

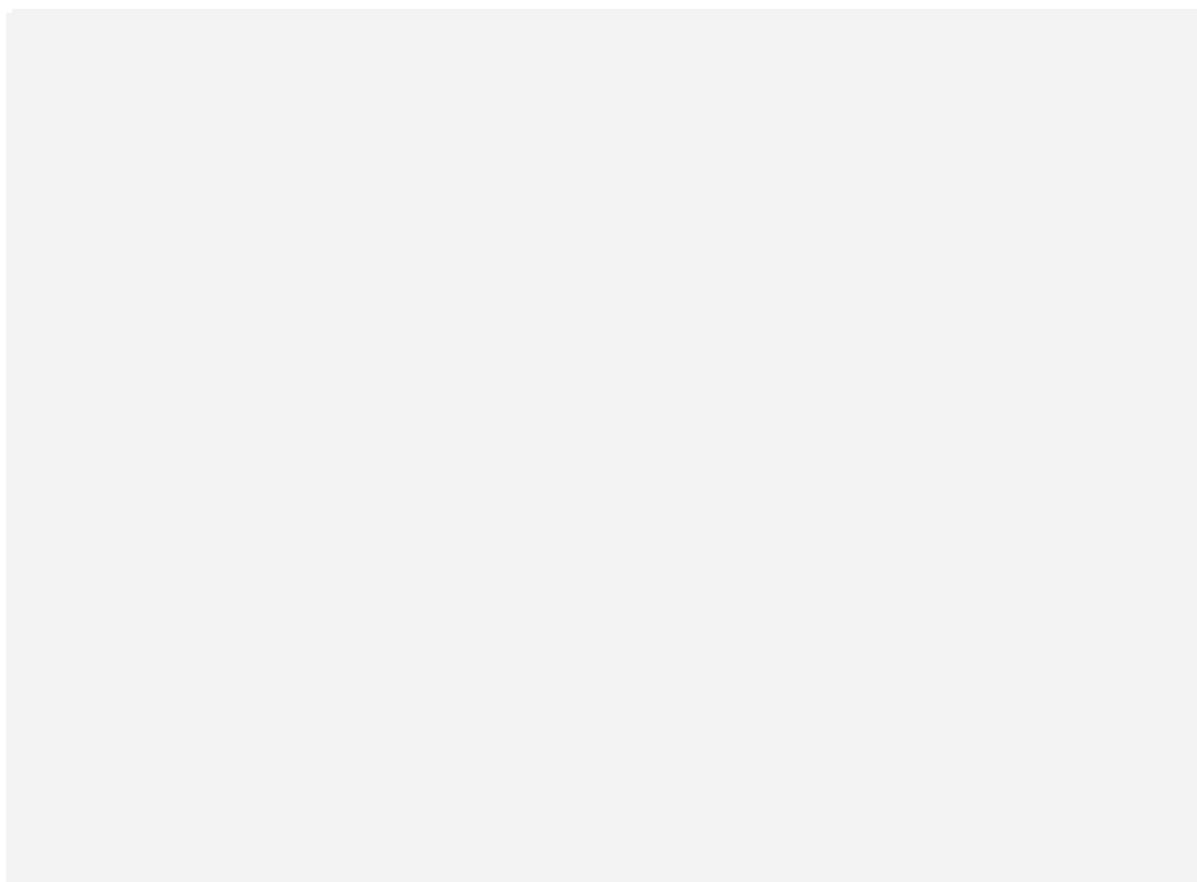


# Blackburn with Darwen Council

## Built Facility Strategy – Assessment Report and Action Plan

January 2022

Prepared on behalf of WYG Environment Planning Transport Limited.





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## Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 In July 2019, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council alongside Hyndburn Borough Council, appointed WYG to produce a Playing Pitch Strategy and Built Facilities Strategy for each borough.
- 1.1.2 This document sets out the Built Facility Strategy Assessment (BFS) for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and the subsequent Strategy and Action Plan. It considers the adequacy of provision for swimming pools, sports halls, indoor tennis, indoor bowls, athletics, squash, gymnastics and trampolining, health and fitness, indoor climbing and golf (under a separate cover). The Strategy and Action Plan, which sets out how the issues identified in this assessment will be addressed, is found at the end of each section.
- 1.1.3 The primary purpose of the Built Facility Strategy (BFS) is to provide a strategic framework which ensures that the provision of indoor built facilities meet local and community needs of existing and future residents and visitors to the Borough.
- 1.1.4 This strategy was prepared during the 2020 Covid 19 pandemic and parts of the consultation for the document were undertaken during this time. The challenges associated with the pandemic have impacted on the development of the document and may on occasion impact on the results of the consultation. It is also as yet unknown what impact Covid 19 will have on short and long term participation. The impact of the pandemic is referenced further in Section 2 (Methodology).

### 1.2 Key Drivers

- 1.2.1 There are many key drivers for undertaking the Built Facility Strategy (BFS) in Blackburn with Darwen. Improving the health and well-being of Blackburn with Darwen residents is one of the priorities identified in the Council's Corporate Plan and this is strongly linked with the development of a BFS.
- 1.2.2 In February 2017, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council adopted the *Eat Well, Move More, Shape Up Strategy Framework* to improve the health and wellbeing of residents across the borough. Blackburn with Darwen has some of the most challenging health statistics in the country with increasing burden on the local healthcare system and economy. The vision for the Strategy is '*For everyone in Blackburn with Darwen to move more, eat well and maintain a*



*healthy weight*. An up to date BFS will help to support the objectives of the *Eat Well, Move More, Shape Up Strategy*.

1.2.3 Other key objectives of the strategy document include;

***(a) Corporate and Strategic***

- To ensure a strategic approach to sports provision. The BFS will act as a tool for the Councils and partner organisations to guide resource allocation and set priorities for sports moving forward
- To provide robust evidence for capital funding. As well as proving the need for developer contributions towards pitches and facilities, a BFS can provide evidence of need for a range of capital grants. Current funding examples include the Sport England Lottery

Fund, the Football Foundation and the Big Lottery. identify and prioritise sites that require improvements and where the funding should be secured from.

- To help demonstrate the value of leisure services during times of increasing scrutiny of non-statutory services through a desire to increase activity rates as a means to improve the health and wellbeing of the whole community.

### ***(b) Planning***

- The BFS will add to the evidence base supporting the Hyndburn Local Plan and Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan, both of which are in the preparation phase.
- The assessment and strategy will support strategic policies on green infrastructure, leisure, outdoor sports facilities and health and well-being.
- The action plan will feed into the work on the Site Allocations part of the Local Plans and masterplans for large sites.
- The documents will also provide an evidence base for Developer Contributions through s106 planning agreements.

### ***(c) Operational***

- The assessment can help improve current asset management, which should result in more efficient use of resources and reduced overheads.
- The assessment will identify facilities where quality of provision can be enhanced.

### ***(d) Sports Development***

- The BFS will help identify which sites have community use and whether that use is secure or not.
- The document helps identify where community use of school sports facilities is most needed to address any identified deficits in provision.
- The document provides better information to residents and other users of sports facilities available for use.
- It promotes sports development and can help unlock latent demand by identifying where the lack of facilities might be suppressing the community needs.



## 1.3 Vision and Objectives

1.3.1 The strategy seeks to support the Council and its partners in the creation of;

*'An accessible, high quality and sustainable network of sports facilities that supports delivery of the Council's strategies through increased sports participation by all residents, at all levels of play, from grassroots to elite'.*

1.3.2 To achieve this strategic vision, the strategy therefore seeks to deliver the following objectives;

- Ensure that the most valuable facilities are protected for the long-term benefit of sport
- Promote a sustainable approach to the provision and management of facilities
- Ensure that there are enough facilities in the right place to meet current and projected future demand
- Ensure that all clubs have access to facilities of appropriate quality to meet current needs and longer-term aspirations.

1.3.3 More specifically, it will;

- Provide a quantified and documented assessment of current and future needs within the Borough
- Provide information to assist asset management planning of Council owned facilities and associated buildings
- Provide information to underpin the protection, enhancement and quality improvement of the existing facility stock
- Map out a process for improvements in community access to education sites
- Develop a process for regular updating and monitoring of the BFS.

## 1.4 Structure and Scope

1.4.1 The strategy considers the adequacy of existing provision to meet current and projected future need and sets an individual action plan for each of the following facilities and sports;



- Swimming Pools
- Sports Halls
- Indoor Tennis
- Indoor Bowls
- Athletics
- Squash
- Gymnastics and Trampolining
- Health and Fitness
- Indoor Climbing
- Boxing and Martial Arts
- Golf (reports under separate cover).

#### 1.4.2 The document seeks to;

- present an understanding of the current supply of sports facilities in Blackburn with Darwen Borough
- outline the current demand for sports facilities and the potential demand up to 2036
- understand the overall adequacy and capacity of provision across the Borough both at the current time and also in the future
- identify the key issues that need to be addressed and provide a strategy for the future provision of facilities across the borough.

