

# **SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **DRAFT Sports Facilities, Local Leisure Facilities and Playing Pitch Studies**

### **Executive Summary**

**December 2018**



Nortoft Partnerships Limited  
The Old Barn, Nortoft Cottage, Nortoft, Guilsborough,  
Northamptonshire NN6 8QB  
Tel: 01604 586526  
Email: [info@nortoft.co.uk](mailto:info@nortoft.co.uk) Web: [www.nortoft.co.uk](http://www.nortoft.co.uk)

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

SECTION 1: Vision and objectives	3
SECTION 2: Purpose of the Leisure Studies	4
SECTION 3: Local Plan and population	5
SECTION 4: Delivering and funding the Leisure Studies	10
SECTION 5: District wide recommendations	11
SECTION 6: West sub area recommendations	13
SECTION 7: North sub area recommendations	15
SECTION 8: South sub area recommendations	16

## **TABLE OF FIGURES**

Figure 1: Major housing sites and Study sub areas for South Oxfordshire	7
Figure 2: Major development dwelling numbers and phasing	8
Figure 3: Population forecasts by sub area to 2034	9

## SECTION 1: Vision and objectives

### 1.1 The vision for the Leisure Studies are:

*'plan and provide a network of high quality, accessible and affordable community sporting and recreation facilities to meet the needs of South Oxfordshire residents both now and into the future, through the combined efforts of the Council and its partners, and ensure that facilities remain fit for purpose, by refurbishment or replacement, throughout the term of the studies.'*

### 1.2 The specific objectives for the Leisure Studies are:

- To provide a balanced and consistent approach to the provision of sport and leisure facilities for all ages and abilities, which take into account all needs and demands.
- To recommend appropriate and commensurate provision for the increased demands brought about by new housing development.
- To support the health and wellbeing agenda by making facilities for exercise appropriate and accessible to all.
- To engage under-represented groups and those not currently taking part in sport and physical activity.
- To sustain and increase where possible participation in sport and physical activity.
- To contribute to reducing physical inactivity levels.
- To enable a range of sports activities to flourish, including recreational, teaching, coaching, club growth and the development of excellence.
- To promote principles of sustainability and good and efficient design.
- To provide a guide the investment strategies of South Oxfordshire District Council and other potential providers.
- To ensure that additional facilities for sport contribute towards wider agendas including social, economic and environmental factor.

### 1.3 The District Council's direct role in the provision of sport and leisure facilities is twofold, firstly, via its ownership and ongoing development of the major public leisure centres, and secondly via the securing of contributions from new developments towards new or improving existing facilities in line with the requirements set out in the Leisure Studies.

### 1.4 South Oxfordshire District Council is committed to equality and its vision is to ensure the provision of fair and accessible services and employment opportunities that meet the needs of everyone, and positively promote inclusion. The Council has equality objectives and statements in its Corporate Plan (2016-20) and these will help to guide the priorities for investment in relation to the projects identified in the Leisure Studies. The equality objectives are:

- Continue to improve physical access to council owned or leased buildings or land.

- Ensure new projects, policies or strategies, changes to services, and communication take account of the needs of all users
- Support communities to deliver better outcomes for disadvantaged groups and encourage community cohesion.
- Seek to improve access to major new developments and town centres in South Oxfordshire for people with disabilities, carers and older people.

## **SECTION 2: Purpose of the Leisure Studies**

- 2.1 The suite of Sports Facilities, Local Leisure Facilities and Playing Pitch Studies consider the future need for sport and recreation facilities up to 2034, anticipating what will be required if the housing proposed in the emerging Local Plan is developed. The studies will provide the evidence base for the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034. It is expected that the recommendations will also be used to establish and/or inform investment decisions by the Council, its partners and key stakeholders.
- 2.2 There are five Parts that form a suite of documents within the Leisure Studies:
- Part 1: Background and Context
  - Part 2: Sports Facilities Study
  - Part 3: Playing Pitch Study
  - Part 4: Local Leisure Facilities Study
  - Part 5: Open Spaces Study
- 2.3 The methodologies for the studies follow that set down in the Sport England guidance and the studies have been developed following extensive consultation with the community, sports clubs, national governing bodies of sport, parish and town councils and Sport England. The full draft studies were subject to district wide consultation in April-May 2018.
- 2.4 Parts 1-4 have been reviewed to take account of the proposed strategic site allocations in the emerging Local Plan because the change in population and the location of the proposed allocations will impact upon the strategic sports facility requirements. Part 5 has not required review because the primary outputs of this study are standards for open space provision, which are applied locally to each development.
- 2.5 Parts 1-4 have been updated and the findings provided within separate addendums. This Executive Summary provides an overview of the implications of the strategic housing proposals and brings together the updated recommendations of each addendum by sub area.

