



NORTOFT  
PLANNING



The Old Barn, Nortoft Cottage,  
Guilsborough NN6 8QB  
Tel: 01604 586526  
[david@nortoft.co.uk](mailto:david@nortoft.co.uk)  
[sue@nortoft.co.uk](mailto:sue@nortoft.co.uk)



## Loddon Garden Village



## Sports Justification Report

July 2025

David O'Neil, MRTPI, Sue O'Neil MRTPI, Nortoft Partnerships Limited  
Company Registered in England No. 03903741 VAT No. 747791777

Page left blank

## Contents

SUMMARY.....	5
1. Introduction .....	9
2. Relevant policies and evidence base.....	11
SS13 – Loddon Valley Garden Village .....	11
HC2 – Community Infrastructure .....	12
HC4 – Open space, sports, recreation and play facilities .....	12
Loddon Valley Garden Village: Development Guidelines: Appendix B4 .....	14
Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Sept 2024): Loddon Valley Garden Village .....	15
3. Playing field area required – community element.....	17
Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan modelling.....	17
Updating the football modelling for the LVGV allocation as a whole.....	19
Ancillary facilities to support community football .....	29
4. Education playing field needs.....	29
5. Indicative masterplan of the sports hub .....	30
6. Indoor and other sports facilities .....	31
7. Achieving delivery.....	36
8. Off-site sports provision .....	37
9. Conclusions.....	37

## Tables

Table 1: PPS Action Plan extract of Table 2.27 .....	18
Table 2: Development generated match pitch demand for LVGV .....	20
Table 3: Borough-wide teams numbers from PPS 2023.....	22
Table 4: Percentage split of teams from PPS by pitch size.....	23
Table 5: Number of community pitches needed to meet LVGV demand .....	24
Table 6: Summary of match length for different formats .....	25

## Figures

Figure 1:	The FA Recommended Pitch Sizes .....	20
Figure 2:	Sport England PPS Guidance pitch capacity .....	21
Figure 3:	Design of a full size artificial pitch .....	26
Figure 4:	Design of a 9v9 size artificial pitch.....	26
Figure 5:	Indicative programming for AGPs, plus grass pitch.....	28
Figure 6:	Sports hub detail from masterplan.....	30
Figure 7:	Education and Community Sports Area - Indicative land use strategy .....	31
Figure 8:	Sports halls within a 20-minute drive time from IBFS .....	33
Figure 9:	Location of proposed sports hub with surrounding sports halls.....	34
Figure 10:	Health and fitness locations at 2024, IBFS extract .....	35

## SUMMARY

1. This Sports Justification Report supports the University of Reading's Outline Planning Application for 2,800 dwellings at Loddon Garden Village (LGV), which is part of the Loddon Valley Garden Village (LVGV) site allocation. Although the sports facilities are proposed to be located on land the subject of the University's application, they will meet the identified demand arising from the whole LVGV allocation of 3,930 dwellings. They will also respond to a deficit of artificial grass pitches identified in the relevant Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) recent evidence base study, providing a real benefit to the wider community in Wokingham.
2. For clarity, the Sports Justification Report uses the abbreviation LGV in reference to the University's Outline Application for Loddon Garden Village. It also uses the abbreviation LVGV when referring to the wider allocation, called the Loddon Valley Garden Village in the Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040: Proposed Submission Plan.
3. The report considers the community needs for sport which might be met at a 'sports hub', which will also serve the secondary and primary schools. Sport England considers a 'sports hub' to be a site which has multiple sports facilities, which can be a cost-effective and sustainable way of delivering them. The proposal at LGV is for a number of shared sports facilities, also known as 'dual use' facilities.
4. The starting point for the sports hub proposals of the University's Outline Application is the objective of policy SS13 Part 3(c) of the Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040: Proposed Submission Plan:

*"The promotion of community facilities for shared use, such as outdoor and indoor sports and leisure provision will be strongly encouraged".*

5. The report considers the relevant policies of the Submission Plan, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (September 2024) (IDP) and the relevant evidence base Strategies, being the Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report (August 2023); the Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan (August 2023); and the Indoor Built Facilities Strategy (July 2024). Although dated before the IDP, the Strategies were not published until 2025, and the IDP is not fully consistent with the findings or recommendations contained in them.
6. However, the IDP anticipates future updates generally - *"Updates to the IDP may be undertaken as new information and data becomes available."* (p2). Such updates are also specifically anticipated in relation to the LVGV allocation *"Separate sections have been prepared for the Loddon Valley Garden Village, ..... Infrastructure projects, costings, timescale and priorities are subject to further assessment as the projects progress and more information becomes available. This may as a result lead to further updates."* (p3).
7. Although the Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan (called the 'Action Plan' in this report) was approved by the WBC Executive Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025, it was with the caveat

that it should be “*the basis for further work*”. This acknowledged the need to update the Action Plan and its recommendations. The Action Plan does not appear in the list of Evidence Studies supporting the Local Plan.

8. The playing pitch needs of the LVGV allocation was considered by the Action Plan, with the modelling based on the dwelling numbers in the Revised Growth Strategy (2021), which were higher than the total now being proposed.
9. The Action Plan recommendation was that only football pitch provision needed to be on-site, with the demand for other playing pitch sports and tennis being off-site. The recommendation in the Action Plan (LVGV was sometimes referred to as “Hall Farm”) was “*Could provide two 3G AGPs and four grass pitches long with ancillary provision to support this.*” Notably, the size of the pitches is not specified so could range from small pitches for mini soccer, up to full size pitches.
10. The Action Plan and the IDP both suggest that two full size artificial turf pitches (AGPs) are provided on site. One of these is to meet the demand arising from the LVGV allocation, but the other would be to address a Borough-wide deficit in this type of facility.
11. The Action Plan does not contain the justification (or workings) to underpin the recommendation of four grass pitches for football in addition to the two 3G AGPs with football turf. It would appear that the Action Plan’s grass pitch recommendation assumed no use of the 3G AGPs for matches, and that almost all matches would take place at the same time, rather than the reality of matches being spread over the weekends. Pitch provision at the level recommended by the Action Plan would result in significant over-provision for football.
12. The IDP suggestion of “*2 x full size 3G artificial grass pitches, 4 x adult natural grass pitches*” has effectively further increased the expectation on LGV, by increasing the size of the grass pitch provision to all adult pitches, but again without justification.
13. Nortoft has therefore undertaken new modelling for the football pitch provision for the LVGV allocation as a whole, with 3,930 dwellings which is consistent with the emerging Local Plan policy SS13. The modelling considers the role of the proposed artificial grass pitches (AGPs) in meeting the match needs of community football, as would be the normal approach and, in this context, identifies what the need will be for grass pitches for community use. The University’s Outline Application provides the location and indicative layout for these pitches.
14. The IDP suggests that the sports hub serving the LVGV allocation should have a shared use sports hall and fitness gym. However, the relevant evidence base, the Indoor Built Facilities Strategy (July 2024) concludes that Wokingham already has sufficient sports hall and fitness gym capacity up to 2040. The University’s Outline Application therefore identifies the location and provides sufficient space for a community size shared sports

hall, a fitness gym and ancillary facilities, to ensure that they can be provided, if confirmed, at the Reserved Matters stage.

15. In addition to the shared pitches and facilities, further playing field space will be provided for the sole use of both the secondary school and the primary school. The amount of space is as required by the design guidance for new schools. This matter is addressed in the socio-economic chapter of the Environmental Statement.

16. The Reserved Matters stage will confirm the final sports facilities mix, the layout, design, management, and other aspects such as a mechanism to secure long term community use (a Community Use Agreement). The University's Outline Application and its masterplan with its indicative layout, has provided the location and demonstrated that sufficient space for all of the potential sports hub elements can be accommodated, being:

- artificial grass pitches with football turf (AGPs) fenced and sports lit, and designed to meet the specifications of the Football Association's (FA) 3G AGP Pitch Register (or its successor),
  - two full size pitches shared with the secondary school;
  - one 9v9 size pitch shared with the primary school;
- 4 x changing rooms at community standard to service the AGPs plus lockers;
- 2 x changing rooms at community standard to service the grass pitch;
- one 4-court sports hall designed at community standard;
- multi-use games area (MUGA), fenced with sports lighting;
- changing rooms at community standard to service the sports hall and fitness gym;
- fitness gym;
- a social area;
- reception;
- office;
- additional grass playing field space large enough to mark out two youth football pitches for community use;
- additional grass playing field areas suitable for marking out of pitches for both the secondary and primary schools;
- appropriate accessible car and cycle parking.

17. The most efficient use and management of the proposed sports hub is a combined approach across the secondary school, primary school and community elements. The grass playing field area for the community and for the secondary school will therefore be a single space, although the primary school will have its own fencing separating its playing field area from that of the secondary school/sports hub. There will be a pedestrian gateway in the fence between the primary school and the secondary school/sports hub, to enable community use of the primary school's AGP outside of school hours.