#### 1.4.3 The updated report is structured as follows;



- Section 2: Methodology - this section sets out the methodology undertaken
- Section 3: Strategic Context - this section summarises the key issues in the borough relating to demographics, health and wellbeing and the facility implications
- Section 4: Swimming Pools - this section outlines the current picture for swimming and evaluates the adequacy of existing provision to meet current and projected future demand
- Section 5: Sports Halls - this section outlines the current picture for sports halls and evaluates the adequacy of existing provision to meet current and projected future demand
- Section 6: Indoor Tennis - this section outlines the current picture for indoor tennis and evaluates the adequacy of existing provision to meet current and projected future demand
- Section 7: Indoor Bowls - this section outlines the current picture for indoor bowls and evaluates the adequacy of existing provision to meet current and projected future demand
- Section 8: Athletics - this section outlines the current picture for athletics and evaluates the adequacy of existing provision to meet current and projected future demand
- Section 9: Squash - this section outlines the current picture for squash and evaluates the adequacy of existing provision to meet current and projected future demand
- Section 10: Gymnastics and Trampolining - this section outlines the current picture for gymnastics and trampolining and evaluates the adequacy of existing provision to meet current and projected future demand
- Section 11: Health and Fitness - this section outlines the current picture for health and fitness and evaluates the adequacy of existing provision to meet current and projected future demand
- Section 12: Indoor Climbing - this section outlines the current picture for indoor climbing and evaluates the adequacy of existing provision to meet current and projected future demand
- Section 13: Boxing and Martial Arts - this section outlines the current picture for boxing and martial arts and evaluates the adequacy of existing provision to meet current and projected future demand
- Section 14: Golf - this section outlines the current picture for golf and evaluates the adequacy of existing provision to meet current and projected future. Under separate cover.

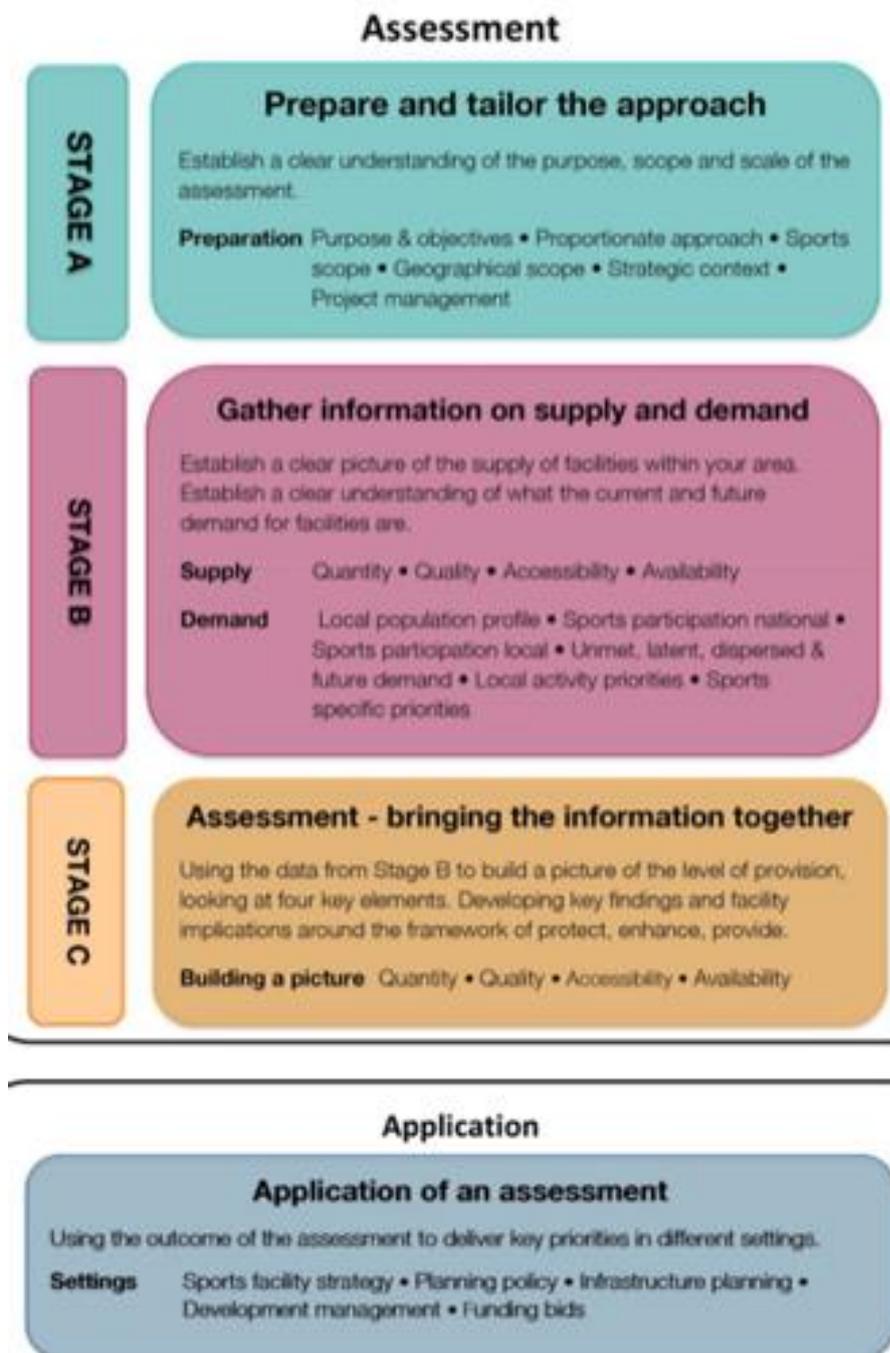


## 2.0 Methodology

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.4.1 The assessment and strategy has been produced in line with guidance by Sport England (Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities; 2014).
- 2.4.2 The remainder of this section summarises the key principles of the methodology and the tasks that have been undertaken at each stage. Work has been tailored to the needs of Blackburn with Darwen Borough following discussions with the project steering group.
- 2.4.3 The approach to the Study has been developed utilising the process set out in the Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (ANOG), the methodology for assessing indoor sports needs developed by Sport England, as set out in figure 2.1 below. Adopting this approach will ensure the work is NPPF compliant.

**Figure 2.1 – ANOG Methodology**



## 2.5 Sport England (Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities; 2013)

2.5.1 The key stages in the ANOG process are as follows:

- Stage 1 – Prepare and tailor your assessment
- Stage 2 – Gather information on supply and demand
- Stage 3 – Assessment, bring the information together.

The key tasks undertaken in relation to the assessment are briefly summarised below.

## **2.6 Stage 1: Undertaking an Assessment:**

2.6.1 The approach was tailored following detailed discussions with the steering group.

## **2.7 Stage 2: Gather Information on Supply and Demand**

2.7.1 To gather information on supply, visits were made to all the main facilities. Discussions were held with operators, managers and users.

2.7.2 To gather information on demand, questionnaires were sent (many with follow calls and/or visits) to all key sports clubs. Consultation also took place with national and regional governing body of sport representatives.

## **2.8 Stage 3: Assessment – Bring the Information Together**

2.8.1 The analysis seeks to bring together the evidence gathered to gain an understanding of the relationship between supply and demand. Key findings and issues to be addressed are set out for each of the sports / facilities covered.

## **2.9 B Application of Assessment – Strategy Development**

2.9.1 Recommendations and strategy priorities are developed to address the issues identified through the data collection and analysis undertaken in Step A. An action plan is developed, identifying the key issues and priorities for each sport.

## **2.10 Summary**

2.10.1 This is the BFS assessment report. It summarises the key issues arising from the assessment of facilities and informs the preparation of the strategy document (under separate cover). For each of the sports covered, it aims to;



- Summarise the current supply of facilities
- Outline current demand and evaluate likely future demand based upon population growth
- Evaluate the overall adequacy of provision to meet current and projected future demand and
- Identify the key issues and options for each sport in-line with ANOG guidance.

2.10.2 The strategy document will build on the issues identified and set out strategic priorities and actions for delivery. It will use scenario testing to determine the most appropriate course of action for each sport.

2.10.3 To inform the analysis of the current and projected future picture for each sport and to provide context for the sport specific issues discussed, Section 3 summarises the strategic context, as well as the demographic profile.



### 3 Strategic Context, Population and Sports Participation Profile

#### 3.4 Introduction

3.4.1 An understanding of the local strategic context, population and sports participation trends is essential in order to ensure that the Playing Pitch Assessment and Strategy is tailored to the characteristics, profile and aspirations of Blackburn with Darwen.

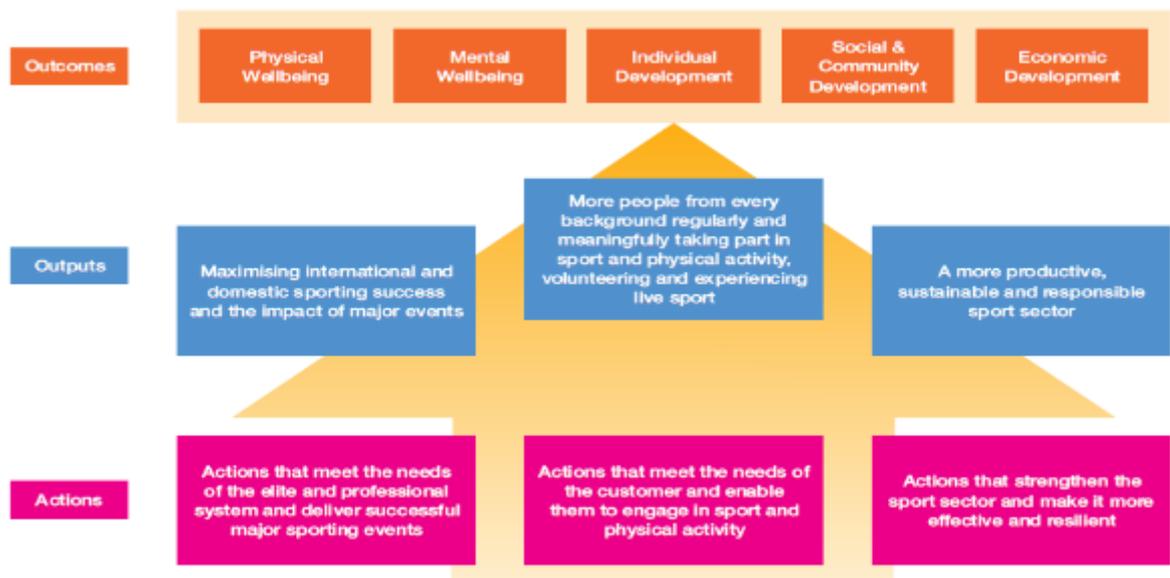
3.4.2 This section therefore briefly summarises the key policies that impact upon the preparation of this assessment and strategy and provides an overview of the demographics and sports participation trends, and assesses the impact of this on demand for sports facilities.

