

**INDOOR BUILT FACILITIES STRATEGY  
WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL  
2024-2040**



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

A REPORT BY FMG CONSULTING LTD

JULY 2024

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### **Basis of Information**

*It is not possible to guarantee the fulfilment of any estimates or forecasts contained within this report, although they have been conscientiously prepared on the basis of our research and information made available to us at the time of the study. Neither FMG as a company, nor the authors, will be held liable to any party for any direct or indirect losses, financial or otherwise, associated with any contents of this report. We have relied in a number of areas on information provided by the client and have not undertaken additional independent verification of this data.*

# 1. Introduction

## Background

- 1.1 This is Wokingham Borough Council's Indoor Built Facilities Strategy (2024-40). The strategy sets a long-term vision for indoor sports provision in the borough that is based on a current and future needs assessment to 2040.
- 1.2 The strategy has been researched and prepared during February to March in 2024. Further analysis has been included following the Sport England's National Run for Sports Halls and Swimming Pools in April 2024.
- 1.3 The needs assessment has been prepared in accordance with Sport England's Assessing Needs and Opportunities for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities Guidance (ANOG) and in consultation with colleagues from Wokingham Borough Council, Sport England, relevant National Governing Bodies (NGB's) and other local providers.
- 1.4 The strategy helps provide a clear focus to all stakeholders about Wokingham's indoor built facility requirements. The information contained in this report helps to inform future plans and investment decisions to provide a modern, efficient, and effective stock of community-based assets that enable all residents of Wokingham to either reach their sporting potential or simply lead healthier and more active lives.
- 1.5 This strategy has been set against a difficult financial backdrop for local authorities. The changes impacting provision since the last strategy was written in 2014 are captured below:
  - New Government and Sport England Strategies relevant to the scope of this work.
  - The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the degree of bounce back in Wokingham for the sport and leisure sector.
  - The cost-of-living crisis and the impact of changes in global energy prices.
- 1.6 Despite these pressures, Wokingham has invested significant sums in infrastructure since the publication of its last Built Facilities Strategy. This has included This has included circa £5m in new leisure facilities at Arborfield and Ryeish Green; £40m in new and enhanced facilities at Bulmershe Leisure Centre and Carnival Pool and a new Activity Centre at Dinton Pastures Country Park.
- 1.7 In addition, there has been increased emphasis on improving the active environment with new 'Greenways' linking housing developments and new walking and cycling routes.
- 1.8 Over the next 15 years, the population of Wokingham is naturally forecast to increase by 6% to circa 194,000 by the end of the plan with this figure swelled further by the need to provide a further 6,689 additional homes by 2040. This strategy is therefore timely in ensuring Wokingham is on track to achieve its vision as:

*A place where everyone can easily access high quality indoor and outdoor spaces for active leisure pursuits and do so in increasing numbers, enhancing health and wellbeing across all our communities, and particularly benefiting the more vulnerable”.*

## **Scope**

- 1.9 The Built Facilities Strategy ('BFS') specifically addresses provision of the following sports in line with the Council's brief:
- Sports Halls
  - Swimming Pools.
  - Health and Fitness Gyms.
  - Fitness Studios
  - Squash
  - Martial Arts
  - Indoor Bowls
  - Indoor Tennis/Padel

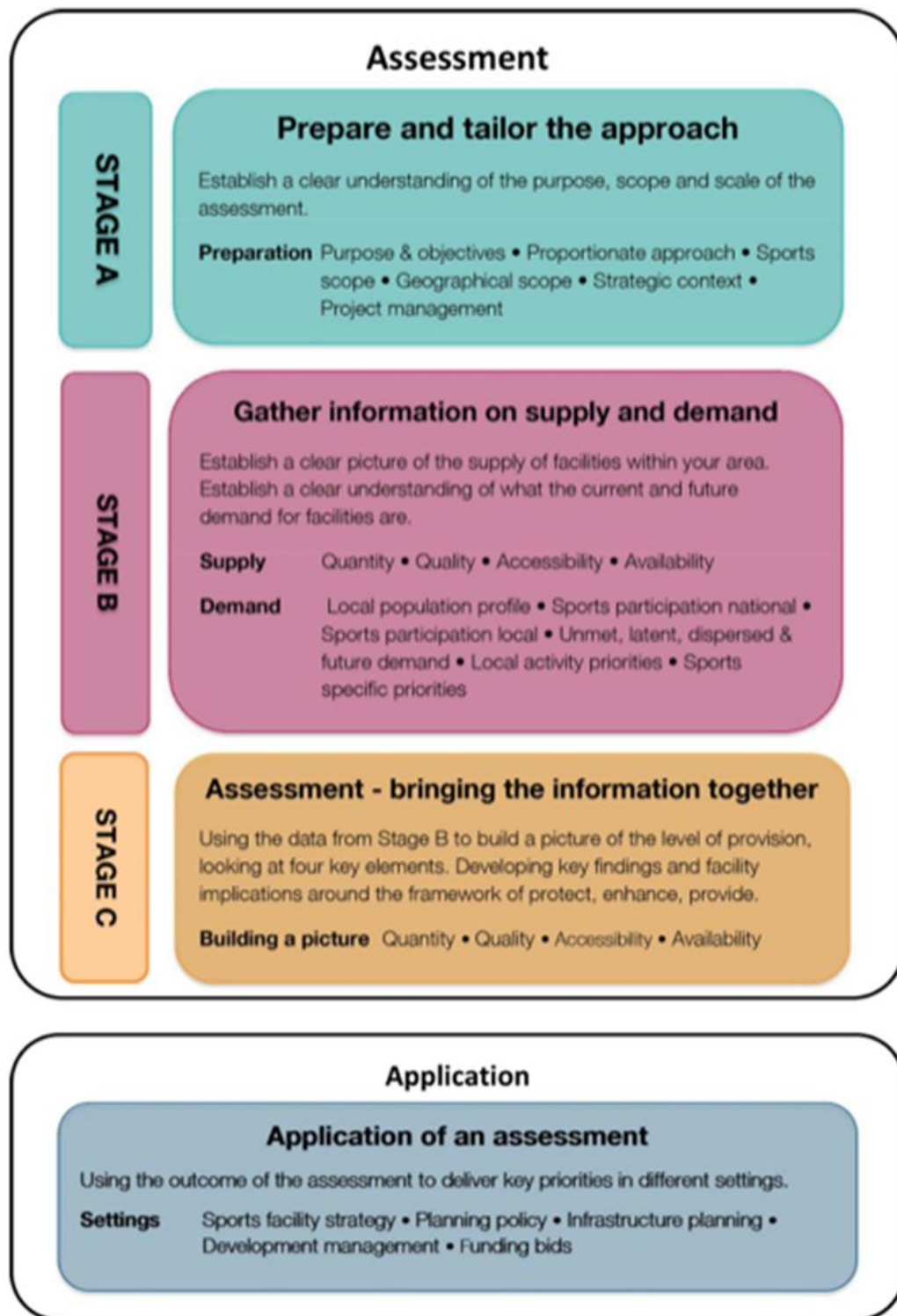
## **Objectives**

- 1.10 The objective is the production of an updated strategy for Wokingham providing the strategic context for indoor built leisure facilities in the Borough that can be used to:
- Aid decision-making by Councillors and Officers.
  - Support external funding applications.
  - Support developer discussions around Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section106 contributions.
  - Support decisions on service rationalisation and investment.
  - Support potential work with neighbouring authorities; and
  - Link appropriately to Local Plans.
- 1.11 The strategy also needs to be realistic in its aspirations identifying actions capable of being implemented within the Council's budgetary position and procurement regime, and those that would require significant external funding or put the Council at undue commercial risk.

## **Methodology**

- 1.12 Our approach to the refresh has been developed utilising the process as set out in the Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (ANOG), the methodology for assessing indoor sports needs developed by Sport England, as set out in figure 1.1 overleaf.

Figure 1.1 ANOG Methodology for Assessing Indoor Sports Facilities



## **Report Structure**

1.13 The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

Section 2 – Strategic Context.

Section 3 – Local Context.

Section 4 – Assessment of Need and Evidence Base - Sports Halls.

Section 5 – Assessment of Need and Evidence Base – Swimming Pools;

Section 6 – Assessment of Need and Evidence Base - Health and Fitness;

Section 7– Fitness studios.

Section 8 – Squash.

Section 9 – Martial Arts.

Section 10 – Indoor Bowls; and

Section 11 – Indoor Tennis

1.14 The consultant team is grateful to those who contributed their knowledge to the development of this strategy and the project management and leadership of Wokingham Borough Council.

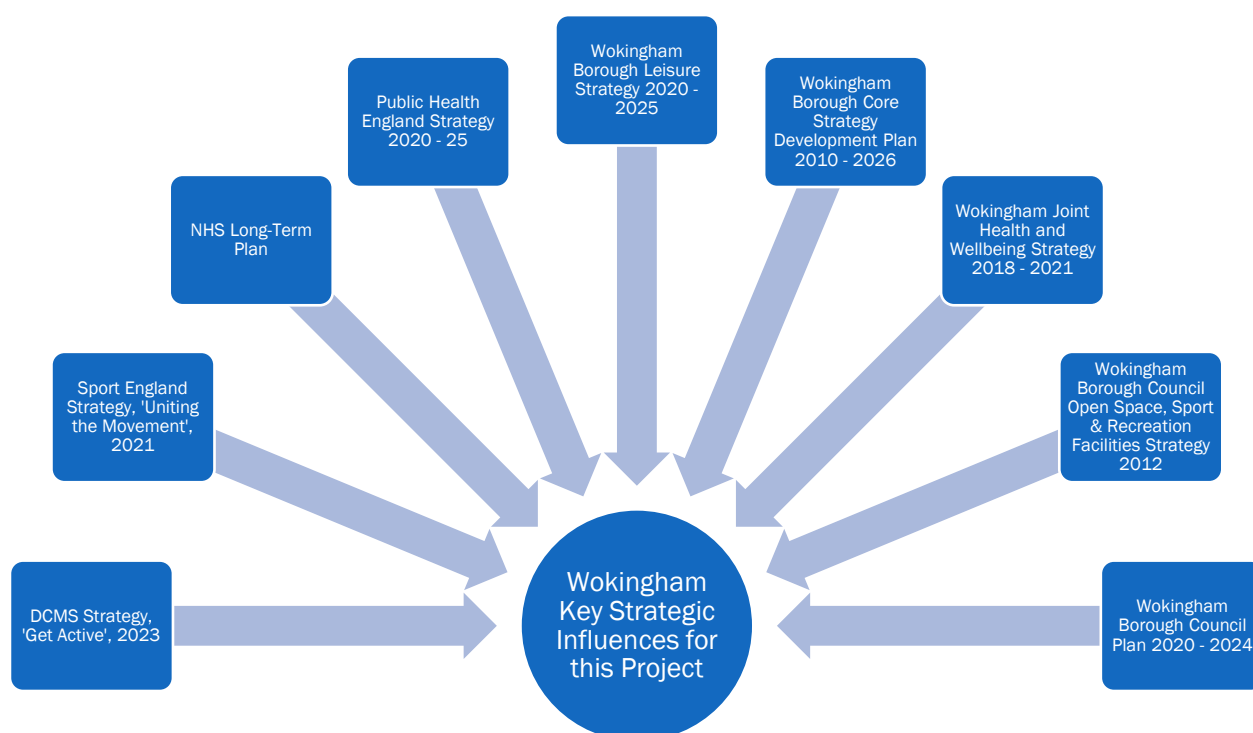
### **Contact**

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## 2. Strategic Context

### Introduction

We have undertaken a desktop review of relevant local policy documents and implications in the context of the project to help identify the golden thread between local and national plans. The key strategic influences for Harrow are summarised below:



### National Strategy

#### Government

- 2.1 At a national level, the Government has set out a strategic vision for the nation in 'Get Active: A Strategy for the Future of Sport and Physical Activity'. This retains the five outcomes set in the previous strategy, 'Sporting Future'. These outcomes include Physical Wellbeing, Mental Wellbeing, Individual Development, Social and Community Development and Sustainable Economic Development.
- 2.2 The strategy also sets out 3 core priorities:
  - Being unapologetically ambitious in making the nation more active.
  - Making sport and physical activity more inclusive and welcoming for all so that everyone can have confidence that there is a place for them in sport.
  - Moving towards a more sustainable sector that is more financially resilient and robust.

These core priorities are accompanied by specific focuses such as 'Setting the future direction for facilities and spaces where people can be active', 'Helping the sector to be welcoming to all' and 'Working towards a more environmentally sustainable sector', all of which are relevant to the vision of the proposed facilities in Harrow.

### ***Sport England***

- 2.3 In 2021, Sport England published a new strategy, 'Uniting the Movement'. The strategy is a 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity.
- 2.4 The Mission for the strategy is for sport and physical activity to be recognised as essential. Promoting movement in general as the means to unlock sport and activity for some people.
- 2.5 There are deep-rooted inequalities in sport and physical activity, which means there are people who feel excluded from being active because the right options and opportunities are not there, including disabled people and people with a long-term health condition, people in a lower socio-economic group (NS-SEC 6-8), women and girls and people from Asian and Black backgrounds.
- 2.6 For a long-time there have been patterns in the characteristics of people who feel less able to get active. These inequalities are at the core of the Uniting the Movement strategy – providing opportunities to people and communities that have traditionally been left behind and helping to remove the barriers to activity.

### ***Three key objectives:***

- 1. Advocating for movement, sport, and physical activity - The Strategy seeks to shape the conversation and the evidence on the value of movement, sport, and physical activity so that it resonates with partners, both within and outside the sector.
- 2. Joining forces on 5 big issues – See below.
- 3. Creating the catalysts for change - The right conditions for change must be created: across the people, organisations, and partnerships with the potential to contribute and help turn shared plans and ideas into action.



### **The 5 big issues:**



2.7 These national drivers provide an essential context for understanding the picture in Harrow. It will be important to understand how investment into a new leisure centre facilities can contribute to achieving targets around physical wellbeing and mental wellbeing.

### **NHS Long Term Plan**

2.8 The NHS Long Term Plan sets out the ambitions and objectives of the NHS over a 10-year period. The Plan references the focus on NHS organisations working with local partners through 'Integrated Care Systems' to plan and deliver services which meet the needs of communities. Some of the key ambitions and methodology for achieving the targets set out are:

1. **Making sure everyone gets the best start in life** – including taking further action on childhood obesity.
2. **Delivering world-class care for major health problems** – including aims of preventing 150,000 heart attacks, strokes, and dementia cases, providing education and exercise programmes to more patients with heart problems, delivering community-based physical and mental care for people with severe mental illness.
3. **Preventing illness and tackling health inequalities** – including new action to help people stop smoking, overcome alcoholism, and avoid Type 2 diabetes, with a particular focus on communities and groups of people most affected by these problems.

### **Public Health England**

2.9 The Public Health England Strategy 2020 – 2025 sets out the foremost priorities which PHE will focus on for the next five years to both protect people and help people to live longer in good health.

2.10 Some key priorities of the strategy, relate to promoting a healthier nation, including:

- Take steps towards creating a smoke-free society by 2030.

- Help make the healthy choice the easy choice to improve diets and reduce rates of childhood obesity.
- Develop and share advice on how best to reduce air pollution levels and people's exposure to polluted air.
- Promote good mental health and contribute to the prevention of mental illness.

### **The Future of Public Leisure Provision**

- 2.11 This report produced by Sport England, was a response to the challenges being faced by the public leisure sector. It took the restrictions of the coronavirus pandemic and people's changing exercise habits as a result, and the challenges seen in the rising cost of energy, chemical shortages, and staff retention to outline a model enabling the sector to create a more sustainable future.
- 2.12 The approach saw a transitional leisure service transition to being focused on active wellbeing with closer relationship between health and leisure, built on social prescribing, co-location of services and the delivery of preventative activity opportunities – providing users with convenient places and ways to be active, located in close proximity to other health and social care services and facilities.
- 2.13 The new vision, based on the concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods, is built around four inter-related foundations and commitments that come together to support seven broad themes.
- 2.14 Four inter-related foundations of the new vision:
- Alignment of leisure, physical, mental health, and social care
  - Place-based provision.
  - Low carbon provision
  - Strong sector leadership
- 2.15 Seven broad themes of the vision:
- High-quality data and insight
  - Environmental sustainability
  - Strengthening the connection to health
  - Digital transformation
  - Coordination and partnerships
  - Leadership and workforce development
  - Championing equality, diversity, and inclusion
- 2.16 The so called 'Pivot to Wellness' provides a common agenda, which helps the sector move forward in a sustainable way with a service that meets the needs of modern users. At its core is mutual accountability across partners that provide the culture required to safeguard the future of public leisure and provide it with a renewed sense of purpose.

## Opening School Sports Facilities

- 2.17 The UK governments School Sport and Activity Action plan (2019) represented a joint commitment from the Department for Education (DfE), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), and Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) to *‘ongoing collaboration at national level to ensure that sport and physical activity are an integral part of both the school day and after-school activities, so that all children have the opportunity to take part in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day’*.
- 2.18 Recognising the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on children’s health, the Department of Education’s three-year Opening School Facilities Fund to March 2025, aims to help schools to open their facilities outside of the school day in areas where it is most needed.
- 2.19 In February 2021, £10.1m of government funding was announced to help schools deliver extra-curricular activities and open their facilities outside of the school day during evenings, weekends and school holidays to the public following the lifting of the threat from coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- 2.20 The initiative including specific guidance from Sport England, including online resources and toolkits to help open up and retain school sites for community use.
- 2.21 Through recent investment, Wokingham has prioritised community use of sports facilities in schools and colleges, alongside existing and new community sports provision. Community Use Agreements have been maintained at school sites by ensuring that, unlike many other local authorities, the arrangements for managing school-based sports facilities in Wokingham remain part of the leisure management contract and not under the direction of the schools themselves. This has ensured that maximum community benefit is being realised from the level of Council investment made in school facilities.

