# Vale of White Horse District Council

# Playing Pitch Strategy

# Annual Review

# 2026

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# Glossary of Terms

| Term | Description |
|---|---|
| 3G | Third generation AGP usually dressed with rubber crumb. The surface is commonly used for football but can also be used for rugby where sufficiently sprung to reduce / absorb impact. |
| AGP | Artificial Grass Pitch, sometimes referred to as an ATP (Artificial Turf Pitch) or NTP (Non-Turf Pitch). The term covers all types of artificial pitch including, sand based, sand dressed, water based, and 3G. |
| BBFA | Berks and Bucks Football Association, |
| CC | Cricket Club |
| ECB | England and Wales Cricket Board |
| EH | England Hockey |
| FA | Football Association |
| FC | Football Club |
| FF | Football Foundation |
| HC | Hockey Club |
| LP | Local Plan |
| NGB | National Governing Body (for sport) |
| OCCB | Oxfordshire County Cricket Board |
| OFA | Oxfordshire Football Association |
| PPS | Playing Pitch Strategy |
| PC | Parish Council |
| RFU | Rugby Football Union |
| RFC | Rugby Football Club |
| SE | Sport England |
| TC | Town Council |

# 1. Introduction

1.1. This is the Council's first annual update of the Vale of White Horse Playing Pitch Strategy, 2024 (PPS). As well as setting a strategy for playing pitch provision across the district, these reports also form part of the Council's technical evidence base for the emerging Joint Local Plan and we developed them in accordance with Sport England guidance. We have prepared an equivalent with Sport England guidance. We have prepared an equivalent report for the South Oxfordshire PPS.

1.2. This report provides updates to the Council's existing evidence base regarding playing pitches. This report has several background documents which are listed below:

- Vale of White Horse Playing Pitch Strategy, 2024
- Playing Pitch Strategy Appendices
- PPS Supporting Documents

1.3. The Council used Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance - An approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy to help us undertake this review.

1.4. Sport England identifies that an annual review should highlight:

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

1.5. This update follows this approach. For completeness of understanding, please read this update alongside the original strategies and appendices from 2024 outlined in paragraph 1.2.

1.6. It is important to recognise that the Council is not the only organisation responsible for delivering and maintaining playing pitches and leisure facilities across our district. We work with partners such as sports organisations, education establishments, community sports networks and other stakeholders who are interested in protecting and enhancing playing fields, pitches and ancillary facilities. As such, we will need to work with these partners to deliver many of the objectives and actions within this document.

# 2. Methodology

2.1. The 2024 Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) focused on the following types of sports facilities:

- Cricket
- Football
- Hockey
- Rugby Union
- Lesser played sports

2.2. To identify changes since the 2024 PPS, we engaged national governing bodies (NGBs), council officers, and key stakeholders, who provided updates on demand, supply, and other key changes. We also reviewed planning and funding applications to identify additional changes. Steering group meetings were held with those listed in Table 2.2.

*Table 2.2 Stakeholder engagement per sport*

| Sport/Sports Provision | Organisation |
|---|---|
| Cricket | England and Wales Cricket Board, Oxfordshire Cricket Board |
| Football | Berks and Bucks Football Association, The Football Foundation |
| Hockey | England Hockey |
| Rugby Union | Rugby Football Union |
| All | Sport England, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Council Officers |

2.3. We did not contact representatives of the lesser-played sports for this update due to the lower level of participants. We monitor enquiries for new pitch facilities throughout the year, and current demand still indicates low uptake in these sports.

2.4. We consulted all town and parish councils across Vale of White Horse during the data gathering process, of which 20 responded to the request for information.

2.5. For each sport, we took the following to gathering information:

- Supply update – we asked stakeholders to identify the key changes in pitch supply against the original PPS recommendations (linking back to the three aims set out by Sport England to protect, enhance and provide).
- Demand update – this compares key changes in the number of teams in each sub area, split between the known age and gender makeup of clubs, highlighting changes in the sport between 2023/24 (the data

underpinning the PPS) and 2024/25 – the data underpinning this action plan update.

- Key updates – we asked each sport stakeholder to identify any significant changes or issues from their perspective and if there had been any further changes to the information presented in the 2024 documents. This section summarises the feedback that we have had throughout the year from sports clubs, national governing bodies town and parish councils and the Council's own officers. It also records any updates we are aware of from our own records, for example – planning applications for sport and leisure facilities.
- Summary – we reviewed the information and summarised changes in participation data, together with any recurring themes identified through the key updates.
- Recommendations – we reviewed the information to determine if any changes were needed to the recommendations for each sport in the respective action plan.

2.6. The sub-area maps can be found in Appendix 1.

2.7. A list of priority actions was created by the steering group and can be found in Appendix 2.

2.8. A summary of the town and parish council responses can be found in Appendix 3.

# 3. Cricket

## Supply update

3.1. No changes in cricket pitch supply and quality have been identified during the steering group meetings or data collection for this update.

## Demand update

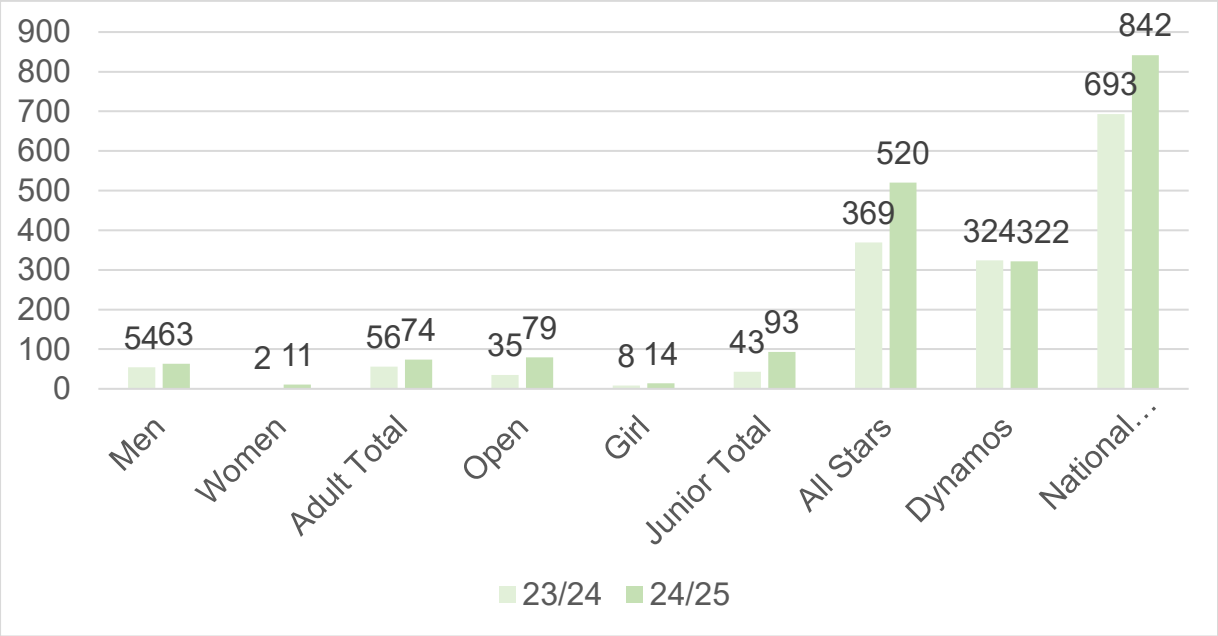
3.2. Table 3.2 below explains the key changes in the number of cricket teams in each sub area between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