#### 3.5 Strategic Context

##### National

3.5.1 A national vision is set in 'Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation'. This document sets out a framework and outcomes that can be translated locally against issues and opportunities for the Borough. Figure 3.1 illustrates the Government framework.

**Figure 3.1 – Sporting Future Framework**





- 3.5.2 This framework lists 5 Core Outcomes: developing physical and mental well-being, individual development, social and community development and economic development. The model includes key outputs such as 'more people from every background regularly and meaningfully taking part in sport'.
- 3.5.3 To facilitate this, it is recognised that several actions will need to take place to drive behavioural change. The effective provision of playing fields and outdoor sports facilities will be key in helping to achieve the goals of this framework locally across Blackburn with Darwen.
- 3.5.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) clearly establishes the requirement for local plans to ensure that there is proper provision of community and cultural facilities to meet local needs. The NPPF's expectations for the development of local planning policy for sport and physical activity/recreation is set out in paragraphs 98 and 99 which require there to be a sound (i.e., up-to-date and verifiable) evidence base underpinning policy and its application. Paragraph 98 indicates that:
- 'Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up to date assessments of the need for open space, sports and recreation facilities (including qualitative or quantitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.'*
- 3.5.5 Paragraph 99 states that: 'Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- *an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- *the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- *the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use'*

3.5.6 The preparation of this built facility assessment and strategy will help to ensure that Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council is able to deliver upon the requirements of this national policy and support the achievement of wider goals relating to sport and leisure participation.

## 3.0 Sport England

3.1.1 In January 2021, Sport England published 'Uniting the Movement', its new strategy which sets a vision for the next 10 years. The strategy sets a vision of '*a nation of equal, inclusive and connected communities and a country where people live happier, healthier and more fulfilled lives*' and highlights that being active is one of the most effective and sustainable ways of achieving this.

3.1.2 It replaces the previous strategy, 'Towards an Active Nation' which was aimed at tackling inactivity. This document outlined how Sport England would deliver against the five health, social and economic outcomes set out in the Government's 2015 Sporting Future strategy.

3.1.3 The new strategy seeks to ensure that sport and physical activity is to be recognised as essential to help overcome national challenges. It highlights that before the Covid 19 pandemic, record levels of activity were being achieved in England it is important to both get that momentum back, but also to reach people who have traditionally been excluded.

3.1.4 The strategy sets three objectives;

- Advocating for movement, sport and physical activity
- Joining forces on five big issues
- Creating the catalysts for change.

3.1.5 With regards advocating for Sport and Physical Activity, the strategy indicates that key tasks of Sport England will include;



- Establishing, building and growing partnerships
- Developing and delivering behavioural change campaigns
- Promoting the value of sport and physical activity as part of the solution and communicating the power of being active.

3.1.6 This built facility assessment and strategy will help the local authorities and its partners to ensure that an effective network of facilities is in place to support and engage with these priorities.

3.1.7 The five big issues highlighted which Sport England will seek to address are of particular relevance to this playing pitch strategy and are as follows;

- **Recover and reinvent** – responding to the short, medium and long term challenges of Covid 19 and supporting organisations and people to return to activity that’s stronger, more relevant and more inclusive than before
- **Connecting communities** – working in collaboration with communities - local people and organisations. This will include investing in clubs and charities and collaborating on local solutions, helping to deliver the outcomes that are needed through sport
- **Positive experiences for children and young people** – working to ensure that every child / young person experiences the enjoyment and benefits that being active can bring. This will include using sport and physical activity to improve mental and physical wellbeing, creating and protecting quality and safe places and spaces for children to play and enjoy being active outdoors and embracing technology and the digital world
- **Connecting with health and wellbeing** – ensuring that sport and physical activity is at the heart of health and wellbeing both in terms of stopping health problems arising in the first place, but also supporting people to manage problems when they do arise.
- **Active Environments** – the strategy recognises a range of environments, from dedicated leisure facilities and playing fields, other community spaces (parks / open spaces / community centres and schools) through to the built environment (streets / housing estates etc). The strategy focuses upon making activity easier for everyone and focuses upon the protection and improvement of sport and leisure facilities (as well as the innovation of new designs and operational models), the creation of opportunities



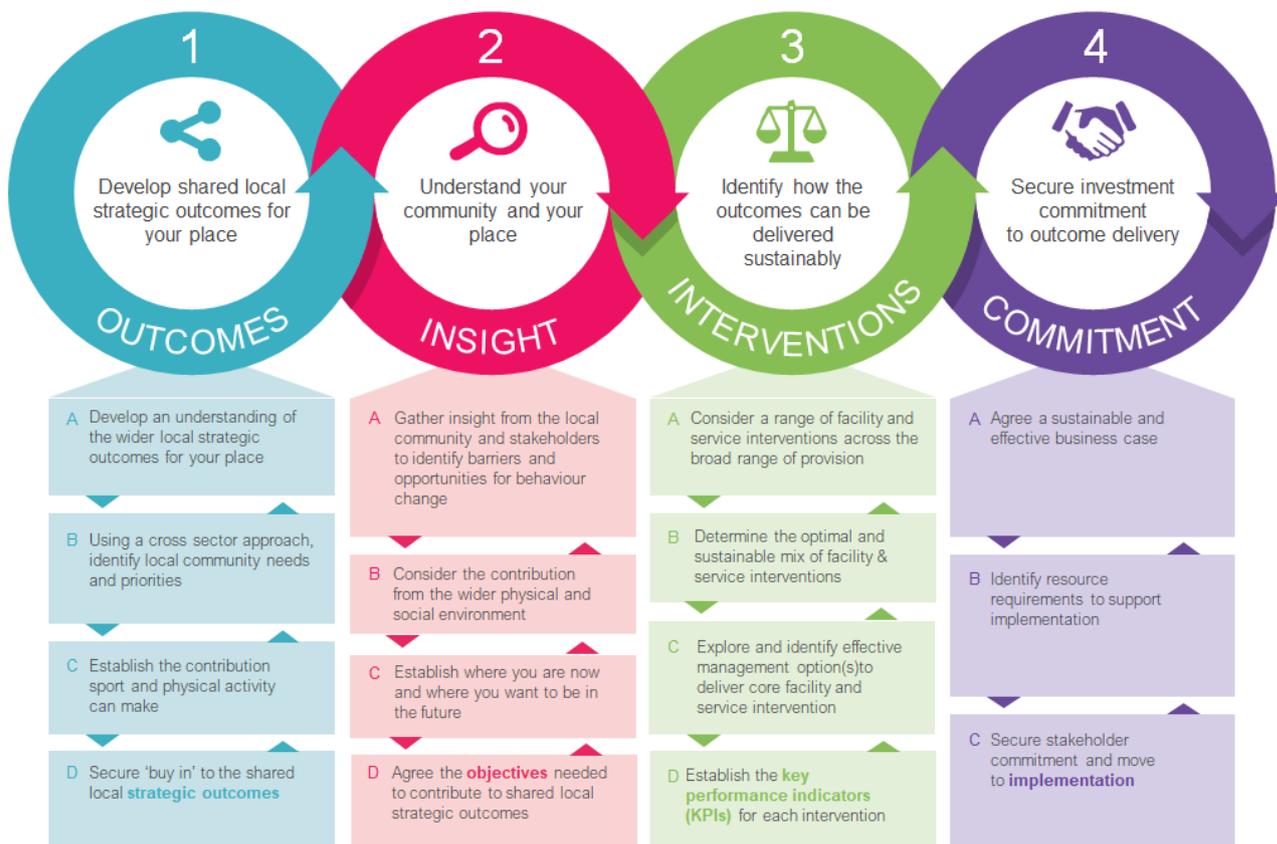
around community spaces and the creation of better places to live through an influence on design.

- 3.1.8 The strategy therefore makes clear recommendations with an emphasis placed on working collaboratively locally to promote and increase the number of active people. It focusses on investment driven by local need that drives down inequalities and puts physical activity and sport at the heart of life.
- 3.1.9 These national drivers provide an essential context for understanding the picture in Blackburn with Darwen Borough and it will be important to understand how continued investment in facilities can contribute to achieving the targets around physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing and so on. Indeed, clarity in these aspects should facilitate even greater engagement in the future with public health partners, education and business sectors.

### **Sport England's Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance**

- 3.1.10 Sport England has published this guidance to assist local authorities to take a strategic approach to maximising the contribution that sport and physical activity makes to its local outcomes. This guidance has four stages, as set out in figure 3.2

**Figure 3.2- Sport England’s Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance**



3.1.11 Sport and physical activity are increasingly seen as a co-producer of local outcomes and local authorities across the country are using their services, assets, partnerships and infrastructure to make a significant contribution to their residents’ lives as a direct provider, commissioner or enabler.

3.1.12 Sport England’s guidance shows that having a clear, strategic and sustainable approach to sport and physical activity is essential to making effective investment into provision – both facilities and services.

3.1.13 The guidance is structured around 4 stages;



- **Stage 1 – Outcomes** – Developing shared local outcomes for your place
- **Stage 2 – Insight** – Understand your community and your place
- **Stage 3 – Interventions** – Identify how the outcomes can be delivered sustainably
- **Stage 4 – Commitment** – Secure investment and commitment to outcome delivery.