18. In summary, the sports facilities proposals for as presented in the University's Outline Application will provide very significant community benefits, both for the new community across the whole of the LVGV allocation, and also more widely for the existing

communities in Wokingham. The proposals respond to the emerging Local Plan policy objective of shared use of sports facilities and pitches and take into account the findings and recommendations of the evidence base Strategies.

19. The University's Outline Application provides the location and indicative layout for the proposed sports hub, but the final facility mix together with its final design and layout, will be confirmed via Reserved Matters applications. The Reserved Matters stage will also confirm, amongst other matters: the delivery programme; the management of the sports facilities, and; the mechanisms for securing community use for the lifetime of the sports facilities.

# 1. Introduction

1.1. This document supports the

*Application for the phased development of a new community at Loddon Garden Village, comprising, in outline:*

- *up to 2,800 residential units to include up to 100 custom and self-build plots;*
- *2 primary schools (up to 3 forms of entry) to include early years provision and 1 secondary school (up to 12 forms of entry);*
- *one District Centre, to incorporate up to 11,000m<sup>2</sup> of Class E (Commercial, Business and Service, to include a food store of around 2,500m<sup>2</sup>), and Class F (Local Community and Learning);*
- *one Local Centre; to incorporate up to 2,400m<sup>2</sup> of Class E;*
- *a Sports Hub to include sports pitches and pavilion space;*
- *up to 4,250m<sup>2</sup> of further Class E, Class F, and sui generis development to include commercial, health care and public house;*
- *comprehensive green infrastructure including a Country Park, landscaping and public open space, and ecological enhancement measures;*
- *20 gypsy and traveller pitches;*
- *comprehensive drainage and flood alleviation measures to include Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and engineering measures within Loddon Valley for the River Loddon;*
- *internal road network including spine road with pedestrian and cycle connections and associated supporting infrastructure;*
- *new and modified public rights of way;*
- *associated utilities, infrastructure, and engineering works, including the undergrounding of overhead lines;*
- *Ground reprofiling to accommodate infrastructure, flood alleviation and development parcels;*
- *Up to 0.5ha of land adjoining St Bartholomew's church for use as cemetery;*
- *Electricity substation (up to 1.5ha)*

*All matters reserved other than access, incorporating:*

- *a new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to Lower Earley Way via a new 4th arm to the Meldreth Way roundabout;*
- *a new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular bridge over the M4;*
- *a new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular bridge over the River Loddon;*
- *a new vehicular access to the A327 Reading Road, via a new arm to the Observer Way roundabout;*
- *a new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to Thames Valley Science Park;*

- *an initial phase of internal roads with associated drainage, landscape and engineering works and ground reprofiling, between the A327 and the south eastern boundary of the site.*

*Application includes full permission for the change of use of 40.4 hectares of agricultural land to Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), 18.35 hectares of SANG link, and provision of Biodiversity Net Gain measures, the demolition and clearance of 20,809 m<sup>2</sup> of buildings and structures at the Centre for Dairy Research (CEDAR) and at Hall Farm, the demolition of 3 existing dwellings on Carter's Hill Lane, and the retention of specified buildings at Hall Farm.*

- 1.2. This report specifically considers the community sports facilities demand generated by the whole of the proposed allocation of Loddon Valley Garden Village (LVGV), with its 3,930 dwellings, not just the University's Application part which has "*up to 2,800 dwellings*". The report considers how this demand can be met, either on-site or off-site, and takes forwards the WBC policy objectives for community sport.
- 1.3. It takes into account the emerging policies contained in the Wokingham Borough Council Proposed Submission Plan 2023-2040, including the size of the allocation given in Policy SS13 of around 3,930 dwellings. This number of dwellings gives an estimated population for LVGV of 9,432 people, based on an average of 2.4 persons per dwelling - an approach consistent with the Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan (p44). It also considers the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (September 2024) (IDP).
- 1.4. In relation to community sports, the published evidence base documents appearing in the list of Evidence Studies supporting the WBC Local Plan Update Submission Plan are the Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report (August 2023) (PPS) and the Indoor Built Facilities Strategy (July 2024) (IBFS).
- 1.5. In addition, WBC Executive Committee considered and "*approved*" the Playing Pitch Strategy - Action Plan (August 2023) at their meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025 with the decision sheet stating that the Action Plan could be used "*as a basis for further work on the provision of outdoor sports facilities within the borough*". This Action Plan can therefore also be considered part of the evidence base, although the caveat "*as a basis for further work*" both confirms it has limitations, and that its findings and recommendations now require updating.
- 1.6. The key objective of WBC's emerging policies is to achieve the provision of community sports facilities in LVGV which can operate as shared or "*dual use*" facilities, i.e. the sports facilities are part of a school site but are also designed for and used by the community. The schools therefore have full access to the sports facilities during the school day, including for any extra-curricular activities, and the community access to the facilities after school hours on weekdays, at weekends, and in the school holidays.

1.7. The University's Outline Application therefore provides the location and indicative layout for:

- the shared sports and ancillary facilities such as the artificial grass pitches and car parking;
- sports and ancillary facilities which would be required to support community sport but not used by a school, such as social space;
- dedicated grass playing field space for each of the secondary school and primary school.

1.8. The education requirements for the secondary and primary schools are covered by the socio-economic chapter in the Environmental Statement.

## 2. Relevant policies and evidence base

2.1. The relevant parts of the emerging policies of the *Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040: Proposed Submission Plan* are considered below. These are the Policies SS13, HC2, HC4, plus Appendix C - Loddon Valley Garden Village: Development Guidelines.

### SS13 – Loddon Valley Garden Village

#### Development principles

*Phased delivery of:*

*a) Around 3,930 dwellings...*

*c) Schools, including:*

- i. Two 3-form entry primary schools (including appropriate onsite early years provision); and*
- ii. An 8-form entry secondary school, with additional land reserved to enable expansion to 12-form entry with sixth form.*

#### Place shaping principles

*3. The siting, layout, and form of development, including landscaping should:*

*.....*

*c) .... The promotion of community facilities for shared use, such as outdoor and indoor sports and leisure provision will be strongly encouraged;*

## HC2 – Community Infrastructure

### New Facilities

1. *Development proposals for the provision of new or extended community facilities will be supported where there is an identified present or future need, and should be:*
  - a) *Of a suitable nature and scale to meet identified needs, be compatible with the character of the area and be sufficiently flexible to meet changing needs over time;*
  - b) *Designed to accommodate a range of community uses, where appropriate. The co-location of facilities, including access for appropriate organisations and the local community will be strongly encouraged;*
  - c) *Accessible by the community and promote social inclusion; and*
  - d) *Provided as part of a large residential schemes where development increases demand beyond current capacity, or generates a newly arising need.*
2. *New community facilities must be supported by appropriate arrangements to secure the future management and maintenance of the facility.*

## HC4 – Open space, sports, recreation and play facilities

### New Facilities and Residential Development

3. *Development proposals for open space, sport and recreation and play facilities will be encouraged and supported, in line with other policies in the Local Plan Update and Sport England guidance. New open space, sports, recreation and play facilities should be well related to the communities they serve and should, where possible, promote their dual use by being co-located with other community uses, such as schools.*
4. *Development proposals for residential development involving a net increase in the number of dwellings, will be required to provide or contribute to the provision of open space, sport and recreation and play facilities and must demonstrate how they meet the standards in the table below.*

Type (Outdoor sports)	Borough standard (ha per 1,000 population)
Outdoor sports facilities	1.44
Type (indoor sports)	Borough standard (m <sup>2</sup> per 1,000 population)
Sports hall (4-badminton court) including indoor bowls (2 rinks) and Health & Fitness gyms (20 stations)	65.43
Swimming pool	8.26
Activity halls	41.31

5. Open space, sports, recreation and play facilities should be provided on-site. Where this is not possible or achievable, a financial contribution will be sought towards off-site provision.

#### Responding to the emerging policies SS13, HC2 and HC4

2.2. This Sports Justification Report is based on the long-term development generated sports demand of the whole LVGV allocation, which is proposed to have 3,930 dwellings in accordance with policy SS13. This gives an estimated population of approximately 9,432 people, based on 2.4 persons per dwelling. This housing multiplier is consistent with the approach used for the Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan.

2.3. The proposals are for a shared use sports hub. Sports hubs are promoted by Sport England as being sites providing a variety of sports facilities, which provide for a variety of sports activities. They are promoted by Sport England because they are considered to be more sustainable and cost effective than smaller, more limited sports facilities. The proposed sports hub will be shared with the secondary school and primary school, and will be easily accessible to everyone in the allocation. The University's Outline Application is therefore in accordance with Policy SS13 and HC2, and the justification for the different elements of the sports hub are addressed in later sections of this report.

2.4. The total playing field area will need to provide both for the community and education. This report considers the pitch space needed to provide for community sport, whilst the socio-economic chapter of the Environmental Statement considers the education aspects.