## Local Strategies

### ***Wokingham Borough Council Plan 2020 - 2024***

- 2.22 The council plan identifies the council’s ambitions focused on being the best they can be and the steps that will be taken to nurture and develop colleagues across their organisation to realise these ambitions within the budget available.
- 2.23 The vision expressed in this plan has seven key objectives. We have highlighted the relevant ones for this report:
- **Providing Safe and Strong Communities:** Wokingham Borough has a growing population with many thriving communities but with an increasing proportion of residents with long term health conditions, such as dementia, and people with learning disabilities or difficulties, it is important to address and manage demand for long term care and maintain high quality services.
  - **Enriching Lives:** We are tackling health and well-being in Wokingham Borough, with a particular focus on emotional health and well-being, early intervention, and prevention. Broad measures of well-being mask pockets of deprivation, health, and economic need and those living in poverty. Over the last couple of years there has been an increase in the number of children, young people and adults seeking support for mental and emotional well-being support.
- 2.24 The plan also sets out the values of the council:

- Customer Focused: Put ourselves in our customers shoes and listen, to deliver services we would like to receive.
- One Team: Work jointly with our residents, colleagues, councillors, and partners, across any boundaries, to ensure efficient, effective delivery on behalf of our communities.
- Taking Ownership: Taking responsibility for issues and address them with actions we see through to resolution. Be accountable for our service delivery in the context of our community wellbeing and Council objectives.
- Being Ambitious: Aiming for excellence in the outcomes we pursue and the way we do things. Being forward-thinking, innovative, entrepreneurial, and accepting risks where possible to do so.

### ***Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Development Plan 2010 – 2026***

- 2.25 The Core Strategy sets out the vision for how the borough will develop in the period to 2026 and how the council aims to protect and enhance the good quality of life enjoyed in the borough.
- 2.26 The council emphasises the importance of making the borough a great place to live for its residents and being able to provide a good quality of life for them. They also recognise the crucial role of sport, leisure, and cultural facilities, in addition to country parks and open spaces, to achieve this objective.
- 2.27 The strategy also sets out 21 Core Strategy Policies. We have extracted the relevant ones to this report:
- CP1 Sustainable Development:
    - Development within the borough should enhance the overall sustainability of the area through minimising impact on the environment, including access to facilities.
  - CP2 Inclusive Communities
    - In order to achieve sustainable development, it is important that the needs of all sections of the population are met through development. All proposals should take into account relevant equality and diversity legislation.
  - CP4 Infrastructure Requirements
    - The Council and the community is concerned that all necessary improvements to infrastructure are identified when development is allowed.

### ***Wokingham Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018 – 2021***

- 2.28 The joint health and wellbeing strategy's key priorities revolve around narrowing the health inequalities gap, creating physically active communities, and reducing isolation.
- 2.29 These priorities have specific aims:
- Priority 1: Creating Physically Active Communities - To get people of all ages and abilities more physically active by:
    - Getting more people out and using green and blue spaces

- Promoting more active travel
- Encouraging more children to get at least one hour of physical activity every day.
- Priority 2: Reducing Social Isolation - To reduce social isolation and loneliness in:
  - Older people
  - People with mental illness
  - Carers
- Priority 3: Narrowing the Health Inequalities Gap - To close the gap between what a child who is born today in the most deprived areas and those in the least deprived areas will experience over their life time.

### **Wokingham Borough Leisure Strategy 2020 – 2025**

2.30 The Wokingham Borough Leisure Strategy forms part of the overarching Community Vision established for the borough in 2020. It emphasises the importance of physical activity and sports in supporting the well-being of the Borough’s people and communities and is explicitly recognised in the Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2021.

2.31 The strategy highlights a number of recent major investments including:

- New leisure facilities open at Arborfield and Ryeish Green.
- New and enhanced facilities completed at Bulmershe Leisure Centre and underway at Carnival Pool.
- Full-size 3G football pitch at Emmbrook School with community access.
- A network of ‘Greenways’ linking new housing developments to other amenities to provide.
- attractive walking and cycling routes.
- Cantley Park Enhancement – April 2020.
- New 3G pitch Arborfield Primary School – December 2020.
- Extended car parking and toilet facilities at California Country Park – Completed 2020.
- New Activity Centre building at Dinton Pastures Country Park – Completion Spring 2021.
- New outdoor play facilities at California Country Park – Completion Spring 2021.

2.32 The vision stated in the strategy reads:

*“Wokingham Borough is renowned as one of the most ‘active’ and best places to live in the whole of the UK. A place where everyone can easily access high quality indoor and outdoor spaces for active leisure pursuits and do so in increasing numbers; enhancing health and wellbeing across all our communities and particularly benefiting the more vulnerable.”*

2.33 The strategy focuses on four key aims:

- Fostering wellbeing through universal access to high quality leisure opportunities.
- Reducing levels of inactivity and, in particular, tackling increasing levels of excess weight and obesity.
- Targeted provision to reduce social isolation and those facing additional barriers to participation.
- Commercialisation to ensure that high quality facilities remain affordable and sustainable into the future whilst protecting provision for the more vulnerable.

2.34 The strategy also sets out a number of key priorities:

- Promoting Health and wellbeing
- Raising participation and reducing levels of inactivity
- Maintain and Extend Accessibility to Indoor Leisure facilities.
- Maintain and Extend Accessibility to Outdoor Spaces
- Fostering Enjoyment and Sporting Excellence
- Raising Levels of Active Travel
- Ensure Financial Sustainability

***Wokingham Borough Council Open Space, Sport & Recreation Facilities Strategy 2012***

- 2.35 The council open space, sport & recreation facilities strategy focuses on reporting the findings of the extensive research, consultation, site assessments, data analysis and GIS mapping that underpins the study.
- 2.36 The report provides an audit based assessment of both quantitative and qualitative open space, sport, and recreation facilities.

### Summary - What does this mean for Wokingham?

The strategic review has found strong synergies, related to physical activity, between national and regional strategies and a wide cross-section of Wokingham policies in the following key areas:

- planning.
- transport.
- health and social care.
- economic development.
- children and young people.
- and the environment.

These policies are aligned with and integral to the overarching strategy of the Council Plan and the Wokingham Borough Leisure Strategy. This alignment provides strong evidence of a commitment to increase physical activity at a population level and evidences a coherent narrative supporting physical activity, sport, and leisure.

This is supported by clear evidence of ongoing investment in sports and leisure provision in line with the recommendations set out in the previous Indoor Built Facility Strategy.

## 3. Local Context

### Introduction

- 3.1 This section details information and data from several sources to establish user demographics within Norwich (and its surrounding catchment area), including wider demographic analysis for the city.
- 3.2 Several sources have been used throughout, including:
- Census 2021 Data (and 2011 Census where appropriate).
  - Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD).
  - Sport England Active Lives Survey.
  - Sport England Local Insights Tool.
  - Public Health England Local Health Profile.

### Demographics in Wokingham

#### Population

- 3.3 Data from the most recent 2021 Census shows Wokingham to have a current population of 177,500, an increase of 15% from the 2011 Census estimate of 154,400.
- 3.4 The age profile of the Unitary Authority of Wokingham is shown in Table 3.1 below. The 2021 Census data is used, with an age group breakdown alongside regional and national comparisons.

**Table 3.1 – Wokingham Population by Age Groups**

Age Group (years)	Wokingham	Wokingham (%)	South East (%)	England (%)
Under 14	34,613	19.5%	17.4%	17.3%
15-24	18,283	10.3%	11.2%	11.7%
25-34	20,058	11.3%	12.4%	13.6%
35-44	26,270	14.8%	13.1%	13%
45-54	25,915	14.6%	13.7%	13.3%
55-64	21,655	12.2%	12.7%	12.5%
65-74	15,798	8.9%	10.2%	9.9%
75+	14,555	8.2%	9.3%	8.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>177,500</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>



- 3.5 The table above shows a population that is strongly middle age in comparison to the South East region and England.
- 3.6 The Under 14 group and the 35-54 age groups have a higher proportion than the regional and national averaged.
- 3.7 The rest of the age groups in Wokingham have a lower proportion than in the South East and England.

#### **Population Growth by 2040**

- 3.8 The ORS Sub Area population projections for Wokingham reveal how the population is expected to grow until 2042/43.
- 3.9 Table 3.3 details how the age profiles are estimated to change over time.

**Table 3.2 – Wokingham Population Age Profile Evolution in 2032/33 and 2040**

Age Group	Wokingham 2021 (%)	Wokingham 2021 (%)	Wokingham 2029/30	Wokingham 2029/30 (%)	Wokingham 2039/40	Wokingham 2039/40 (%)
Under 14	34,613	19.5%	32,284	17.6%	32,208	17.0%
15-24	18,283	10.3%	20,675	11.3%	19,110	10.1%
25-34	20,058	11.3%	17,455	9.5%	19,632	10.4%
35-44	26,270	14.8%	24,139	13.2%	22,755	12.0%
45-54	25,915	14.6%	26,478	14.4%	25,706	13.6%
55-64	21,655	12.2%	23,747	13.0%	24,237	12.8%
65-74	15,798	8.9%	19,029	10.4%	20,996	11.1%
75+	14,555	8.2%	19,452	10.6%	24,553	13.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>177,145</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>183,259</b> <b>(+3.5%)</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>189,197</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(+3.2%)</b>

- 3.10 The table above shows an ageing population as we see most age groups from 0 – 54 decreasing in the coming decades and the 65+ age group increasing.
- 3.11 2042/43 sees a surge in the 25-34 age group when compared to the 2032/33 estimates.
- 3.12 Tables 3.4 and 3.5 detail the growth of the population in each of the recognised sub areas starting with the 2021 Census population data and comparing with the 2032/33 and 2042/43 estimates.

**Table 3.3 – ORS Population Estimates 2032/33 for each Sub Area**

Age Group	Wokingham 2032/33 (%)	Northern Sub-Area	Urban Western Sub-Area	Wokingham Town Sub-Area	Southern Sub-Area
Under 14	17.2%	14.3%	18.0%	18.6%	17.4%
15-24	11.1%	8.6%	12.3%	10.3%	11.4%
25-34	9.6%	8.6%	9.5%	9.8%	9.7%
35-44	12.9%	11.7%	13.7%	13.5%	12.4%
45-54	14.4%	14.7%	14.5%	14.7%	13.9%
55-64	12.9%	15.0%	12.5%	12.3%	13.5%
65-74	10.8%	12.8%	9.8%	9.6%	11.1%

Age Group	Wokingham 2032/33 (%)	Northern Sub-Area	Urban Western Sub-Area	Wokingham Town Sub-Area	Southern Sub-Area
75+	11.2%	14.3%	9.5%	11.2%	10.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3.4 – ORS Population Estimates 2042/43 for each Sub Area

Age Group	Wokingham 2042/43 (%)	Northern Sub-Area	Urban Western Sub-Area	Wokingham Town Sub-Area	Southern Sub-Area
Under 14	17.2%	13.7%	16.9%	18.3%	17.3%
15-24	9.8%	5.9%	11.6%	9.5%	9.7%
25-34	10.4%	8.9%	10.3%	10.7%	10.8%
35-44	12.0%	11.4%	12.1%	12.5%	11.7%
45-54	13.3%	13.7%	13.8%	13.9%	12.9%
55-64	12.7%	14.0%	12.8%	12.4%	12.8%
65-74	11.0%	14.1%	10.6%	10.2%	11.6%
75+	13.7%	18.3%	11.9%	12.5%	13.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

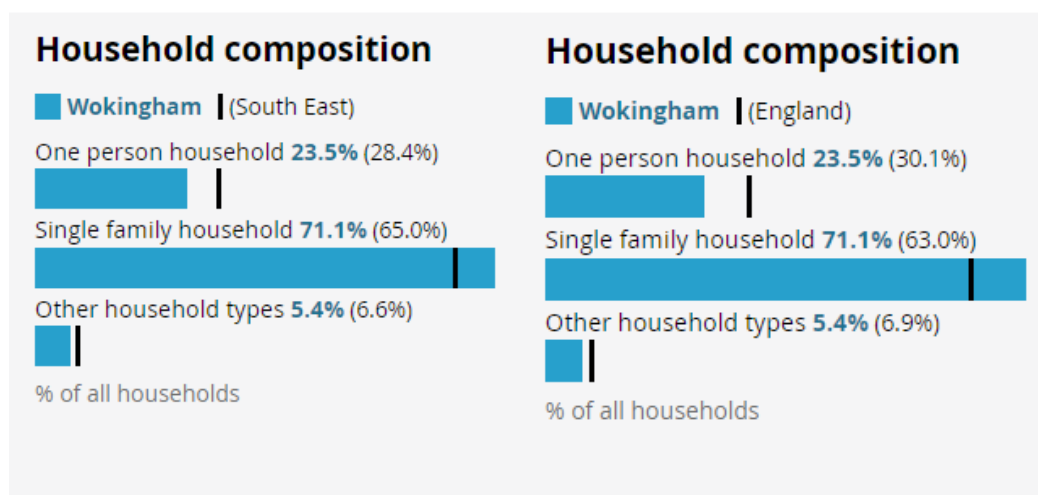
### Student Population

- 3.13 There are 21.4% of people aged 5 years and over that are in full time education. This is higher than the South East region average (20.0%) and the national average (20.4%).

### Household Composition and Tenure

- 3.14 The 2021 Census provides data on the household composition of all households at the time of the census. Figure 3.1 provides a breakdown of the household composition in Wokingham with regional and national comparisons.

Figure 3.1 – Household Composition in Wokingham



- 3.15 The figure above shows Wokingham to have a significantly lower proportion of one person households as compared to the South East and England.

3.16 Conversely, there is a significantly higher proportion of single family households than both.

3.17 Wokingham also has a lower proportion of **other household types**.

### Population Growth through Housing

3.18 Known housing growth has been factored into the population growth estimates. This has been based upon calculations made by Opinion Research Services (ORS), who are the consultants working with Wokingham Borough Council on their Housing Needs Assessment and align with those used in the latest Playing Pitch Strategy.

3.19 Details of the housing forecasts are set out in the table below.

**Table 3.5 - Population Growth Forecast through Housing**

Area	Dwellings	Assumed Occupancy	Estimate Population	Assumed % Adult (16-64)	Additional Adult Population
Arborfield SDL	140	2.4	336	60%	202
South of M4 (Shinfield) SDL	371	2.4	890	60%	534
North Wokingham	283	2.4	679	60%	407
South Wokingham	906	2.4	2,174	60%	1,304
Policy H2 Allocations	1,822	2.4	4,372	60%	2,623
Hall Farm	4,500	2.4	10,800	60%	6,480
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,022</b>		<b>19,251</b>		<b>11,550</b>

3.20 Based on a person per dwelling factor of 2.4, population will increase by a further 19,251 persons. Based on a general assumption that 60% of all new dwellers will be adults between the ages of 16-64, we estimate a total of 11,550 more adults living in Wokingham by the end of the plan period.

### *Ethnicity and Religion*

3.21 According to the 2021 Census, Wokingham's population is significantly more ethnically diverse than the South East but less than England with 79.9% of the population in Wokingham classified as White compared to 86.3% in the South East and 81% in England.

3.22 There is also a significant proportion of Asian/Asian British residents with 12.9% of the population in Wokingham which is almost twice as much as in the South East (7.0%) and significantly more than in England as well (9.6%). People from a Black ethnic background represent 2.4% (2.4% in the South East and 4.2% in England), whilst mixed ethnic groups total 3.1% (2.8% and 3% in the South East and England respectively).

3.23 Christianity is the most popular religion in Wokingham (44.7%), although this is lower than the South East (46.5%) and England (46.3%). Around a third of the population, 36.9%, practice no religion. This is also significantly lower than the South East average (40.2%) but in line with the national average (36.7%).

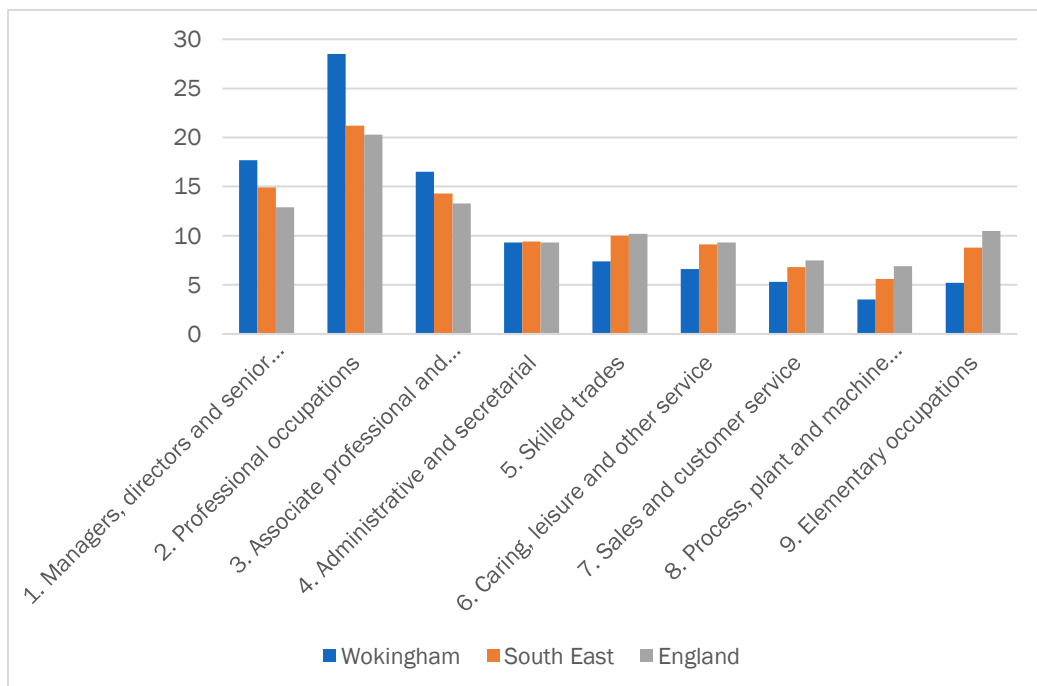
## Economy

- 3.24 According to the 2021 Census, 63.5% of people aged 16 years and over are economically active in Wokingham. This is higher than the South East (59.2%) and significantly higher than the national average (57.4%).
- 3.25 The unemployment rate is currently 2.7%, slightly lower than the 3.0% rate in the South East and lower than the 3.5% rate in England. Additionally, 33.8% of the population are economically inactive. This is significantly lower than the South East average (37.8%) and the national average (39.1%).