*Table 3.2 Comparison of number of cricket teams*

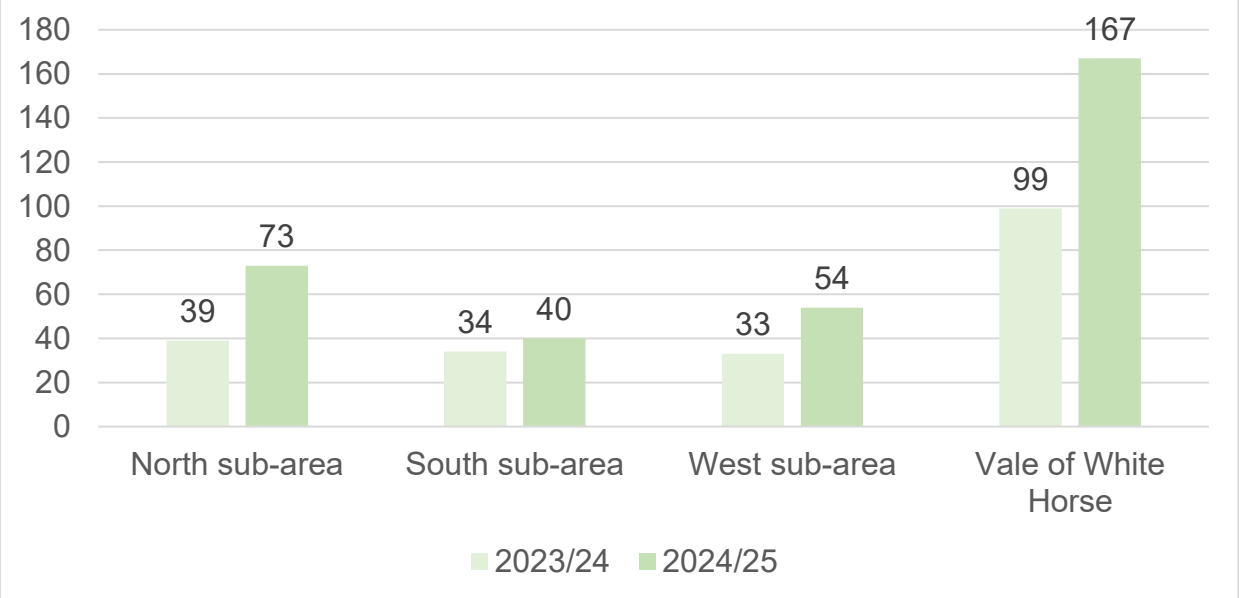
| Demand Data | | | 2023/24 | 2024/25 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| North | Adult teams (16 - 55) | Men | 19 | 21 |
| | | Women | 1 | 5 |
| | | Total | 20 | 26 |
| | Junior teams (9 - 15) | Open | 15 | 37 |
| | | Girl | 4 | 10 |
| | | Total | 19 | 47 |
| | National Programmes (participants, not teams) | All Stars | 203 | 255 |
| | | Dynamos | 156 | 211 |
| | | Total | 359 | 466 |
| South | Adult teams (16 - 55) | Men | 14 | 18 |
| | | Women | 1 | 3 |
| | | Total | 15 | 21 |
| | Junior teams (9 - 15) | Open | 15 | 15 |
| | | Girl | 4 | 4 |
| | | Total | 19 | 19 |
| | National Programmes (participants, not teams) | All Stars | 53 | 92 |
| | | Dynamos | 82 | 27 |
| | | Total | 135 | 119 |
| West | Adult teams (16 - 55) | Men | 21 | 24 |
| | | Women | 0 | 3 |
| | | Total | 21 | 27 |
| | Junior teams (9 - 15) | Open | 11 | 27 |
| | | Girl | 1 | 0 |
| | | Total | 12 | 27 |
| | National Programmes (participants, not teams) | All Stars | 113 | 173 |
| | | Dynamos | 86 | 84 |
| | | Total | 199 | 257 |
| VoWH | Adult teams (16 - 55) | Men | 54 | 63 |
| | | Women | 2 | 11 |
| | | Total | 56 | 74 |
| | Junior teams (9 - 15) | Open | 35 | 79 |
| | | Girl | 8 | 14 |
| | | Total | 43 | 93 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | National Programmes (participants) | All Stars | 369 | 520 |
| | | Dynamos | 324 | 322 |
| | | Total | 693 | 842 |

*Graph 3.2.1 Change in adult cricket teams, junior teams and participants across the Vale of White Horse between 2023/24 and 2024/25*




*Graph 3.2.2 Change all cricket teams across the Vale of White Horse between 2023/24 and 2024/25*



3.3. The key changes affecting club numbers between the two years are as follows:

*Table 3.3 changes in cricket teams*

| Sub area | Key changes |
|---|---|
| North | • Cumnor CC has a new women's team.<br>• Wolvercote has a new junior girls' team. |
| South | • Didcot CC has a new adult women's team. |
| West | • Farringdon & District CC has a new adult women's team.<br>• Kingston Bagpuize CC has a new adult women's team. |

**Key updates**

3.4. The following section sets out the key issues and updates identified through stakeholder engagement.

**North sub-area**

a. Appleton CC report that Appleton with Eaton Parish Council aspire to upgrade both the pavilion and storage facilities at the sports field (this is in line with the existing recommendation, C15).

b. Cumnor CC aspires to improve their changing facilities to make them accessible and sustainable for women and girls, in line with the existing recommendation, C22.

c. Due to constraints at Land North Dunmore Road development site, no cricket pitch will be provided on site. Recommendation C46 has therefore been removed.

d. Marcham CC aspire to update their score hut and install outdoor nets (in line with recommendations C15 and C13).

e. Steventon CC aspire to install hybrid pitches and upgrade their changing facilities (identified in existing recommendation C15).

f. Sunningwell CC requires a new pavilion (as identified in existing recommendation C22).

g. Sutton Courtenay Parish Council has a planning application for the delivery of a two-lane cricket net practice facility at Sutton Courtenay Recreation Ground (P25/V1917/FUL). The Parish Council has highlighted the delivery of practice nets as a priority need.

h. Sutton Courtenay Parish Council notes that providing changing facilities for teams to book alongside booking the cricket pitch or football pitches is a priority for them.

i. The Vale of White Horse District Council granted planning permission for the rebuild of the sports pavilion at Playfield Road Sports Pavilion, Kennington (removal of existing structure and building a new pavilion) (P25/V0359/FUL).

j. Wootton Parish Council notes a priority to maintain, improve and expand the use of the village cricket pavilion and pitch (in line with existing recommendations F37 and C21).

k. Wolvercote CC, who use facilities at Playfield Road, Kennington, are seeking to upgrade their pavilion to support current and future use.

**South sub-area**

l. The Vale of White Horse District Council granted planning permission at Boundary Park for the installation of a player shelter for clubs to use during matches and sports festivals (P25/V2244/FUL).

m. East and West Hendred CC has future aspirations for a new clubhouse (in line with existing recommendation, C26) and new nets (recommendation C25).

n. Wantage CC has future aspiration to redevelop their clubhouse.

**West sub-area**

o. Challow & Childrey CC (linked with King Alfreds Academy) would like a new cricket ground as a second pitch (this links to existing recommendation C53). A Community Use Agreement (CUA) also needs to be secured, and the school are currently reviewing this (CUA recommendations C3 and C10).

p. Faringdon & District CC aspire for clubhouse refurbishments and to enlarge their practice facilities (this aligns to existing recommendation C15).

q. The applicant for the Land East of Kingston Bagpuize (David Wilson Homes) has submitted a planning application (P25/V2702/MPO) that would vary the commitment made under (P22/V0248/O) to deliver cricket facilities on site. The PPS shows demand for a cricket ground at this site and in the West sub-area of Vale. The application went to committee and will not be delivering the proposed cricket pitch.

r. A new location for a cricket ground in the West sub-area should be explored (due to the removal of cricket provision at Land East of Kingston Bagpuize).

s. Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Parish Council states there are flooding issues around the existing pavilion, and the driveway needs resurfacing along with additional improvements.

t. Stanford in the Vale Parish Council aspires for a village cricket pitch along with new changing facilities.

**Cricket summary**

3.5. Since we undertook our original strategy in 2024, cricket clubs have expanded participation in Vale of White Horse by adding 18 new adult teams and 50 new junior teams. Junior teams increased by 116%, while adult teams grew by 32%. The national participant programme also expanded by 21% across the Vale of White Horse between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

3.6. Many clubs report a need to upgrade their pavilions and changing facilities to better meet their needs.

3.7. There is a need to Continue to secure Community Use Agreements and secured leases for sites with unsecure access to ensure long term certainty of pitch availability.

**Cricket recommendations**

3.8. We have reviewed the data provided to determine whether the existing action plan requires any changes. The following recommendations in table 3.10 have been added or updated in the action:

*Table 3.10 Changes to the action plan recommendations*

| Site | PPS recommendation | New / Updated Aim |
|---|---|---|
| North sub-area | | |
| Old Wallingford Way Recreation Ground, Sutton Courtenay | **C57:** Explore the opportunity to provide changing/ancillary facilities at Wallingford Way Recreation Ground, Sutton Courtenay recreation ground. | New - Provide |
| Playfield Road, Kennington | **C22)** Support the improvement of club ancillary facilities to provide fit for purpose facilities, to service current membership and the growth in the Women & Girls game at Sunningwell CC, Cumnor CC and Steventon Village Green. This list will need to be monitored as more and more clubs establish new women & girls' sections. | Update - Wolvercote CC (Playfield Road, Kennington) have been added to the list. |
| Dunmore Road, Abingdon | **C46:** ~~Dunmore Road development near Abingdon a new cricket ground has been agreed as part of the development. This is to accommodate future additional demand from the development and the final number of cricket pitches on the ground needs to be agreed.~~ | Update – this recommendation has been removed due to constrains on the development site. |
| West sub-area | | |
| Kingston Bagpuize | **C52:** ~~Lioncourt, East of Kingston Bagpuize – West sub area – will provide a new cricket ground and supporting pavilion around 200sqm. An agreement has not been signed but discussions are at an advanced stage.~~ | Update – provide a new cricket ground within the West sub-area (as both the parish council and David Wilson Homes resisted the delivery of a playing pitch on land east of Kingston Bagpuize). |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Kingston Bagpuize | **C58:** Support the improvements to the ancillary facilities at Kingston Bagpuize sports ground, specifically issues caused by flooding. | New - Enhance |
| Stanford-in-the-Vale | **C59:** Explore the aspiration for a village cricket pitch and ancillary facilities in Stanford-in-the Vale subject to demonstrable demand and viability. | New - Provide |

3.1 It is important to note that these are just new or updated actions from this annual update. The council will also continue to progress the other recommendations from the 2024 strategy and action plan.