2.5. The final facility mix for the sports hub will need to be confirmed at the Reserved Matters stage, along with the detailed design and layout, the delivery programme, and

mechanisms for securing community use long term. The University's Outline Application provides the sports hub location, and the masterplan's indicative layout also demonstrates that there is sufficient suitable space for all of the potential sports facilities.

- 2.6. There may also be some justification for off-site investment into sport, for example into existing pitch sites providing for community rugby and hockey. On-site provision for these other community pitch sports is not justified, either because the new population will be too small for a viable facility, or there is sufficient potential capacity off-site to meet the expected needs of the population. This is confirmed by both the Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan and by the IDP.
- 2.7. The proposed Borough-wide standards in Policy HC4 were produced prior the publication of the relevant evidence strategies; the Playing Pitch Strategy (2023), the Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan (2023), and the Indoor Built Facilities Strategy (2024). The proposed standards per 1,000 population for indoor and outdoor sports facilities in HC4 are not derived from, do not relate to, nor reflect the findings or recommendations of the evidence base Strategies, and are not therefore robust or appropriate to apply to LVGV. Furthermore, the proposed policy HC4 is not consistent with NPPF para 103 which requires that planning policies "*should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.*"

## Wokingham Local Plan Update 2023-2040, Proposed Submission Plan Appendix C

### Loddon Valley Garden Village: Development Guidelines: Appendix B4

.....

#### Community

*ii) Provide two new 3-form entry primary schools on site (including appropriate on-site early years provision) and an 8-form entry secondary school, with additional land reserved to enable expansion to 12-form entry with sixth form. .... Space should also be reserved for appropriate playing pitch provision. Playing pitches should be co-located with other community uses to promote their accessibility and dual use.*

*B4.8. The key infrastructure requirements for the Loddon Valley Garden Village are set out in the council's latest Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). A bespoke infrastructure funding agreement should be secured and based on the value captured from the development, and should be spent on infrastructure locally, and in the surrounding areas where suitable.*

## Responding to the Loddon Valley Garden Village Development Guidelines

- 2.8. The University's Outline Application responds to these Development Guidelines proposing that the schools' artificial turf pitches are part of the shared/dual use sports hub. Both the secondary and primary schools also have additional dedicated grass playing field space, as does the community.
- 2.9. The Policy B4.8 recognises the potential need for off-site investment via S106 where there is justification. Such justification is usually provided by the evidence base Strategies, at Wokingham these are the Playing Pitch Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan, and the Indoor Built Facilities Strategy.
- 2.10. The education aspects of the shared /dual use sports facilities are covered by the socio-economic chapter of the Environmental Statement.

## Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Sept 2024): Loddon Valley Garden Village

- 2.11. The **Introduction** to the IDP states that its purpose is to:

*... "to identify key infrastructure requirements needed to support the Local Plan Update (LPU) – the plan that sets out the strategy for managing development to 2040 and providing an appropriate basis for housing, employment and infrastructure provision over the longer term. This will include the allocation of land to support that strategy. (p2)*

- 2.12. The **Introduction** section of the IDP anticipates that the IDP will be updated:

*For the avoidance of doubt, the IDP does not set out definitive timescales or allocate funding. A scheme may be added to, or taken out of, the IDP as necessary. Therefore, the inclusion of a scheme within the IDP does not guarantee it will be delivered. It also cannot predict changes in legislation or new regulations which may affect the council's ability to deliver or facilitate infrastructure. Updates to the IDP may be undertaken as new information and data becomes available. (p2)*

- 2.13. Within the **Guide to this document**, the IDP provides further confirmation that it is likely to be updated as the "strategic scale development is planned", including the LVGV allocation:

*"Infrastructure projects, costings, timescale and priorities are subject to further assessment as the projects progress and more information becomes available. This may as a result lead to further updates."*

- 2.14. The IDP (September 2024) has a section relating to the LVGV, and the sports provision is addressed on page 28. Its suggestions are:

**Indoor sports:** Sports hall of at least 1,532 m<sup>2</sup> comprising 4 courts and a 20 station health and fitness gym. Essential delivery on completion of 1,500 homes at indicative cost of £9.2m, “*could be delivered as dual use with the proposed secondary school facilities*”. Funding to be confirmed (S106, CIL, Other).

**Outdoor sports:** “*Sports hub consisting of: 2 x full size 3G artificial grass pitches, 4 x adult natural grass pitches, pavilion facilities (at least 4 team changing rooms)*.” Essential delivery with timing to be agreed. Cost of £6m and funding to be confirmed (S106, CIL, Other). As with the indoor facilities, “*could be delivered as dual use with the proposed secondary school facilities*”.

- 2.15. Material to the consideration of the IDP in guiding the planning application for LGV is that it does not reflect the findings and recommendations of the “*robust and up-to-date assessments*” [NPPF para 103] of the evidence base strategies. The Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy (2024) findings are that there are sufficient sports hall and fitness gym spaces up to 2040, and no new facilities are required. The Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan recommends the provision of two 3G AGPs plus 4 grass pitches [size not given] on p75 and in Appendix B, however this would be over-provision for the LVGV allocation population.
- 2.16. This inconsistency between the IDP and the evidence base strategies may arise from the fact that the IDP was published before the evidence base Strategies, although the Strategies are dated earlier than the IDP.
- 2.17. The IDP states a 1,500 dwelling trigger for the sports hall delivery, and the Outdoor Sports is “*Timing to be agreed*”. The Reserved Matters will therefore need to confirm the phasing of the sports facilities at the sports hub site.
- 2.18. Given the uncertainties over the sports facility mix, the University’s Outline Application therefore adopts a precautionary approach by providing the location and indicative layout for a sports hub with the following facilities, which will be confirmed at the Reserved Matters stage:
  - a 4-court hall to the community specifications recommended by Sport England<sup>1</sup>;
  - space for a 20-station health and fitness gym;
  - two full size plus one 9v9 size artificial grass pitches with football turf (AGP) which are sports lit and fenced, designed to meet the specifications of the Football Association 3G AGP Register (or its successor) – which will enable them to be used for matches;

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/affordable-sports-halls-main-document-2015.pdf?VersionId=3yEOo0yUI.32gE57t9wxrjRCLbYRluOe>

- grass playing field areas, with sufficient pitch space for both the education needs and community needs, at Sport England standards<sup>2</sup>;
- changing and ancillary space to support both the school and community requirements, at Sport England standards<sup>3</sup>;
- social space and reception area;
- multi-use games area marked out for netball and tennis, fenced and sports lit to Sport England standards<sup>4</sup>;
- appropriate levels of car parking to support the community use which is both accessible and shared with the school.

2.19. A national statement from Sport England on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025<sup>5</sup> confirmed that no new 3G AGPs with rubber crumb infill will be permitted after 2031, and that alternative surfaces for artificial grass pitches (AGPs) are currently being developed. The University's Outline Application responds to this change by proposing that the Reserved Matters should include the appropriate specification for the artificial grass pitches with football turf (AGPs).

### 3. Playing field area required – community element

3.1. This section of the report firstly reviews the modelling contained in the Playing Pitch Action Plan (2023) and then updates the modelling to take into account the ability to use the proposed artificial turf pitches for matches at the weekend. The outcome of the updated modelling justifies the proposed mix of artificial and grass pitches at the LVGV sports hub, as set out in the University's Outline Application.

#### Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan modelling

3.2. The Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan (2023) (the 'Action Plan') was considered and approved by Wokingham Borough Council's Executive Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025. Although it does not appear as an evidence base report in the list of Studies supporting the emerging Local Plan, its recommendations guide what should be provided at LVGV, although with the noted caveat of the WBC Executive Committee of 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025 that it should be used "*as a basis for further work*".

3.3. Of particular note is that the Action Plan, having considered the wider provision for pitch sports in Wokingham, recommended that only football should be provided on-

---

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/outdoor-surfaces?section=natural\\_turf\\_sports\\_pitches](https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/outdoor-surfaces?section=natural_turf_sports_pitches)

<sup>3</sup> [https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2-clubhouse-design.pdf?VersionId=xpeoo1b.2dZHV7i9pfiYWK\\_s3Kojxujm](https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2-clubhouse-design.pdf?VersionId=xpeoo1b.2dZHV7i9pfiYWK_s3Kojxujm)

<sup>4</sup> [https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/outdoor-sports-lighting-briefing-note-sept-2010.pdf?VersionId=88JTF6c1lp\\_V98\\_ErWcSo8z8W8aBlvI9](https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/outdoor-sports-lighting-briefing-note-sept-2010.pdf?VersionId=88JTF6c1lp_V98_ErWcSo8z8W8aBlvI9)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/position-statement-on-3g-pitches>

site within the LVGV allocation. The development generated demand for cricket, rugby and hockey could all be met off-site.