3.5.7 Further detail relating to the information available and the subsequent gaps in the Council’s understanding can be found in the parallel PPS. This BFS is a key component of the evidence base for Stage 2 of this model – Insight.

## 3.6 Local Strategies

3.6.1 We have undertaken a review of the local policy documents to help identify the golden thread between local and national plans. A summary of the key findings is provided below.

**Table 3.1 – Key Findings**

<b>Blackburn with Darwen Council Corporate Plan 2019 - 2023</b>	<p>The corporate plan outlines the Council’s core priorities and ambitions 2019 - 2023. It brings together all the council strategies and plans. The Plan is complimentary to the Local Strategic Partnership’s emerging Plan for Prosperity 2030 (not yet produced) which will articulate the strategic vision for the Borough with partners.</p> <p>The plan has eight strategic priorities: (1) supporting young people and raising aspirations (2) safeguarding and supporting the most vulnerable people (3) reducing health inequalities and improving health outcomes (4) connected communities (5) safe and clean environment (6) strong economy to enable social mobility (7) supporting our town centres and businesses (8) transparent and effective organisation. For each of these strategic priorities, it details what actions the Council will take over the plan period.</p> <p>There is specific reference to increasing and improving the life chances for all residents with investment in health and care provision and by delivering increased levels of activity through Sport England funding.</p> <p>Under the reducing health inequalities and improving health outcomes priority there is specific reference to - work with our partners to make sure that residents have access to good quality sporting and leisure facilities across the Borough and can access wellbeing activity in their local neighbourhoods.</p> <p>The achievement of the aims and objectives of this BFS can therefore contribute to the wider goals of this Corporate Plan.</p>
<b>Blackburn with Darwen Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2018</b>	<p>The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) sets out the needs and assets of Blackburn with Darwen and its residents. It is about the population make up, how healthy it is, and the assets people and communities have to help them to stay healthy. The JSNA has a profile of the borough’s population and local economy and is then arranged under the three themes of the Borough’s Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy: ‘Start Well’, ‘Live Well’ and ‘Age Well’.</p> <p>The live well section references physical activity and the headline data for Blackburn with Darwen is that both obesity is higher than average and physical activity lower than average. The provision of an effective network of facilities for outdoor sport, guided by this BFS can therefore contribute to the improvement of these measures.</p>
<b>Blackburn with Darwen Our Community Our Future - Social Integration</b>	<p>The vision for the borough is a strong, cohesive and prosperous community, where everyone is treated fairly, where people’s faith and cultures are understood and respected. A place where diversity is valued and embraced because of how it enriches our community, where people connect and form meaningful relationships and friendships that span every characteristic of society.</p> <p>The strategy priorities are (1) to increase economic prosperity for all the borough’s communities as an essential prerequisite for social integration, (2), to strengthen relationships between the borough’s diverse communities,</p>



<p><b>Strategy 2018 – 2020</b></p>	<p>(3) to build connections and strengthen relationships between young people who live in the borough’s diverse communities, and (4) to connect the borough’s disadvantaged communities to shared spaces – linking people and neighbourhoods to zones of employment, physical assets, community shared spaces and social action.</p> <p>For each priority there are specific actions with statements of what will be achieved by 2021 and ten lists these in more detail with listed outcomes (short term) and higher level outcomes (long term).</p> <p>None of the priorities reference sport or physical activity within the title, actions or outcomes. It is however clear that sport can be a key vehicle for social integration and the priorities of this PPS can therefore contribute to the achievement of the goals of this strategy/</p>
<p><b>Blackburn with Darwen Core Strategy (Local Plan Part 1) (adopted January 2011)</b></p>	<p>The Core Strategy forms part of the Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan, it sets out the priorities for the future planning and development of the Borough to 2037: how much and what types of development there should be, where it should be focused, when it is likely to take place, and how it will be delivered. The vision of the core strategy is;</p> <p>By 2026 Blackburn with Darwen will have consolidated its role as a centre of regional importance. It will have a growing economy, based on a highly skilled workforce, set within a unique and high quality environment. There are 11 strategic objectives (page 37 para 5.1), given these are strategic objectives, not surprisingly none of the objectives reference sport or physical activity. However objective C is “Ensure that local people benefit from economic growth and have sustainable access to services and facilities”</p> <p>Lead policy is CS1 “A Targeted Growth Strategy and a listed outcome is - the range and quality of public facilities, particularly in town centres. For each service area it lists –infrastructure, capacity issues and solutions and for leisure facilities it lists as capacity 9 topics and as solutions (for some of these it lists redevelopment of Darwen Leisure Centre) (completed since the strategy was published) (page 53)</p> <p>There are no policies specifically dealing with playing fields, although the role that schools can have in providing sports provision is clearly articulated.</p> <p>This document therefore sets out the priorities for the future development of the Borough for the next 15 to 20 years. This strategy will be superseded by an emerging local plan. This playing pitch assessment and strategy will inform the emerging local plan, including site allocations and development management policies which will provide further detail on the principles set out in the core strategy.</p>
<p><b>Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (adopted December 2015)</b></p>	<p>The Local Plan Part 2 was adopted in December 2015, alongside the previously adopted Core Strategy (which is Part 1 of the Local Plan). It aims to shape the future development of Blackburn with Darwen in order to create jobs, attract and retain a skilled labour force, and strengthen the borough’s competitive position in the North West.</p> <p>It identifies strategic land allocations which are essential to delivering these objectives; and sets out development management policies which will be used in assessing planning applications. The Local Plan Part 2 replaces the “saved” policies of the 2002 Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan</p> <p>There are no policies directly relating to outdoor or indoor sports and playing fields.</p>
<p><b>Blackburn with Darwen Infrastructure Delivery Plan (adopted January 2016)</b></p>	<p>This Infrastructure &amp; Delivery Plan (IDP) forms part of the evidence base for the Local Plan Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies. The Local Plan Part 2 provides detailed policies and proposals to implement the Core Strategy.</p> <p>The purposes of this document are to (1) provide evidence on infrastructure needs arising from planned development in the period up to 2026; (2) identify specific elements of infrastructure needs, costs, funding sources and delivery timetables where known; and (3) inform the planning framework of partners involved in the delivery and management of infrastructure in the Borough.</p>

3.6.2 The assessment therefore directly informs and links with the issues and priorities raised in many of the above local strategic documents. It also looks to reflect the priorities of the relevant National Governing Bodies of Sport set out in their facility strategies. These are included in the relevant assessment sections.

3.6.3 The key priorities of these documents will be explored in the sport specific sections.

### **3.7 Demographics and Population Profile**

3.7.1 Blackburn with Darwen Borough have prepared bespoke population projections up to 2037. The key messages arising from these are;

- The Blackburn with Darwen total population is projected to increase from 149,806 people in 2019 to 157,564 in 2037, an increase of 7,763 or 5.1% and an annual increase between the two years of 0.28%
- The 0 – 14 age band and where sport and physical activity participation first starts is projected to decrease from 32,658 people in 2019 to 31,116, in 2037, a 4.7% decrease
- The 15 – 34 age band is where the rate of sports and physical participation is highest, and this population is projected to increase from 39,091 people in 2019 to 40,747 people in 2037, an increase of 4.2%. This is the age band where the impact on increasing sports and physical activity participation from population growth will have the biggest impact on increased demand for facilities. However, the total population increase is only 1,656 people from 2019 to 2037.
- The 35 – 59 age group has national average rates of participation and for this age band population is projected to decrease from 48,567 people in 2019 to 47,986 people in 2037, a decrease of 581 people or 1.2%
- The 60 – 79 age group has below national rates of sports and physical activity participation, with between 2% - 3% of people participating on a regular basis. This age band is projected to increase from 24,152 people in 2019 to 29,352 people in 2037. It is the age band with the highest projected increase in population of 5,200 people or 21.5%.

3.7.2 The more likely driver of participation changes (and increases) is therefore the rate of participation by the resident. This is considered within the Active Lives and Active People findings on sports and physical activity participation for Blackburn with Darwen Borough.

### 3.8 Sports Participation Profile

- 3.8.1 The direction for the Sport England new strategy, "Towards an Active Nation", (2016) looks beyond simple participation to how sport changes lives and becomes a force for good. The focus is on five outcomes: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and economic development.
- 3.8.2 As part of the new strategy, Sport England introduced a new national survey **Active Lives** to measure adult participation in sport AND physical activity. Active Lives recognises the breadth of both formal and informal ways people choose to get active and stay healthy.
- 3.8.3 At a national level, the findings of the survey demonstrate that;
- Traditional team sports and racket sports both indoors and outdoors are declining in participation
  - Individual based activities such as fitness and exercise classes are increasing in participation
  - There is an increase in adventure and thrill-based activities
  - Participation in all different categories of walking has a considerably higher rate of participation than any sport. Walking for leisure by all adults, has the highest rate of participation of any activity at 25% of all adults participating.
- 3.8.4 What appears apparent is that the time, organisation and fixed times for playing team sports, both indoor and outdoor are maybe becoming barriers to participation.
- 3.8.5 Individual sports and activities which require little organisation, and are available at times that suit the lifestyle of participants are becoming more popular.
- 3.8.6 In Blackburn with Darwen, the Active lives survey demonstrates that for the Active Category (150+ minutes of activity per week), Blackburn with Darwen has 54.8% of all adults who are active. This is lower than levels in all neighbouring authorities. 11.2% fall into the fairly active category and again this is lower than figures in neighbouring authorities. The quantity of people falling into the inactive category however (34.1%) is considerably higher.
- 3.8.7 This suggests that there remains a challenge in Blackburn with Darwen to increase the proportion of adults who are active and decrease the proportion who are not active at all. An effective network of facilities will be instrumental in achieving this goal.