## Occupation

- 3.26 The 2021 Census provides data on the occupation types of all residents aged 16 and over that were in employment at the time of the census. Figure 3.2 provides a breakdown of occupation types. Comparisons are also provided with the South East and national data.

Figure 3.2 – Wokingham Population by Occupation



- 3.27 As show in the graph, more than half of the residents in Wokingham (62.7%) are employed in type 1, 2 and 3 occupations. This is significantly higher than the South East average (50.4%) and the England average (46.5%).
- 3.28 Conversely, type 4, 5 and 6 occupations are less common in Wokingham (23.3%) than in the South East (28.5%) and the country (28.8%).
- 3.29 This trend is repeated for type 7, 8 and 9 occupations as well, with Wokingham's average (14.0%) being higher than the South East's (21.2%) and England's (24.9%).
- 3.30 The high proportion of residents engaged in managerial, professional and semi-professional occupations provides some indication of the levels of disposable income that may be available to spend on sport and leisure provision in the area.

### ***Car or Van Ownership***

- 3.31 According to the 2021 Census, only 9.0% of households have no cars or vans. This is significantly lower than the South East average with 16.9% of households having no cars or vans and is more than two and a half times lower than the England average (23.5%).
- 3.32 This suggests that residents in Wokingham are likely to have access to a car which would facilitate travelling longer distances for sport and leisure activities than if they relied on public transport or walking.

### ***Crime***

- 3.33 The overall crime rate in Wokingham from December 2022 to November 2023 was 51.5 crimes per 1,000 persons. This compares very positively to the South East's rate of 78.8 crimes per 1,000 persons and England's rate of 82.3 crimes per 1,000 persons.
- 3.34 The most common crime in Wokingham is violence and sexual offences, accounting for 20.4 crimes per 1,000 persons. This is significantly lower than the South East average (33.7 per 1,000 persons) and the England average (33.2 per 1,000 persons). Anti-social behaviour is the second most common crime and is also significantly lower at 11.6 per 1,000 persons, compared to the South East and England (33.7 and 38.3 per 1,000 persons respectively).

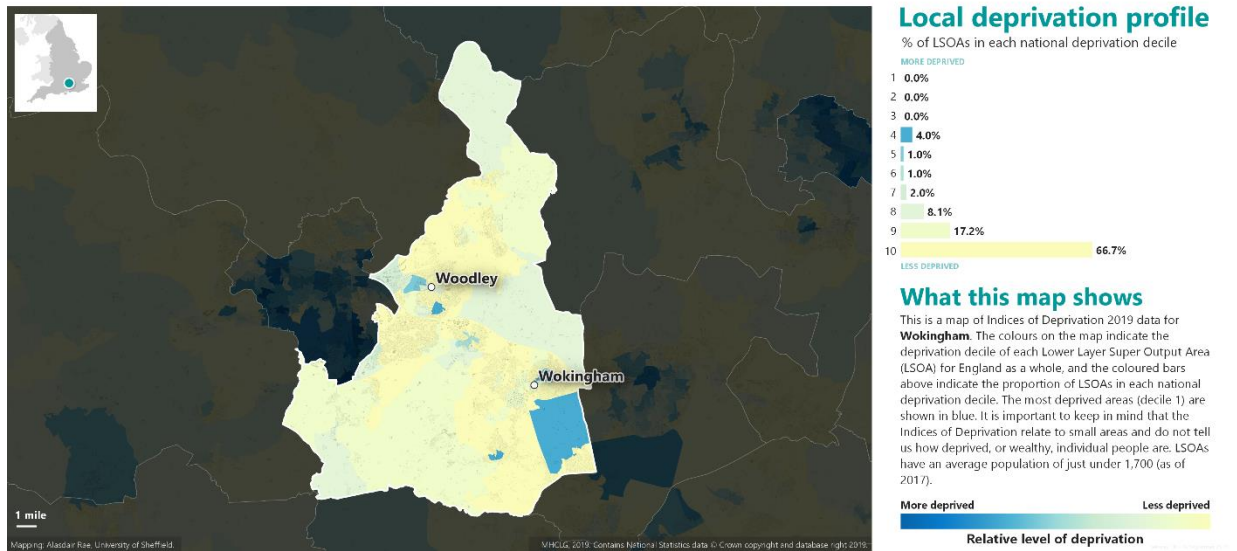
### ***Deprivation***

- 3.35 We have sought to analyse the deprivation levels in Wokingham based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD 2019) data. IMD 2019 consists of seven domains of deprivation, each of which contain several individual measures or indicators.
- 3.36 Areas are grouped into small groups, LSOA's (Lower Super Output Areas) or neighbourhoods of which there are 32,844 in England, each of which have an average population of just under 1,700. All neighbourhoods are then grouped into ten equal sized groups, 'deciles', the 10% of neighbourhoods with the highest level of deprivation (as measured in the IMD) are grouped into decile 1, and so on with 10% of neighbourhoods with the lowest levels of deprivation grouped in decile 10.

Map 3.1 – Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 - Wokingham

# English Indices of Deprivation 2019

## WOKINGHAM



- 3.37 Wokingham is ranked 316<sup>th</sup> least deprived out of all 317 local authorities in 2015, maintaining that ranking in 2019. The colours on the map indicate the deprivation decile of LSOA for England as a whole, and the coloured bars above indicate the proportion of Wokingham’s LSOAs in each national deprivation decile. The most deprived areas (decile 1) are shown in dark blue.
- 3.38 Out of the 10 deciles, Wokingham has the most LSOAs (66.7%) within decile 10, the top 10% least deprived in the country. In addition, there is a further 17.2% within decile 9, the top 20% least deprived.
- 3.39 Wokingham has very low levels of deprivation with a small area within decile 4, amongst the top 40% most deprived in the country, in the south east of the territory.

### Health

- 3.40 The 2021 Census shows that 88.2% of the Wokingham population consider themselves to be in ‘very good’ or ‘good’ health. This is higher than the South East, at 84.0% and significantly higher than the national average of 82.2%.
- 3.41 In addition, only 2.7% percent of residents in Wokingham consider themselves to be in ‘very bad’ or ‘bad’ health. This is lower to the South East average (4.2%) and almost half of the national average at 5.2%.

### Public Health England Local Health Profile

- 3.42 We have reviewed the latest Health Profile for Wokingham for the 2021 - 2022 period and extracted the relevant data which is set out in the table below.

**Table 3.6 – Public Health England Local Health Profile for Wokingham**

Indicator	Wokingham	South East	England
Under 75 mortality rate (deaths per 100,000)	241.1	298.3	342.3
Smoking prevalence in Adults	4.6%	11.5%	12.7%
Adult Obesity	61.4%	62.7%	63.8%
Child Obesity (year 6)	14.4%	19.4%	22.7%
Children living in low-income families	5.5%	10.8%	15.3%
Male life expectancy at birth (Yrs)	82.7	80.6	79.3
Female life expectancy at birth (Yrs)	85.1	84.1	83.2

- 3.43 The health of people in Wokingham compares very favourably when looking at regional and national figures. Men live, on average, two years more than in the region and three years more than in England. Comparatively, women live one year more than in the South East and two years more than in England.
- 3.44 The Under 75 mortality rate is also significantly lower in Wokingham (241.1) than in the South East (298.3) and England (342.3). Similarly, there is a significantly lower proportion of children living in low-income families (5.5%) than in the region (10.8%) and England (15.3%).
- 3.45 Furthermore, Wokingham can boast of lower rates of obesity in adults (61.4%) compared to the rates of 62.7% and 63.8% rates in the region and England, respectively.

***Sport England Active Lives Data***

- 3.46 Sport England calculate a range of different data sets to measure participation in sport and physical activity. Previously, Sport England utilised the Active People Survey to measure activity levels, but this was focused on traditional sport and physical activities.
- 3.47 In 2016/17, they released the Active Lives Survey, in line with the new Sport England strategy, and the data now analyses non-traditional activities such as gardening, walking, and dancing as well as traditional sport and physical activity methods.
- 3.48 The latest Active Lives survey was last published for the November 2021 to November 2022 data (2021/22) and the data is below in Table 3.6.

**Table 3.6 – Activity Levels in Wokingham**

Indicator	Wokingham	South East	England
Inactive – less than 1 x 30 minutes of physical activity per week	21.4%	22.1%	25.8%
Fairly Active – 30 to 149 minutes per week	11.5%	11.4%	11.1%
Active – Over 150 minutes per week	67.1%	66.5%	63.1%

- 3.49 The results show Wokingham's population to be more active than the average, with 67.1% of the population participating in physical activity for more than 150 minutes per week. This is above both the South East (66.5%) and England (63.1%) averages.
- 3.50 Furthermore, 11.5% of the population in Wokingham participates in 30 to 149 minutes of activity per week and are classed as 'fairly active'. This is slightly higher than both the South East and England averages.
- 3.51 Participation numbers in Wokingham are very elevated and inactivity levels are significantly lower than the average. Whilst this is very positive, there is always scope for improvement and to see how to encourage 'inactive' and 'fairly active' individuals to extend their time taking part in physical activity.



## Summary of Wokingham Demographic Analysis

<p>The population is, on average, very middle age when compared to the South East and England. By 2043, Wokingham's population is set to increase by 8%.</p>	<p>Wokingham is ethnically diverse, 79.9% of people are White and 12.9% of people are Asian. This is likely to have some impact on participation levels.</p>	<p>Economic activity in Wokingham is higher than in the South East and England. Additionally, unemployment is very low. Residents are likely to have more disposable income, on average, to spend on sport and leisure.</p>
<p>A very small proportion of households have no access to a car or a van. Most residents will face little issues in regards to transport and accessibility to sport and leisure facilities.</p>	<p>Wokingham ranked 316<sup>th</sup> most deprived out of all 317 local authorities in 2019.</p>	<p>The crime rate in Wokingham is significantly lower than the regional and national averages.</p>
<p>The highest paid occupations, types 1, 2 and 3 are significantly higher than the regional and national averages. The lowest paid occupations, types 7, 8 and 9 are the opposite.</p>	<p>The number of people in 'good' or 'very good' health in Wokingham compares very favourably with the South East and England. People in 'bad' or 'very bad' health is significantly lower than both.</p>	<p>Levels of physical activity in Wokingham are above average.</p>

## 4. Sports Halls

### Introduction

- 4.1 The council has engaged with Sport England to create a Facility Planning Model for the sports halls in Wokingham. Two runs were commissioned as follows:
- Run 1 – a baseline assessment of provision in 2023; and
  - Run 2 – a forward assessment of demand for sports halls and its distribution, based on the projected changes in population between 2023 and 2040, and includes the modelled exclusion of St Crispin’s Leisure Centre for community use.
- 4.2 The key findings are summarised here:
- The scale of the public leisure centres and most of the educational sites means that they can cater for all sports activities and club development.
  - The sports halls are estimated to be reasonably full at peak times in both 2023 and 2040. However, the distribution of demand means that some sites are theoretically very full.
  - The public leisure centres are either modern (three opened since 2017) or are older but have been modernised. The educational sector is the largest provider, but the stock is older and there is a need for modernisation.
  - In both 2023 and 2040 there is sufficient sports hall capacity within a suitable travel time to meet 97% of Wokingham’s demand. This is despite theoretical demand increasing in 2040.
- 4.3 Full copies of the report are included in Appendix A.

## Supply

4.4 There are currently 23 sports halls in Wokingham across 16 sites. These are summarised in Table 4.1

**Table 4.1 – Supply of sports halls**

Site Name	Operation	Facility Type	Dimensions (m)	Area	Peak Hours	Total Hours	Capacity (visits)	Year Built	Year Refurbished
Arborfield Green Leisure Centre	Education (3rd party)	8-court	40 x 34.5	1380	41	79.5	2,624	2017	–
Bulmershe Leisure Centre	Public	4-court	334.55 x 20	690	46	104	1,472	2020	–
Crosfields School	Education (3rd party)	5-court	40.6 x 21.35	867	24	24	960	1999	–
Finchampstead Baptist Church Centre	Community	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	30	65	960	2010	–
Loddon Valley Leisure Centre	Public	10-court	40 x 38	1520	46	105	3,680	1987	1996
Maiden Erlegh School	Education (3rd party)	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	24.5	25.5	1,243	1996	–
		Activity	18 x 10	180	24.5	25.5			
Reading Blue Coat School	Education (3rd party)	4-court	33 x 18	594	20	20	640	2004	–
Ryeish Green Sports Hub	Public	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	46	94.5	1,472	2017	–
St Crispin's Leisure Centre (Run 1 only)	Education (3rd party)	4-court	32 x 18	576	46	108.5	1,897	1978	–
		Activity	17 x 15	255	16	26			

Site Name	Operation	Facility Type	Dimensions (m)	Area	Peak Hours	Total Hours	Capacity (visits)	Year Built	Year Refurbished
The Emmbrook School	Education (3rd party)	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	34	36	2,023	1982	-
		Activity	22 x 12	264	34	36			
The Forest School	Education (3rd party)	4-court	34.5 x 18	630	20	20	1,015	1958	-
		Activity	18 x 10	180	20	20			
The Holt School	Education (3rd party)	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	17.5	17.5	841	1984	-
		Activity	18 x 10	180	15	15			
The Piggott School	Education (3rd party)	4-court	32 x 18	576	34	49	1,726	1980	-
		Activity	18 x 10	180	34	49			
Waingels College	Education (3rd party)	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	36.5	46.5	1,852	1962	2011
		Activity	18 x 10	180	36.5	46.5			
Wokingham Leisure Centre	Public	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	46	108.5	1,472	2022	-
Woodford Park Leisure Centre	Public	5-court	45 x 18	810	45	88.5	1,800	1985	2007

### **Quality**

- 4.5 Ten sports hall sites opened before 2000 and three have been modernised, so there is an increasing need for modernisation. In 2040, the average age of all the sites is 45 years, and 34 years for the public sites. There has however been two new leisure centre's built in the last four years that contain sports halls, Bulmershe Leisure Centre in 2020 and Wokingham Leisure Centre in 2022. The oldest sports hall in Wokingham is located at the Forest School, which was built in 1958.

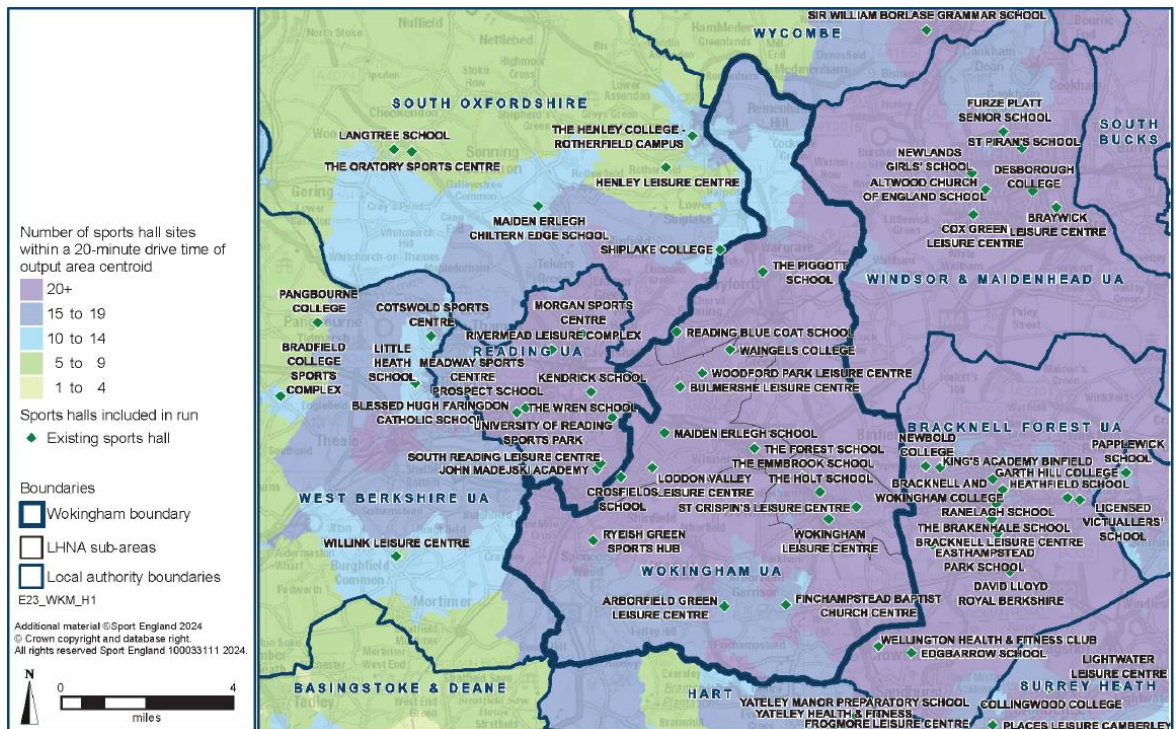
### **Quantity**

- 4.6 As shown in Table 4.1, there are currently 23 sports halls in Wokingham across 16 sites. Seven of these sites have a main hall along with an activity hall.
- 4.7 The number of sports halls will decrease by 2040 to 21 sports halls across 15 sites, as St Crispin Leisure Centre is due be close shortly.
- 4.8 The educational sector is the largest provider, with ten sites in 2023 and nine sites in 2040. This accounts for 63% of the supply in 2023, and 60% in 2040. Public leisure centres account for 30% of the supply in both 2023 and 2040, with the remaining supply of sports halls is managed by a community organisation (Finchampstead Baptist Church Centre)

### **Accessibility**

- 4.9 Only 9% of Wokingham residents don't have access to a car, which is lower than the regional average of 16% and the national average of 23%. The majority of Wokingham residents have access to 20 sports halls within a 20-minute drive time, this includes sports halls in neighbouring local authorities as shown in figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 – Sports halls within a 20-minute drive time



4.10 Over half of Wokingham’s population is within a 20-minute walk of a sports hall in 2023 and 2040. Only four of the sports halls are more than a five-minute walk of a bus stop.