3.4. The Action Plan used the number of dwellings for LVGV allocation from the Revised Growth Strategy (consultation period November 2021 – January 2022) and estimated the match pitch requirements for football. At that time, the LVGV proposed allocation had 4,500 dwellings, giving a total future population of 10,800 people, see Table 1.

*Table 1: PPS Action Plan extract of Table 2.27*

	Match Demand (MES)
Adult football	1.67 matches per week
Junior football	9.01 matches per week
Mini football	8.74 matches per week

Note: based on 4,500 dwellings and population of 10,800.

3.5. It should be noted that the estimated demand is for matches per week, measured in Match Equivalent Sessions (MES). The Action Plan does not provide the justification for the recommendation that LVGV “*Could provide two 3G AGPs and four grass pitches along with ancillary provision to support this*” (p75). However, it would appear that the Action Plan recommendation for the grass pitch provision assumes that all of the matches are on grass pitches, and that most matches would kick off at the same time.

3.6. The 3G AGP cost given on p75 of the Action Plan is £1,075,000, which was the approximate cost of one full sized 3G AGP. The provision of a second 3G AGP at LGV appears to respond to the identified Borough-wide deficit of this type of facility, not the demand generated by the LVGV allocation.

3.7. The Action Plan (p75) also suggested a “*Four team changing pavilion with club room*” at an estimated cost of £755,000. This number of changing rooms is not explained and does not relate to the pitch provision suggested by the IDP. Sport England’s and the national governing body’s standard approaches are that two changing rooms should be provided per adult or 11v11 youth size pitch, whether this is grass or artificial. As written, the IDP would therefore lead to a need for 12 changing rooms, so very significantly inconsistent with the PPS Action Plan.

1.9. The PPS Action Plan (Table 2.28) also provided, again for the higher population level of 10,800, the estimated training demand. For football, this was estimated to be 40.22 match equivalent sessions per week, or the equivalent of just over one full size 3G AGP. This PPS calculation is based on the football national governing bodies’ standardised approach of assuming that each full size AGP provides for 38 training sessions per week, and that on average, teams each train for one hour per week. The use of this methodology is confirmed in the PPS Assessment report’s para 3.124.

## Updating the football modelling for the LVGV allocation as a whole

3.8. There are two elements to the modelling of pitch needs for football. The simpler aspect is the estimation of the weekday evening training demand from football teams. The more complex modelling relates to the match needs at weekends.

### Training needs for LVGV

3.9. The Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan Table 2.28 provides the estimated training needs for football for LVGV at the bigger allocation size proposed at the Revised Growth Strategy stage (i.e. 4,500 dw). With the now lower population level for the LVGV allocation (ie. 3,930 dw), the training demand for football drops to about 0.9 full size AGP. One full size AGP is therefore justified on-site to meet the development generated demand from LVGV.

3.10. However, the Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan both identify a Borough-wide deficit of AGPs, so the PPS recommendation is for two full-size 3G AGPs to be provided at the sports hub, in order to meet this wider deficit. The IDP reflects the PPS recommendation, and recognises that the funding for a second AGP would be different from one provided to meet the demand generated from the development.

### Estimating the match requirements

3.11. There are a number of steps in estimating the demand for football matches and then modelling of how this demand might be met by a combination of artificial pitches (AGP) and grass pitches. The Football Association (FA) allows community clubs to have affiliated matches on either 3G AGPs or on grass pitches, so long as the 3G AGP are recorded on the current FA 3G AGP Register.

### What is the football demand?

3.12. The proposed allocation at LVGV will have a lower number of dwellings and therefore lower population level than used in the Playing Pitch Action Plan modelling. The development generated match demand for football for 3,930 dwellings with a population of 9,432 pro rata to the PPS Action Plan modelling, is given in Table 2.

**Table 2:** *Development generated match pitch demand for LVGV*

	<b>PPS Action Plan estimate (Table 2.27)</b> <b>Number of home matches per week</b>	<b>LVGV pro rata match demand</b> <b>Number of home matches per week</b>
	<b>4,500 dwellings; population of 10,800</b>	<b>3,930 dwellings; population of 9,432</b>
Adult football	1.67 matches per week	1.46 matches per week
Junior football	9.01 matches per week	7.87 matches per week
Mini football	8.74 matches per week	7.63 matches per week

What size of pitches are required?

3.13. The next step is to translate the football match demand into the number and size of the pitches required. The Sport England Playing Pitch Guidance (2013)<sup>6</sup> recommends the use of the Football Association's recommended pitch sizes, see Figure 1, which appear within Table 3.2 in the PPS 2023. This gives the size of the match pitch for each age group/format.

*Figure 1: The FA Recommended Pitch Sizes*

<b>The FA Recommended Pitch Sizes</b>					
Age grouping	Type	Recommended size <b>without</b> runoff (safety area around pitch)		Recommended size <b>including</b> runoff (safety area around pitch)	
		Length x width (metres)	Length x width (metres)	Length x width (metres)	Length x width (metres)
Mini-Soccer U7/U8	5v5	37	27	43	33
Mini-Soccer U9/U10	7v7	55	37	61	43
Youth U11/U12	9v9	73	46	79	52
Youth U13/U14	11v11	82	50	88	56
Youth U15/U16	11v11	91	55	97	61
Youth U17/U18	11v11	100	64	106	70
Over 18 (senior ages)	11v11	100	64	106	70

How many pitches are needed?

3.14. The quality of a grass pitch (natural turf pitch) determines how much it can be used, i.e. its 'capacity', which is measured by match equivalent sessions (MES). For football, the quality assessment is that set out in Sport England PPS Guidance, Appendix 2c, Step 4 (see Figure 2). The grass pitches at the sports hub, proposed in the University's

<sup>6</sup> [https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/pps-guidance-october-2013-updated.pdf?VersionId=afnAz9cYWu47lnVNn\\_t3QCSem9.uRnwg](https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/pps-guidance-october-2013-updated.pdf?VersionId=afnAz9cYWu47lnVNn_t3QCSem9.uRnwg)

Outline Application, will be constructed to a 'Good' standard, and maintained long-term to at least 'Standard' quality. This means that even in the long-term, at least four sessions/matches per week can be played on mini pitches (7v7 and 5v5), and two sessions/matches can be played on each youth and adult pitch.

*Figure 2: Sport England PPS Guidance pitch capacity*

1. Pitch carrying capacity - As a guide, details are provided below on the number of match equivalent sessions a week that a natural grass pitch is likely to be able to regularly accommodate, based on an agreed quality rating, without adversely affecting its current quality:

Agreed pitch quality rating	Adult Football	Youth Football	Mini Soccer
	Number of match equivalent sessions a week		
Good	3	4	6
Standard	2	2	4
Poor	1	1	2

- 3.15. An artificial pitch with football turf (AGP), currently constructed as 3G AGPs, has effectively no limits on the number of hours that they can be used, which means that they can be used by both the schools and by the community. Use for 30+ hours per week per AGP is not unusual. AGPs require management and maintenance to ensure their quality is retained long term, with the level of maintenance increasing with the level of use. They also require resurfacing, with most needing to be done approximately every 10 years.
- 3.16. Given the estimated demand for football training during weekdays arising from the LVGV population, a full size AGP is expected to be provided in the sports hub, which can be used by both the school and the community. This will need to meet the specifications of the FA 3G AGP Register (or its successor). As the pitch is a shared /dual use facility it will be available to the community both on weekday evenings for training, and at the weekends for matches.
- 3.17. The Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan which was signed off by WBC along with Sport England and the national governing bodies of sport, recommended a second full size 3G AGP at the sports hub, responding to the Borough-wide identified deficit of this type of facility. The funding for this second 3G AGP is still to be confirmed, but given the suggested infrastructure in the IDP of two full size 3G AGPs, the University's Outline Application assumes that two full size artificial grass pitches with football turf (AGPs) will be provided.
- 3.18. The University's Outline Application additionally proposes a 9v9 size AGP which will be wholly on the primary school site. However, it is proposed that there will be a direct pedestrian link between it and the shared/dual use secondary school sports facilities. This means that it could also be used by the community outside of school hours, and potentially managed as part of the sports hub. This smaller size AGP will provide

additional capacity both for football training on weekday evenings, and matches at weekends.

### When are the pitches needed?

3.19. The PPS 2023 (p55) provides this simple summary of the peak demand for community football matches in Wokingham, all of which are at weekends. No further breakdown or detail is provided.

- Adult male football: Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning;
- Adult female football: Sunday afternoon;
- Junior football: Saturday morning and Saturday afternoon;
- Mini Soccer: Saturday morning.

3.20. This peak time information has been used in Table 5 to identify how many pitches are likely to be required at different times across the weekend, for each of the different formats of the game (column heading **Estimated peak times % match play**). The Junior football is assumed to be split equally between Saturday mornings and afternoons, and the bulk of the men's football matches are assumed to be on Sunday mornings, as this is the usual pattern.