# 4. Football

## Supply update

4.1. Table 4.1 below shows the key updates against the PPS recommendations for football provision.

*Table 4.1 Changes in football supply and quality*

| Site | PPS recommendation | Update | Aim (protect, enhance or provide) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **South sub-area** | | | |
| Alfredian Park, Wantage | **F78:** Deliver proposed pitches "in the pipeline" to meet demand arising in those locations. This means pitches at:<br><br>e. Alfredian Park, Wantage Town FC, deliver 1 x full-size sports-lit 3G pitch and associated necessary ancillary facilities. | Development of a new 3G pitch completed. | Provide |
| Crab Hill, Wantage | **F78:** Deliver proposed pitches "in the pipeline" to meet demand arising in those locations –<br>b. Crab Hill, Wantage, 2 x grass adult 11v11 and 1 x grass youth 11v11 and associated necessary ancillary facilities. | Pitches delivered and handed over to Wantage Town Football Club. | Provide |

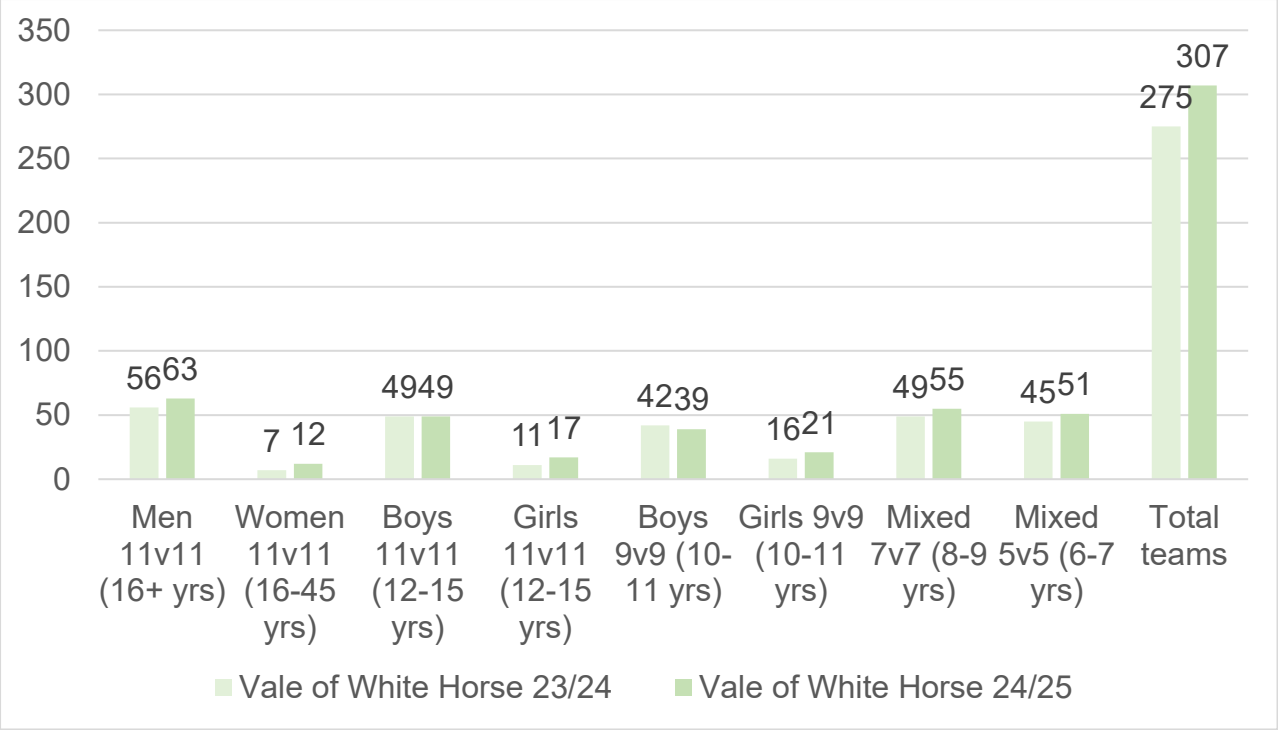
## Demand update

4.2. Table 4.2 below explains the key changes in the number of football teams in each sub area between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

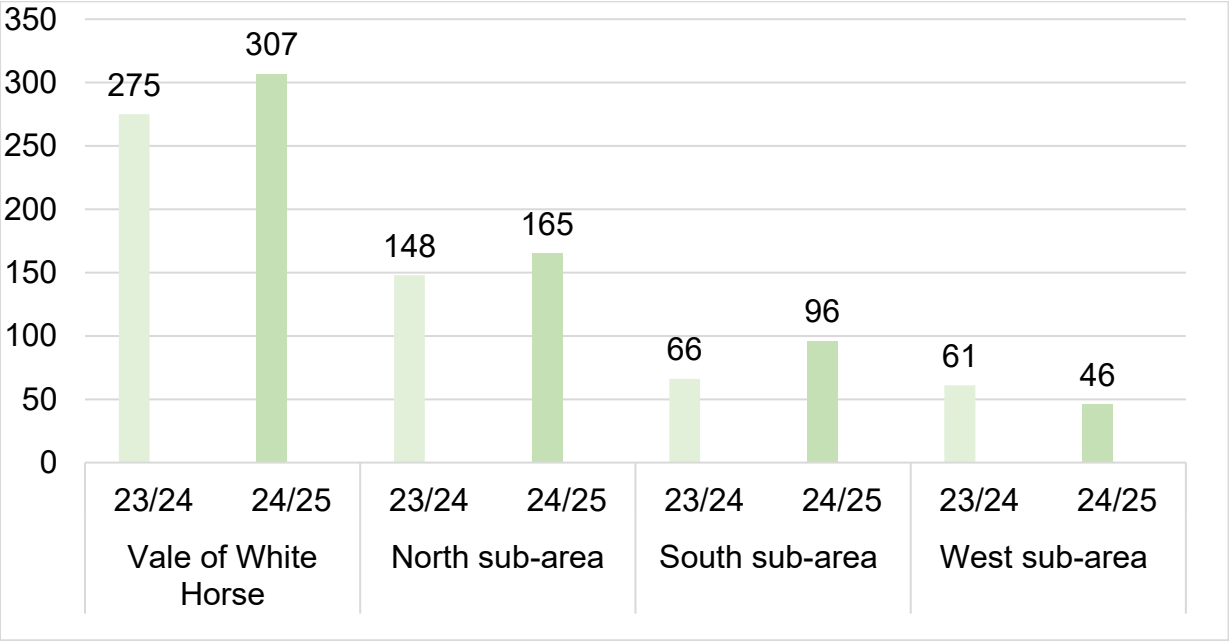
*Table 4.2 Comparison of number of football teams*

| Football Demand Data | Vale of White Horse | | North sub-area | | South sub-area | | West sub-area | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 23/24 | 24/25 | 23/24 | 24/25 | 23/24 | 24/25 | 23/24 | 24/25 |
| **Men 11v11 (16+ yrs)** | 56 | 63 | 31 | 33 | 12 | 15 | 13 | 15 |
| **Women 11v11 (16-45 yrs)** | 7 | 12 | 5 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| **Boys 11v11 (12-15 yrs)** | 49 | 49 | 26 | 27 | 12 | 15 | 11 | 7 |
| **Girls 11v11 (12-15 yrs)** | 11 | 17 | 4 | 8 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 1 |
| **Boys 9v9 (10-11 yrs)** | 42 | 39 | 27 | 22 | 6 | 10 | 9 | 7 |
| **Girls 9v9 (10-11 yrs)** | 16 | 21 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 11 | 2 | 2 |
| **Mixed 7v7 (8-9 yrs)** | 49 | 55 | 24 | 28 | 13 | 18 | 12 | 9 |
| **Mixed 5v5 (6-7 yrs)** | 45 | 51 | 23 | 30 | 10 | 17 | 12 | 4 |
| **Total teams** | 275 | 307 | 148 | 165 | 66 | 96 | 61 | 46 |

*Graph 4.2.1 Change in football team categories across the Vale of White Horse between 2023/24 and 2024/25*




*Graph 4.2.2 Change in all football teams across the Vale of White Horse between 2023/24 and 2024/25*




**Key updates**

4.3. The following section sets out the key issues and updates identified through stakeholder engagement:

a. Local clubs are struggling to keep up with the increasing demand from youth provision. They are unable to accommodate players due to lack of facilities or workforce shortages, resulting in waiting lists for junior teams.