## 2.6 Each of the addendums:

- Identifies any known changes to the network of sports facilities or playing pitches since the draft report.
- Summarises the implications of feedback from the District Council's consultation on the draft, where this has resulted in a significant change in the study recommendations.
- Provides an updated assessment of the future balance in the demand and supply of sports and recreation facilities including local leisure facilities such as community halls, for the Local Plan period up to 2034, and where there is planned development of proposed strategic site allocations beyond this date, the longer term requirements.
- Considers the implications of project and feasibility work undertaken since the draft was completed.
- Confirms the draft recommendations or provides updated recommendations.

## SECTION 3: Local Plan and population

- 3.1 The demographics used in the draft strategies were derived from the housing need set out in the Core Strategy and Local Plan 2033 second Preferred Options document (March 2017). These expected the population to rise from around 143,500 in 2017, to around 182,100 by 2032.
- 3.2 The strategic site allocations and timescales are proposed to change and are mapped in Figure 1. The total population at 2034 is now expected to be around 189,400. It is expected that, as the details of the strategic housing allocations become clearer over time, that the planned dwelling numbers at each site may change. The recommendations contained in this Executive Summary and the addendums for the Leisure Studies are therefore likely to require further review as the Local Plan progresses and the housing proposals are firmed up.
- 3.3 The proposed number of dwellings for the sites mapped in Figure 1 are given in Figure 2, together with the other larger developments across South Oxfordshire. This table shows both the number of dwellings expected in the Local Plan period up to 2034 and the number of dwellings expected to be delivered after 2034. It also shows the anticipated population of each development by 2034.
- 3.4 Culham, Grenoble Road and Chalgrove are expected to have a high proportion of their dwellings developed after the plan period. For these developments in particular, it will be important to master-plan the whole site including post 2034, to ensure that the long term needs for sport and recreation are fully considered from the outset and appropriate land is set aside.

## West

- 3.5 The West sub area has a new proposed strategic site allocation, Grenoble Road, close to Oxford. Just over half of this site is expected to be constructed by 2034, with the remainder after the Plan period. The other very significant change in the West sub area is the proposed rate of development at Culham where about 60% of the site is now expected to be constructed by 2034, with the remainder after that period.
- 3.6 The new housing at Grenoble Road and the slower speed of development at Culham broadly balance out, giving a fairly limited population forecast change across the sub area as a whole. However, the size of the developments mean that key considerations now include the need for different on-site sport, leisure and recreation provision.