3.21. Table 3 shows the PPS Assessment Report 2023 findings for the team numbers for each size of pitch at a Borough-wide level (the Team Generation Rate or 'TGR'), given in its Table 3.16. It is appropriate to use the TGR Borough-wide figures because the PPS 2023 Southern sub-area is currently largely rural, but its characteristics will become increasingly urban when LVGV is built out, bringing it closer to the higher, Borough-wide average.

*Table 3: Borough-wide teams numbers from PPS 2023*

Number of teams Borough wide for each pitch size				
	Adult (16-45 yrs)	Junior Football 11v11 (12-15 yrs)	Junior Football 9v9 (10-11 yrs)	Mini soccer 7v7 (8-9 yrs)
Male	95	124	89	141
Female	12	32	25	143
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>Total combined</b>		<b>270</b>		<b>284</b>

3.22. Table 4 converts Table 3 into percentages of demand for each gender and pitch size. The information from this table is then used in Table 5 (column heading: **Total number of matches needed per week with estimated splits**).

*Table 4: Percentage split of teams from PPS by pitch size*

		% of teams for each pitch size			
		Junior Football 11v11	Junior Football 9v9	Mini soccer 7v7	Mini soccer 5v5
Adult					
Male	0.9	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.5
Female	0.1	0.1	0.1		
<i>Total</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>1</i>		<i>1</i>

*Table 5: Number of community pitches needed to meet LVGV demand*

<b>Format/ age group</b>	<b>Total number of home matches per week (from Table 2)</b>	<b>Total number of home matches needed per week with estimated splits</b>	<b>Match peak time (from PPS)</b>	<b>Estimated peak times % match play</b>				<b>Weekly pitch requirement for matches and peak time</b>
				<b>Sat am</b>	<b>Sat pm</b>	<b>Sun am</b>	<b>Sun pm</b>	
Adult Male	1.46	1.3	Sat pm and Sun am		0.35	0.65		1 pitch Sat pm alternate weeks, 1 pitch Sun am
Adult Female		0.1	Sun pm				1.0	1 pitch Sun pm alternate weeks
Youth 11v11 Male	7.87	3.9	Sat am and Sat pm	0.5	0.5			4 pitches spread over Sat am & pm
Youth 11v11 Female		0.8						1 pitch either Sat am or pm
9v9 Boys		2.4		0.5	0.5			2 pitches either Sat am or pm plus one pitch alternate weeks either Sat am or pm
9v9 Girls		0.8						1 pitch either Sat am or pm
7v7 Mixed	7.63	3.8	Sat am	1.0				4 pitches Sat am
5v5 Mixed		3.8						4 pitches Sat am

## Programming the weekend matches

- 3.23. The next step is to consider how these matches might use the two full size and one 9v9 AGPs at the sports hub site, as FA affiliated matches can be played on either AGPs or on grass pitches.
- 3.24. There are Football Association Handbook<sup>7</sup> rules for the length of adult, youth and mini matches, summarised in Table 6.

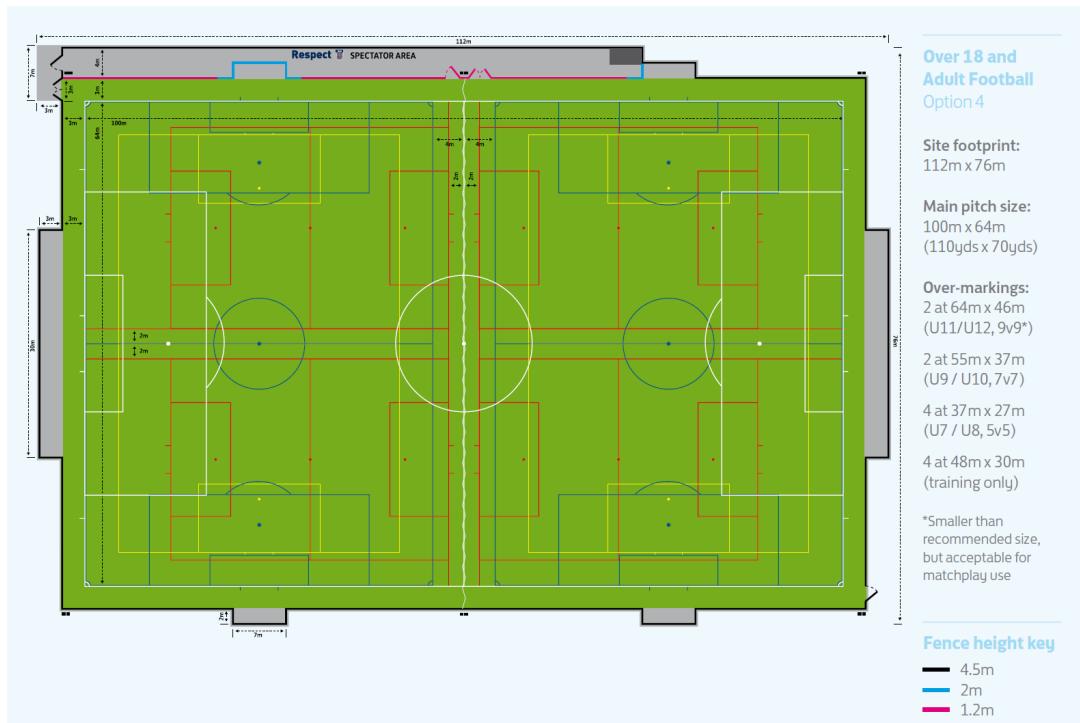
*Table 6: Summary of match length for different formats*

	Playing time (minutes)	Half time length (minutes)	Total match time including half time	
			Minimum (minutes)	Maximum (minutes)
5v5	20 - 40	5 -15	25	55
7v7	40 -50	5 -15	25	65
9v9	40 - 60	5 -15	45	75
U13/U14	50 - 70	5 -15	55	85
U15/U16	50 - 80	5 -15	55	90
U17/U18	50 - 90	5 -15	55	105
Adult (standard league)	90 + 15 mins extra time	15 mins	105	120

- 3.25. A period of approx. 15 minutes is usually sufficient between consecutive matches if they are being scheduled for the same pitch.
- 3.26. Walking football, small-sided football and disability teams usually play for a relatively short time, may use only part of full size pitch or a smaller size pitch, and usually play outside of the peak match times. They are therefore not included in this weekend programming, although it is clear that there is enough spare capacity to accommodate these important teams, particularly on a Sunday.
- 3.27. The AGPs proposed at the sports hub will be marked out for a number of different pitch sizes. The pitch layouts given in Figure 3 and Figure 4 are from *The FA Guide to 3G Football Turf Pitch Design Principles and Layouts (2013)*.
- 3.28. Figure 3 shows how the multiple markings of the full-size artificial pitch can provide: one 11v11 full size pitch, two 9v9 and two 7v7. The 5v5 U7/U8 use would be on the 48 x 30m pitches, allowing four matches/training sessions to be played at the same time. The pitch can be managed to maximise its usage, say with 2 x 5v5 on half of the pitch, whilst the rest is used for 9v9 or 7v7. Two full size AGPs are proposed at the sport hub.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/lawsandrules>

*Figure 3: Design of a full size artificial pitch*



3.29. Figure 4 provides design information for a 9v9 AGP. This suggests that this smaller pitch at the could provide for: 1 x 9v9, 1 x 7v7, or 3 x U7/U8 5v5.

*Figure 4: Design of a 9v9 size artificial pitch*



3.30. The options for marking out pitches, the match lengths for different age groups and the peak time requirements across the weekend can be synthesised into an indicative programme for the proposed two AGPs which are suggested by the IDP, plus the proposed 9v9 AGP. This programming demonstrates that only one 11v11 youth grass pitch would be needed in addition to the AGPs in order to cater for all of the potential community football matches which the whole LVGV allocation can now be expected to generate. Figure 5 provides this indicative programming.

3.31. The indicative programming demonstrates that the community match requirements for football could therefore be met on:

- AGPs which are designed and maintained at a quality to be included in the FA 3G AGP Register (or its successor) -
  - 2 x full size on shared sports hub/secondary school site;
  - 1 x 9v9 size on shared sports hub/primary school site;
- 1 x youth 11v11 grass pitch with dimensions 97x61m including run-off, being a pitch with dedicated community use.

3.32. In fact, this combination of football pitches at the sports hub site provides spare capacity for the further growth in the game, particularly on Sundays, as shown by the white and blue colours in the indicative pitch programming (Figure 5).

3.33. This analysis confirms that the PPS Action Plan's recommendation for 4 grass pitches was both based on the larger allocation dwelling numbers from the Revised Growth Strategy of 2021, and the assumption of no match use of the 3G AGPs. This level of provision is therefore not justified. The IDP's suggestion of "*4 x adult natural grass pitches*" is similarly not justified.