**North sub-area**

b. There continues to be an urgent need for a 3G Pitch in the Abingdon area, to support the needs of several large clubs (in line with existing recommendation F76).

c. The pitches at Southern Town Park, Abingdon have seen significant improvements and are in now a better condition.

d. Milton United FC is in urgent need of new changing facilities, with the adult, male first team having to play off-site due to lack of ancillary facilities (as identified in existing recommendation F37).

e. A planning application has been submitted for the demolition of the existing changing facilities to be replaced with a new community centre at Milton Heights (P25/V1604/FUL). No replacement changing facilities for football have been included in the plan. At the time if writing this report, no decision has been issued.

f. St Edmunds FC is facing challenges at Wootton and Dry Sandford community centre due to significant pitch hire costs.

g. Football clubs around the edges of Oxford, Kennington, and Cumnor continue to experience steady growth in participation. To support this expanding demand The FA recommends that a 3G pitch be developed as soon as the opportunity arises (aligned with existing recommendation F76).

h. Vale of White Horse District Council granted planning permission for the rebuild of the sports pavilion at Kennington Memorial Field, Playfield Road (P25/V0359/FUL).

i. The replacement of Louie Memorial Pavilion is a key priority for Botley and North Hinksey Parish Council. This is an existing recommendation within the action plan (recommendation F37).

j. Sutton Courtenay FC currently only has one adult team, however, aspire to expand and have a second team. Sutton Courney Youth has six teams who have shown interest in using the facilities at Old Wallingford Way Recreation Ground, Sutton Courtenay.

k. In relation to recommendation F78, there has been a variation to change one of grass football pitches to 3G pitch, so two 3G pitches will be delivered on site.

**South sub-area**

l. Aureus School is exploring the opportunity to provide a 3G pitch, which is supported by the FA.

m. West Hendred Parish Council has highlighted a need for new football goal posts at the West Hendred playing field (recommendation F27 supports enhancements to ancillary facilities).

n. Harwell Parish Council states they have no toilets or changing facilities at their recreation ground, limiting use of the facilities. The recommendation to enhance the quality of changing and ancillary facilities at Harwell Recreation

Ground (F40) is no longer applicable as the site is being converted into a scout hall. This recommendation has been updated to support Harwell Parish Council with exploring the opportunity to provide toilets and changing facilities at the recreation ground.

o. Wantage Town Council has expressed that upgrades to the football pitches are a priority project. Pitch improvements are stated under existing recommendation F22.

p. Grove Parish Council is working with the district council to develop a sports-lit 3G sports pitch at Grove Airfield. They have highlighted this as a priority project, which links to existing recommendation, F79.

q. Chilton Parish Council states there are a lack of pitches available in the area and that there is expressing demand from sports clubs.

**West sub-area**

r. The FA state that there is growing demand for an additional 3G pitch in Didcot which will become necessary once the two planned 3G pitches at Common Park have been delivered.

s. Didcot currently supports over 100 football teams, but training provision is extremely limited, placing pressure on local clubs to secure regular training slots.

t. A planning application has been submitted for the delivery of a new sports pavilion at Hanney War Memorial Hall (P25/V1917/FUL).

u. Stanford in the Vale Parish Council aspires for two new adult football pitches and up to four children's pitches along with new changing facilities (linking to existing recommendation F80). They are working to improve their 7v7 pitches and state that current changing facilities are inadequate an require upgrades.

v. Little Coxwell Parish Council is waiting for a lease to their playing field from the District Council. The District Council are in discussions with the Parish Council regarding a long-term lease.

**Football summary**

4.4. We have reviewed the supply, demand, and key updates set out above to summarise the main outcomes.

4.5. The total number of teams has continued to increase, reaching 307, an 11% rise from 2023/24 to 2024/25, with the most significant growth in youth and women's teams.

4.6. The assessment identifies the need for 3G pitches in each sub-area.

4.7. The assessment identifies the need for new or improved changing facilities across all sub-areas.

**Football recommendations**

4.8. We have reviewed the data provided to determine whether the existing action plan requires any changes. The following recommendations in table 4.8 have been added or updated in the action:

*Table 4.8 Changes to the action plan recommendations*

| Site | PPS recommendation | New / Updated Aim |
|---|---|---|
| North sub-area | | |
| Wooton and Dry Stanford community Centre | **F81:** Support St Edmunds FC to alleviate ancillary facility challenges (currently at Wootton and Dry Sandford community centre). | New – Enhance |
| Oxford Fringe | **F76:** ~~Provide 3 x full-size sports-lit 3G pitches to serve Abingdon to address unmet and future demand (one of which could be delivered at Dalton Barracks), and consider additional +1 x full-size sports-lit 3G to serve the edge of Oxford (Botley – Kennington arc) should demand arise in the middle to late part of the period to 2041.~~ | Update -<br>Provide 3 x full-size sports-lit 3G pitches to serve Abingdon to address unmet and future demand (one of which could be delivered as part of the redevelopment of Dalton Barracks), and consider additional +1 x full-size sports-lit 3G to serve the edge of Oxford (Botley – Kennington arc) when demand appears. |
| Dalton Barracks | **F85:** Secure a community use agreement for the proposed 3G pitch Monks Farm education site (Dalton Barracks). | New – Protect |
| South Sub Area | | |
| Harwell Recreation Ground | **F40:** ~~Enhance the quality of changing and other ancillary facilities – Harwell Recreation Ground.~~ | Update - Support Harwell Parish Council with exploring the opportunity to provide toilets and changing facilities at the recreation ground. |
| Chilton | **F82:** Explore the need for additional pitch facilities around Chilton to support clubs in the area, if demand is identified. | New – Provide |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Grove Airfield | **F84:** Ensure the delivery of good quality grass pitches on the Grove Airfield site. | New - Provide |
| Aureus School, Didcot | **F86:** Explore the opportunity to support the delivery of a 3G pitch at the education site along with a community use agreement to help alleviate demand pressures. | New – Provide |
| West sub-area | | |
| Stanford in the Vale | **F80)** ~~Consider provision of proposed additional grass pitches in Stanford-in-the-Vale, subject to demonstrable demand and viability.~~ | Updated:<br><br>Support provision of proposed additional grass pitches in Stanford-in-the-Vale, subject to demonstrable demand and viability. |
| Stanford in the Vale | **F83:** Support facility upgrades to the ancillary facilities at Stanford in the Vale Recreation Ground. | New – Enhance |

4.9. It is important to note that these are just new or updated actions from this annual update. The council will also continue to progress the other recommendations from the 2024 strategy and action plan.

# 5. Hockey

**Supply update**

5.1. Following our engagement with clubs, facility operators, parish and town councils, and a review of planning applications, we have not identified any new or upgraded hockey pitches across the district.

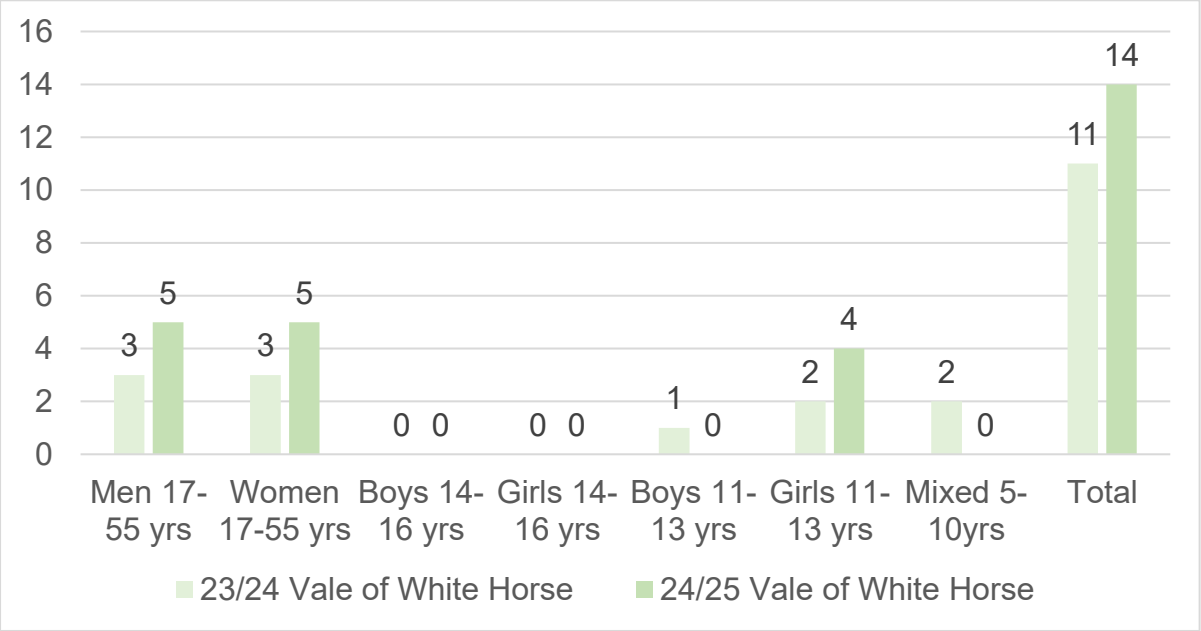
**Demand update**

5.2. Table 5.2 below explains the key changes in the number of hockey teams in each sub area between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