## North

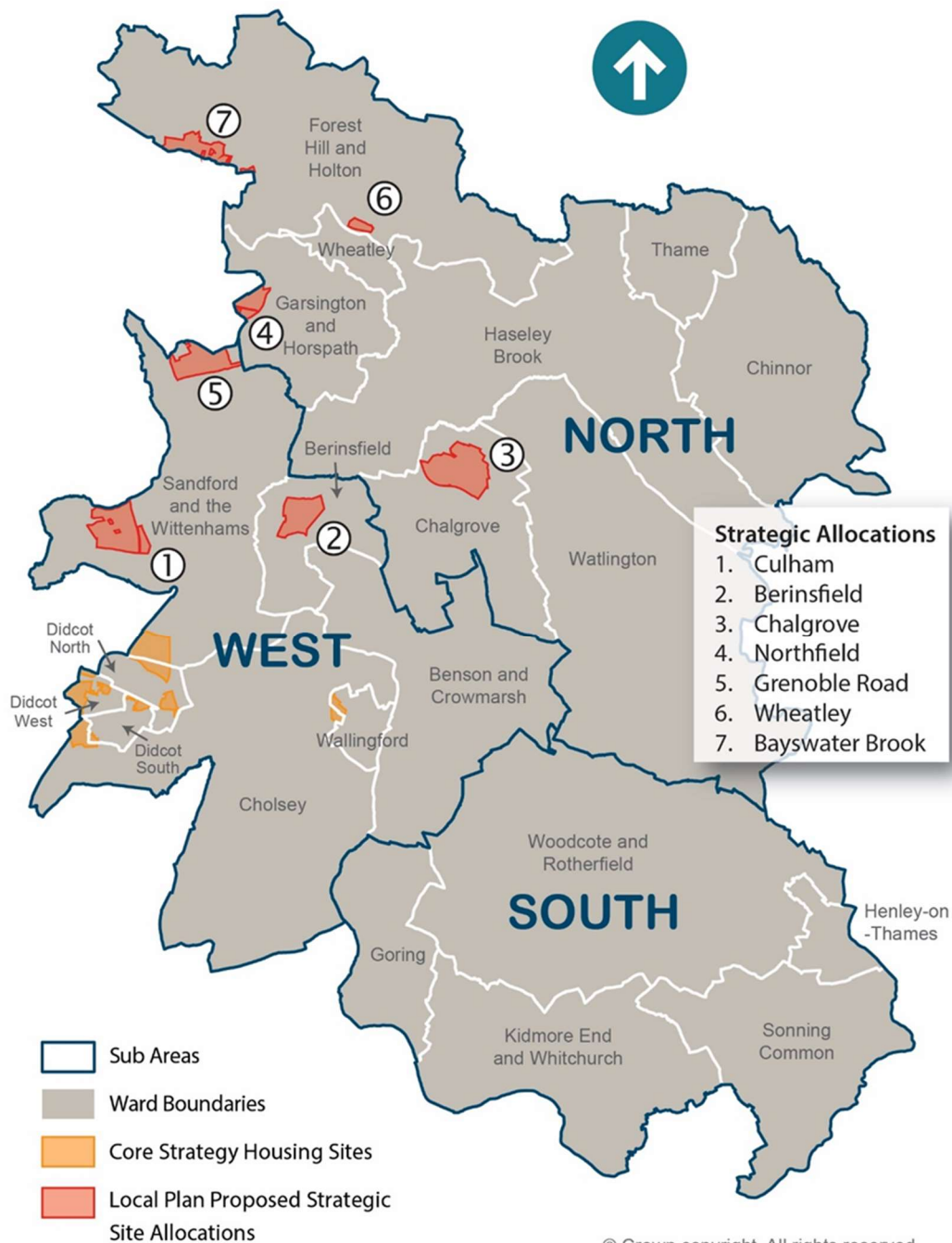
- 3.7 The new proposed strategic site allocations at Northfield and Bayswater Brook are both within the North sub area and both sites are close to Oxford. These sites are responsible for most of the North area increase in population up to 2034. Chalgrove is expected to have around the same number of dwellings once built out as the previous forecast, but the site is now expected to be developed more slowly than anticipated, with around one third left to construct after the Local Plan period.

## South

- 3.8 In the South sub area there is a slight reduction in the number of dwellings proposed leading to a small fall in the forecast population by 2034. However, this relatively small change is insufficient to make any significant changes to the provision recommendations in the sports studies.



Figure 1: Major housing sites and Study sub areas for South Oxfordshire



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved.  
Ordnance Survey 100018668

Figure 2: Major development dwelling numbers and phasing

Study Sub Area	Location	Number of homes to come forward from 2011-2033/34	Number of homes to come forward beyond Plan period	Total within Plan period and beyond	Population at 2034 based on 2.43 persons per dwelling
West	Culham	1850	1650	3500	4496
	Didcot (various)	6503	0	6503	15802
	Wallingford	1164	0	1164	2829
	Benson	514	0	514	1249
	Berinsfield	1600	100	1700	3888
	Cholsey	634	0	634	1541
	Crowmarsh Gifford	334	0	334	812
	Grenoble Road	1700	1300	3000	4131
North	Thame	1612	0	1612	3917
	Chalgrove	2025	975	3000	4921
	Chinnor	777	0	777	1888
	Watlington	288	0	288	700
	Wheatley	407	0	407	989
	Northfield	2139	0	2139	5198
	Bayswater Brook	2036	0	2036	4947
South	Henley-on-Thames	1099	0	1099	2671
	Goring-on-Thames	236	0	236	573
	Nettlebed	57	0	57	573
	Sonning Common	399	0	399	970
	Woodcote	249	0	249	605