### Availability

4.11 The five public leisure centres are available for between 45 hours and the maximum 46 hours in the weekly peak period. Finchampstead Baptist Church Centre is available for 30 hours in the weekly peak period. The 10 educational sites are unlikely to be available for more than 41 hours in the weekly peak period because they are not available for community use during weekday daytimes. The hours that these sites are available in the peak period varies.

4.12 The educational sports halls with the most availability are:

- St Crispin's Leisure Centre - 46 hours (closed in Run 2).
- Arborfield Green Leisure Centre - 41 hours; and
- Waingels College - 37 hours

4.13 The educational sports halls with the least availability are:

- The Holt School - 18 hours.
- Reading Blue Coat School - 20 hours; and
- The Forest School - 20 hours.

## Demand

- 4.14 Demand for sports halls in Wokingham is less than the available supply in both 2023 and 2040. This is shown in Table 4.2

**Table 4.2 – Sports hall demand**

Demand	Run 1 (2023)	Run 2 (2040)
Population	178,585	189,197
Visits demanded in weekly peak period	14,902	15,192
Demand in courts with comfort factor included	50.6	51.6
% of demand in the 10% most deprived LSOAs nationally	0%	0%

- 4.15 There is currently demand for 50.6 courts in Wokingham, which includes a comfort factor. There are currently 76 courts available across all of the sites, excluding the activity halls, which means demand can sufficiently be catered for. Although there is a 6% increase in the population up to 2040, this increase in demand doesn't have a significant impact on demand, even if you factor in the loss of the four courts at St Crispin Leisure Centre.
- 4.16 The smaller increase in demand compared with population growth is because of the ageing of the population in Wokingham between 2023 and 2040. There will be fewer residents in the age bands with the highest sports hall participation (0-15 year olds and 25-39 year olds) in 2040 than in 2023.
- 4.17 Wokingham is the only local authority in the area with a projected increase in demand for sports halls. Demand in all of its neighbouring local authorities is forecast to remain unchanged up to 2040 or decrease, with the largest decrease is forecast in West Berkshire (6%).
- 4.18 Wokingham's supply of sports halls is currently meeting 97% of satisfied demand at peak times. This remains unaffected up to 2040.

## NGB Consultation

- 4.19 Several NGBs were consulted with as part of the assessment to understand more about their priorities locally and any issues they may encounter regarding accessing sports halls for their respective sports. A summary for each sport has been provided below.

### Volleyball

- 4.20 Wokingham is a Priority Area for volleyball as it one of the most popular areas of England for the sport.
- 4.21 Clubs have reported some issue with being able to access sport halls for training and matches. The clubs are growing, and some have waiting lists. Their activity is limited by availability for volleyball complaint venues.

## Badminton

- 4.22 Wokingham is a priority area for the sports. With a focus on increasing the number of people playing across the area. Court costs are perceived as being high in Wokingham for the local area.

## Netball

- 4.23 Wokingham is a priority area for Netball with four clubs and three leagues based in the Borough, as well as very popular Back to Netball sessions and social leagues. There are currently 848 residents taking part in netball in Wokingham.
- 4.24 Developing a Walking Netball programme is a priority in Wokingham but a suitable venue with availability can't be found at present.
- 4.25 Facilities are fairly well located however access to those facilities at times required can be difficult. When facilities are accessible, costs have been prohibitive. Access at schools can be difficult.

There are opportunities to grow the existing Back to Netball programme in Wokingham, develop a Walking Netball programme and increase junior netball participation if facilities are available and costs aren't prohibitive.

### Section 4: Assessment of Need and Evidence Base – Sports Halls.

#### Interpretation of findings: What does this mean for Wokingham?

- there are currently 23 sports halls in Wokingham across 16 sites. Seven of these sites have a main hall along with an activity hall. The number of sports halls will decrease by 2024 to 21 sports halls across 15 sites, as St Crispin Leisure Centre is due to close shortly.
- The existing supply of sports halls in Wokingham is sufficient to meet current and future demand, up to 2040, even with a 6% increase in the population forecast and the closure of St Crispin's Leisure Centre.
- The majority of Wokingham residents have access to 20 sports halls within a 20-minute drive time, this includes sports halls in neighbouring local authorities.
- The five public leisure centres are available for between 45 hours and the maximum 46 hours in the weekly peak period. Finchampstead Baptist Church Centre is available for 30 hours in the weekly peak period. The 10 educational sites are unlikely to be available for more than 41 hours in the weekly peak period because they are not available for community use during weekday daytimes.
- There is currently demand for 50.6 courts in Wokingham, which includes a comfort factor. There are currently 76 courts available across all of the sites, excluding the activity halls, which means demand can sufficiently be catered for.
- Despite there being sufficient demand identified for sports halls in Wokingham, consultation with some NGBs has identified issues with locals clubs being able to access sports halls to programme training and matches. The cost of hiring facilities has also been cited as a potential barrier for growing participation. The Council may wish to continue to monitor sports hall programmes and price to ensure they continue to provide opportunities and access to all sections of the community.



# 5. Swimming Pools

## Introduction

- 5.1 The council has engaged with Sport England to create a Facility Planning Model for the sports halls in Wokingham. Two runs were commissioned as follows:
- Run 1 – a baseline assessment of provision in 2023; and
  - Run 2 – a forward assessment of demand for swimming pools and its distribution, based on the projected changes in population between 2023 and 2040.
- 5.2 The key findings are summarised here:
- The current and future demand for swimming pools in Wokingham can be met by the available supply. There is no need to increase swimming pool provision.
  - Demand for swimming pools increases between 2023 and 2034. This increase can be accommodated within the existing supply.
  - A very high level of the demand for swimming pools is met in both years, with the majority retained within the Borough. Unmet demand is low, the majority of which is a result of residents being located too far from a facility. There is no unmet demand due to a lack of capacity.
  - The distribution of demand and the draw of the public leisure centres means that Bulmershe Leisure Centre and Wokingham Leisure Centre are estimated to be uncomfortably full at peak times (more than 70% of capacity used) in both years.

## Supply

- 5.3 There are currently 14 swimming pools across 10 sites in Wokingham, with a range of providers, this includes three public leisure centres, four commercial sites and three educational sites. this equates to 2,929 sqm. When scaled against the amount available for community use during the weekly peak period, this reduces to 2,491 sqm.
- 5.4 There are also 21 pools that have been excluded from the assessment based on either being for private use, too small, closed or there being a lack of information, particularly relating to hours of use available. Details of these sites can be found in the FPM report provided in Appendix B
- 5.5 A summary of swimming pool supply in Wokingham is provided in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1 – Supply of swimming pools**

Site	Operation	Facility Type	Dimension (m)	Area (sqm)	Peak Hours	Total Hours	Capacity (visits)	Year Built	Year Refurbished
Bulmershe Leisure Centre	Public	6-lane	25 x 13	325	52.5	104	3,640	2020	–
		Learner	13 x 7	91	52.5	104			
Castle Royle Golf and Country Club	Commercial	4-lane	20 x 10	200	52.5	104.5	1,750	1999	2012
Crosfields School	Educational	4-lane	25 x 10	250	24	24	1,000	2012	–
David Lloyd Club (Reading)	Commercial	4-lane	25 x 10	250	52.5	107.5	2,188	1995	2007
Loddon Valley Leisure Centre	Public	6-lane	25 x 15	375	52.5	108	4,316	2000	2001
		Learner	15 x 8.5	128	48.5	91.5			
Nuffield Health (Reading)	Commercial	4-lane	20 x 8	160	52.5	101.5	1,400	2004	2014
Nuffield Health (Wokingham)	Commercial	4-lane	19 x 9	171	52.5	99.5	2,266	2003	–
		Learner	11 x 8	88	52.5	99.5			
Reddam House	Educational	4-lane	25 x 9	225	26	44	975	1979	2006
The Forest School	Educational	4-lane	25 x 10	250	15	20	625	1958	2011
Wokingham Leisure Centre	Public	6-lane	25 x 13	325	52.5	108.5	3,640	2022	–

- 5.6 Wokingham Borough Council granted permission for Reddam House to provide a replacement swimming pool on the same site.

**Quality**

- 5.7 In 2023, the average age of the public swimming pool sites is nine years, this increases to 26 years by 2040. The average age of all sites is 24 years, this increase to 41 years by 2040. There are two new leisure centres that have been built in the last four years that provide swimming pools, Bulmershe Leisure Centre, built in 2020 and Wokingham Leisure Centre built in 2022. There are only two swimming pool that haven't been built or refurbished in the last 20 years, those are pools located at Loddon Valley Leisure Centre and Nuffield Health (Wokingham).

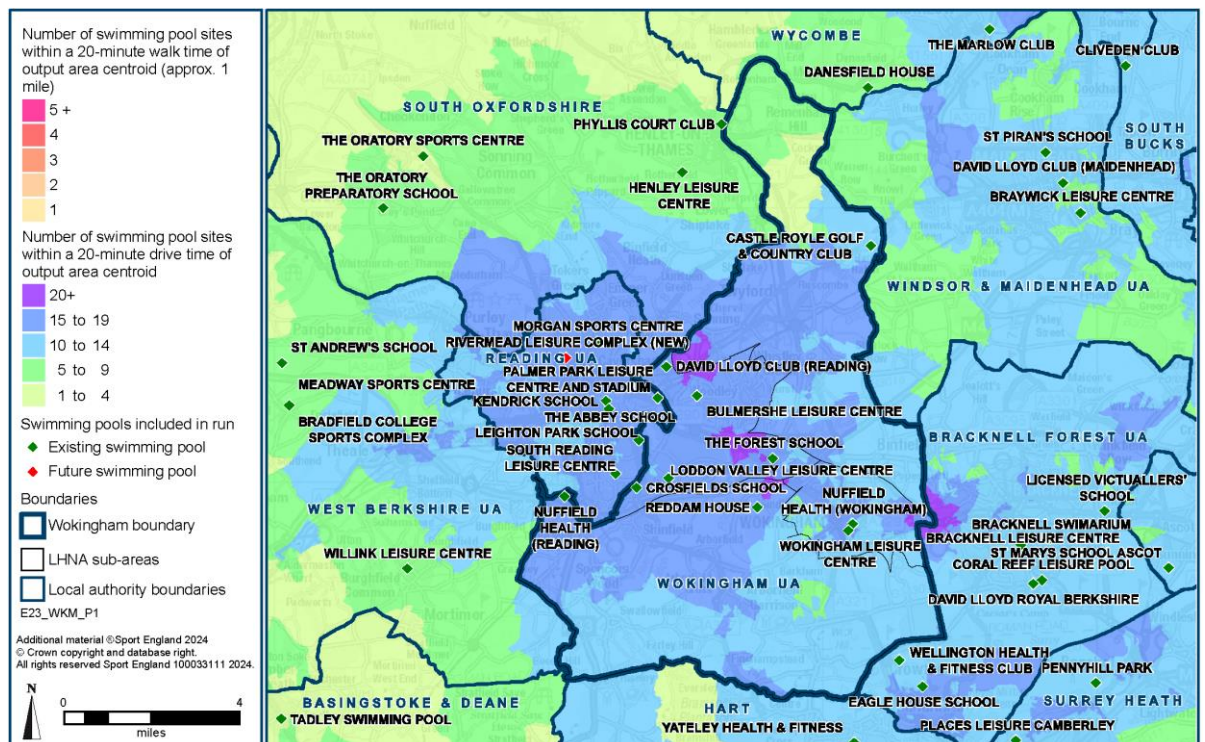
**Quantity**

- 5.8 As shown in Table 5.1, there are currently 14 swimming pools across 10 sites in Wokingham.

**Accessibility**

- 5.9 As previously noted, car access in Wokingham is very high, with only 9% of residents that don't have access to a car.
- 5.10 In both 2023 and 2040, all residents have access to at least four swimming pool sites within a 20-minute drive (shown in Figure 5.1).
- 5.11 Residents in most of the Borough can drive to between ten and 19 sites (light blue and dark blue areas in Figure 5.1). Access is best at more than 20 sites in small areas in the centre, northwest and east of the Borough (purple areas in Figure 5.1).

**Figure 5.1 – Swimming pools within a 20-minute drive time**



- 5.13 A third of Wokingham residents are within a 20-minute walk of a swimming pool site. All the swimming pool sites, with the exception of Reddam House, are located within a five-minute walk of a bus stop.

#### Availability

- 5.14 Seven of the ten sites are available for the maximum 52.5 hours in the weekly peak period.

#### Demand

- 5.15 There is a small increase in demand for swimming pools in Wokingham between 2023 and 2040. This is shown in Table 5.2 below.

**Table 5.2 – Swimming pool demand**

Demand	Run 1 (2023)	Run 2 (2040)
Population	178,585	189,197
Visits demanded in weekly peak period	11,901	12,096
Demand in sqm of water with comfort factor included	1,957	1,989
% of demand in the 10% most deprived LSOAs nationally	0%	0%

- 5.16 The population in Wokingham is forecast to grow by 6% up to 2040, which results in a 2% increase on demand for swimming pools. The smaller increase in demand compared with population growth is because of the ageing of the population in Wokingham between 2023 and 2040. There will be fewer residents in the age bands with the highest swimming participation (0-15 year olds and 25-39 year olds) in 2040 than in 2023. The rate and frequency of swimming participation is assumed to be unchanged between the two years.
- 5.17 Wokingham is the only local authority that has an increase in demand for swimming pools, compared to its neighbouring local authorities. All bar two show a decrease in demand, those are Bracknell Forest and Buckinghamshire.
- 5.18 Wokingham has a larger proportion of met demand than the South East regional average and the national average in 2023 and 2040. Retained demand in the weekly peak period increases from 8,794 visits in 2023 to 8,991 in 2040. This equates to 76% of the Borough's satisfied demand in both years. In 2023 and 2040, 24% of Wokingham's satisfied demand is exported to swimming pools in neighbouring local authority areas, with the majority of this demand, 66%, being exported to Reading.
- 5.19 Imported demand accounts for 29% of the used capacity of Wokingham's swimming pools in 2023, decreasing to 27% in 2040. The largest amount of imported demand comes from Reading, this account for 48% of imported demand in 2023 and 45% in 2040.
- 5.20 Unmet demand is 3% of demand in both years, which equates to 50 sqm of water in 2023 and 51 sqm in 2040. Almost all is demand that is too far from a facility. In 2023 there is no unmet demand due to lack of capacity, and in 2040 there is unmet demand of only 1 sqm of water.

## Capacity

- 5.21 Most swimming pools in Wokingham are comfortably full in 2023 and can accommodate the forecast increase in demand in 2040. However, Bulmershe Leisure Centre and Wokingham Leisure Centre are estimated to be uncomfortably full, with Wokingham Leisure Centre completely full at peak times in 2040.
- 5.22 The overall estimated used capacity of swimming pools in the weekly peak period is 57% in both 2023 and 2040. However, three swimming pool sites are uncomfortably full (over 70% of capacity used at peak times), these are Bulmershe Leisure Centre, Wokingham Leisure Centre and Crosfields School.

### Section 4: Assessment of Need and Evidence Base – Sports Halls.

#### Interpretation of findings: What does this mean for Wokingham?

- There are currently 14 swimming pools across 10 sites in Wokingham, with a range of providers, this includes three public leisure centres, four commercial sites and three educational sites. this equates to 2,929 sqm. When scaled against the amount available for community use during the weekly peak period, this reduces to 2,491 sqm.
- In 2023, the average age of the public swimming pool sites is nine years, this increases to 26 years by 2040. The average age of all sites is 24 years, this increase to 41 years by 2040. There are two new leisure centres that have been built in the last four years that provide swimming pools, Bulmershe Leisure Centre, built in 2020 and Wokingham Leisure Centre built in 2022. There are only two swimming pool that haven't been built or refurbished in the last 20 years, those are pools located at Loddon Valley Leisure Centre and Nuffield Health (Wokingham).
- A third of Wokingham residents are within a 20-minute walk of a swimming pool site. All the swimming pool sites, with the exception of Reddam House, are located within a five-minute walk of a bus stop. In both 2023 and 2040, all residents have access to at least four swimming pool sites within a 20-minute drive.
- Seven of the ten sites are available for the maximum 52.5 hours in the weekly peak period.
- The population in Wokingham is forecast to grow by 6% up to 2040, which results in a 2% increase on demand for swimming pools. The smaller increase in demand compared with population growth is because of the ageing of the population in Wokingham between 2023 and 2040. There will be fewer residents in the age bands with the highest swimming participation (0-15 year olds and 25-39 year olds) in 2040 than in 2023. The rate and frequency of swimming participation is assumed to be unchanged between the two years.
- Most swimming pools in Wokingham are comfortably full in 2023 and can accommodate the forecast increase in demand in 2040. However, Bulmershe Leisure Centre and Wokingham Leisure Centre are estimated to be uncomfortably full, with Wokingham Leisure Centre completely full at peak times in 2040.
- The overall estimated used capacity of swimming pools in the weekly peak period is 57% in both 2023 and 2040. However, three swimming pool sites are uncomfortably full (over 70% of capacity used at peak times), these are Bulmershe Leisure Centre, Wokingham Leisure Centre and Crosfields School.

## 6. Health and Fitness

### Introduction

- 6.1 Sport England defines health and fitness suites as those facilities providing fitness stations for both cardiovascular and strength training, more commonly known as gyms, and excludes spaces for aerobics and dance activities. The assessment below is based on the tools available from Sport England and supplemented with desktop searches using Google to identify health and fitness facilities within Wokingham.

### Quantity (Supply)

- 6.2 There are 30 health and fitness venues in Wokingham. At the time of the audit, all were operational. In total these providers offer 1,968 fitness stations.
- 6.3 A total of 25 venues are publicly accessible. They provide a total of 1,896 fitness stations accessible to the public either as pay and play or as part of registered membership arrangements.
- 6.4 Five smaller venues are reserved for private use. They include 4 school sites (Reading Blue Coat School; Reddam House; The Bulmershe School and Waingels College together with Reform: U which offers private one-to-one personal training). Collectively they provide 72 fitness stations.
- 6.5 The largest health and fitness centres is located at Nirvana Spa. It offers 270 fitness stations. David Lloyd Reading and Pulse 8 are also large gyms offering 200 and 180 stations, respectively.
- 6.6 Wokingham local authority provides 5 venues – Bulmershe; Loddon Valley, Ryeish Green; Carnival Pool and Arborfield. In total, these offer 375 fitness stations circa 19% of the publicly available facilities in the borough. Woodley Town Council provides a publicly accessible gym at Woodford Park Leisure Centre, it offers 25 stations.
- 6.7 A breakdown of facilities by ownership type is provided in the table below.