*Table 5.2 Comparison of number of hockey teams across the Vale of White Horse between 2023/24 and 2024/25*

| Hockey Demand Data | North sub-area | | West sub-area | | Vale of White Horse | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 23/24 | 24/25 | 23/24 | 24/25 | 23/24 | 24/25 |
| **Men 17-55 yrs** | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5 |
| **Women 17-55 yrs** | 3 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| **Boys 14-16 yrs** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Girls 14-16 yrs** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Boys 11-13 yrs** | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| **Girls 11-13 yrs** | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| **Mixed 5-10yrs** | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| **Total** | 11 | 13 | 0 | 1 | 11 | 14 |

*Graph 5.2.1 Change in hockey team categories across the Vale of White Horse between 2023/24 and 2024/25*




*Graph 5.2.2 Change in all hockey teams across the Vale of White Horse between 2023/24 and 2024/25*

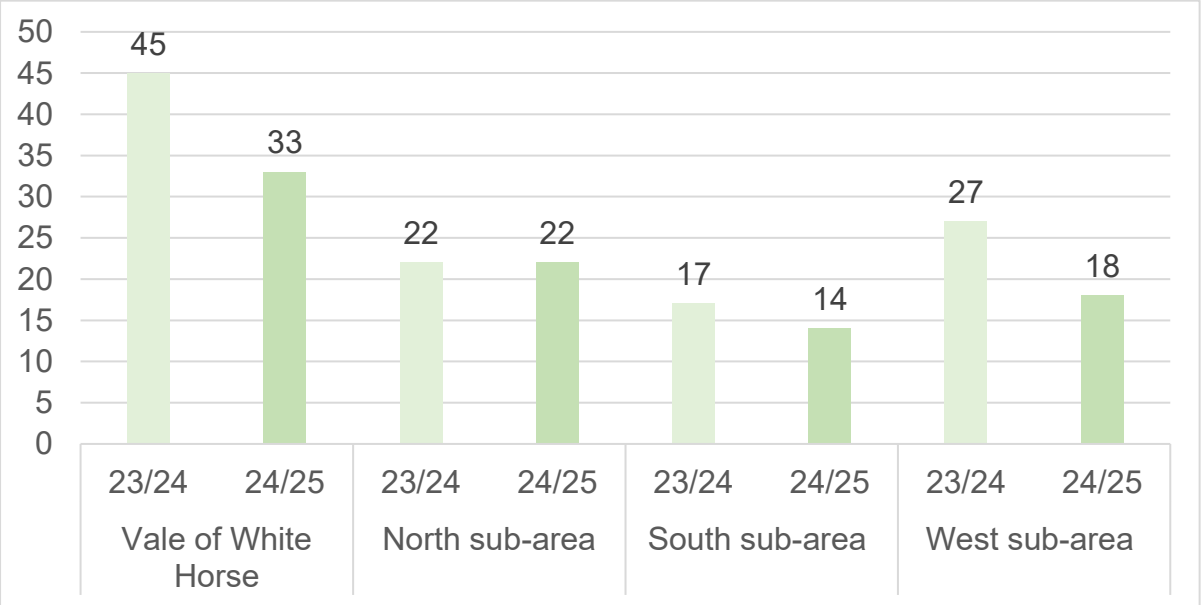
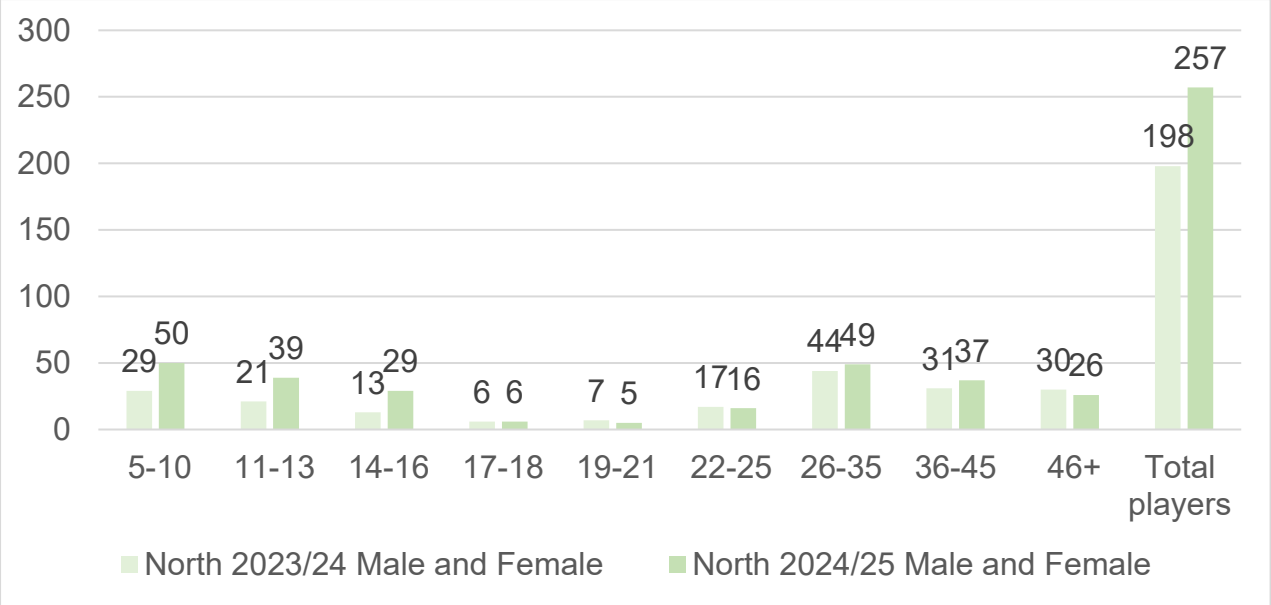


*Table 5.2.1 Comparison of number of hockey players across the Vale of White Horse between 2023/24 and 2024/25*

| Club Name | Sub Area | Year | Gender | 5-10 | 11-13 | 14-16 | 17-18 | 19-21 | 22-25 | 26-35 | 36-45 | 46+ | Total players |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Abingdon HC | North | 2023/24 | Male | 14 | 10 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 11 | 20 | 12 | 19 | 198 |
| | | | Female | 15 | 11 | 11 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 24 | 19 | 11 | |
| | | 2024/25 | Male | 30 | 17 | 15 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 30 | 15 | 16 | 257 |
| | | | Female | 20 | 22 | 14 | 3 | 3 | 7 | 19 | 22 | 10 | |
| Defence Academy HC | West | 2023/24 | Male | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - |
| | | | Female | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | | 2024/5 | Male | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 11 | 11 | 3 | 38 |
| | | | Female | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 0 | |

*Graph 5.2.3 Change in hockey players across the Vale of White Horse between 2023/24 and 2024/25*




5.3. We could not identify any hockey teams in the South sub area in 2024 or 2025. Furthermore, we are unable to ascertain the number of teams based at Shrivenham Defence Academy.

5.4. We have amended our table of teams to match the structure of Sport England's Active Places Power[1] online calculator.

[1] Sport England's Active Places Power Website

## Key updates

5.5. The following section sets out the key issues and updates identified through stakeholder engagement.

### North sub-area

a. Abingdon Hockey Club (Tilsley Park) has completed a pitch condition report which shows they will need to replace the surfaces of the two pitches within the next two years.

## Hockey summary

5.6. We have reviewed the supply, demand, and key updates set out above to summarise the main outcomes. Across the district there as an 11% increase in hockey teams between 2023/24 and 2024/25, with most substantial growth occurring in the North sub-area; increasing by 30% between 2023/24 and 2024/25. Unfortunately, we were unable to compare participant data for the West sub-area.

## Hockey recommendations

5.7. Based on the information above, we don't believe there is a need for any new or updated recommendations for hockey pitches. Any recommendations within the 2024 LFAS and action plan will remain valid.

# 6. Rugby Union

**Supply update**

6.1. Following our engagement with clubs, facility operators, parish and town councils, and a review of planning applications, we have not identified any new or upgraded rugby pitches across the district.