3.9 The impact of the proposed housing up to 2034 has been compared with the 2017 forecast population for each sub area, using a housing multiplier of x 2.43 people. The new sub area forecasts up to 2034 are given in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Population forecasts by sub area to 2034

Sub Area	Population at 2017	2017 forecast population to 2032	Change in population to 2033/34 at 2.43 housing multiplier between 2017 forecast and Oct 2018	Revised forecast population at 2034	Increase in sub area population 2017 to 2034
North	44,024	55,116	8,592	63,709	19,685
South	36,358	41,565	-598	40,967	4,609
West	63,118	85,395	-693	84,702	21,584
	143,499	182,076		189,378	

- 3.10 It should be noted that the demand calculations are based on the dwelling numbers in Figure 2 for each of the proposed strategic allocations because updated demographics are not yet available. The population figure calculations were based on the 2017 estimate of the current population from Oxfordshire County Council at 2017, provided to support the draft sports strategies. These population figures are therefore all new growth.

### Application of sub areas

- 3.11 The studies and the draft strategies used sub areas based on the 2015 ward boundaries. The sub areas needed to reflect the practical experiences of sports participants across the district and the findings of national research into catchment areas for sports facilities carried out by Sport England and the national governing bodies of sport. There was also a need to assess the supply and demand relating to Wallingford, Berinsfield, Culham and Didcot together, whilst separately identifying the potential impact of the major development at Chalgrove Airfield.
- 3.12 The sub areas were agreed with key stakeholders, including the District Council, Sport England and the key national governing bodies of sport.
- 3.13 Where a facility is proposed within a sub area, the location of the proposed facility may mean that its catchment crosses over to other sub areas. For example, a facility planned for Berinsfield in the West sub area, may also serve Chalgrove and part of the North sub area. Therefore, as the recommendations are addressed, the impact and implications of each facility investment proposal will be considered in relation to its catchment, not simply how it may serve the needs of the study sub area in which it is located.

## SECTION 4: Delivering and funding the Leisure Studies

- 4.1 The District Council will develop an Action Plan to monitor and to help coordinate the delivery of the Leisure Studies. The Action Plan will be made available on the Council's web site and updated annually. In developing the Action Plan which will support this document, the Council will continue to consult with relevant stakeholders and facility providers to establish their delivery priorities. These will be used to inform both the securing of facilities and/or developer contributions and the release of S106 / CIL funds.
- 4.2 The Council's primary role in the provision of sport and leisure facilities is via the provision and application of planning policy to secure new or improved facilities from new developments in line with the requirements set out in this document. The facility requirements identified in the Leisure Studies are not intended to be provided or funded directly by the Council and it should not be assumed that the Council will automatically make additional funds available to assist other bodies to provide new or improved facilities. It also does not mean that the Council will take responsibility for more facilities.
- 4.3 South Oxfordshire District Council will however support clubs and external providers with guidance on the strategic requirements, external funding and the planning process where there is an identified need for new or improved sport and leisure facilities within their ownership.

### Community Infrastructure Levy

- 4.4 The most recent policy setting out the authority's approach towards developers' contributions for infrastructure is set out in the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule and the Regulation 123 List of August 2017.
- 4.5 The Leisure Studies have a number of specific proposals for investment. Some of these should be included in the District Council's Community Infrastructure Levy list for contributions from developers, and others may be part funded by developers' contributions under the S106 mechanism. The wording of the Community Infrastructure Levy Revised CIL Regulation 123 however now requires revision as its implementation is not as envisaged, and it is not generating all of the originally anticipated funding from developers.

### Review and monitoring of the Leisure Studies

- 4.6 Sport England recommends that a process should be put in place to ensure regular monitoring of how the Leisure Study recommendations and Action Plan are being delivered. Understanding and learning lessons about how the studies have been applied is also a key component of monitoring its delivery. This is intended to be an on-going process, and in relation to the Playing Pitch Study will include an annual meeting of Sport England and the national governing bodies of sport.