**Table 6.1 Health and Fitness Provision by Management Type**

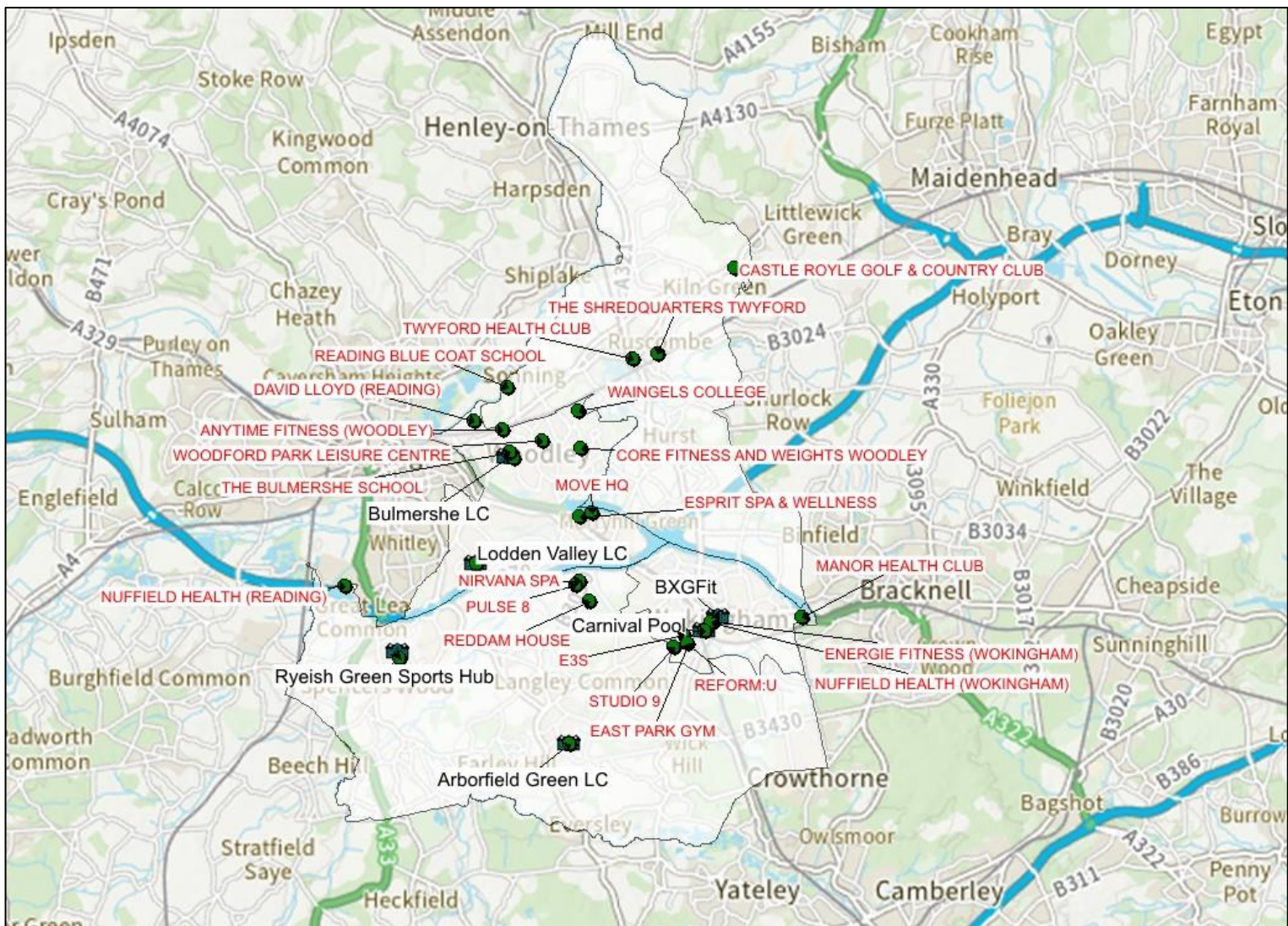
Providers	Number of Facilities	Number of Fitness Stations	Market Share
Commercial Operators	20	1511	77%
Local Authority – Wokingham	5	375	19%
Town Council - Woodley	1	25	<1%

Providers	Number of Facilities	Number of Fitness Stations	Market Share
Education	4	57	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100%</b>

6.8 The oldest facilities, Nirvana Spa were opened in 1972 with the Authority owned Lodden Valley Leisure Centre opening sometime after in 1987. A total of nine facilities have opened or re-opened following refurbishments since 2020. These include new built Authority owned facilities at Bulmershe Leisure Centre (2020); Wokingham Leisure Centre @Carnival (formerly Carnival Pool) in 2022, and Lodden Valley (2020). The latest facility to open is the East Park Gym in 2022.

6.9 A map setting out the location of the facilities is included for information.

Figure 6.1 - Location of the health and fitness facilities Wokingham 2024 (Wokingham Local Authority Boundary) (Sport England@Active Power)





Details of the health and fitness facilities in Wokingham are set out in Table 6.2.

**Table 6.2 – Health and Fitness Facilities– Wokingham 2024**

Site Name	Post Town	Stations	Access Group	Ownership Group	Year Built	Year Refurbished
Anytime Fitness (Woodley)	Reading	125	Public Access	Commercial	2016	n/a
Arborfield Green Leisure Centre	Reading	57	Public Access	Local Authority	2018	n/a
Bulmershe Leisure Centre	Reading	75	Public Access	Local Authority	2020	n/a
Castle Royle Golf & Country Club	Reading	85	Public Access	Commercial	1999	2013
Core Fitness And Weights Woodley	Reading	40	Public Access	Commercial	2002	2013
David Lloyd (Reading)	Reading	200	Public Access	Commercial	1995	2007
Energie Fitness (Wokingham)	Wokingham	75	Public Access	Commercial	2020	n/a
Esprit Spa & Wellness	Reading	18	Public Access	Commercial	2010	n/a
Loddon Valley Leisure Centre	Reading	75	Public Access	Local Authority	1987	2020
Manor Health Club	Wokingham	26	Public Access	Commercial	1989	2016
Move HQ	Wokingham	30	Public Access	Commercial	2021	n/a

Site Name	Post Town	Stations	Access Group	Ownership Group	Year Built	Year Refurbished
Nirvana Spa	Wokingham	270	Public Access	Commercial	1972	2003
Nuffield Health (Reading)	Reading	100	Public Access	Commercial	2004	2014
Nuffield Health (Wokingham)	Wokingham	102	Public Access	Commercial	2003	2008
Pulse 8	Sindlesham	180	Public Access	Commercial	1988	2010
Reading Blue Coat School	Reading	17	Private	Education	2004	2019
Reddam House	Sindlesham	7	Private	Education	2004	n/a
Ryeish Green Sports Hub	Reading	45	Public Access	Local Authority	2017	n/a
The Bulmershe School	Reading	17	Private	Education	2007	n/a
Waingels College	Reading	16	Private	Education	1995	n/a
Wokingham Leisure Centre @ Carnival Hub	Wokingham	130	Public Access	Local Authority	2022	n/a
Woodford Park Leisure Centre	Woodley	25	Public Access	Local Authority	2018	n/a
Studio 9	Wokingham	15	Public Access	Commercial	2020	
Arc Gym	Wokingham	35	Public Access	Commercial	2021	
Wellington Health & Fitness Club	Crowthorne	100	Public Access	Commercial	1990	2012
E3s	Wokingham	15	Public Access	Commercial	2020	

Site Name	Post Town	Stations	Access Group	Ownership Group	Year Built	Year Refurbished
East Park Gym	Wokingham	50	Public Access	Commercial	2022	
Reform:U	Wokingham	15	Private	Commercial	2021	
The Shredquarters Twyford	Twyford	15	Public Access	Commercial	2021	
Twyford Health Club	Twyford	15	Public Access	Commercial	2013	2022
		1968	Public Access 1896 (25); Private 72 (5)			

(Source: Contains Data © Sport England; and Google)

- 6.10 The map of health and fitness shows a concentration of gyms in and around Wokingham Town Centre and Loddon Valley and around Bulmershe School. There are fewer facilities located in the south of the borough around Arborfield and to the area north of Ruscombe. Those living in the north of the borough are likely to find their facilities in Henley-on-Thames more convenient than perhaps travelling south into Wokingham.
- 6.11 We understand that the Authority has identified potential demand related to new housing development at Halls Farm, south of the borough, which will see circa 3,750-4,500 new homes. The guidance suggests the need for an additional 80 health and fitness stations to meet future demand.

### **Quality**

- 6.12 Information on the quality of the gyms is taken from Sport England Active Places Power and information that has been gleaned from internet searching. This highlights the age of the gym and any refurbishments that have taken place. These measures are used as proxies for quality.
- 6.13 The average age of facilities dates to 2007. All of the publicly accessible facilities built before this time have been refurbished, suggesting that the stock is in good overall condition and that the overall level of competition between providers remains high. The trade-off between quality, price and programme offer is therefore likely to be a key factor when choosing a gym particularly where there are a number of providers competing for a share of the same catchment population.

### **Accessibility**

- 6.14 There are a limited number of private providers across Wokingham, meaning that there is a good range of choices for members of the public looking to take part in health and fitness activities either through play-and-play access or via a membership option. Given the number of providers, price and quality is likely to be a key factor in choosing your gym.
- 6.15 Public access to a gym is widely available through extended hours midweek and at weekends. Energie Fitness was the only provider found to offer 24 hours access to its gym. Prices for gym membership are competitive and pitched for both budget and premium customers.

### **Demand**

- 6.16 Data on adult participation rates is available from Sport England through the Active Lives platform. The data suggests that in November 2022, circa 13% of Wokingham adults took part in a gym session twice in the last 28 days. This was in line with the regional average (Berkshire Active Partnership) and slightly above the national average (10.5%). The data suggests that the rates of participation in Wokingham have not yet regained pre-Covid levels which stood around 20% locally with a regional average of 16%.

**Figure 6.2 - Participation in Gym Sessions Comparison Wokingham, Region, and Nation 2015 – 2022**

Participation in the last 28 days : At least twice in the last 28 days by activity  
Gym session



### Wokingham Population - 2024- 2040

- 6.17 Given participation in gym sessions is predominately undertaken by those over 16, it is possible to use the population projections data for Wokingham to provide some understanding of the potential scale of participation in future years.
- 6.18 Table 6.3 sets out the total population in the 16-64 age bands compared to the population overall. This includes the base and housing projections for the population in 2030 and out to 2040.

**Table 6.3 - Summary of Demand based on Adult Population Projections**

Health and Fitness	2021	2030 (est.)	2040 (est.)
Total Wokingham Base Population	177,150	183,260	189,200
Population Gain through Housing	-	13,850*	19,250
% Adults (age 16-64)		60%	60%
No. of new Adults		8,310	11,550
Base Pop Aged 16-64	112,180	112,494	111,440
Total Adult Population with housing		120,804	122,990

Health and Fitness	2021	2030 (est.)	2040 (est.)
Participation Rate 20%	22,440	24,160	24,598
Number of Stations (25 members per station)	898	966	984

(Est – based on Housing Growth Forecast - 2030 assumes 50% of Hall Farm is delivered by 2030)

- 6.19 If we assume that participation rates will at some point return to pre-Covid levels then applying the Wokingham participation figure of 20% of adults participating at least twice in the last 28 days to the 2021 census population data for those aged over 16 of 112,180 in 2021 and 122,990 in 2040, would equate to 22,440 regular gym goers in 2021 rising to 24,598 in 2040. The estimates include additional growth from housing.
- 6.20 FMG Consulting uses a benchmark indicator where each health and fitness station can support between 20 – 25 members. Using a standard factor of 25 members per station, in 2021, 22,440 potential gym goers will require the equivalent of 898 gym stations. This figure increases to 984 health and fitness stations in 2040.
- 6.21 There are currently 1,968 stations being provided in Wokingham. This will be sufficient to meet future levels of demand, although we would expect the market to respond to new population growth around Halls Farm with some additional local provision. There is therefore little additional need to increase the number of health and fitness stations across the borough.
- 6.22 As the level of competition amongst health and fitness providers remains strong, the Council may wish to consider how it can adjust its health and fitness offer so that it continues to appeal to an increasingly ageing population.

## Section 6: Assessment of Need and Evidence Base – Health & Fitness.

### Interpretation of findings: What does this mean for Wokingham?

- There are 30 health and fitness venues in Wokingham providing a total of 1,968 gym stations. Five venues are reserved for private use leaving 1,896 health and fitness stations available for use by the public use.
- The largest health and fitness centres is located at Nirvana Spa. It offers 270 fitness stations. David Lloyd Reading and Pulse 8 are also large gyms offering 200 and 180 stations, respectively.
- Wokingham local authority provides 5 venues – Bulmershe; Lodden Valley, Ryeish Green; Carnival Pool and Arborfield. In total, these offer 375 fitness stations circa 19% of the publicly available facilities in the borough. Woodley Town Council provides a publicly accessible gym at Woodford Park leisure Centre, it offers 25 stations.
- The oldest facilities, Nirvana Spa were opened in 1972 with the Authority owned Lodden Valley Leisure Centre opening sometime after in 1987. A total of nine facilities have opened or re-opened following refurbishments since 2020. These include new built Authority owned facilities at Bulmershe Leisure Centre (2020); Wokingham Leisure Centre @Carnival (formerly Carnival Pool) in 2022, and Lodden Valley (2020). The latest facility to open is the East Park Gym in 2022.
- The map of health and fitness shows a concentration of gyms in and around Wokingham Town Centre and Lodden Valley and around Bulmershe School. There are fewer facilities located in the south of the borough around Arborfield and to the area north of Ruscombe. Those living in the north of the borough are likely to find their facilities in Henley-on-Thames more convenient than perhaps travelling south into Wokingham.
- The average age of facilities dates to 2007. All of the publicly accessible facilities built before this time have been refurbished, suggesting that the stock is in good overall condition and that the overall level of competition between providers remains high. The trade-off between quality, price and programme offer is therefore likely to be a key factor when choosing a gym particularly where there are a number of providers competing for a share of the same market.
- In terms of location, there are a limited number of private providers across Wokingham, meaning that there is a good range of choices for members of the public looking to take part in health and fitness activities either through play-and-play access or via a membership option.
- Public access to a gym is widely available through extended hours midweek and at weekends. Energie Fitness was the only provider found to offer 24 hours access to its gym. Prices for gym membership are competitive and pitched for both budget and premium customers.
- Data on adult participation rates from Sport England's Active Lives survey shows that 13% of Wokingham adults took part in a gym session twice in the last 28 days. This was in line with the regional average (Berkshire Active Partnership) and slightly above the national average (10.5%). The data highlights that rates of participation in Wokingham have not yet regained pre-Covid levels which stood around 20% locally with a regional average of 16%.

#### Section 6: Assessment of Need and Evidence Base – Health & Fitness (cont'd)

- If we assume that participation rates will at some point return to pre-Covid levels then applying the Wokingham participation figure of 20% of adults participating at least twice in the last 28 days to the 2021 census population data for those aged over 16 of 112,180 in 2021 and 122,990 in 2040, would equate to 22,440 regular gym goers in 2021 rising to 24,598 in 2040. The estimates include additional growth from housing.
- Using a standard factor of 25 members per station, in 2021, 22,440 potential gym goers will require the equivalent of 898 gym stations. This figure increases to 984 health and fitness stations in 2040.
- There are currently 1,968 stations being provided in Wokingham and this is sufficient to meet current and future levels of demand. Whilst the overall distribution of demand may change in future years that there is little additional need to increase the number of health and fitness stations across the borough.
- As the level of competition amongst health and fitness providers remains strong, the Council may wish to consider how it can adjust its health and fitness offer so that it continues to appeal to an increasingly ageing population.



# 7. Fitness Studios

## Introduction

7.1 In this section we consider the provision of fitness studios across Wokingham.

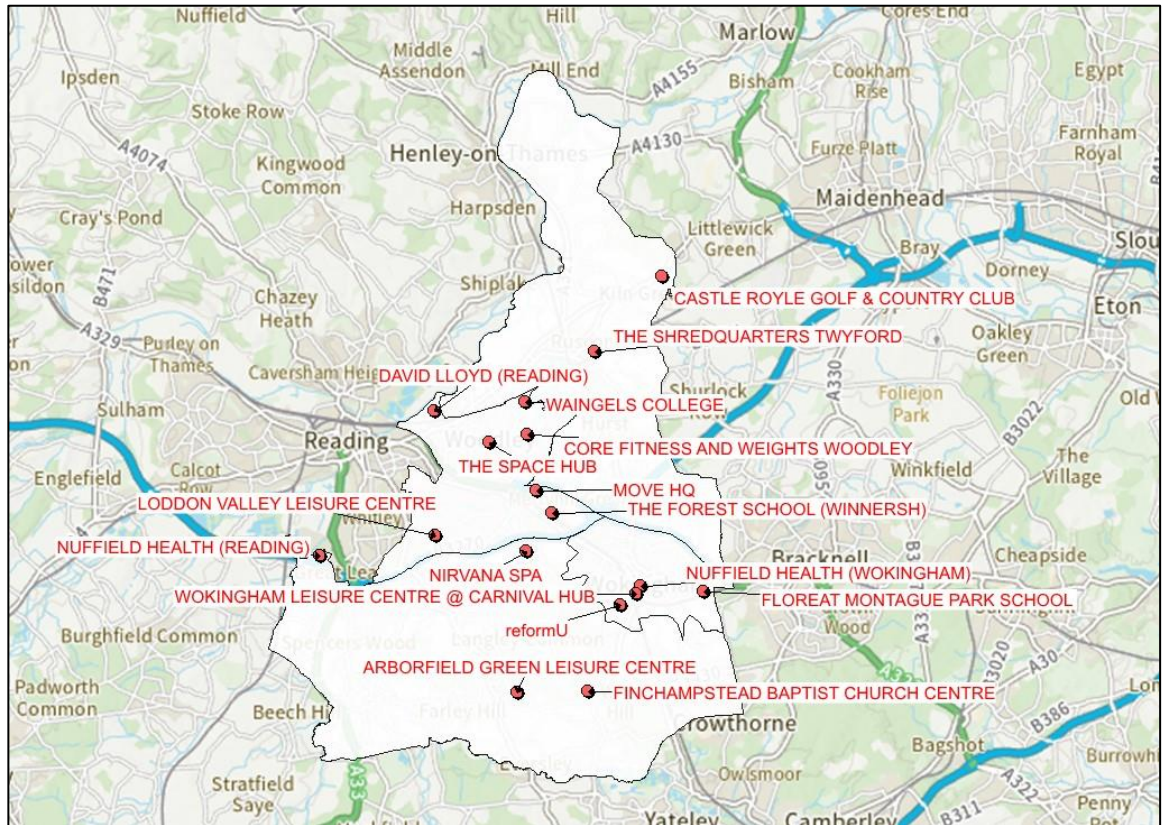
## Quantity

7.2 There are around 33 separate fitness studio spaces found in Wokingham. This includes only one dedicated cycling studio at the Council's newly built Wokingham Leisure Centre (formerly Carnival Pool).