**Demand update**

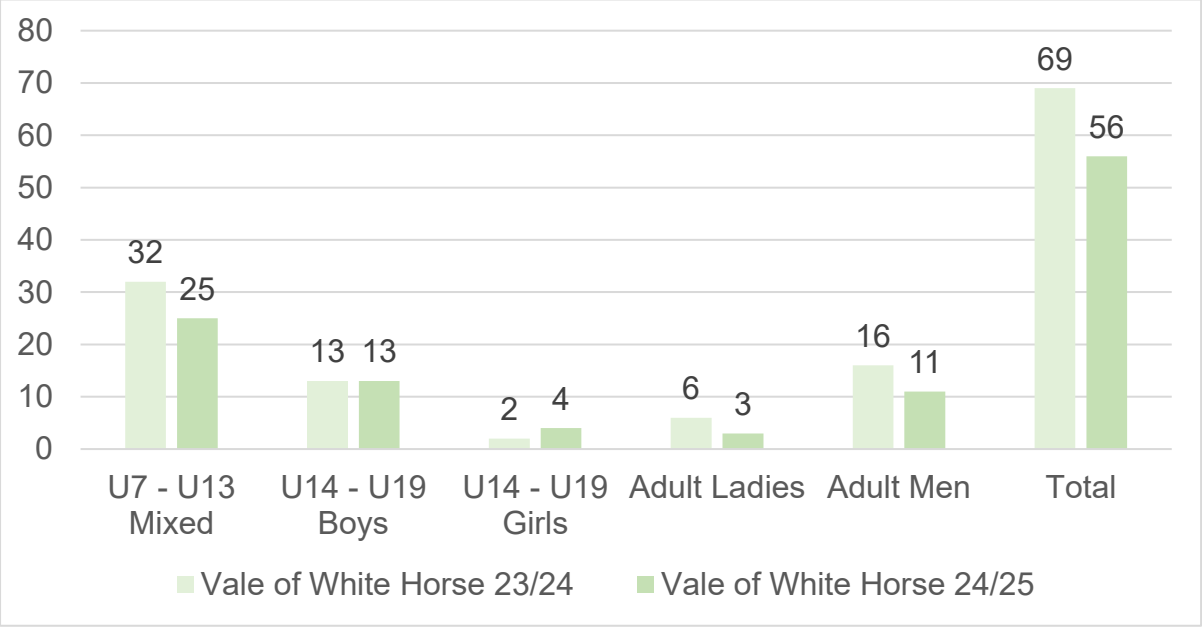
6.2. Table 6.2 below explains the key changes in the number of rugby teams in each sub area between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

*Table 6.2 Comparison of number of rugby teams*

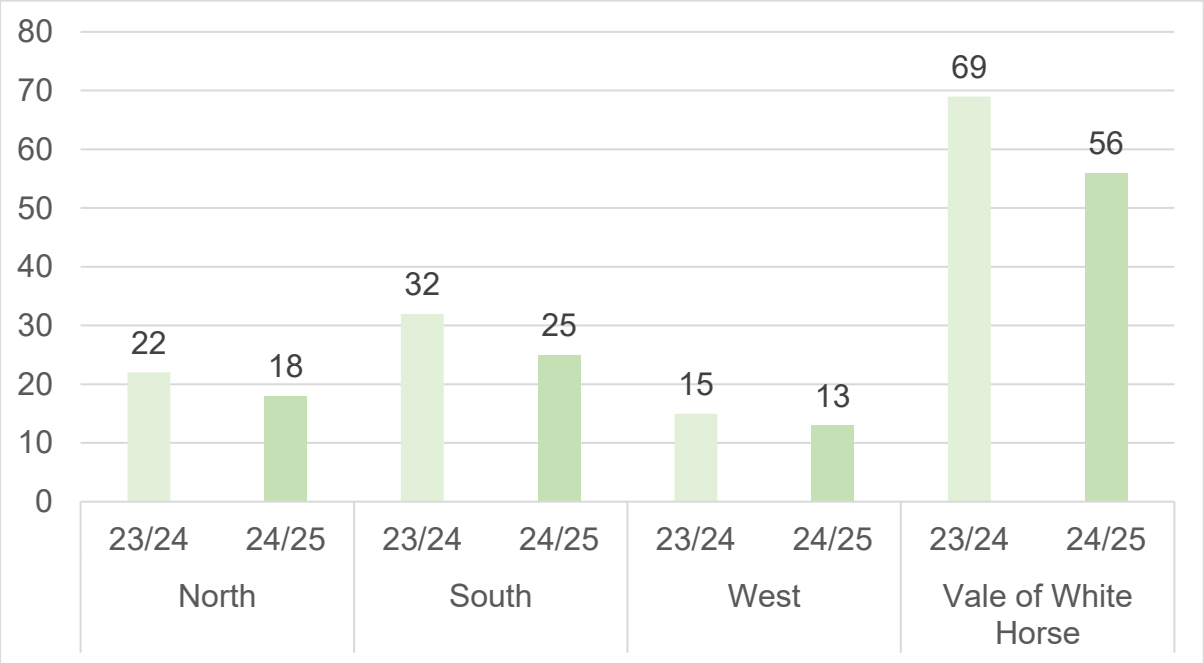
| Rugby Demand Data | North | | South | | West | | Vale of White Horse | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 23/24 | 24/25 | 23/24 | 24/25 | 23/24 | 24/25 | 23/24 | 24/25 |
| U7 - U13 Mixed | 11 | 10 | 14 | 10 | 7 | 5 | 32 | 25 |
| U14 - U19 Boys | 4 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 13 | 13 |
| U14 - U19 Girls | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Adult Ladies | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 3 |
| Adult Men | 6 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 16 | 11 |
| Total | 22 | 18 | 32 | 25 | 15 | 13 | 69 | 56 |

For 2024/25, U7-U13 mixed now called Age Grade Mixed (U7 - U11), U14 - U19 Boys now called Age Grade Boys (U12 - U16) and U14 - U19 Girls now called Age Grade Girls (U12 - U16).

*Graph 6.2.1 Change in rugby team categories across the Vale of White Horse between 2023/24 and 2024/25*




*Graph 6.2.2 Change in all rugby teams across the Vale of White Horse between 2023/24 and 2024/25*



## Key updates

6.3. The following section sets out the key issues and updates identified through stakeholder engagement:

**North sub-area**

a. Abingdon Rugby Football Club is progressing with a high priority project, the development of new changing rooms at Southern Town Park. A planning application for a single-storey changing block was submitted in 2024 (and granted). The club is also looking into improved pitch maintenance and have received investment support from the RFU (recommendation R42).

b. Oxford Rugby Football Club requires upgrades to their clubhouse at the Southern Bypass Ground, with a particular focus on the toilet facilities (supported by existing recommendation R13).

**South sub-area**

c. Grove RFC aspires to improve the changing facilities at Grove Recreation Lane once the football club move offsite (in line with existing recommendation R22). Grove RFC also suffer with midweek pitch training issues as there is not enough sports lighting on the natural turf pitches to manage capacity so would be supportive of a new 3G pitch locally to use for training purposes. Grove Parish Council is pursuing plans for a new 3G on the Grove Airfield Development site to cater for rugby and football.

**West sub-area**

d. Didcot Rugby Football Club requires upgrades to their facility at Boundary Park, with a particular focus on the kitchen area to help with hosting more rugby and cricket matches (existing recommendation R13).

e. Faringdon Rugby Football Club continues to face significant issues with the changing facilities at Folly Sports Park. The club has seen notable growth, particularly in its women's and girls' sections, and the existing facilities are no longer fit for purpose (existing recommendation R13).

## Rugby summary

6.4. The Vale of White Horse has seen a 19% decrease in rugby teams between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

6.5. Feedback from current clubs highlights that the need to improve facilities are a consistent theme across rugby clubs. Stakeholders should continue to support the delivery of improved ancillary facilities to meet club needs.

## Rugby recommendations

6.6. Continue to support rugby clubs with the improvements or delivery of ancillary facilities to cater for their club's needs.

6.7. Based on the information above, we don’t believe there is a need for any new or updated recommendations for rugby pitches. Any recommendations within the 2024 LFAS and action plan will remain valid.

# 7. Strategic Housing Sites

7.1. Strategic housing allocation sites present a significant opportunity to host pitches required because of demand which arises from their population. In addition, they can support locations for new pitches that could help address wider demand across the sub-area where land is available either on-site or close to it.

7.2. Most of the strategic sites in our local plan now have planning permission, meaning that we have secured sport and pitch contributions from these developments via legal agreements. The list below represents those sites that do not yet have planning permission.

7.3. This study has updated the requirements for the strategic development sites to take account of the latest results of the Sport England calculator, reflecting changes in sport teams and uptake rates since 2024.

7.4. The table below summarises the contribution that the strategic housing sites in the Vale of White Horse could make to provision of pitches (based on the sites that we have been advised can still be influenced / informed by the outcomes of the PPS update), using the team data present above in this report. Off-site contributions for some sports are required, however are not summarised here.