3.8.8 With regards young people, there are similar findings - the activity by children and young people is lower for the three active categories than in the neighbouring local authorities and the Blackburn with Darwen rate is higher in the inactive category. National findings demonstrate that activity levels peak at the end of primary school and the type of preferred activity changes as children grow older. 'Active play', such as tag or scootering, is the most popular form of activity for younger age groups, with team sports growing in popularity as children get older. By school Years 7 and 8, team sports are the most popular and remain so through to age 16. This has positive implications for team sports in the younger age groups.

### 3.9 Summary

3.9.1 Analysis of the strategic and demographic context therefore demonstrates that;

- The contribution that health and physical activity can make to the achievement of many of the strategic goals of Blackburn with Darwen Council and partner organisations is clear– an effective facility infrastructure will be essential in the achievement of these goals
- Although the population of the borough is increasing by just over 5%, it is the age groups that are less likely to participate where projected growth is highest, growth is therefore unlikely to be a key driver of increased participation and demand for facilities on a borough-wide basis
- There are opportunities to improve levels of activity in Blackburn with Darwen, with the proportion of residents that are active lower than neighbouring authorities. Sports facilities will be a key component of the range of facilities that will be necessary to deliver these objectives.

## 4 Section 4 - Assessment of need and evidence base for Swimming Pools

### 4.4 Introduction

- 4.4.1 There is a full and separate strategic assessment and report for provision of swimming pools across the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council area. The findings are based on Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (fpm) data from Sport England's national assessment of swimming pools. It was commissioned by BwD Council to provide an in-depth assessment, applying the extensive data which is available for sports halls and swimming pools and which is not available for the other facility types.
- 4.4.2 The report is based on seven headings. total supply; total demand; supply and demand balance; satisfied/met demand; unmet demand; used capacity (how full the swimming pools are); and equity share.
- 4.4.3 A summary of the findings from that report are set out here following the Assessment of Needs and Opportunities headings. It is produced to provide consistency with the assessment for the other facility types in the Built Sports Facility Strategy.

### 4.5 Quantity

- 4.5.1 There are 8 individual pools located at 5 swimming pool sites across BwD. The total supply of water space available for community use in the weekly peak period is 1,676 sq metres of water. (Note: for context a 25m x 4 lane pool is between 210 and 250 sq metres of water, depending on lane width).
- 4.5.2 Details of the swimming pool sites are set out in Table 4.2

**Table 4.1 - BwD Swimming Pools**

Name of Site	Type	Dimensions	Area	Site Year Built	Site Year Refurb	Car % Demand	Public Transport % Demand	Walk % Demand
BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN								
BLACKBURN SPORTS LEISURE CENTRE	Main/General	25 x 13	325	2015		66%	11%	23%
BLACKBURN SPORTS LEISURE CENTRE	Learner/Teaching/Training	10 x 5	50					
DARWEN LEISURE CENTRE	Main/General	25 x 17	424	2010		73%	10%	17%
DARWEN LEISURE CENTRE	Learner/Teaching/Training	13 x 8	98					
DW SPORTS FITNESS (BLACKBURN)	Main/General	20 x 9	178	2004		91%	5%	4%
HALF FISH HQ	Main/General	25 x 9	213	1991	1994	58%	9%	33%

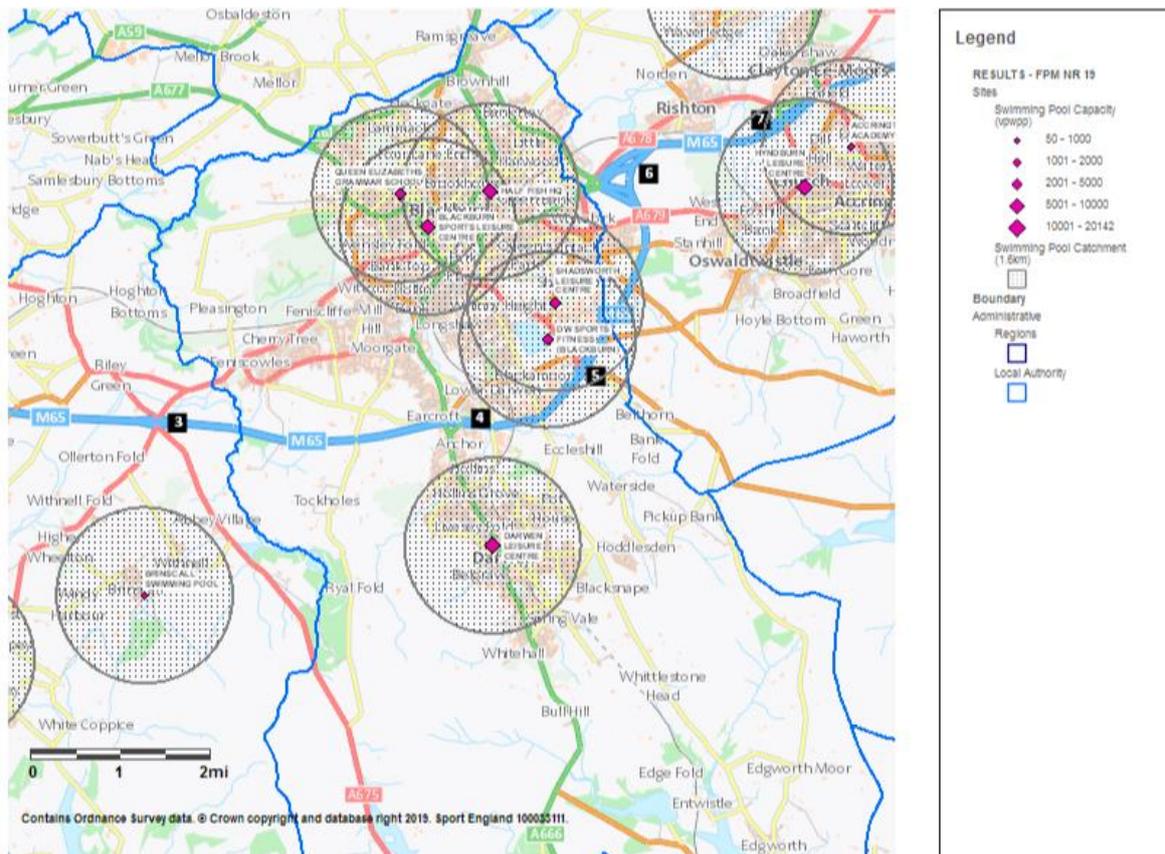
# Blackburn with Darwen Council Built Facility Strategy

HALF FISH HQ	Learner/Teaching/Training	13 x 7	91			
QUEEN ELIZABETHS GRAMMAR SCHOOL	Main/General	25 x 13	325	1989	67%	10% 23%

4.5.3 Other smaller pools are excluded. These are set out in the fpm report.

4.5.4 The location of the swimming pool site across BwD and those in neighbouring authorities closest to the BwD boundary are shown in Map 4.1. The purple diamond is the pool site location, and the size of the diamond is representative of the scale of the pool site in terms of the pool capacity. The notional 20 minutes/1 mile walking catchment is also shown.

**Map 4.1 - Location of the Swimming Pool Sites BwD**



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- 4.5.5 Two of the six swimming pool sites are public leisure centre swimming pool sites, Blackburn Sports Leisure Centre and Darwen Leisure Centre. The two public swimming pool sites are very modern, the Darwen Leisure Centre having opened in 2010 and Blackburn Sports Leisure Centre in 2015.
- 4.5.6 The Half Fish Swimming Centre was formerly Daisyfields Pools, a public swimming pool. The Council made an asset transfer of the pool site to Half Fish HQ who provide an extensive learn to swim programme and local community swimming.
- 4.5.7 There is one education swimming pool site, which is Queen Elisabeth's Grammar School and there is one commercial swimming pool sites, DW Sports Fitness.
- 4.5.8 In terms of swimming pool scale, two of the public leisure centre sites have both a main pool and a separate teaching learner pool. Blackburn Sports Leisure Centre has a 25m x 6 lane main pool (325 sq metres of water) and a 50 sq metre teaching/learner pool, whilst Darwen Leisure Centre has a 25m x 8 lane main pool (424 sq metres of water) and a teaching/learner pool with 98 sq metres of water.
- 4.5.9 The scale of provision at the public swimming pools sites, means they can provide for all the swimming activities of: learn to swim; casual recreational swimming; lane and aqua aerobics fitness swimming activities; and swimming development through clubs. The swimming activities can be undertaken in separate dedicated pools at both centres.
- 4.5.10 The Queen Elisabeth's Grammar School is a state-funded independent school. The pool is a 26m x 6 lane main pool (with 325 sq metres of water) and the scale means it can also provide for all swimming activities.
- 4.5.11 Some schools and colleges are proactive in providing for community use, whilst other schools and colleges let the pool in response to requests for lets, usually from swimming clubs and some schools may also let the pool to a swim school. According to the data there are 35 hours of community use, outside of education hours at the Queen Elisabeth's Grammar School.
- 4.5.12 The commercial pool site is DW Fitness, which is a 20m x 4 lane pool (178 sq metres of water). Commercial pools provide for recreational swimming by the centre membership and the development of learn to swim programmes

4.5.13 Half Fish HQ was formerly Daisyfields Pools and it was a public swimming pool. The organisation provides an extensive learn to swim programme and the centre also provides for local community swimming. There are two pools, a 25m x 8.5m 4 lane main pool (213 sq metres of water) and a teaching/learner pool of 13m x 9m (91 sq metres of water). It is an important part of the swimming infra-structure.