7.3 Commercial operators provide the majority (25) of the fitness studios available in the borough. The Local Authority provides a total of 5 studio facilities across three leisure centres at Arborfield; Lodden Valley and Wokingham Leisure Centre meaning that it provides around one-fifth of fitness studios in the borough.

7.4 The Space Hub provides studio space to hire offering 5 different sized studio spaces for rent from premises located in Woodley.

Figure 7.1 – Fitness Studios in Wokingham



- 7.5 The location of studios has been mapped and shown at map x.x above. Whilst the distribution of fitness studios is concentrated in the centre and south of the borough, residents can reach a fitness studio within 20 minutes of where they live.
- 7.6 A full list of the fitness studios in Wokingham is provided at Table 7.1.

### **Quality**

- 7.7 Our research shows that the average age of facilities dates to 2009. The oldest, were previously located at Lodden Valley Leisure Centre. Built in 1987, these underwent refurbishment in 2020. The most recent facilities to be opened include the Council's flagship centre in Wokingham and the facilities at Move HQ. These became operational in 2021 and 2022.
- 7.8 Of the 25 fitness studios available, ten have undergone some form of refurbishment. Castle Royle Golf & Country Club and the facilities at Nuffield Health do not appear to have undergone any form of noticeable refurbishment for some time.
- 7.9 Facilities are generally well sized (average 14m x 10m) meaning that they are suitable for the delivery of a wide range of activity programmes. The largest studio facility is located at Nuffield Health (Reading) with the smallest facilities provided at Arborfield Leisure Centre and the Space Hub.

### **Accessibility**

- 7.10 There is a concentration of studios in the mid central and southern parts of the borough although facilities are more sparsely distributed in the southwest and north with little coverage for those living in the most northern parts of the borough around Henley-on-Thames. Having said that, most residents can expect to find a publicly accessible fitness studio within a 20 minute drive of where they live.
- 7.11 The needs assessment suggests that whilst there are a relatively high number of multi-purpose fitness studios, there is limited additional provision of purpose-built indoor cycling studios at the same location. In a number of cases, fitness studios are located alongside health and fitness gyms on the same site allowing providers to offer a comprehensive gym and workout programme for customers. The local authority appears to be the only provider offering a dedicated cycling studio in Wokingham meaning that studio spaces need to be set up and broken down for spin/cycle programmes. In some cases, this can lead to equipment storage issues on site impacting the customer's overall experience.
- 7.12 Only the facilities at Waingel College are categorised as private use. Management arrangements at the other facilities are via a combination of public, private and educational suppliers. As facilities at Floreat Montague Park and The Forest Schools are on school/educational sites, it is likely that the general public may have some restrictions on the use of or timetabling of activities during the school term.

### **Availability**

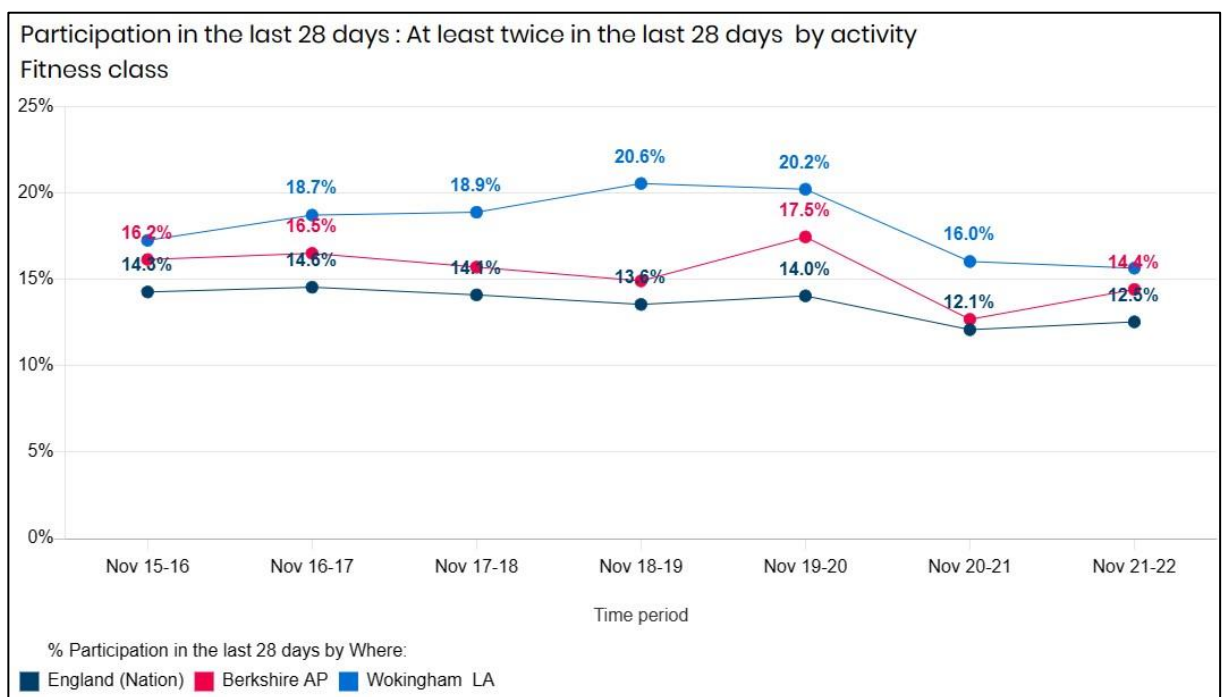
- 7.13 From the data, it is possible to deduce that fitness studios continue to be an integral part of the gym and wellbeing offer within Wokingham. Commercial operators like The Space Hub, have capitalised on the demand for studio space in Wokingham by offering a variety of different sized studio spaces for rent to the market. This is likely to broaden the range of activity programmes that can be made available to Wokingham residents outside of traditional leisure centre locations.
- 7.14 With a high number of potential studio locations within Wokingham, there is scope for the Council and its operator to make best use of the facilities by developing a broad mix of programmes

available throughout the day to appeal to different target markets including women, those over 65, and those with limiting long-term health conditions.

### Demand

- 7.15 Sport England’s Active Lives data shows that around 16% of Wokingham’s adult population take part in fitness activities regularly. This compares with 13% for England, and 14% for the region (Berkshire Active Partnership).
- 7.16 Trend data shows that prior to Covid, participation rates were around 6 percentage points higher amongst Wokingham’s residents (20%) than for the current period.

**Figure 7.2 - Participation Rates Fitness Classes Wokingham (Active Lives)**



- 7.17 While there is no known method for calculating the demand for fitness studios, the Council can capitalise on the potential growth in the participation rate and from its recent investment in its stock of facilities by developing a broad programme offer that can appeal to a wide mix of target audiences.

**Table 7.1 - Fitness Studios within Wokingham**

Site Name	Post Town	Post Code	Facility Sub Type	Area	Length	Width	Access Group	Ownership Group	Year Built	Year Refurbished
Castle Royle Golf & Country Club	Reading	RG10 9XA	Fitness Studio	225	15	15	Public Access	Commercial	1999	n/a
Castle Royle Golf & Country Club	Reading	RG10 9XA	Fitness Studio	150	15	10	Public Access	Commercial	1999	n/a
Castle Royle Golf & Country Club	Reading	RG10 9XA	Fitness Studio	99	11	9	Public Access	Commercial	1999	n/a
Core Fitness And Weights Woodley	Reading	RG5 4UL	Fitness Studio	120	12	10	Public Access	Commercial	2002	n/a
David Lloyd (Reading)	Reading	RG6 1PT	Fitness Studio	225	15	15	Public Access	Commercial	1995	2003
David Lloyd (Reading)	Reading	RG6 1PT	Fitness Studio	225	15	15	Public Access	Commercial	1995	2003
Floreat Montague Park School	Wokingham	RG40 1BG	Fitness Studio	130	13	10	Public Access	Education	2016	n/a
Move HQ	Wokingham	RG41 5TS	Fitness Studio	280	28	10	Public Access	Commercial	2021	n/a
Nirvana Spa	Wokingham	RG41 5DJ	Fitness Studio	250	25	10	Public Access	Commercial	1997	2003
Nuffield Health (Reading)	Reading	RG2 6UL	Fitness Studio	375	25	15	Public Access	Commercial	2004	2014
Nuffield Health (Reading)	Reading	RG2 6UL	Fitness Studio	375	25	15	Public Access	Commercial	2004	2014
Nuffield Health (Wokingham)	Wokingham	RG40 2LD	Fitness Studio	160	16	10	Public Access	Commercial	2003	n/a

Site Name	Post Town	Post Code	Facility Sub Type	Area	Length	Width	Access Group	Ownership Group	Year Built	Year Refurbished
Nuffield Health (Wokingham)	Wokingham	RG40 2LD	Fitness Studio	128	16	8	Public Access	Commercial	2003	n/a
Nuffield Health (Wokingham)	Wokingham	RG40 2LD	Fitness Studio	180	18	10	Public Access	Commercial	2010	n/a
The Forest School (Winnersh)	Wokingham	RG41 5NE	Fitness Studio	100	10	10	Public Access	Education	2016	n/a
Waingels College	Reading	RG5 4RF	Fitness Studio	100	10	10	Private	Education	1995	2011
Re-Flection Wellness	Crowthorne	RG45 7AQ	Fitness Studio	100	10	10	Public Access	Commercial	2010	2021
REFORMU	WOKINGHAM	RG41 2PR	Fitness Studio	80	10	8	Public Access	Commercial	2012	
The Space Hub	Woodley	RG5 3JP	Fitness Studio	336	21	16	Public Access	Commercial	2019	
The Space Hub	Woodley	RG5 3JP	Fitness Studio	231.25	18.5	12.5	Public Access	Commercial	2019	
The Space Hub	Woodley	RG5 3JP	Fitness Studio	115.5	11	10.5	Public Access	Commercial	2019	
The Space Hub	Woodley	RG5 3JP	Fitness Studio	55	10	5.5	Public Access	Commercial	2019	
The Space Hub	Woodley	RG5 3JP	Fitness Studio	66	11	6	Public Access	Commercial	2019	
The Space Hub	Woodley	RG5 3JP	Fitness Studio	33	6	5.5	Public Access	Commercial	2019	
The Shredquarters Twyford	Twyford	RG10 9NJ	Fitness Studio	100	10	10	Public Access	Commercial	2015	

(Source; Contains Data © Sport England; and Google)

## Section 7 – Fitness Studios What does this mean for Wokingham?

### Interpretation of findings: What does this mean for Wokingham?

- There are around 30 fitness studios provided across Wokingham.
- Location is concentrated around the mid central and southern parts of the borough, with fewer opportunities available the further you travel north and in the south west.
- The age and quality of fitness studios does vary. The average age of facilities dates to 2009. The oldest, were previously located at Lodden Valley Leisure Centre. Built in 1987, these underwent refurbishment in 2020. The most recent facilities to be opened include the Council's flagship centre in Wokingham and the facilities at Move HQ. These became operational in 2021 and 2022.
- Of the 25 fitness studios available, ten have undergone some form of refurbishment. Castle Royle Golf & Country Club and the facilities at Nuffield Health do not appear to have undergone any form of noticeable refurbishment for some time.
- The needs assessment suggests that whilst there are a relatively high number of multi-purpose fitness studios, there is limited provision of purpose-built indoor cycling studios at the same location. In a number of cases, fitness studios are located alongside health and fitness gyms on the same site allowing providers to offer a comprehensive gym and workout programme for customers.
- Data from Sport England's Active Lives survey shows that 16% of Wokingham residents take part in fitness class activities which is higher than the regional and national average. The data however shows that participation rates have yet to return to Pre Covid levels (20%).
- While there is no known method for calculating the demand for fitness studios, the Council can capitalise on the potential growth in the participation rate and from its recent investment in the stock of facilities by continuing to developing a broad programme offer that can appeal to a wide mix of target audiences.

## 8. Squash

### Introduction

8.1 In this section we consider the provision of squash courts across Wokingham.

### Quantity

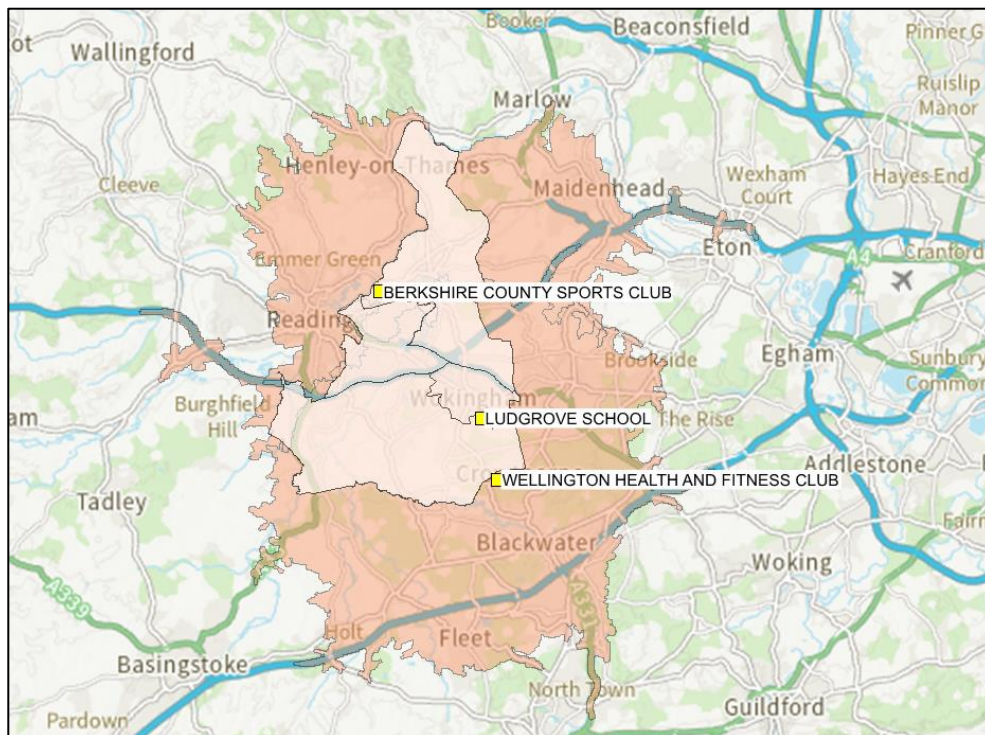
8.2 There are four squash courts located at two venues within Wokingham. All are reachable within a 20-minute drive time. There are a further five courts just across the borough boundary at the Wellington Health and Fitness Club in Crowthorne.

8.3 Ludgrove School has two squash courts which it reserves for private use and Berkshire County Sports Club operates two squash courts through its Sports Club. The local authority re-purposed three squash courts at the Lodden Valley Leisure Centre in 2018 due to low levels of demand.

8.4 The location of squash courts has been mapped and shown below together with a 20-minute drive time catchment around each point.

8.5 If one were to discount the facilities at Ludgrove School and at Wellington Health and Fitness Club, public access to squash would be limited to the facilities at Berkshire County Sports Club meaning those living in the most southernly parts of the borough (south of Arborfield Green) would need to travel more than 20 minutes to find a publicly accessible squash court.

**Figure 8.1 – Location of squash courts Wokingham (20-minute drive time catchment)**



8.6 Details of squash court provision are set out in Table 8.1.

**Table 8.1 - Squash Court provision Wokingham 2024**

Site Name	Post Town	Sub Type	Courts	Access Group	Access Type	Ownership Group	Management Type	Year Built	Year Refurbished
Berkshire County Sports Club	Reading	Normal	2	Public Access	Sports Club / Community Association	Sports Club	Sport Club	1950	n/a
Ludgrove School	Wokingham	Normal	2	Private	Private Use	Education	School/College/ University (in house)	2005	n/a
Wellington Health And Fitness Club	Crowthorne	Normal	5	Public Access	Registered membership use	Commercial	Commercial Management	1990	2012

(Contains Data © Sport England)

#### Quality

8.7 The quality of existing squash courts is mixed. The facilities at Crowthorne have been maintained in good condition by the commercial operator. Facilities provided by Ludgrove School and at Berkshire County Sports Club are arguably overdue some form of investment.

#### Accessibility

8.8 Other than the facilities at Ludgrove School, access varies by provider. Berkshire County Sports Club offers a full pay and play offer. Regular access to squash courts, particularly for regular and club players tends to be via a centre of club membership arrangement. These types of arrangements are found at both the Wellington and Berkshire County facilities which are affiliated to England Squash.

#### Availability

8.9 Squash remains popular with the 20-60 age bands and particularly amongst men. Because of the intense nature of the sport at competitive level, participation rates drop off in the older age groups and a more social form of the sport dominates.



- 8.10 As the Berkshire County Sports Club provides pay and play access, members of the public can access facilities during normal opening hours. Members at Berkshire County can book single or double court sessions using a dedicated online booking system. According to Squash England data, there are a small number of members at this facility. The Wellington Health and Fitness Club (Wellington College (WC Enterprise) is the largest squash club in Wokingham with circa 89 members. Access to squash courts at the club is likely to be detailed as part of the membership terms and conditions.