3.34. In summary, the proposed and justified shared use football provision in the University's Outline Application is:

- AGPs which are designed and maintained at a quality to be included in the FA 3G AGP Register (or its successor)
  - 2 x full size on shared sports hub/secondary school site;
  - 1 x 9v9 size on shared sports hub/primary school site;
- 1 x youth 11v11 grass pitch with dimensions 97x61m including run-off, pitch with dedicated community use;
- Space for a further youth 11v11 grass pitch but area to be marked out as required, and to have dedicated community use;
- Ancillary facilities including changing facilities, social space and car parking (see para 3.35).

*Figure 5: Indicative programming for AGPs, plus grass pitch*

### LGV with 3930 dwellings, 9,432 population

Winter: start September - end April

KEY

Regular weekly bookings
Bookings alternate weeks
Pitch free

AGP 1

## AGP 2

1

AGP 3 9v9

1

## Grass pitches

### **Pitch A: Youth 11v11 grass football**

Saturday	am	pm
	Youth 11v11	Youth 11v11
Sunday	am	pm

Nortoft

## Loddon Garden Village

## Sports Justification Report

July 2025

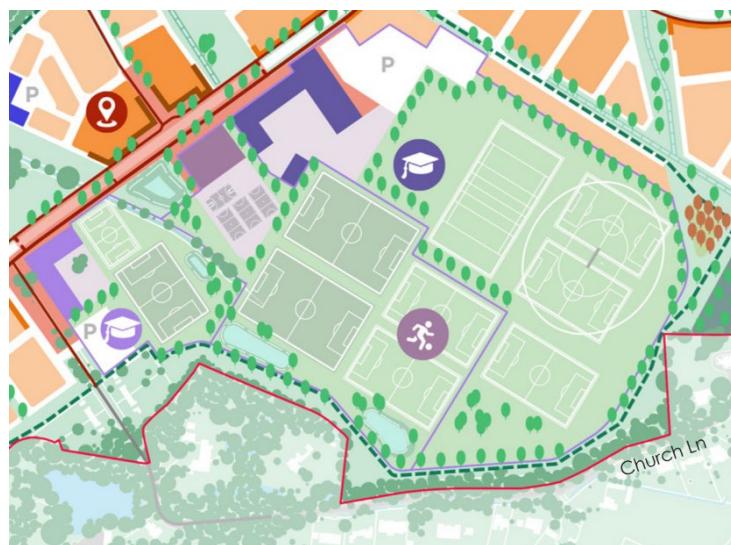
## Ancillary facilities to support community football

- 3.35. The University's Outline Application provides the location and space for the ancillary facilities which may be developed at the sports hub, and these would form part of the shared use sports hall building. For example, there would be a need to provide four 'clean' team changing rooms with lockers to service the two full size AGPs, i.e. two per pitch. These shared changing rooms would have the community specification set down by the Football Foundation / Football Association / Sport England, which is higher than the specification for education alone.
- 3.36. The grass football pitch for community would also require another community specification set of two changing rooms, but they can again be shared with the secondary school.
- 3.37. The application additionally provides the necessary space for other ancillary facilities such social space with a café/kitchenette, a reception area and an office for the facilities manager. Sufficient shared car and cycle parking, with appropriate access for both the school and the community is provided.
- 3.38. All these will be detailed in the Reserved Matters Application.

## 4. Education playing field needs

- 4.1. In addition to the shared use/dual use AGPs, both the secondary and primary schools will require their own 'dedicated' grass playing field areas. Indicative pitch markings for a rugby, cricket and football are therefore shown in Figure 6 in order to illustrate how these could be provided.
- 4.2. The greatest flexibility of the secondary school/sports hub site would be achieved without fencing dividing up the site, although such fencing could be installed if required. An indicative fence line is therefore shown on the masterplan.

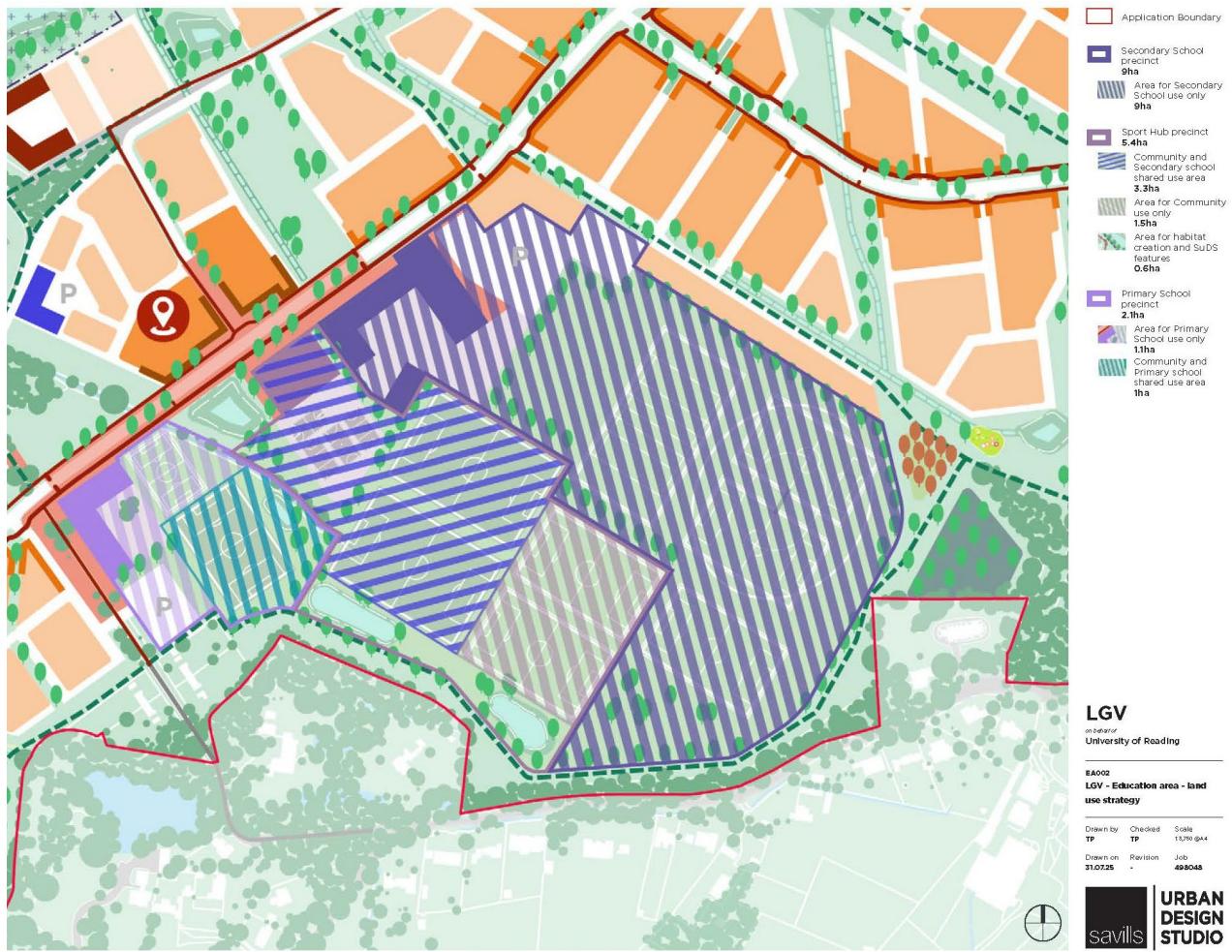
*Figure 6: Sports hub detail from masterplan*



## 5. Indicative masterplan of the sports hub

- 5.1. The indicative plan in Figure 7 show how the sports hub layout meets the needs of both the community and the schools, maximising the shared use of facilities and pitches. The pitches and facilities would be constructed to the relevant Sport England or national governing body specification.
- 5.2. The legend for Figure 7 shows which parts of the sports hub are proposed to be shared, and which will be only be used by the schools, or by the community. The approximate areas for each element is also provided.

Figure 7: Education and Community Sports Area - Indicative land use strategy



## 6. Indoor and other sports facilities

6.1. The Indoor Built Facilities Strategy (July 2024) is the robust and up-to-date evidence base for the consideration of the other potential sports facilities on site, and although dated just before the IDP (September 2024), was only published in early 2025. The following section considers the potential provision of a community sports hall and fitness gym at the sports hub, along with community use of the multi-use games area (MUGA).

### Sports hall

6.2. The IDP suggests that LVGV should provide a shared/dual use 4-court sports hall on site. The size is given as 1,532 sqm, which is the size of a community 4-court hall plus its associated ancillary facilities.