### ***Swimming pools per 1,000 population***

4.5.14 Based on a measure of water space per 1,000 population, the BwD supply is 13 sq metres of water space per 1,000 population. BwD has the third highest supply based on this measure along with Ribble Valley, and after Bolton with 14 sq metres of water and South Ribble with 16 sq metres of water per 1,000 population.

4.5.15 The North-West Region average is 13 sq metres of water per 1,000 population and for England wide it is 12 sq metres of water per 1,000 population.

4.5.16 The provision of water space per 1,000 population in BwD is higher than in four of the neighbouring local authorities, is on a par with the NW Region average and above that for England wide

## **4.6 Quality and the swimming Offer**

4.6.1 The scale of provision at the public swimming pools sites, means they can provide for all the swimming activities of: learn to swim; casual recreational swimming; lane and aqua aerobics fitness swimming activities; and swimming development through clubs. The swimming activities can be undertaken in separate dedicated pools at both centres.

4.6.2 The two public swimming pool sites are modern, the Darwen Leisure Centre opened in 2010 and Blackburn Sports Leisure Centre in 2015. The average age of all five swimming pool sites is 17 years, the oldest pool site is Queen Elisabeth's Grammar School pool (1989) and the most recent centre is Blackburn Sports Leisure Centre (2015).

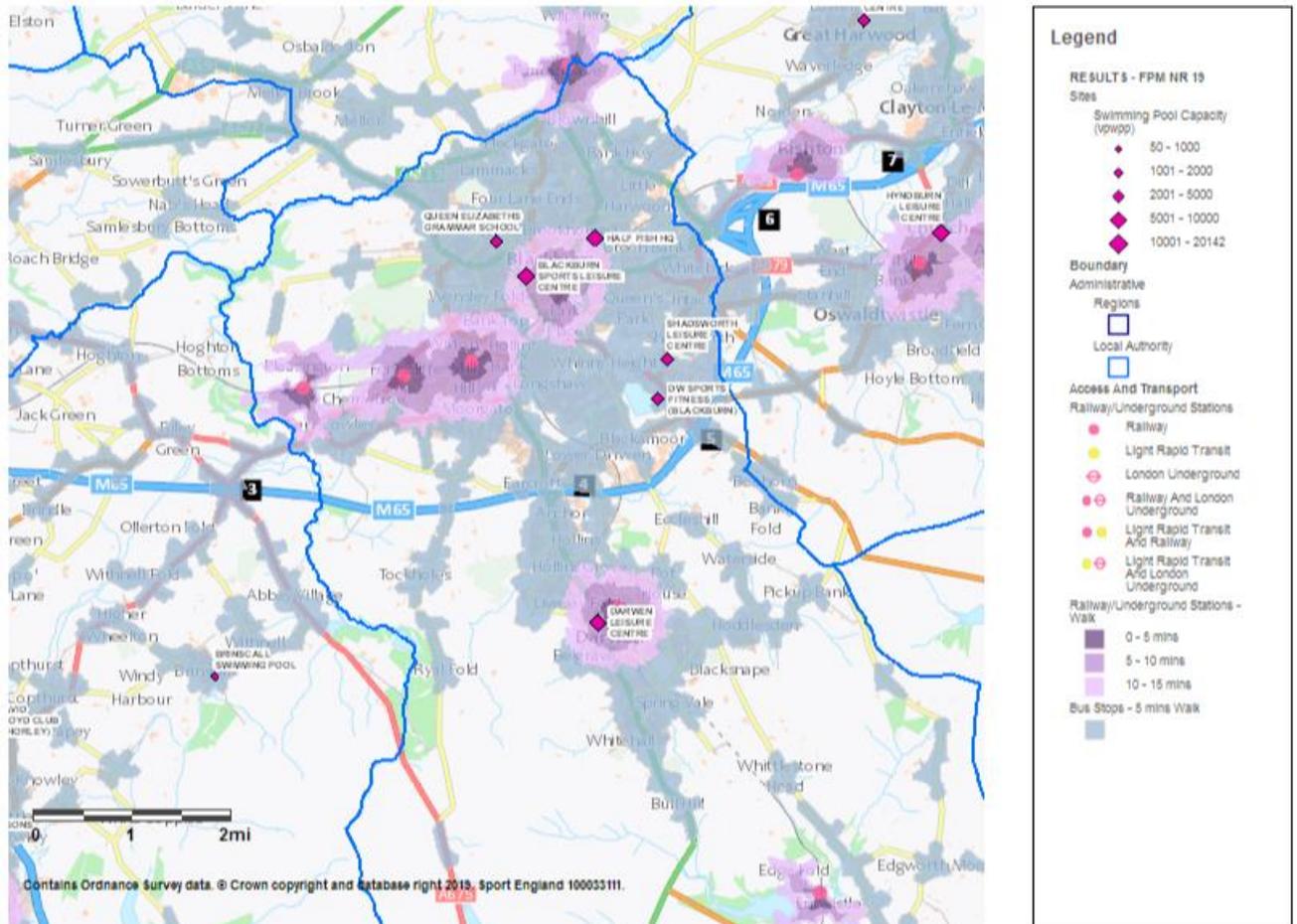
## **4.7 Accessibility**

4.7.1 Some 95% of the total demand for swimming from BwD residents is satisfied/met. This is the level of the Borough's total demand for swimming that is located inside the catchment area of a swimming pool (pools located both inside and outside the Borough). Plus, there is enough swimming pool capacity at these pools, to meet 95% of the BwD total demand for swimming.



- 4.7.2 In BwD 29% of the resident population do not have access to a car, based on the 2011 Census. For these residents a network of local accessible swimming pools is important to encourage ease of access and swimming participation. BwD has the second highest percentage of all the local authorities in the study area, the highest is in Burnley where 31.1% of the population do not have access to a car.
- 4.7.3 The findings for BwD are that, 63% of all visits to pools are by car, with 26% of visits by walking and 11% of visits by public transport. So the majority of visits to pools are by car, but there are 37% of all visits, or, over one in three visits to a swimming pool, by a combination of walking and public transport.
- 4.7.4 For this population a network of local accessible pools will be important to encourage and support swimming participation. Map 4.2 shows the area of BwD within a 0 – 15 minutes' walk from the BwD railway stations (purple shades). Plus, the area covered by 5 minutes' walk from the BwD bus stops. The location of the swimming pool sites and names are also shown.
- 4.7.5 As the map shows there is an extensive area of the Borough within these walking areas and this provides reasonably good access for residents who either walk or use public transport to travel to a swimming pool.

**Map 4.2 - Area within a 0 – 15 minute walk of the BwD Railway Stations and 5 Minutes' Walk from the Bus Stops**



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## 4.8 Availability

4.8.1 Availability is a measure of usage and throughput at swimming pools, and estimates how well used/how full facilities are. The facilities planning model is designed to include a 'comfort factor', beyond which the venues are too full. The pool itself becomes too busy to be able to swim comfortably, plus the changing and circulation areas become too crowded. The model assumes that usage over 70% of capacity used in the weekly peak period is busy, and the swimming pool is operating at an uncomfortable level above that percentage.

## Blackburn with Darwen Council Built Facility Strategy

4.8.2 The BwD Borough average swimming pools used capacity, is 70.7% of pool capacity used in the weekly peak period. This is right on the Sport England benchmark of pools being comfortably full, at 70% of pool capacity used in the weekly peak period.

4.8.3 The findings on used capacity can be explained by;

- The resident population of BwD, generates a demand for 1,568 sq metres of water. This compares to the total supply of 1,426 sq metres of water, which is available for community use in the weekly peak period. So, there is a balance of demand exceeding supply by 142 sq metres of water. This finding contributes to a quite high Borough average for pool capacity used
- The satisfied demand finding is 95% of the total demand for swimming from BwD residents is satisfied/met and so the pools are going to be busy.

4.8.4 So overall, the demand for swimming can be met, the level of satisfied demand is very high, unmet demand is very low and there is a good level of pool capacity used in the weekly peak period.

4.8.5 The findings for each individual pool site do vary from the Borough wide average, and these are set out in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2 - Used Capacity of the BwD Swimming Pools**

Name of Site	Type	Dimensions	Area	Site Year Built	Site Year Refurb	% of Capacity Used	% of Capacity Not Used	Car % Demand	Public Transport % Demand	Walk % Demand
<b>BLACKBURN w DARWEN</b>										
BLACKBURN SPORTS LEISURE CENTRE	Main/General	25 x 13	325	2015		100%	0%	66%	11%	23%
BLACKBURN SPORTS LEISURE CENTRE	Learner/Teaching/Training	10 x 5	50							
DARWEN LEISURE CENTRE	Main/General	25 x 17	424	2010		62%	38%	73%	10%	17%
DARWEN LEISURE CENTRE	Learner/Teaching/Training	13 x 8	98							
DW SPORTS FITNESS (BLACKBURN)	Main/General	20 x 9	178	2004		26%	74%	91%	5%	4%
HALF FISH HQ	Main/General	25 x 9	213	1991	1994	86%	14%	58%	9%	33%
HALF FISH HQ	Learner/Teaching/Training	13 x 7	91							
QUEEN ELIZABETHS GRAMMAR SCHOOL	Main/General	25 x 13	325	1989		76%	24%	67%	10%	23%