#### Facilities per 1,000 population

- 8.11 There is no specific methodology for assessing the current and future need for squash courts. Overall participation in squash is said to be increasing particularly at the club level whilst demand for community access to squash courts has continued to decline. The Sport England Active Places Power data shows that a further 177 publicly accessible squash courts have closed since 2020.
- 8.12 A benchmark measure used in sports facilities assessments is facilities per 1,000 population. The findings for Wokingham are set out in Table 8.5 below. The totals shows the ratio including and excluding the 2 courts at Ludgrove School which are not publicly accessible.
- 8.13 Although data is unavailable for neighbouring authorities, the findings by this standard measure, suggest that the overall supply of squash facilities in Wokingham is slightly below the England average.

**Table 8.2 – Benchmark Squash Courts per 1,000 population Wokingham**

Area	Population 2021	Squash Courts	Courts/1,000
Wokingham	177,500	9 (all) 7 (public)	0.0507 0.0394
England	56.54m	3,654 (all) 3,306 (public)	0.0646 0.0584

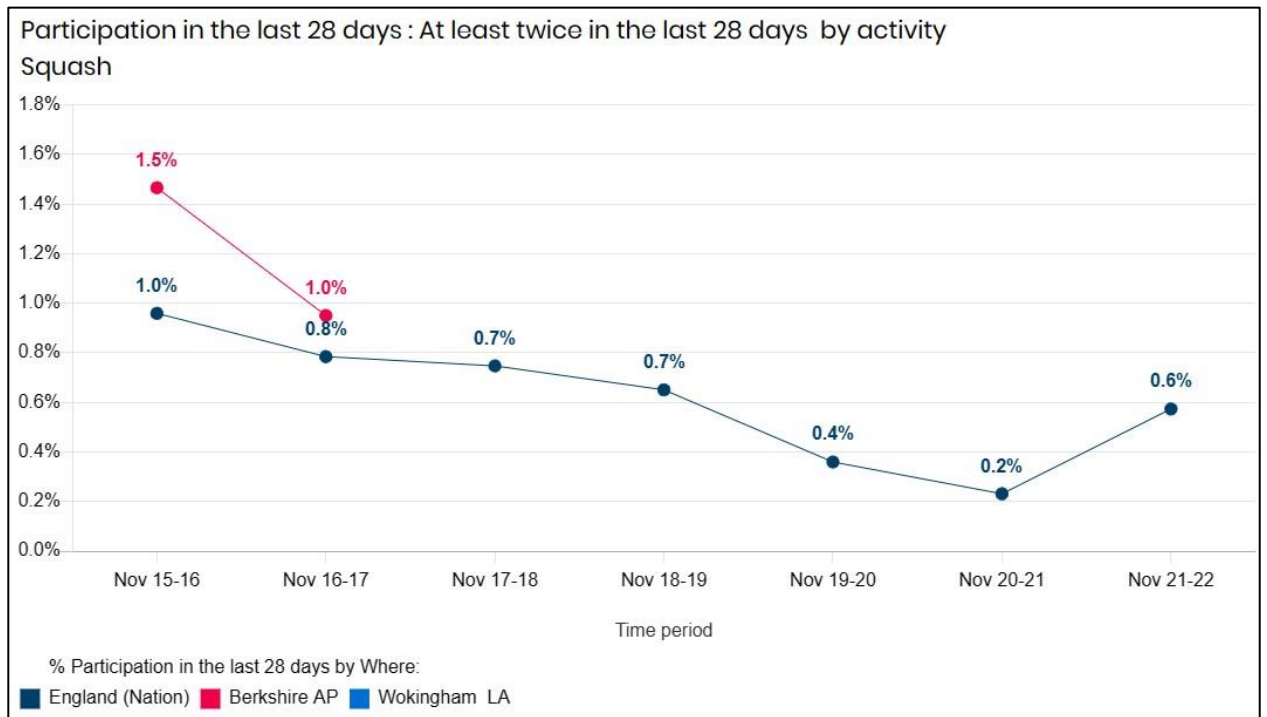
(Contains Data © Sport England)

#### Demand for Squash

##### *Sport England Sport and Activity Lifestyle Survey*

- 8.14 Sport England's Active Lives survey reveals that less than 1% of the population (0.6%) take part in squash on a regular basis. This is the equivalent of 264,100 persons at the national level. There is no formal data collected at the local level.
- 8.15 Club data from Squash England shows a small number of regular members playing squash (less than 100) in Wokingham.
- 8.16 Berkshire Active reported that they are currently recruiting a Community Engagement Officer to work with schools, clubs, and societies within the borough to rebuild and develop squash and junior programmes. The focus links with the lead-up to 2028 Olympics, where squash features for the first time. Whilst facilities are considered to be adequate, they report that there is more room for development.

**Figure 8.3 - Participation Rates Squash National Rates (Active Lives)**



8.17 In summary there appears to be a sufficient level of supply to meet existing demand and latent demand for squash. The Council should retain the existing level of provision and keep this under review in line with local patterns of demand.

## Section 8 – Assessment of Need and Evidence Base – Squash.

### Interpretation of findings: What does this mean for Wokingham?

- There are four squash courts located at two venues within Wokingham. All are reachable within a 20-minute drive time. There are a further five courts at the Wellington Health and Fitness Club across the borough boundary in Crowthorne:
- Facilities are well established and whilst maintained, there is little additional evidence of regular investment in squash provision in the last ten years:
- There is a good balance of club and recreational squash facilities that encourage take up and regular play. Overall club membership levels are relatively low across the borough and the local active partnership is currently recruiting a Community Engagement Officer to develop interest in the sport in the lead up to the Olympics in 2028, where squash appears for the first time:
- The local authority re-purposed three squash courts in 2018, due to low levels of local demand:
- Compared to England, Wokingham has a lower overall level of squash facilities per 1,000 population:
- Based on population and participation data, there appears to be a sufficient squash court capacity across Wokingham to meet existing levels of demand and latent demand for squash:
- The Council should retain keep the level of squash provision under review in line with changes in local patterns of demand:

# 9. Martial Arts

## Introduction

9.1 In this section we consider the provision of martial arts facilities across the Borough.

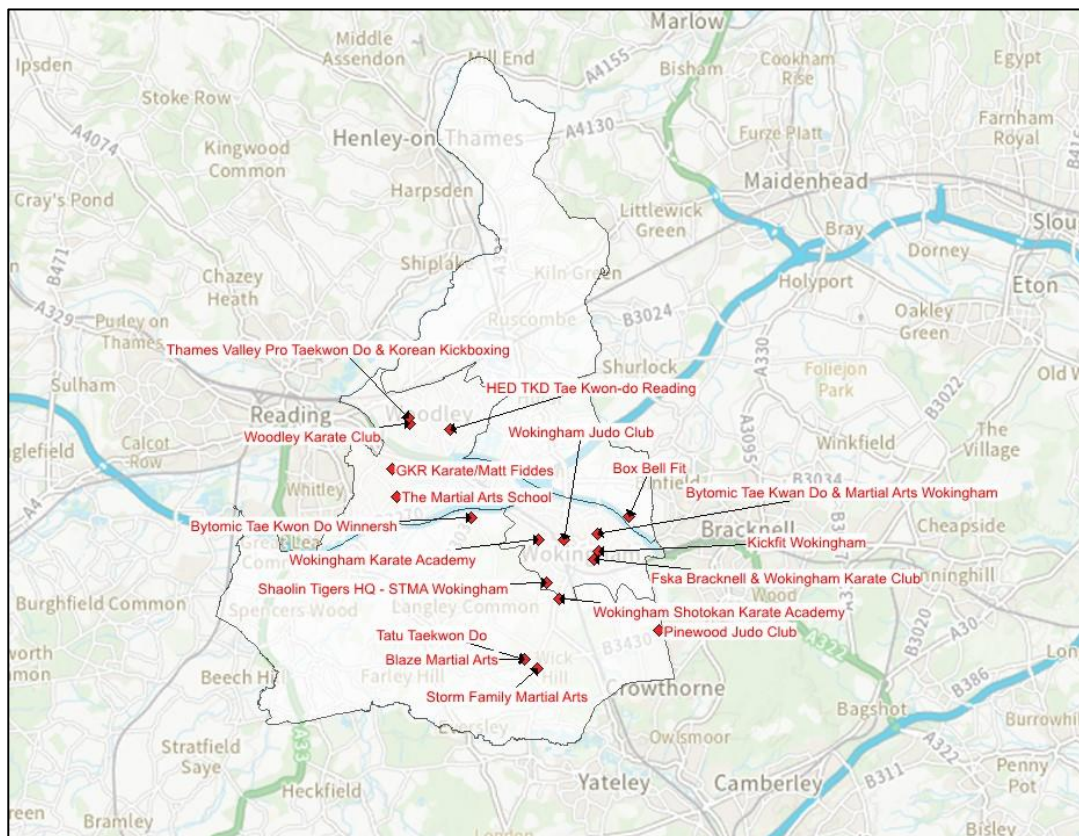
## Quantity

9.2 Martial facilities are not captured through the Active Places Power database. A Google search of Wokingham identified that there are around 19 separate providers of martial arts/mixed combat and exercise sports. These include 7 Tae Kwon-Do; 5 Karate clubs; 1 Box Fit provider; 2 Judo and 4 Mixed Martial Arts schools.

9.3 Shaolin Tigers HQ offers a dedicated facility set over two floors. It includes a Dojo on the second-floor level. The Martial Arts School is located in the local authority leisure centre at Lodden Valley and Thames Valley Pro Taekwon Do & Korean Kickboxing offers programmes from Bulmershe Leisure centre.

9.4 Pinewood Judo Club is the oldest provider. A registered charity and established for almost sixty years, it is a specialist Judo provider with a record of National and International achievements.

**Figure 9.1 – Martial Arts Providers in Wokingham**



- 9.5 The location of martial arts providers has been mapped and shows a concentration of provision in the centre of the borough with the main provision to the east around Wokingham Town Centre and the western areas around the Council's facilities at Lodden Valley and Bulmershe Leisure Centre. Whilst residents living in the south of the borough are well catered for those living in the north of the borough would have to travel to Woodley to find their nearest facility.
- 9.6 Details of the local providers are included in Table x.x below.

**Table 9.1 - Martial Arts Providers Wokingham**

Provider	Discipline	Description	Location
HED TKD Tae Kwon-do Reading	Tae Kwon Do	Dedicated Tae Kwon Do School with multiple locations across the south east.	Based at Rivermead Primary School
Shaolin Tigers HQ - STMA Wokingham	MMA	Dedicated MMA based school offering a range of martial arts classes, including Muay Thai, Kickboxing, MMA, BJJ, and White-Collar Boxing. Level 1 boasts a dynamic boxing and striking area; Level 2 houses the dojo and grappling space.	The Lawrence Centre Wokingham
Fska Bracknell & Wokingham Karate Club	Karate	A friendly family-orientated Shotokan Karate Club established for over 19 years in Bracknell, Berkshire.	St Teresa School Easthampstead
Storm Family Martial Arts	MMA	The curriculum at Storm Family Martial Arts is a unique blend of multiple martial arts styles. We focus on pad work, fitness, self-defence, and personal development	Nine Mile Ride Primary School
Kick Fit Wokingham	MMA	Offers full range of martial arts programmes for all ages.	Westend Junior School
GKR Karate	Karate	Regional Karate Teaching organisation with over 1000 locations; GKR Karate is a family club that is dedicated to fostering sound values and developing strong, humble, brave individuals and healthy communities.	Emmbrook Secondary School
Matt Fiddes	Tae Kwon Do	Part of the Matt Fiddes Franchise offering fitness, self-defence, and personal safety classes.	Emmbrook Secondary School
Bytomic Tae Kwon Do Winnersh	Tae Kwon Do	Opened in 1988; now operates classes at 27 venues in the South East of England.	Winnersh Community Centre
Bytomic Tae Kwan Do & Martial Arts Wokingham	Tae Kwon Do	As above	All Saints CoE Primary Wokingham

Provider	Discipline	Description	Location
Blaze Martial Arts	Tae Kwon Do	Offers a MIXED martial art syllabus comprising of Kickboxing (Full Contact and Light Contact), Karate, Tae Kwon Do, Ju-Jitsu, Muay Thai Boxing, The Keysi Fighting Method, Self Defence and Reality-Based training.	Gose Ride Junior School Finchampstead
Tatu Taekwon Do	Tae Kwon Do	Specialist Tae Kwon Do instruction for juniors and adults	Gose Ride Junior School Finchampstead
Pinewood Judo Club	Judo	Pinewood Judo Club has an outstanding record of National and International achievements dating back over 58 years. Beginners and intermediate classes running at capacity.	Old Wokingham Road
The Martial Arts School	MMA	Family-friendly school offering multi-discipline programme of mixed martial arts including Kung Fu, Kickboxing, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, MMA, Chinese Martial Arts, and self-defence.	Mainly based at Lodden Valley
Woodley Karate Club	Karate	Teaches traditional Japanese martial art of Shotokan Karate across Berkshire	Based at Highwood Primary School Woodley.
Wokingham Shotokan Karate Academy	Karate	Offers fun and practical classes in karate with guest instructors from other disciplines such as judo or ju-jitsu.	Evendons Primary School in Finchampstead and Wokingham Youth Centre
Wokingham Karate Academy	Karate	Established in 1984, Wokingham Karate Academy teaches Okinawan Goju-Ryu Karate-Do under Sensei Len Sim, 8th Dan.	Woosehill Community Hall
Wokingham Judo Club	Judo	Wokingham Judo Club is a local, family-run club which delivers judo lessons to anyone who wants to join in.	Wokingham Youth Centre
Box Bell Fit	Box Fit	Offers a mixture of styles to keep training varied – strength, conditioning, functional fitness, HIIT, Boxing, Bodyweight.	Dedicated premises in rural outskirts of Wokingham
Aro Fitness Kickboxing	Tae Kwon Do	Dedicated kickboxing school offering classes at all levels	Manor Primary School Ashampstead
Thames Valley Pro Taekwon Do & Korean Kickboxing	Tae Kwon Do	Offers classes for those under 16 as well as adults aimed at beginners, advanced and extremely advanced (black belt and above).	Bulmershe Leisure Centre

(Source: Google)

## **Quality**

- 9.7 It is not possible to determine the quality of the facilities found through Google searches. Website searching of the clubs and their Facebook pages suggests that all providers attract a small but dedicated group of customers.
- 9.8 The majority of providers rely on hire arrangements with local schools and community halls. In some cases, providers use the same facilities on different nights of the week. Whilst no details are provided on the quality of provision, we would expect that instructors are competent in continuing to assess that the condition of the facility meets their particular needs.

## **Accessibility**

- 9.9 All providers are open to the public, with customers encouraged to follow prescribed courses of instruction in order to become more proficient in the sport. All clubs operate under amateur sport club basis with a dedicated and small team of coaches providing instruction.
- 9.10 Those looking to take part in martial arts type exercise have a number of options including schools with a specific discipline or those offering mixed disciplines. In addition, there are operators like Box Bell Fit who take boxing disciplines and combine these with personal training or one-to-one activity programmes.
- 9.11 All providers offer a good range of instruction for beginners and as well as advanced learners with the affiliated clubs providing grading and competition pathways.
- 9.12 Unlike some other forms of sports, those interested in taking part are prepared to travel to a good facility/teacher.

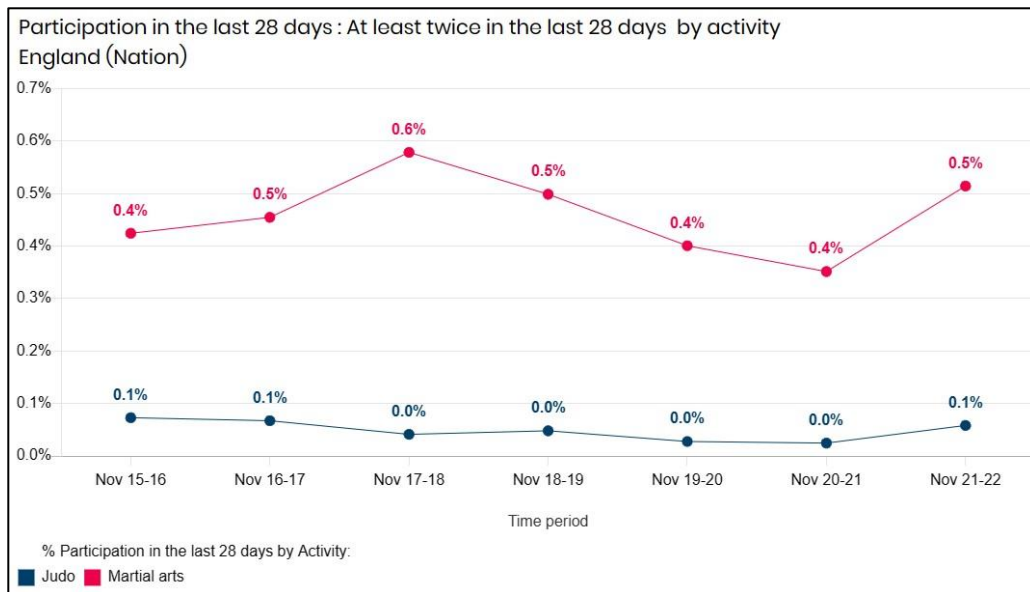
## **Availability**

- 9.13 Given the number of specialist providers, the market appears mature with a relatively high number of providers utilising a wide range of local community spaces from which to offer their programmes and activities.

## **Demand**

- 9.14 Active Lives data for November 2021 shows that less than 1% of England's population take part in traditional martial arts activities on a regular basis. No data is available at the local level. The figure has remained constant since 2015.
- 9.15 In our experience, those interested in taking part in a martial arts discipline will tend to follow the same instructor for a number of years before switching disciplines.
- 9.16 In terms of demand and given the variety of the current offer, there does not appear to be a need to increase the overall level of supply at the current time.