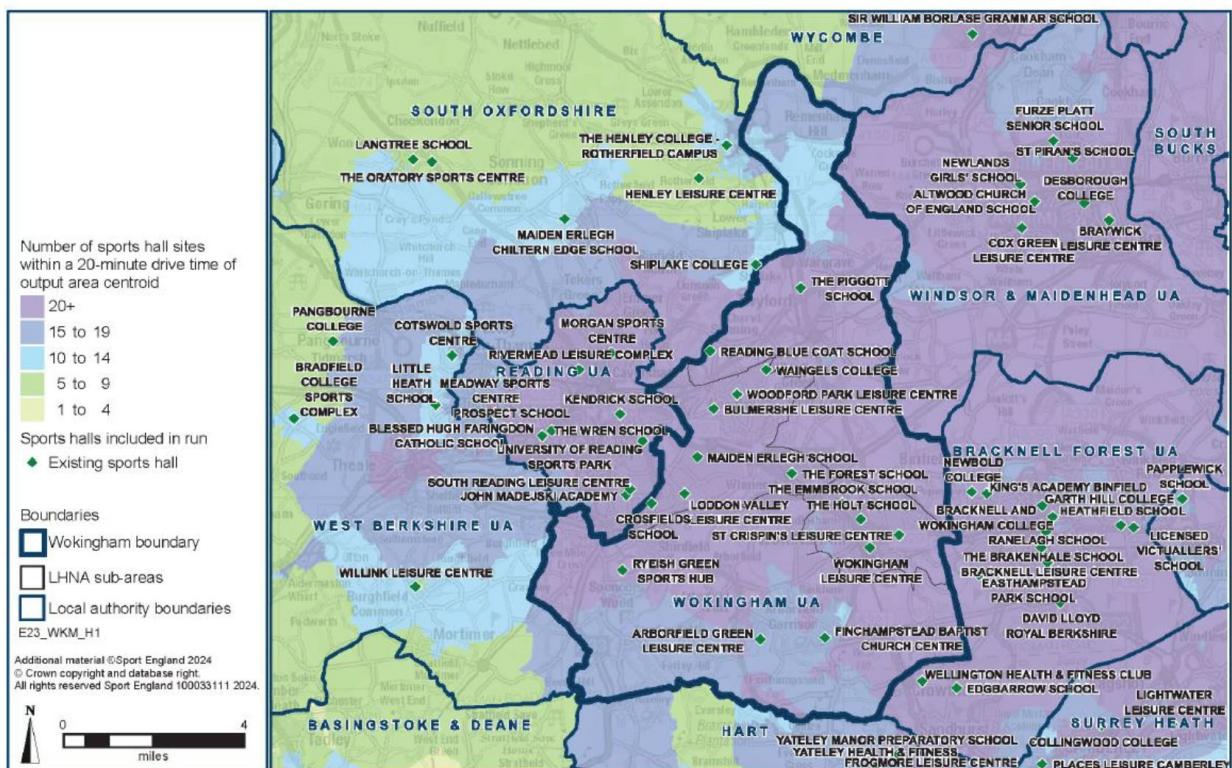
- 6.3. A community size sports hall is slightly larger than one for education alone, its design is better, and its associated changing is of a higher quality, including the provision of lockers. It therefore costs more than an education standard sports hall.
- 6.4. The Sport England Sports Facilities Calculator (May 2025)<sup>8</sup> gives for a population of 9,432 at LVGV a development generated demand of 0.6 of a 4-court hall, or 0.06 of a sport hall per 1,000 population.
- 6.5. If a shared use sports hall is to be provided on site, one approach may therefore be to use the value of the demand generated by the development to upgrade the education standard sports hall on the LGV site to one suitable for community use.
- 6.6. However, the Indoor Built Facilities Strategy conclusion on p30 states:
 

*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.*
- 6.7. This suggests that the demand could be met through existing spare capacity at reasonably accessible facilities off-site. The map extract from p28 of the Strategy in Figure 8 shows the density of the existing sports halls across Wokingham and confirms that all of the LVGV allocation area is within a 20-minute drive of at least 20 sports hall sites which are currently open for community use.
- 6.8. The 20-minute drive time is a standard methodology for this type of strategy, and reflects the methodology and findings from the Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM) Report which is listed as Appendix A to the Strategy, though is not included within the published study.

---

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.activeplacespower.com/pages/sportsfacilitycalculator>

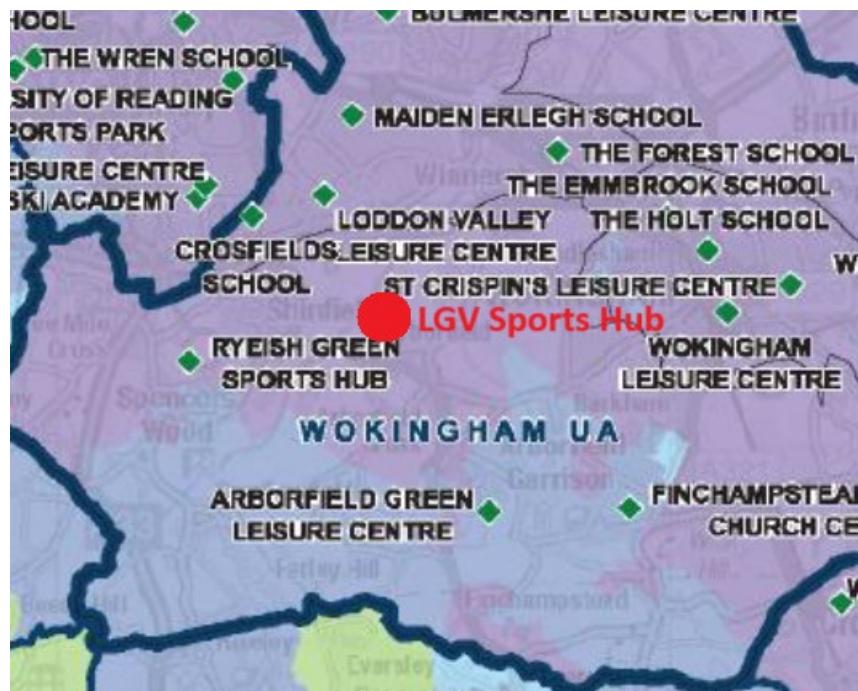
Figure 8: Sports halls within a 20-minute drive time from IBFS



6.9. The closest existing sports halls with community access to the proposed sports hub site are shown in the zoomed in version of this map (see Figure 9) with the added approximate location of the sports hub site. The following information is from the Strategy pp25-26, 28, with the travel times from Google maps:

- Loddon Valley Leisure Centre: 10 court sports hall built in 1987. Public facility and available daytimes and evenings. Approximately 2.2 miles from the sports hub site, about 11 minutes' cycle or 8 minutes' drive;
- Ryeish Green Sports Hub: 4-court sports hall built in 2004. Public facility and available daytimes and evenings. Approximately 2.3 miles from the sports hub site, about 11 minutes' cycle or 8 minutes' drive;
- Arborfield Green Leisure Centre: 8 court sports hall built in 2017 and open for 41 hours per week at evenings and weekends. Shared use with education. Approximately 3.9 miles from sports hub site, about 18 minutes' cycle or 9 minutes' drive;
- Crosfields Leisure Centre: 5 court sports hall built in 1999. Shared use with education. Approximately 3.9 miles from sports hub site, about 10 minutes' cycle or 6 minutes' drive.

Figure 9: Location of proposed sports hub with surrounding sports halls



6.10. The relevant evidence base, the Indoor Built Facilities Strategy's conclusion that there *"is sufficient [sports hall space] to meet current and future demand, up to 2040"* is therefore not consistent with the IDP's suggestion of a community size 4-court sports hall at LVGV. The Strategy was published in early 2025, although it was dated at around the same time as the IDP.

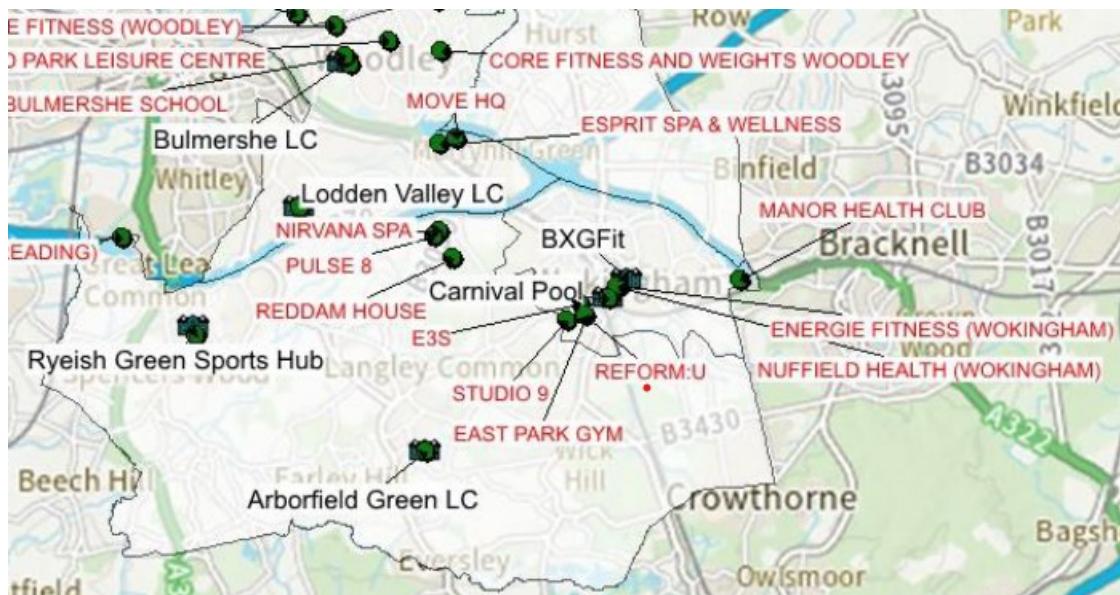
6.11. Given the need at the Reserved Matters stage to confirm the final facility mix at the sports hub site, the University's Outline Application provides the location and indicative layout for the sports hub including a community sports hall sized building, as suggested by the IDP.