4.8.6 The findings for each individual pool site do vary and there are related reasons, these are;

- Firstly - the public leisure centres provide for all the swimming activities of: learn to swim; public recreational swimming; fun and leisure activities; lane and fitness swimming activities; and swimming development through clubs.
- The centres are (1) accessible for public use as well as swimming club use. (2) The opening hours are extensive and available for day time use and which is not possible at any education pools during term time. (3) The centres are proactively managed to encourage and support swimming participation and physical activity (4). There is not the requirement to pay a monthly membership fee to access the pool, as there is at the commercial centres. All these reasons contribute to a “draw effect” to the public leisure centre pools and there is a higher level of pool capacity used.
- Blackburn Sports Leisure Centre has an estimated used capacity of 100% in the weekly peak period. It would appear to be located in the area of the Borough with the highest demand for swimming. It is also the most modern swimming pool site in the Borough and it has the flexibility/attraction of a main pool plus a dedicated separate teaching/learner pool, so lots of further draw factors to this pool site.
- Darwen Leisure Centre has an estimated used capacity of 62% in the weekly peak period. It is the largest public swimming pool site in the Borough but it is located in an area of the Borough where there is a lower level of demand for swimming.
- Secondly - it is important to consider the scale of each pool site and not view the used capacity percentage figure in isolation. Darwen Leisure Centre is the largest swimming pool site in the Borough, the two pools have a total of 522 sq metres of water. So the Darwen Centre can accommodate more usage than the Blackburn Sports Leisure Centre, which has 375 sq metres of water.
- The respective used capacity of each site is 62% and 100% in the weekly peak period, and this has to be seen in this wider context, of the amount of water space and usage which each centre can accommodate. To repeat it is important to consider the scale at each pool site and the amount of use that can be accommodated and not view the used capacity percentage figure in isolation.



- Thirdly - the estimated used capacity of the education pool site, is based on the hours the pool is available for community use outside of education use. According to the data there are 35 hours of community use at the Queen Elisabeth's Grammar School and the estimated used capacity is 76% in the weekly peak period. The pool is a 25m x 6 lane pool and so can accommodate the full range of swimming activities, the most likely use is by swimming clubs and possibly a swim school operation.
- The commercial swimming pool will be available for recreational use by the centre membership and possibly learn to swim programmes. Overall there is a much more limited programme of swimming activities at commercial centres. The DW Fitness Centre has an estimated used capacity of 26% in the weekly peak period, which reflects this more limited programme of activities and with use limited to the centre membership.
- The Half Fish HQ Centre has an estimated used capacity of 86% in the weekly peak period and this is a high level, the centre is now principally a learn to swim centre.

### 4.9 Demand and Participation

#### Current Position

- 4.9.1 The resident population of BwD, generates a demand for 1,568 sq metres of water. This compares to the total supply of 1,426 sq metres of water, which is available for community use in the weekly peak period. So, there is a balance of demand exceeding supply by 142 sq metres of water.
- 4.9.2 Some 95% of the total demand for swimming from BwD residents is satisfied/met. Such a high level of the BwD total demand can be met, despite the BwD demand exceeding the BwD supply, because some BwD, residents live within the drive time catchment area of swimming pools located within neighbouring local authorities.
- 4.9.3 The BwD demand for swimming retained at the swimming pool sites located in the Borough is 89% of the BwD demand for swimming and 6% of the BwD demand is exported. Both assessments are made based on residents using the nearest pool to where they live.

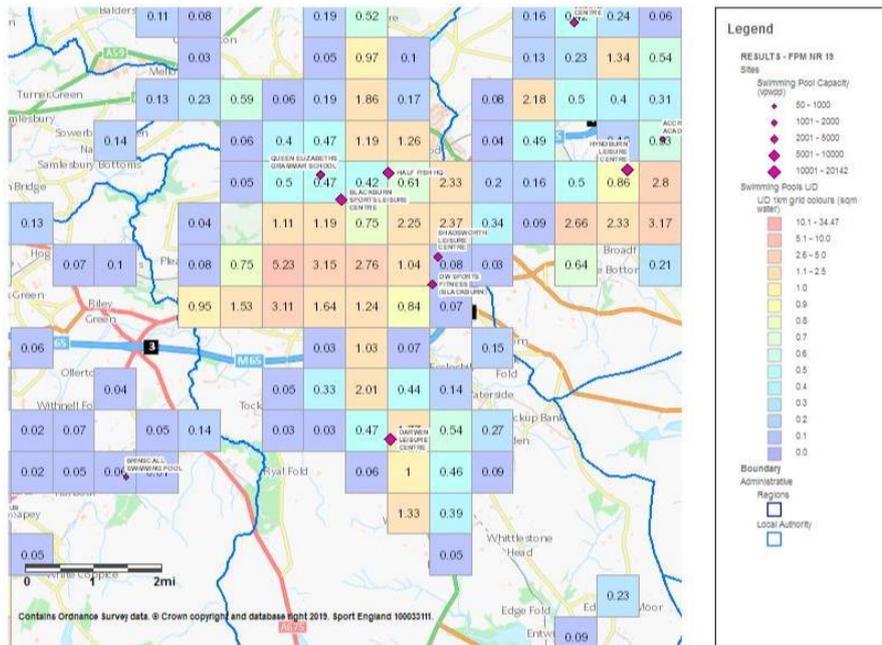


- 4.9.4 The BwD total unmet demand for swimming is 4.9% of total demand, and this equates to 76 metres of water. Of the total unmet demand, 96% is from unmet demand located outside the catchment area of a pool, which equates to 73 sq metres of water and 4% is from lack of swimming pool capacity, which is just 3 sq metres of water.
- 4.9.5 Unmet demand from this lack of access and demand outside catchment, is mainly by people who do not have access to a car, and live outside the walking or public transport catchment area of a pool. As set out under the accessibility heading 29% of BwD residents do not have access to a car.
- 4.9.6 Unmet demand outside catchment will always exist, this is because it is not possible to get complete spatial coverage, whereby all areas of an authority are inside catchment.
- 4.9.7 The BwD swimming pool locations map in the quantity section, shows there is an area in the south of the Borough, where there are no swimming pool sites. Fortunately, there is not a lot of demand for swimming located in this area. In terms of visits, the total unmet demand outside catchment, is 442 visits per week in the weekly peak period. This compares with the demand inside catchment, and which is being met, of 8,989 visits per week in the weekly peak period.
- 4.9.8 Map 4.3 shows the location and scale of the total unmet demand for swimming across BwD.
- 4.9.9 Unmet demand is highest in the area south-west of Blackburn Sports and Leisure centre in the Feniscliffe and Mill Hill areas and totals between 20 - 25 sq metres of water. This is not sufficient to warrant the need for additional swimming pool provision. Whilst there are two swimming pools located near to this area, it is likely there are residents who do not have access to a car and live outside the public transport catchment area of a swimming pool. Map 4.2 in the demand section does show the public transport network is limited in this area. The remainder of the unmet demand is distributed in low values, across the rest of the Borough. In short there are no significant deficiencies in pool provision, which warrant additional water space.

**Map 4.3 - Unmet Demand for Swimming BwD**

**Facilities Planning Model - National Runs - Swimming Pools 2019 Unmet Demand**

Unmet Demand expressed as square metres of water (round to two decimal places). Data outputs shown thematically (colours) at either output area level or aggregated at 1km square (figure labels).



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**Participation Trends**

4.9.10 Swimming provides cradle to grave participation opportunities for all age groups. Swimming is one of the most effective ways to burn calories: 30 minutes exercising in the water is worth 45 minutes of the same activity on land. Regular swimming can lower stress levels, reduce anxiety and depression and improve your sleep patterns. Swimming improves heart health, lowers blood pressure, improves lung capacity, increases bone strength and reduces joint pain as it is a low impact sport. Regular swimming can help to reduce long-term health conditions such as heart disease and diabetes by up to 40 per cent.

4.9.11 Swimming remains one of the most popular activities;

- In the last 12 months, 14 million adults (31.3 per cent of the nation) went swimming – 7.8 million women and 6.2 million men

- When focusing on those who swim more frequently, 4.7 million adults swim at least twice a month (10.5 per cent of the population)
- 2.7m women swim at least twice a month (11.7 per cent of the female population)
- Outdoor swimming continues to grow. 7.5m people swim in open water and in outdoor pools
- While 7.5m swim outdoors, 2.1 million prefer to swim in open water (lakes, lochs, rivers and seas), 3.15 million choose to swim in outdoor pools and an additional 2.25 million enjoy swimming both in open water and outdoor pools. Source: Active Lives, Nov 17-18
- Almost 27 per cent of children aged seven-16 years old swam in the last week. That's 1.88 million young people
- 138,000 children (almost one in four) cannot swim the statutory 25m when they leave primary school. Source: Active Lives Children and Young People, 2018
- 1.18 million children learn to swim on the Swim England Learn to Swim programme. Source: Swim England Swim Census 2018

4.9.12 Covid has impacted due to pool closures across the country, but the sport is now gearing up to re-open and the provision of swimming opportunities is and will remain a key activity to drive participation in sport and promote healthy lifestyles.

### **National Governing Body (NGB) Priorities**

4.9.13 Swim England's Strategic Plan was published in May 2020 and sets out a simple vision of A Nation Swimming. The mission of Swim England is *to create a happier, healthier and more successful nation through swimming.*

4.9.14 Consultation with Swim England revealed the following in terms of Blackburn;

- Blackburn with Darwen has benefitted from more recent aquatic builds. It also has an adequate water provision currently
- It is likely that refurbishment works will be needed within the next 5-10yrs to help prolong the sustainability of the current Leisure Centre facilities.

- Half Fish HQ which is an open community use swimming pool that has reached an age refurbishment works are likely to be needed, with a possibility of replacement within the next 5-10yrs depending on current condition of the facility.
- Within the future designs of replacement facilities, 25m pools should replace the current 20m options and also maintain the deepwater provision where it is currently in place.