- 4.7 A full review of the Leisure Studies is expected to be undertaken by 2022 which will include all of the recommendations. These will then be updated as required.

## SECTION 5: District wide recommendations

- 5.1 The following recommendations are drawn from the separate Leisure Study Addendum reports which reviewed the draft strategy recommendations and provided updated recommendations. The following recommendations apply generally across the district.

Sports halls	Protect and maintain the existing network of sports hall space available to the community across the district.
	Ensure that the existing network is fully accessible for people with disabilities.
Swimming pools	Protect and maintain the existing water space capacity available to the community across the district.
	Further consider the facility network options including the requirement for additional swimming pool provision in the North and West sub areas.
Health and fitness	Protect and maintain the existing network of health and fitness sites which have at least 30 fitness “stations”.
	Ensure positive planning policies are in place to enable the development of appropriate health and fitness facilities across the district.
Athletics tracks and traffic free routes	Develop via the infrastructure evidence supporting the local plan and investment the development of at least one marked running route in each of the major strategic allocations.
	Protect existing traffic free running routes.
	Enhance existing pedestrian routes, particularly those that link open spaces across the towns to make marked running routes.
	Ensure the delivery of new walking and cycling routes which can also be used as marked running routes in each of the strategic housing sites and in strategic business parks.
	Protect and provide greater policy guidance for cycling.
Indoor bowls specialist centres and short mat bowls	Provide for short mat bowls in village and community halls across the district by providing additional mat storage where there is demand.
Outdoor bowls greens	Protect and maintain the existing network of bowls sites, except for one site in the South.
Indoor tennis courts	Encourage and support bids for external funding for the covering of tennis courts at existing sites where this is acceptable in planning terms, meets the policy objectives of the national governing body, and will be financially sustainable.

Outdoor tennis	Protect and maintain the existing network of outdoor dedicated tennis courts, with the priority being those which host active clubs.
	Invest in existing sites to increase capacity where there is demand, including with floodlighting.
Squash courts	Protect the existing larger and active squash clubs along with their provision.
Gymnastics	Support the existing gymnastics clubs.
	Support the development of new dedicated gymnastics centres.
	Support the use of existing multi-purpose spaces for daytime gymnastics use, particularly for pre-school.
	Encourage the programming of sports halls at the leisure centres responds to gymnastics demand.
	Support smaller venues for gymnastics via improved storage at village and community halls, where justified.
Village and community halls	Protect and maintain the existing network of community and village halls.
	Seek developer contributions from all housing towards either new on-site community halls or off-site towards the improvement/extension of existing community or village halls.
	Where development is expected to be delivered beyond the Local Plan period, community hall facilities should be designed from the master-planning stage to fully meet the anticipated demand from the total population at the completion of the build.
Artificial grass pitches	Different types of artificial grass pitch can provide for different sports, even though each pitch may not be the preferred surface so the use may be primarily for training. A detailed feasibility study should be therefore undertaken to further consider the options for provision across of the different types of artificial grass pitches together within an area, taking into account the potential catchment of the proposed AGPs for each sport.
Football pitches and ancillary facilities	Protect all existing playing field sites in South Oxfordshire and maintain the pitches and ancillary facilities at least at standard quality.
	Housing developments to provide contributions for football either on-site (where indicated) or as off-site contributions.
	The master-planning of proposed strategic site allocations should take into account the total planned growth of the site, including beyond 2034 and provide single sports hubs with multiple pitches, clubhouse, parking and other ancillary facilities.
	Address site by site investment needs as identified in the draft PPS.
Cricket pitches and ancillary facilities	Protect all existing used cricket sites in South Oxfordshire and address site by site investment needs as identified in the PPS.
	Housing developments to provide contributions for cricket either on-site (where indicated) or as off-site contributions.
	The master-planning of the proposed strategic site allocations should take into account the total planned growth of the site, including beyond

	2034 and provide single sports hubs with multiple pitches, clubhouse, parking and other ancillary facilities on or off-site.
	To support the growth of cricket amongst women and girls and young people, priority should be given to clubhouse facilities which meet the national governing body recommendations.
Rugby Union pitches and ancillary facilities	Retain all of the rugby club sites across South Oxfordshire.
	Housing developments to provide off-site contributions for rugby towards increasing the capacity of pitches and ancillary facilities.
	Keep under review the impact of the Reg 22 pitch at Horspath on the South Oxfordshire clubs.
Hockey pitches and ancillary facilities	Retain all of the existing hockey pitches with community use as hockey surfaces.
	Housing developments to provide off-site contributions for hockey towards increasing the capacity of pitches and ancillary facilities, or the provision of new sites.