#### Gym – 20 station

6.12. The IDP includes a suggestion for the provision of a *"20 station health and fitness gym"* in LVGV. The approximate internal area for a gym of this size would be around 100 sqm.

6.13. The Indoor Built Facilities Strategy addresses fitness suites with fitness stations in its Section 6, Health and Fitness. The Strategy's map on p38 and the sites list in Table 6.2 shows that there are a number of sites easily accessible to the whole LVGV allocation area, see Figure 10. The Strategy assessment in relation to Accessibility (p42) does not provide a travel time for this type of facility, but notes that *"Public access to a gym is widely available"*.

Figure 10: Health and fitness locations at 2024, IBFS extract



6.14. The closest public fitness gyms recorded by the Strategy are the same as for the sports halls, excluding the dual use site at Crosfield:

- Loddon Valley Leisure Centre: 75 stations, built in 1987. Public facility and available daytimes and evenings. Approximately 2.2 miles from the sports hub site, about 11 minutes' cycle or 8 minutes' drive;
- Ryeish Green Sports Hub: 45 stations, built in 2017. Public facility and available daytimes and evenings. Approximately 2.3 miles from the sports hub site, about 11 minutes' cycle or 8 minutes' drive;
- Arborfield Green Leisure Centre: 57 stations, built in 2018. Approximately 3.9 miles from sports hub site, about 18 minutes' cycle or 9 minutes' drive.

6.15. In addition, there are commercial gyms at Nirvana Spa (275 stations) and Pulse 8 (180 stations), plus a number of sites within the town of Wokingham.

6.16. The most pertinent conclusions for fitness gyms with fitness stations in the Strategy (p46) are:

*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, there is little additional need to increase the*

*number of health and fitness stations across the borough.*

6.17. In response to the IDP suggestion that a fitness gym should be located at the sports hub, the University's Outline Application has provided the location and indicative layout of the sports hub site, including space for a gym. However, the Reserved Matters will confirm the final facility mix on the sports hub site.

### Tennis and Netball on MUGA

6.18. The IDP does not anticipate the provision of tennis courts for community use at LVGV, but the school will be required to have a multi-use games area (MUGA) which is large enough for at least 3 netball courts and is likely to be also marked out for tennis. An education standard MUGA would not require fencing or sports lighting, but these would be required for community use.

6.19. The Sport England Sports Facility Calculator (May 2025) estimates that LVGV generates demand for 1.25 tennis courts. The PPS Action Plan (p46) provides the strategy summary recommendations for tennis, which is to protect and improve existing courts, and potentially provide new courts at Arborfield. No reference is made to LVGV.

6.20. The PPS Action Plan (p47) also provides the strategy recommendations for netball. These are to protect and improve existing sites and potentially provide new courts at Chalfont Park. No reference is made to LVGV.

6.21. The Outline Application's layout for the sports hub site provides sufficient space for fencing and sports lighting of the MUGA, and the plan shows its indicative location on the sports hub site. However, the final sports facility mix will be confirmed in the Reserved Matters.

## 7. Achieving delivery

7.1. University of Reading agrees with the emerging Local Plan policy that the community sports provision should be on a shared or 'dual-use' site with education. The University's Outline Application identifies the location and provides an indicative layout for a such a shared sports hub, including the indoor provision suggested by the IDP, artificial pitches and grass pitches.

7.2. The Reserved Matters stage will confirm the final sports hub facility mix, the detailed design and layout, phasing, management, and how the long-term security of the community use will be achieved.

7.3. The IDP suggests that the costs of providing the community elements of the shared use/dual-use sports hub will be a combination of S106, CIL and "Other", but there is no further breakdown to show how the potential costs might be met. Given the need

to confirm the various sports hub elements at the Reserved Matters stage, the funding for the delivery is also appropriate to address at that stage, particularly where the proposed sports facility provision is to primarily meet a Borough-wide deficit, rather than the sports demand generated within the LGV allocation.

## 8. Off-site sports provision

- 8.1. The emerging Local Plan policies HC4 and B4.8 refer to off-site mitigation. However, as discussed in on page 13, para 2.7 of this report, the HC4 policy standards have been superseded by the relevant evidence base strategies: the WBC Playing Pitch Strategy (2023) and its Action Plan (2023), and; the WBC Indoor Built Facilities Strategy (2024).
- 8.2. Developers' contributions off-site would need to be justified by the Strategies' recommendations towards specific, deliverable projects where investment has been identified as needed to mitigate the impact of the University's Outline Application. It is noted that the Indoor Built Facilities Strategy as published does not include any project specific recommendations.

## 9. Conclusions

- 9.1. The Sports Justification Report supports the University of Reading's Outline Planning Application at Loddon Garden Village (LGV), which is part of the Loddon Valley Garden Village (LGV) site allocation. The focus of the report is the community aspects of the sports hub proposed to be provided within LGV as a shared / dual use site with two of the planned and adjacent schools; the secondary school and a primary school.
- 9.2. The Outline Application directly responds to the principle of shared or dual use sports facilities in the emerging policy SS13, which "*strongly encourages*" shared use, and emerging policy HC2 which similarly encourages the co-location of facilities.
- 9.3. The Sports Justification Report has considered the findings and recommendations of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) (2024) along with the more recently published relevant evidence base Strategies; the Playing Pitch Strategy (2023) (PPS) and the Indoor Built Facilities Strategy (2024) (IBFS). The PPS Action Plan (2023) was approved as being a "*basis for further work*" by the WBC Executive Committee in February 2025, but since it was based on the 2021 Revised Growth Strategy, it is now out of date. The IDP and the PPS Action Plan both now require updating because they do not reflect either the evidence base Strategies, nor the outcomes of the new modelling by Nortoft, which is contained within this report.
- 9.4. However, the key message from the PPS, the PPS Action Plan and the IDP is that football pitch provision needs to be on-site, whilst the other pitch sports (such as rugby and hockey) along with tennis and netball, are better provided off-site. The PPS and IDP also suggest that the opportunity should be taken to plan in artificial turf pitch

(AGP) provision beyond that justified by the LVGV's own demand, in order to meet an identified Borough-wide deficit for this type of facility.

- 9.5. The Indoor Built Facilities Strategy's findings conclude that no new indoor community sports facilities will be required in the future, as all of the LVGV allocation has potentially good access to the existing network of sports facilities, and there is sufficient capacity to meet the new demand arising from LVGV. This finding is counter to the, now out-of-date, IDP which suggests that the sports hub serving the LVGV allocation should have a 4-court sports hall and health and fitness gym.
- 9.6. The University's Outline Application therefore provides the location and masterplan with its indicative layout which demonstrates that sufficient and appropriate space can be provided for all of the potential sports hub elements. The Reserved Matters applications will confirm the facility mix, the final layout, design, management, and other aspects of the proposed shared /dual use sports facilities, such as a mechanism to secure long-term community use (a Community Use Agreement). The main potential sports hub elements which can be accommodated are listed below.
  - artificial grass pitches with football turf (AGPs) fenced and sports lit, and designed to meet the specifications of the Football Association's (FA) 3G AGP Pitch Register (or its successor),
    - two full size pitches shared with the secondary school;
    - one 9v9 size pitch shared with the primary school;
  - 4 x changing rooms at community standard to service the AGPs plus lockers;
  - 2 x changing rooms at community standard to service the grass pitch;
  - one 4-court sports hall designed at community standard;
  - multi-use games area (MUGA), fenced with sports lighting;
  - changing rooms at community standard to service the sports hall and fitness gym;
  - fitness gym;
  - a social area;
  - reception;
  - office;
  - additional grass playing field space large enough to mark out two youth football pitches for community use;
  - additional grass playing field areas suitable for marking out of pitches for both the secondary and primary schools' sole use;
  - appropriate accessible car and cycle parking.
- 9.7. In summary, the sports facilities proposals as presented in the University's Outline Application will provide very significant community benefits, both for the new community across the whole of the LVGV allocation, and also more widely for the existing communities in Wokingham. The proposals respond to the emerging Local Plan policy objective of shared use of sports facilities and pitches and take into account the findings and recommendations of the evidence base Strategies.