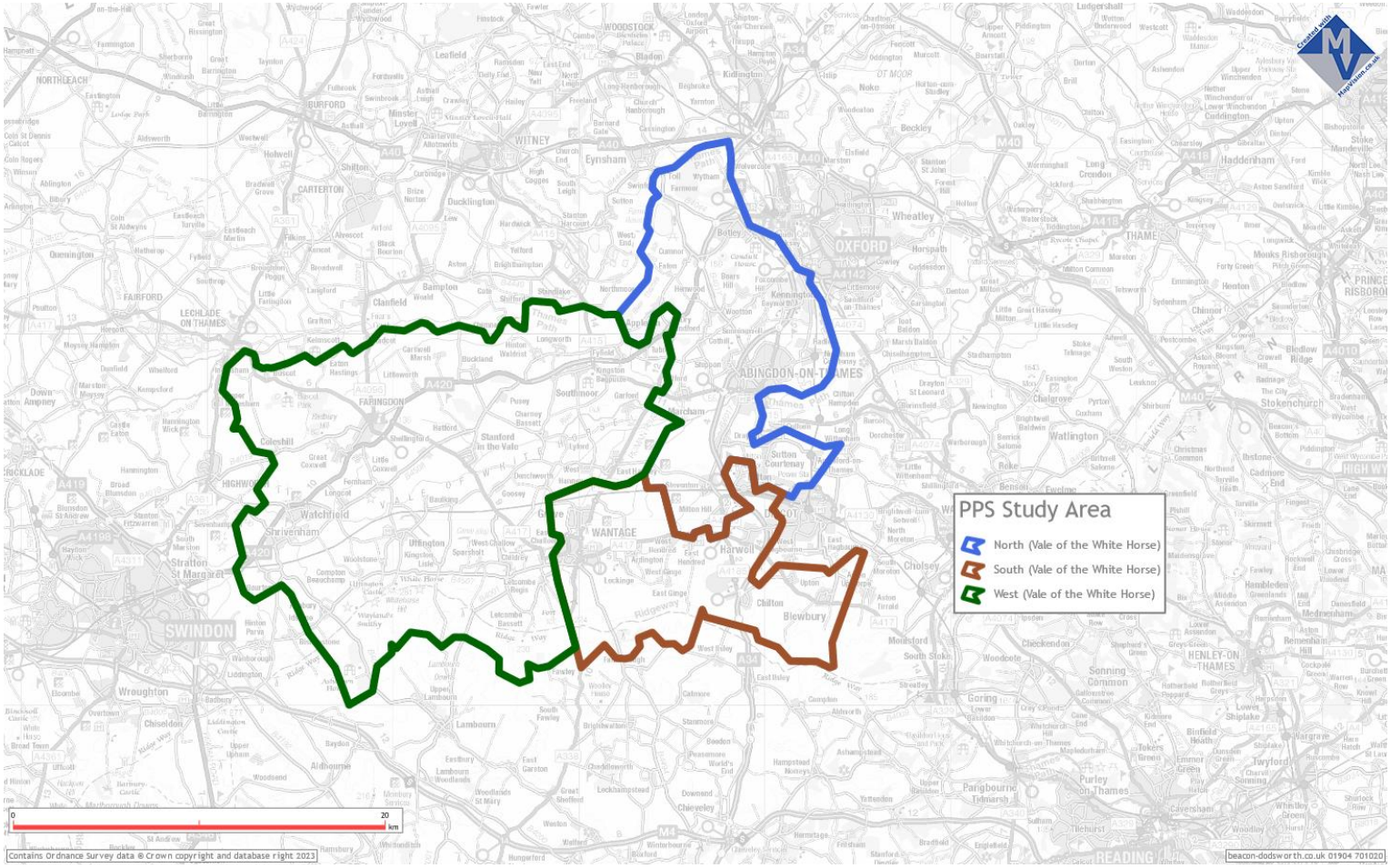
*Table 7.4 Summary of Estimated On-site Playing Pitch Provision at Strategic Housing Sites that do not yet have planning permission*

| Strategic Site | No. of dwellings modelled | Population modelled | On-site requirements (captured in "provide" recommendations) 2024 report | On-site requirements (captured in "provide" recommendations 2026 update |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| North sub-area | | | | |
| Dalton Barracks | 2,750 | 6,600 | Option to respond to estimated demand:<br><br>Football: 3 x grass 11v11, 3 x grass 9v9, 3 x grass 7v7, 1 x full-size sports-lit 3G<br><br>Cricket: 1 x Adult Cricket Ground | Option to respond to estimated demand:<br><br>Football: 3 x grass 11v11, 2 x grass 9v9, 2 x grass 7v7, 1 x 5v5, 1 x full-size sports-lit 3G<br><br>Cricket: 1 x Adult Cricket Ground |

Note: Numbers of dwelling and the population modelled has been done only for those sites over which the PPS can influence provision (i.e. where they are not already commitments through the planning process). The final configuration of pitches should be reviewed and agreed by the relevant National Governing body. If necessary, figures should be rerun to ensure that the most up to date team data and facility costs are captured.

**APPENDIX 1: Sub Area Maps**

The following map shows the North, South and West sub-area for Vale of White Horse.



**APPENDIX 2: PRIORITY ACTIONS**

# 2025/26 Playing Pitch Strategy top priorities

Below is a list of the top playing pitch strategies (PPS) priorities Vale of White Horse which have been taken from the full action plan and agreed by the PPS steering group.

**Vale of White Horse priorities**

| Rec no. | Site/ Location | Sub Area | Sport | Recommendation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| C27 | Kingston Bagpuize | West | Cricket | Gain the secure use of pitches which currently have unsecure community use at Buscot Park, Kingston Bagpuize Sports Ground and Letcombe Recreation Ground to provide certainty of future supply. |
| F81 | Faringdon Community College | West | Football | F81) Deliver proposed pitches "in the pipeline" to meet demand arising in those locations. This means pitches at: a. Faringdon Community College to deliver 1 x full-size sports-lit 3G pitch and any associated necessary ancillary facilities. |
| C30 | Challow & Childrey Cricket Club | West | Cricket | C30) Support the improvement of club ancillary facilities to provide fit for purpose facilities, to service current membership and the growth in the Women & Girls game at Challow & Childrey CC and Craven Playing Fields. This list will need to be monitored as more and more clubs establish new women & girls' sections. |
| C22 | Cumnor Cricket Club | North | Cricket | Support the improvement of club ancillary facilities to provide fit for purpose facilities, to service current membership and the growth in the Women & Girls game at Sunningwell CC, Cumnor CC and Steventon Village Green. This list will need to be monitored as more and more clubs establish new women & girls' sections. |
| C22 | Sunningwell Cricket Club | North | Cricket | Support the improvement of club ancillary facilities to provide fit for purpose facilities, to service current membership and the growth in the Women & Girls game at Sunningwell CC, Cumnor CC and Steventon Village Green. This list will need to be monitored as more and more clubs establish new women & girls' sections. |
| F76 | Abingdon/Didcot | North | Football | Provide 3 x full-size sports-lit 3G pitches to serve Abingdon to address unmet and future demand (one of which could be delivered at Dalton Barracks), and consider |

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| | | | | additional +1 x full-size sports-lit 3G to serve the edge of Oxford (Botley – Kennington arc) should demand arise in the middle to late part of the period to 2041. Also consider additional +1 x full-size sports-lit 3G to serve western catchment of Didcot, with provision made in conjunction with overall sequencing of additional 3G provision in the town (also see South Oxfordshire report). This could be provided, for example, at The Heights, Milton United. |
| F37 | The Heights, Milton United | North | Football | Enhance the quality of changing and other ancillary facilities where possible to help ensure the quality of the experience for the sport is enhanced (with a focus on those of "poor" quality listed below, and then those with "standard" quality). Pitches with secure community use should be prioritised: Poor<br><br>• The Heights, Milton Utd. |
| R42 | Abingdon Rugby Football Club | North | Rugby | R42) Within this sub-area, the following measures should be taken to address the current and projected demand:<br><br>d. Provide additional changing facility capacity at Abingdon RFC. |
| F79 | Wantage / Grove | South | Football | Provide 0.5 x additional full-size sports-lit 3G pitch to serve demand, in a location to be determined, to serve areas where demand appears on the ground, either in the Wantage / Grove or edge of Didcot area. This could be increased to a full-size 3G should demand be demonstrated that this will be viable at the time of proposal. |
| F79 | Didcot | South | Football | Deliver proposed pitches "in the pipeline" to meet demand arising in those locations. This means that pitches at: • Land at Didcot North-east, to deliver 3 x 11v11 pitches and 5 x Youth 7v7 pitches and associated necessary ancillary facilities. |
| C62 | Didcot | South | Cricket | Didcot Northeast development will provide new on-site cricket ground to accommodate additional demand for cricket from the development. The final number of cricket pitches on the ground to be agreed. |