## SECTION 6: West sub area recommendations

6.1 The following sub area specific recommendations are drawn from the separate Leisure Study Addendum reports which reviewed the draft strategy recommendations and provided updated recommendations.

Sports halls	New sports hall space in Didcot, ideally as a 6 badminton-court sports hall as part of a new leisure centre with a swimming pool plus health and fitness facilities, or alternatively two 4-court halls
	Replace Abbey Sports Centre, with a 4-badminton court or equivalent flexible sports hall space.
	Ensure community use at new planned secondary school sports hall at Culham to cater for long term demand, beyond 2034.
Swimming pools	450 sq m additional swimming pool space, equivalent to one 25m x 6 pool plus teaching pool, or one 25m x 8 lane pool. Ideally as part of a new leisure centre in the Didcot area.
Health and fitness	Around 150 fitness stations and 2-3 studios linked to a new leisure centre in the Didcot area, or as extensions to existing sites.
	Increase the number of fitness stations at Berinsfield, if the Abbey Sports Centre is replaced or refurbished.
Indoor bowls specialist centres and short mat bowls	A joint authority feasibility study should be undertaken by the District Councils to consider the shared development of an indoor bowls centre with the Vale of White Horse district.
Indoor tennis courts	Undertake a feasibility study to determine the cost and viability of covering two tennis courts at Portcullis Tennis Club in Wallingford. A



	decision about which type of indoor court facility should account of both the capital and revenue costs.
Outdoor tennis	8 additional courts as sites with ancillary facilities and suitable for tennis club use:
	Culham – 3 courts
	Grenoble Road – 3 courts
	Berinsfield – 2 courts
Squash courts	Retain at least 10 squash courts
Gymnastics	A new, larger replacement site for Abingdon Gymnastics Club.
	1 dedicated gymnastics centre by 2023 and explore options for provision of 1 further dedicated centre by 2034.
Village and community halls	Large size multi-functional community facilities with two halls and a minimum internal area of 780 sq m at:
	Culham
	Grenoble Road
	Didcot (site(s) tbc, if existing/planned network not accessible)
Football pitches and ancillary facilities	Provide for football on the proposed strategic site allocations of:
	Culham (2.4 ha grass playing field)
	Grenoble Road (1.6 ha grass playing field)
	Berinsfield (1.6 ha grass playing field)
	Explore the feasibility of developing a full size pitch at Wallingford Sports Park which meets both the Rugby Reg 22 specification and that of the FA register and confirm the anticipated usage by football. If viable, confirm funding and delivery.
	1 full size 3G pitch in Didcot
Cricket pitches and ancillary facilities	1 cricket pitch with clubhouse and ancillary facilities in:
	Didcot (site to be confirmed)
	Grenoble Road
Rugby Union pitches and ancillary facilities	Undertake a feasibility study to confirm the deliverability and sustainability of a full size Reg 22 pitch at Wallingford Sports Park, including the extent of use for both rugby and football, and taking into account the impact of the new Horspath Reg 22 pitch. Deliver the Reg 22/ FA Register full size pitch if the feasibility report is positive.
Hockey pitches and ancillary facilities	Seek to increase the opening hours at Wallingford School at the weekends for hockey club use.
	1 additional hockey match specification pitch in the West, ideally in Wallingford, to be made available as soon as possible if the negotiations at Wallingford School are unsuccessful, or by 2026 if they are.
	1 hockey pitch by 2034, site to be confirmed.



## SECTION 7: North sub area recommendations

7.1 The following sub area specific recommendations are drawn from the separate Leisure Study Addendum reports which reviewed the draft strategy recommendations and provided updated recommendations.

