport

Pitch type	Rubber crumb type			Sand type		Water type
Category	Long Pile 3G (65mm with shock pad)	Long Pile 3G ¹ (55-60mm)	Short Pile 3G ¹ (40mm)	Sand Filled ¹	Sand Dressed ¹	Water based ¹
						
Comments on sports surfaces	Rugby surface	Preferred football surface	Acceptable surface for some competitive football and hockey	Acceptable surface for competitive hockey and suitable for football training	Preferred surface for competitive hockey and suitable for football training	High level competitive hockey and suitable for football training if pitch irrigated
Sport						
Hockey			 ²	 ²	 ²	 ²
Rugby League	 ³	 ³	 ⁴	 ⁵	 ⁵	 ⁵
Rugby Union	 ⁶	 ⁷	 ⁵	 ⁵	 ⁵	 ⁵
Football	 ⁸	 ⁸	 ⁸	 ⁹	 ⁹	 ⁹
Key	 Not suitable for use  Surface for modified games/training on but not suitable for serious training / competition  Surface for training/recreational use  Surface for training and for some competition  Surface for competition and training  Surface for competition and training (regional / national)  Surface for high level competition/training (national/international)			¹ Shockpad optional: often needed to meet appropriate performance requirements ² Surface must comply with FIH Standard (insitu tested) ³ RFL currently evaluating surface standard - see their website for latest information ⁴ No full contact ⁵ Can only be used for Tag and Touch Rugby / Handling skills ⁶ Surface must comply with IRB type 22 with enhanced HIC requirement ⁷ RFU currently evaluating surface standard - see their website for latest information ⁸ Surface must comply with FIFA 1 star or IATS equivalent approval required ⁹ Surface must comply with BSEN 15330-1 (2007)		
Note:	All users should refer to the individual NGB guidance, available on line, for specific information on the preferred categories					

Current and future provision

351. There are currently, 3 large size floodlit AGPS in Vale, of which one is 3G, plus three small size 3G pitches. The details are provided in Figure 33, and they are mapped in Figure 34 together with the pitches in the surrounding areas.
352. It is notable that all of the current provision is on the east side of the authority, and residents in Wantage/Grove and Faringdon areas are outside a 20 minute drive time to any AGP.
353. There is a proposal with planning permission (November 2011 and since renewed) to develop a full-size floodlit 3G pitch adjacent to the Wantage Leisure Centre which is a partnership between Wantage Town Football Club and King Alfred's School. The Vale of White Horse District Council is involved as one of the landowners. Construction has yet to start as funding still needs to be put in place, and the extent of community use has not yet been confirmed.
354. There is an emerging proposal in Faringdon for a large size 3G AGP. The recommendation in this Study is for it to be located at the Community College as a dual use facility, and to operate during community time as part of the leisure centre. The Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan however also considers locating the AGP at either Tucker Park (preference) or near the skate park. Further discussions between the Vale Council, Community College and Town Council are therefore required. Should the AGP be developed in Tucker Field, there may be a need to replace the grass pitch provision elsewhere because the town is thought to have a deficit of grass pitches. This however will be considered in detail as part of the current Playing Pitch Strategy.
355. Also within Vale, Abingdon School is considering converting the 3 small size pitches to one full size 3G pitch at Tilsley Park, with the replacement of the small size pitches elsewhere on the site. This proposal is at an early stage.
356. New 3G pitches have been proposed in Didcot and the most recent strategy for South Oxfordshire recommended two pitches should be developed. However the final site location(s) have yet to be confirmed although the preferred option is a double pitch site at Didcot North East leisure centre Leisure Centre. These pitches would have importance for the Vale residents living within the Didcot Leisure Sub Area but would be too far away from residents living elsewhere in the authority.
357. Also in Didcot, there is an emerging proposal, which is still at an early stage, for the development of full size sand dressed or sand filled pitch at St Birinus School. Details are not yet known.
358. A new AGP may also be developed in Swindon, possibly as part of the proposed leisure centre in the Eastern Development Area.