**Figure 9.2 Participation in Martial Arts England-wide 2015- 2022**



**Comments Received from British Judo**

- 9.17 The British Judo Association were consulted as part of the assessment. They have launched Judo Active Places and have consulted with Pinewood Judo Club to support their growth. They highlighted that there are currently no Competition venues in Wokingham.
- 9.18 The NGB notes that the majority of judo clubs in Wokingham are reliant on hire from other providers. Some time ago it noted that the Pinewood site might be utilised for development and as such it has examples across the country where clubs have taken advantage of asset transfer or purchased their own land/facility to ensure security of tenure.
- 9.19 In terms of Wokingham, it notes that there are some great hubs of community activity that, in its view, can be grown and modernised. It is open to working with the Council and local clubs to raise the profile of judo as an education system as well as a source of physical activity.



## Section 9 – Assessment of Need and Evidence Base – Martial Arts

### Interpretation of findings: What does this mean for Wokingham?

- There are a well-established and broad mix of dedicated martial arts providers within Wokingham.
- Whilst provision is distributed across the borough, the majority of providers are based in the central east and west of the borough. Whilst those living in the south can reach a martial arts provider within 20 minutes, those living in the northernmost parts of the borough would have some distance to travel to find a Wokingham-based operator. Unlike some other forms of sports, those interested in taking part are prepared to travel to a good facility/teacher.
- Shaolin Tigers HQ offers a dedicated facility set over two floors. It includes a Dojo on the second-floor level. Two schools operate from local authority leisure centres. The majority of providers rely on hire arrangements with local schools and community halls. In some cases, providers use the same facilities on different nights of the week. Whilst no details are provided on the quality of provision, we would expect that instructors are competent in continuing to assess that the condition of the facility meets their particular needs. Given the number of providers we can assume that suitable facilities are available.
- All provides offer a good range of classes and programmes aimed at beginners to advance learners.
- Active Lives data for November 2021 shows that less than 1% of England's population take part in traditional martial arts activities on a regular basis. No data is available at the local level. The figure has remained constant since 2015.
- In our experience, those interested in taking part in a martial arts discipline will tend to follow the same instructor for a number of years before switching disciplines.
- In terms of demand and given the variety of the current offer, there does not appear to be a need to increase the overall level of supply at the current time.

# 10. Indoor Bowls

## Introduction

10.1 In this section we consider the provision of indoor bowls facilities across the Borough

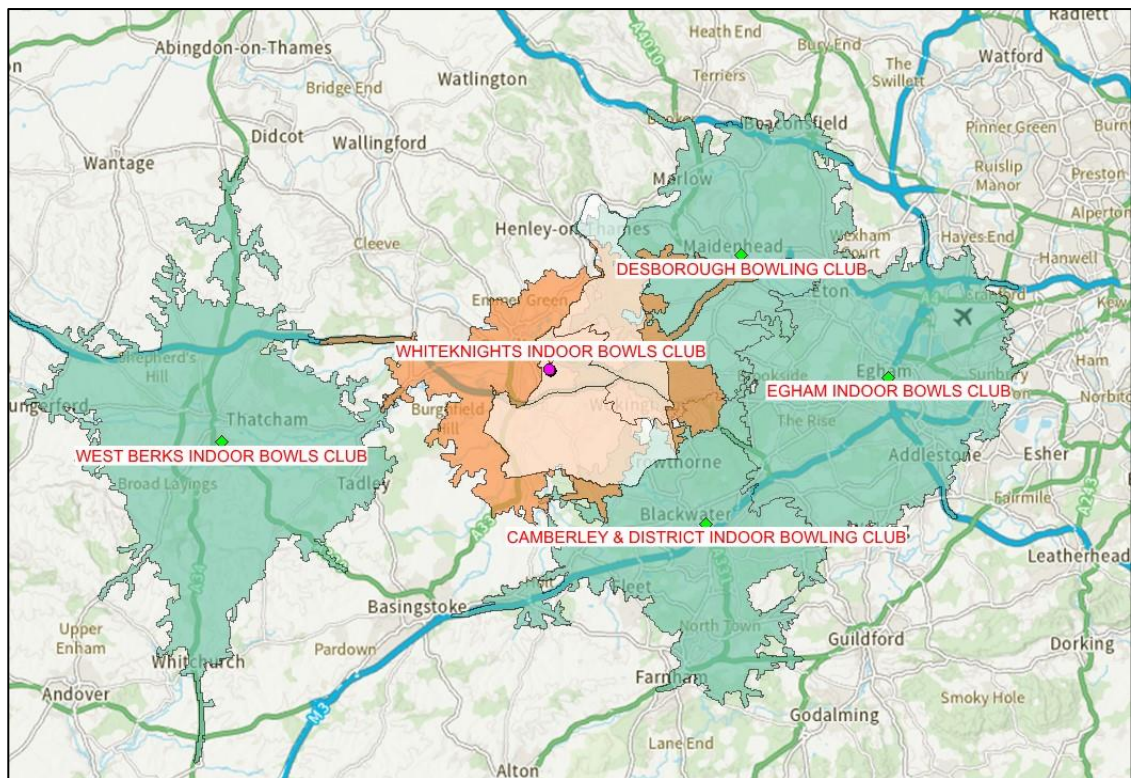
## Quantity

10.2 There is one purpose-built indoor bowling centre in Wokingham. The Whiteknights Indoor Bowls Club was formed in 19072 and is located in the walled grounds of what used to be the old Manor house. Sharing the grounds with Manor Erleigh (outdoor) Bowling Club the club provides facilities for and to promote participation of the whole community in the amateur sport of bowls.

10.3 The facility in Wokingham is one of 5 facilities serving the wider Berkshire community. These include West Berkshire Indoor Bowls Club in Newbury, Desborough Bowling Club in Maidenhead; Camberley and District Indoor Bowling Club; and Egham Indoor Bowling Club.

10.4 A map of the location of the indoor bowling facilities is provided below.

**Figure 10.1 - Indoor Bowls facilities serving Wokingham and the surrounding areas (20-minute drive time catchments)**



10.5 Details of the venues are included overleaf.

**Table 10.1 - Indoor bowls halls in Wokingham and neighbouring areas**

Site Name	Post Town	Area	Length	Rinks	Width	Access Type	Membership	Year Built	Year Refurbished
West Berks Indoor Bowls Club	NEWBURY	986	36.5	6	27	Sports Club / Community Association	530-600	1985	2004
Desborough Bowling Club	MAIDENHEAD	1588	42	8	37.8	Sports Club / Community Association		2019	n/a
Camberley & District Indoor Bowling Club	CAMBERLEY	907	36	6	25.2	Sports Club / Community Association	400+	1989	1999
Egham Indoor Bowls Club	EGHAM	972	36	6	27	Sports Club / Community Association	500	1985	2005
Whiteknights Indoor Bowls Club	WOKINGHAM	1134	36	7	31.5	Sports Club / Community Association	+/-1000	1981	2015

((Source : Contains Data © Sport England)

### Quality

- 10.6 The Whiteknights facility is the oldest of the indoor bowls facilities having been opened in 1981. Whilst other providers have undertaken improvement works since originally built, the Wokingham facility is the latest to have had an upgrade which took place in 2015. The newest indoor bowls facility is the Desborough Bowling Club which opened in 2019.
- 10.7 The Whiteknights indoor facility comprises 7 rinks. A function space and licensed bar lie adjacent to the main green and separate changing rooms are provided. The site has car parking capacity for around 80 vehicles.
- 10.8 Although the facility has more rinks than other indoor bowls centres, the Whiteknights facility is the second largest indoor rink in the area after Desborough Bowling Club.
- 10.9 Whiteknights Indoor Bowls Club has two active representatives that sit on the Wokingham Sports Council.
- 10.10 The Whiteknights facility is owned and managed by the club.

### **Accessibility**

- 10.11 In terms of access, the indoor bowling rink at Whiteknights can be reached by the majority of Wokingham residents within a comfortable 20-minute drive (catchment shown as orange on the map).
- 10.12 Those living in the far north of the borough, around Henley-on-Thames, would have a shorter journey time if they wanted to visit the Desborough Bowling Club; and those living on the southern borders around Crowthorne may consider the drive time to the indoor facility at Camberley as more appealing.

### **Availability**

- 10.13 The Whiteknights facility is an active club comprising of staff, a bowling subgroup, and a Board of Directors. The club offers both pay-and-play and membership options for those interested in playing the game including free use for those under 16. The club has a dedicated website providing information on opening times, taster sessions, leagues and tournaments, coaching, a programme of social events and other club news.
- 10.14 The club is currently promoting an aim of achieving 1,000 members by season 2024/25.
- 10.15 All the indoor clubs are affiliated to the English Indoor Bowling Association, meaning that the development and promotion of indoor bowls remains a key objective. All the clubs boost healthy membership numbers (in excess of 400 members) with some clubs like Whiteknights still looking to grow membership as interest in the sport grows.
- 10.16 Due to the club being located on the same site as a flat green bowling club (Maiden Erlegh), it is only allowed to open for three mornings a week during the summer period.

### **Demand for Indoor Bowls**

- 10.17 There are good levels of indoor bowls provision and a strong club base across the wider West Berkshire area.
- 10.18 An ageing population is likely to increase the demand for bowls. The vast majority of bowls is however crown green, which does not necessarily translate to the indoor game. Nevertheless, there is a strong and well-established bowls community in Wokingham.

### **Sport England Sports Facility Calculator (SFC)**

- 10.19 In the absence of any quantifiable data on demand for indoor bowls, we have reverted to use of the Sport England's Sports Facility Calculator tool that is primarily intended to estimate the demand for facilities in discrete areas.
- 10.20 It can be used to give a broad-brush estimate of the demand over a local authority area, though it takes no account of demand across local authority boundaries, quality of facilities, and existing supply.
- 10.21 Using the Wokingham UA Local Authority Area and total change in population of 31,300 (177,150 in 2021 and 208,450 in 2040 (base 189,200 plus 19,250 growth through housing), the SFC provides the following findings. The result suggests that there is insufficient demand to consider new provision at the current time.

**Table 10.2 - Sports Facility Calculator Indoor Bowling Demand (based on change in population of 31,300 between 2021 and 2940)**

Year for Calculation	Population	No. of Rinks (Average scores)	Centres (Average Score)	Visits per week
2021	177,150	2.76	0.46	431
2041	208,450	3.25	0.54	507
<b>Change</b>	31,300	0.49	0.08	76

- 10.22 Feedback received from the consultation of National Governing Bodies reveals that the EIBA consider that the Whiteknights Club and the Desborough Club in the adjoining LA area can cater for future anticipated demand.
- 10.23 Both EIBA and Bowls England (outdoor level Green NGB) are in discussion with Sport England regarding Sports Facility Interventions. A joint Bowls Market Research project has been undertaken with Indoor & Outdoor Clubs, Local Authorities and Leisure Operators and the findings are being reviewed, Until such time as an update is published, the approach remains to build an effective partnership with Local Authorities/Leisure Providers.
- 10.24 Given the analysis and information available, there does not appear to be a need to increase the overall level of supply of indoor bowling facilities in Wokingham during the period of this strategy.

#### Section 10 – Assessment of Need and Evidence Base – Indoor Bowls

##### Interpretation of findings: What does this mean for Wokingham?

- There are good levels of indoor and outdoor bowls provision and a strong club base across Wokingham and the adjoining local authority areas.
- Residents living in Wokingham have access to one of five indoor facilities across West Berkshire with the vast majority of residents living in Wokingham able to access the indoor facility at Whiteknights within a 20-minute drive time.
- The Whiteknights facility has been upgraded and provides good quality bowls and social facilities to support and promote interest in the game. The indoor bowls club in Wokingham is affiliated to the EIBA and as such provides a wide mix of activities and programmes aimed at those new to the game as well as pathways to competition. The club is popular and is aiming to reach 1,000 members by 2024/25 season.
- There is no one source to calculate the demand for indoor bowling by Wokingham residents.
- The SFC provided by Sport England suggests that there is limited additional demand for rinks to 2040 despite the anticipated growth in population. The EIBA have been consulted and they consider that the facilities at Whiteknights and at Desborough Bowling Club in the adjoining local authority are sufficient to meet the anticipated demand for indoor bowls in future years.
- Given the analysis and information available, there does not appear to be a need to increase the overall level of supply of indoor bowling facilities in Wokingham during the period of this strategy.



# 11. Indoor Tennis

## Introduction

- 11.1 We consulted a number of NGB's to inform this assessment. Of particular note is the feedback from the LTA and the findings of the recent Playing Pitch Strategy regarding tennis provision in the borough.

## Quantity

- 11.2 There are no indoor tennis courts in Wokingham. The LTA highlighted that 'Although there are publicly available indoor tennis courts in neighbouring boroughs (e.g. Reading SportsPark), these are still over a 20-minute drive away. There are some thriving tennis clubs and park venues across Wokingham Borough, and it would be good to explore what opportunities there are to cover existing tennis courts to increase participation through year-round play.
- 11.3 Using the Council's recent Playing Pitch Strategy, the LTA highlighted the following report references related to tennis provision:
- 11.4 60% of sites used by tennis clubs are over capacity. In total, sites used by tennis clubs are over capacity by 1,129 members. The Wokingham Town Area currently has the greatest amount of overcapacity, this is due to the membership demand at Cantley Park, although it is worth noting that this also takes into account Chestnut Park which is located in the Urban Western Area.
- 11.5 Consideration also needs to be given to the significant capacity issue identified at Wokingham Tennis Club where the courts are overcapacity by 225 members. The club also have a waiting list of 100 adult members wanting to join. This could be eased by the proposals at Arborfield Garrison Pitches which is located in the same sub area.
- 11.6 Should the LTA's latent demand be realised then capacity issues at club sites could increase by up to 618 members.

## Quality

- 11.7 The LTA noted the following observations highlighted in the PPS around the quality of tennis provision.
- 11.8 The greatest number of good quality tennis courts are located in the Southern Area. This is also the only sub area that has any poor-quality tennis courts located in it. These are the courts at Arborfield Garrison Pitches. It is understood that there are currently housing proposals in place which would result in these courts being replaced.
- 11.9 During the consultation, no tennis clubs identified any issues with the quality of the courts. Twyford Tennis Club did however raise concerns with the quality of the sports lighting at King George V Recreation Ground.
- 11.10 Berkshire County Sports Tennis are currently working on a proposal to resurface the tennis courts on site and also provide sports lighting. It is understood that this will also result in one of the courts being overmarked for netball.

- 11.11 Crowthorne Tennis Club commented that they would like to upgrade the sports lighting at St Sebastian's Playing Fields to LED.
- 11.12 Wargrave Tennis Club commented that they have recently upgraded their sports lighting to LED. They would also like to resurface 4 of the existing macadam courts to artificial clay.
- 11.13 Wokingham Tennis Club commented that they would like to be able to provide an additional 2 tennis courts at Sadlers End, but they currently lease the courts from the cricket club who aren't keen to progress this.
- 11.14 Both GD Tennis at Cantley Park and Riseley Tennis Club stated that they would like to provide Padel tennis courts at their sites. GD Tennis would also like to upgrade the sports lighting at Cantley Park to LED. There has recently been a padel tennis courts installed at Berkshire County Sports Club.
- 11.15 Through the consultation Twyford Tennis Club stated that they were unhappy with the quality of their existing ancillary provision at King George V Recreation Ground. GD Tennis at Cantley Park also stated that they would like to increase the size of the pavilion that's located by the tennis courts on site.

#### **Accessibility**

- 11.16 The LTA were not aware of any issues related to the accessibility of tennis provision in Wokingham.

#### **Availability**

- 11.17 The LTA noted the following as regards availability.
- 11.18 The Wokingham Playing Pitch Needs Assessment shows that there was a combined membership of 2,342 adult members and 1,527 junior members in Wokingham Borough at the time of production.

#### **Demand**

- 11.19 The LTA noted that the key challenge as shown in the PPS is the number of venues over capacity, leading to waiting lists in some cases. However, there is an opportunity to meet this latent demand through enhanced facilities in the right places.
- 11.20 In particular, the following report references were cited:
- 11.21 During the consultation tennis clubs were asked if they had plans to grow their membership numbers. Tennis clubs who reported a desire to increase their membership numbers have been shown. Should this growth be realised it would create an additional 223 adult members and 143 junior members. Riseley Tennis Club stated that they would like to increase their membership and have capacity to do so but can't currently quantify how many additional members they would look to add.
- 11.22 All of these tennis clubs stated that they felt they had capacity to cater for this increase in demand, with the exception of Twyford Tennis Club.
- 11.23 Insight provided by the LTA suggests that there is demand for an additional 7,725 tennis players in the Borough, the penetration rate is 618 tennis players (8% of demand).
- 11.24 A key factor in whether there is opportunity to develop indoor tennis facilities in Wokingham will depend on the appetite and ability of current tennis venues to develop indoor structures over their courts. This should be explored via a survey and/or individual conversations where possible, similar to a PPS consultation.



## Section 11 – Assessment of Need – Indoor Tennis.

### Interpretation of findings: What does this mean for Wokingham?

- Consultation with the LTA and analysis of the recent Playing Pitch Strategy identifies potential opportunities to support tennis provision.
- There are no indoor tennis courts in Wokingham with the nearest being over a 20-minute drive away. There are some thriving tennis clubs and park venues across Wokingham Borough and it would be good to explore what opportunities there are to cover existing tennis courts to increase participation through year-round play.
- Club capacity is an issue particularly at Wokingham Tennis Club where the courts are overcapacity by 225 members, and it already has a waiting list. This could be eased by the proposals at Arborfield Garrison Pitches which is located in the same sub area.
- The LTA noted that the key challenge as shown in the PPS is the number of venues over capacity, leading to waiting lists in some cases. All of these tennis clubs stated that they felt they had capacity to cater for this increase in demand, with the exception of Twyford Tennis Club who stated that they were unhappy with the quality of their existing ancillary provision at King George V Recreation Ground. The LTA highlighted that there is an opportunity to meet this latent demand through enhanced facilities in the right places.
- In terms of Padel - both GD Tennis at Cantley Park and Riseley Tennis Club stated that they would like to provide Padel tennis courts at their sites. There has also recently been a padel tennis courts installed at Berkshire County Sports Club.