Sports halls	At Lord Williams's Lower School if the school relocates and does not retain the 4-court hall on its current site, ensure its replacement with a 4-court sports hall with full community access.
	1 x 4-court sports hall, site to be confirmed.
Swimming pools	195 sq m additional swimming pool space equivalent to one 20m x 5 lane community pool or one 25m x 4 lane pool. Location and details to be confirmed following further feasibility work by South Oxfordshire District Council.
	Retain and maintain Thame Leisure Centre pool.
Health and fitness	Around 85 stations and 2 studios linked to additional swimming pool provision.
Athletics tracks and traffic free routes	Keep under review the use and demand for athletics training at Lord Williams's Upper School in Thame.
	If justified by local demand, and subject to feasibility studies, enhance the athletics training facilities
Outdoor bowls greens	1 x 6-rink outdoor bowls green with ancillary facilities by 2034, unless a development comes forward in the interim.
Outdoor tennis	5 additional tennis courts as sites with ancillary facilities and suitable for tennis club use:
	Chalgrove – 3 courts
	Bayswater Brook – 2 courts
Squash courts	Retain at least 6 squash courts
Gymnastics	One dedicated gymnastics centre
Village and community halls	Large size multi-functional community facilities with two halls and a minimum internal area of 780 sq m at Chalgrove
	Multi-functional community facilities with a minimum internal area of 530 sq m at:
	Northfield
	Bayswater Brook
Football pitches	Provide for football on the proposed strategic site allocation of Chalgrove (1.6 ha grass playing field).
	1 full size 3G pitch at Meadow Park in Thame
	1 3G pitch elsewhere in the North sub area (size and site to be confirmed)
Rugby Union pitches and ancillary facilities	Address the capacity issues at Chinnor RFC, if possible, by expanding the number of pitches onto the adjacent area. Develop a training size Reg 22 pitch. Improve the changing facilities.
	Wheatley RFC - improve the pitch quality and changing

## SECTION 8: South sub area recommendations

8.1 The following sub area specific recommendations are drawn from the separate Leisure Study Addendum reports which reviewed the draft strategy recommendations and provided updated recommendations.

Swimming pools	Retain and maintain Henley Leisure Centre pool
Athletics tracks and traffic free routes	Keep under review the use and demand for athletics training at Jubilee Park in Henley.
	If justified by local demand, and subject to feasibility studies, enhance the athletics training facilities.
Indoor tennis courts	Undertake a feasibility study which confirms the need for, options, and viability of providing indoor tennis court space at Shiplake Tennis Club, together with a review and amendment of its membership policies.
Outdoor tennis	7 additional tennis courts as sites with ancillary facilities and suitable for tennis club use:
	Sonning Common/Shiplake area – 6 courts
	Goring – 1 court
Squash courts	Retain at least 6 squash courts
Gymnastics	Support the improvement and expansion of the Kennylands Gymnastics Club and support its long term relocation within Sonning Common if the replacement facility meets the long term requirements of the club, and fully meets the policy criteria of the NPPF.
	Explore the need for the development of one further dedicated gymnastics centre by 2034.
Football pitches and ancillary facilities	Ensure Henley Jubilee Park proposed replacement changing provision for football and hockey meets the needs of the clubs, is appropriate for the site, and does not impact on the pitch provision.
	Provide additional football capacity in Henley, potentially via the development of a full size 3G pitch.
	1 x full size and 1 training size 3G pitches in sub area, sites and justification to be confirmed
Rugby Union pitches and ancillary facilities	Improve changing facilities on the main Henley site and basic wash facilities for the Regatta site. Explore opportunities to develop additional pitches, particularly for mini and junior use.
	Improve the changing provision at Reading Abbey, particularly for women.
Hockey pitches and ancillary facilities	Ensure that the neighbourhood plan policies and proposals which envisage the loss but re-provision of the current changing facilities and car parking which serve Jubilee Park at Henley protect both hockey and football use. The replacement facilities should be appropriate for the sports, meet the needs of the clubs, and not significantly impact on the grass playing field area of the site.
	1 full size hockey surface pitch as soon as possible in the Henley area, at a site to be identified.