**APPENDIX 3: Summary of Parish and Town Council Consultation and Feeback**

| Vale of White Horse – Sub Area | Council | Issues and concerns with current leisure facilities in the area | Top priorities for protecting, enhancing and providing leisure facilities / playing pitches | Additional comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| North | Botley & North Hinksey Parish Council | In addition to the need to build the new Pavilion that we were granted planning permission for in 2023; there are additional needs in the Parish. Brookes University is exiting from their Harcourt Hill site in 2026. The swimming pool closed in June 2025. They recently announced the Sports Centre will close in April 2026 so indoor gym and exercise classes will cease at that time. Outdoor pitches will still be available to book after April, but long-term access is uncertain. These pitches and fields are used by the local community and Matthew Arnold secondary school. | Leisure facilities:<br>1: Replacing what we lose with Brookes leaving in April 2026 - gym, exercise classes going April 2026, playing fields provision uncertain.<br><br>2: Closure of the Swimming Pool at Brookes in June 2025 has been a big blow - we want to see it brought back into use<br><br>Replacing the Louie Memorial Pavilion to serve the playing fields and community hall uses is essential to accommodate our needs as a growing community<br><br>Playing pitches:<br>1: Provision of Louie Memorial Pavilion as the changing rooms are unusable in the current building limiting possibilities for teams using the pitches | Brookes Harcourt Hill sports centre, pool and pitches have for many years been accessible to our community with local resident discounts and many clubs and individuals using the pool as well as the gym, classes, pitches and fields. The existence of those facilities has meant the Vale has not needed to provide a leisure centre for Botley. But now these facilities are closed or closing soon. It's a huge loss for residents of all ages. The lack of investment by the Vale here in Botley is now very clear to see. We would like to see serious consideration and support given into how to enable the pool to be reopened and the |

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| | | | 2: Securing the Brookes Playing Fields for community use when Brookes leave the facility | Brookes gym and fields and pitches kept open or reopened to the community after Brookes leave. |
| North | Kennington Parish Council | N/A | 1: Building costs<br><br>2: Running costs<br><br>3: Obtaining grant funding for large projects | N/A |
| North | Sutton Courtenay Parish Council | 1. The public has frequently complained about the lack of toilet facilities at the Recreation Ground.<br><br>2. Through Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Plan, parishioners expressed a wish to see cricket return to Sutton Courtenay. With extent of ground given over to football but not all used for football, the parish council's options for development are very limited. | Leisure facilities:<br>1: The hierarchy of Sports England's role in the planning process and the Vale's Pitch Playing Strategy needs to be flexible so that it empowers parish councils to deliver a variety of sporting and leisure facilities to meet the needs of its parishioners with particular regard to their health and wellbeing. Currently, the process requires preservation of football pitches which are not even used any longer to take precedent over new leisure facilities requested by parishioners in their own parish and on Parish Council land. | Producing pitch playing strategy documents that have a lifetime of a period of 20 years seems to sit at odds with the reality - as housing development in villages increase with a concomitant demand for various activities and, as new sports/leisure activities come in to vogue, villages with limited open space find they are unable to deliver their best for the parishioners as they are bound by remote bodies who have a right to object to modification of existing |

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| | | | 2: Where a Parish Council's play and leisure facilities are being used by residents of wider Oxfordshire living outside of Sutton Courtenay, there should be some direct funding made available to the Parish Council to support the heavy-duty use of those activities. We have some activities such as Nordic Walking where the participants come from as far as Banbury. Fencing around the play area and field is constantly being damaged by cars parking in the limited space available in the Parish Council's car park adjoining the facilities. Parish Councils have a limited budget.<br><br>3: Providing toilets for users of the recreation ground leisure facilities.<br><br>Playing pitches:<br>1: Cricket practice nets to support the cricket team coming back to Sutton Courtenay and children and young people have the opportunity to experience | facilities to allow provision of new facilities. This feels to be in direct contradiction to the Localism Act of 2011.<br><br>Clear lines of accountability for health and safety where Sport England insists on retaining a pitch configuration which puts users of other leisure facilities in a multi sports/leisure ground at risk. |

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| | | | cricket from an early age and develop their talent.<br><br>2: Providing changing facilities for teams to book alongside booking the cricket pitch or football pitches.<br><br>3: Overcoming an insistence by Football Foundation through Sport England, to refuse modifications that involve moving pitches or altering pitches despite the pitches not being in current use and thereby restricting options for sustainable cricket nets and square as well as other leisure facilities. | |
| North | Wootton (Abingdon) Parish Council | N/A | Leisure facilities:<br>1: Working with the Community Centre to improve facilities at the Community Field<br><br>Playing pitches:<br>1: Maintaining the cricket pavilion<br><br>2: Expanding use of the village cricket pavilion/pitch | N/A |

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| West | Charney Bassett Parish Council | N/A | 1: Replacing and keeping up to date our children's playground facility | N/A |
| West | Faringdon Town Council | Southampton Street Public Toilets needs flooring upgraded (icy/slippery in winter months).<br><br>Insufficient recreation space (indoor and outdoor) and sports pitches for the size of the population. A learner pool is required for Faringdon Leisure Centre. More space is required for Urban Movement activities. | 1: MUGA & changing facilities/hall at Folly Sports Park<br><br>2: Boules<br><br>3: Hockey | We don't have enough facilities for the size of the existing population because Faringdon is built out. |
| West | Frilford Parish Meeting | NA | N/A | N/A |
| West | Great Coxwell Parish Council | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| West | Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor | The pavilion/sports field at Kingston Bagpuize has flooding issues around the pavilion, a driveway that needs proper surfacing, the pavilion foul water is currently attached to a cesspit and needs a Klargester or attaching to the mains (see Thames Water). The pavilion needs a veranda.<br><br>For other areas such as tennis and bowls, and regarding pitches you would need to ask the sports clubs. | N/A | N/A |

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| West | Letcombe Bassett Parish Council | N/A | 1: The children's play area needs maintenance | We are too small for anything other than children's play area |
| West | Little Coxwell | We are wait for the District Council to provide us with a lease for our playing field. Without this we cannot provide or improve any leisure facilities. | 1: Secure the land long term | N/A |
| West | Uffington Parish Council | The main playing field in the parish is the Jubilee Field which is owned and managed by the parish council. | N/A | N/A |
| West | Shrivenham Parish Council | N/A | Leisure facilities:<br>1: To perhaps increase letting fees so the facilities can be maintained properly.<br><br>2: Better marketing<br><br>Playing pitches:<br>1: To review fees | N/A |
| West | Stanford in the Vale Parish Council | Insufficient football pitches for adults<br>Insufficient football pitches children<br>Unsafe skate park<br>Grossly inadequate changing rooms<br>No racquet sports courts<br>No fitness trail | Leisure facilities:<br>1: 4 x New Racquet Courts<br><br>2: New Skate Park<br><br>3: New Changing facilities for sports<br><br>Playing pitches:<br>1: 2 x new adult football pitches & up to 4 (depending on age of child) children's football pitches | *Stanford in the Vale PC also included their response to the 2024 PPS and LFAS consultation.* |

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| | | | 2: 1 x Village cricket pitch<br><br>3: New Changing facilities for sports | |
| South | Blewbury Parish Council | Skatepark needs to be replaced and play areas replaced too due to coming to the end of the useful economic lives. | Leisure facilities:<br>1: Replacement<br><br>2: Improvements<br><br>3: Upgrades<br><br>Playing pitches:<br>1: Upgrading conditions<br><br>2: Improvements | N/A |
| South | Chilton Parish Council | N/A | 1: More pitches are needed for children's teams to use - see comments at end of survey | Generally, there seem to be a lack of pitches available for children's football clubs. Although Chilton does not have formal pitches, we allow one or 2 local groups to use part of our recreation area for their games. The grass is not cut to football pitch standard, but I understand is OK. Similarly, there are no toilet facilities available unless the Village Hall is |

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| | | | | opened and we tend not to want muddy boots in the hall anyway.<br><br>However, we have received a number of enquiries from teams outside the village looking for pitches suggesting this is a wider issue. |
| South | Grove Parish Council | N/A | 1: 3G sports pitch<br><br>2: Tennis, Padel and or Pickle tennis<br><br>3: Updating skatepark | N/A |
| South | Harwell Parish Council | We have no toilets or changing areas, which is a reason that many clubs choose to go elsewhere rather than use our recreation ground. | Leisure facilities:<br>1: Provide a pump track and teen shelter<br><br>2: Provide an 'Active Ageing Loop'<br><br>3: Provide a small MUGA area<br><br>Playing pitches:<br>1: Explore creation of public toilets and changing rooms | N/A |

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| | | | 2: Support local bowls and tennis clubs | |
| South | Wantage Town Council | Wantage Town Council would like the Learner Pool at Wantage Leisure Centre to be completed as soon as possible. We are aware that there are S106 funds for this and are frustrated at the lack of progress. | Leisure facilities:<br>1: Learner Pool at Wantage Leisure Centre<br><br>2: Retention and improvement of existing leisure facilities<br><br>3: New leisure facilities where appropriate and where funds are available<br><br>Playing pitches:<br>1: Enhance football pitches<br><br>2: Enhance tennis facilities | N/A |
| South | West Hendred Parish Council | We need new football goal posts in the playing field. | 1: Football goals need replacing | N/A |