4.9.15 Overall, Swim England are satisfied with the current water provision in Blackburn, which matches the assessment conclusions, however they would recommend, based on age and expected life span of aquatic facilities, that future investment will be required to maintain the stock at the current levels and quality. This is explored further below.

### **Impact of Growth**

4.9.16 Using the ONS figures (as used in the Local Plan and PPS) over the Plan period an increase the Blackburn with Darwen total population is projected to increase from 149,806 people in 2019 to 157,564 in 2037, an increase of 7,763.

4.9.17 This generates a demand for 87.49 sq. metres of water, which will result in a further excess of supply.

4.9.18 The growth, as with the current unmet demand, is however spread across the district in relatively small pockets and does not necessarily mean a future need for additional pool water of the scale set out. This will need to be assessed at the time, with a focus on the south of the borough, where current deficiencies are greatest.

4.9.19 Furthermore, before any additional provision is considered at any level, the current supply has to be considered. The overall capacity used in the borough is 70%, which provides some headroom to meet an increased demand. However, the main Council provision, at Blackburn Leisure Centre at 100% estimated capacity, so any increase will impact on facilities which are already full.

### **Summary**

4.9.20 The swimming pools assessment therefore identifies, the BwD demand for swimming pools can be met by the existing swimming pool provision. The level of BwD satisfied demand is very high at over 90% of total demand and unmet demand is very low at 5% of total demand, and this equates to just 76 sq metres of water.

- 4.9.21 Whilst unmet demand is very low, the two public swimming pools sites are estimated to be very busy pools. Any projected growth in population/swimming demand up to 2037, is therefore going to impact on the Blackburn Sports and Leisure Centre pool especially.
- 4.9.22 It may well be any increase in demand can be accommodated by changes in programming and re-distribution of demand across the two pool sites however the later latter consideration is likely to be challenging, given the location and catchment area of the two pool sites.
- 4.9.23 So, growth whilst not significant, will impact on swimming needs both in terms of the existing supply, which will become busier and *potentially* the need for additional pool provision. Particularly if there is any reduction in demand e.g. pool closures.
- 4.9.24 This assessment provides an indication that future investment will be required to maintain the current offer. This is endorsed by the consultation with Swim England. It is evident that any change (reduction) in swimming pool provision and, or community use will influence directly the available supply of swimming pools for community use.
- 4.9.25 Therefore, whilst the overall supply of swimming pools is currently sufficient to meet demand, new demand from growth and or any reduction in supply will increase this used capacity and increase the costs of managing and maintaining the centre.
- 4.9.26 For all these reasons, there is an evidence base to support continued investment in the swimming pool network across Blackburn and Darwen. Application of the Sport England Sports Facility Calculator (SFC) cost findings, to accommodate any requirements to modernise the centres to accommodate the increased usage will be applicable at the time any developments come forward.
- 4.9.27 Any loss in supply will further exacerbate this, particularly in the south of the borough.
- 4.9.28 In terms of assessing the need for contributions towards swimming pool provision the Council should therefore seek contributions towards swimming pool provision from developments. The exact needs and level of contributions should be assessed at the time of development and assessed against the supply and demand position at the time. From consultation, following the investment in the two main pools, there is little or no appetite for new provision therefore *protection of and enhancement* in existing pool stock will be the strategy priority over the life of the plan.

## Swimming Pools Key Issue

### QUANTITY

There are 8 individual pools located at 5 swimming pool sites across BwD. The total supply of water space available for community use in the weekly peak period is 1,676 sq metres of water. (Note: for context a 25m x 4 lane pool is between 210 and 250 sq metres of water, depending on lane width).

Two of the six swimming pool sites are public leisure centre swimming pool sites, Blackburn Sports Leisure Centre (opened in 2015) and Darwen Leisure Centre (opened in 2010).

The Half Fish Swimming Centre was formerly Daisyfields Pools, a public swimming pool. The Council made an asset transfer of the pool site to Half Fish HQ who provide an extensive learn to swim programme and provide for local community swimming.

There is one education swimming pool site, which is Queen Elisabeth's Grammar School and there is one commercial swimming pool sites, DW Sports Fitness.

In terms of swimming pool scale, two of the public leisure centre sites have both a main pool and a separate teaching learner pool. Blackburn Sports Leisure Centre has a 25m x 6 lane main pool (325 sq metres of water) and a 50 sq metre teaching/learner pool, whilst Darwen Leisure Centre has a 25m x 8 lane main pool (424 sq metres of water) and a teaching/learner pool with 98 sq metres of water.

### QUALITY AND THE SWIMMING OFFER

The scale of provision at the public swimming pools sites, means they can provide for all the swimming activities of: learn to swim; casual recreational swimming; lane and aqua aerobics fitness swimming activities; and swimming development through clubs. The swimming activities can be undertaken in separate dedicated pools at both centres.

The average age of the public swimming pool sites, is just 6 years and the average of the 5 swimming pool sites is 17 years.

### ACCESSIBILITY

Some 95% of the total demand for swimming from BwD residents is satisfied/met. This is the level of the Borough's total demand for swimming that is located inside the catchment area of a swimming pool (pools located both inside and outside the Borough).

29% of the BwD population do not have access to a car, based on the 2011 Census. For these residents a network of local accessible swimming pools is important, to encourage ease of access and swimming participation.

The findings for BwD are that, 63% of all visits to pools are by car, with 26% of visits by walking and 11% of visits by public transport. So the majority of visits to pools are by car, but there are 37%



of all visits, or, over one in three visits to a swimming pool, by a combination of walking and public transport.

### AVAILABILITY

Availability is a measure of usage and throughput at swimming pools, and estimates how well used/how full facilities are. The facilities planning model is designed to include a 'comfort factor', beyond which the venues are too full. The pool itself becomes too busy to be able to swim comfortably, plus the changing and circulation areas become too crowded. The model assumes that usage over 70% of capacity used in the weekly peak period is busy, and the swimming pool is operating at an uncomfortable level above that percentage.

Availability is a measure of usage and throughput at swimming pools, and estimates how well used/how full facilities are. The facilities planning model is designed to include a 'comfort factor', beyond which the venues are too full. The pool itself becomes too busy to be able to swim comfortably, plus the changing and circulation areas become too crowded. The model assumes that usage over 70% of capacity used in the weekly peak period is busy, and the swimming pool is operating at an uncomfortable level above that percentage.

The BwD Borough average for swimming pools used capacity, is 70.7% in the weekly peak period. This is right on the Sport England benchmark of pools being comfortably full, at 70% of pool capacity used in the weekly peak period.

The findings on used capacity can be explained by

- The resident population of BwD, generates a demand for 1,568 sq metres of water in 2019. This compares to the total supply of 1,426 sq metres of water, which is available for community use in the weekly peak period. So, there is a balance of demand exceeding supply by 142 sq metres of water in 2019. This finding contributes to a quite high Borough average for pool capacity used
- The satisfied demand finding is 95% of the total demand for swimming from BwD residents is satisfied/met and so the pools are going to be busy

The findings for each individual pool site do vary and there are related reasons, these are:

- Firstly - the public leisure centres provide for all the swimming activities of: learn to swim; public recreational swimming; fun and leisure activities; lane and fitness swimming activities; and swimming development through clubs.
- The centres are (1) accessible for public use as well as swimming club use. (2) The opening hours are extensive and available for day time use and which is not possible at any education pools during term time. (3) The centres are proactively managed to encourage and support swimming participation and physical activity (4). There is not the requirement to pay a monthly membership fee to access the pool, as there is at the commercial centres. All these reasons create a "draw effect" to the public leisure centre pools and with it a higher level of pool capacity used.
- Blackburn Sports Leisure Centre has an estimated used capacity of 100% in the weekly peak period. It is located in the area of the Borough with the highest demand for swimming. It is also the most modern swimming pool site in the Borough and it has the flexibility/attraction of a main pool plus a dedicated separate teaching/learner pool, so lots of further draw factors to this pool site.

- Darwen Leisure Centre has an estimated used capacity of 62% in the weekly peak period. It is the largest public swimming pool site in the Borough but it is located in an area of the Borough where there is a lower level of demand for swimming.
- Secondly - it is important to consider the scale of each pool site and not view the used capacity percentage figure in isolation. Darwen Leisure Centre is the largest swimming pool site in the Borough, the two pools have a total of 522 sq metres of water. So the Darwen Centre can accommodate more usage than the Blackburn Sports Leisure Centre, which has 375 sq metres of water.
- The respective used capacity of each site of 62% and 100% in the weekly peak period, should be viewed in this context, namely the amount of water space and usage which each centre can accommodate. To repeat, it is important to consider the scale at each pool site and the amount of use that can be accommodated and not view the used capacity percentage figure in isolation.

## DEMAND AND PARTICIPATION

As reported, 95% of the total demand for swimming from BwD residents is satisfied/met. The BwD demand for swimming retained at the swimming pool sites located in the Borough is 89% and 6% of the BwD demand is exported. Both assessments are based on residents using the nearest pool to where they live.

The BwD total unmet demand for swimming is 5% of total demand, and this equates to 76 metres of water. Of the total unmet demand, 96% is unmet demand located outside the catchment area of a pool, which equates to 73 sq metres of water and 4% is from lack of swimming pool capacity, which is just 3 sq metres of water.

Unmet demand located outside catchment, is mainly by people who do not have access to a car, and live outside the walking or public transport catchment area of a pool. As set out under the accessibility heading, 29% of BwD residents do not have access to a car.

Unmet demand outside catchment will always exist, this is because it is not possible to get complete spatial coverage, whereby all areas of an authority are inside catchment.

The BwD swimming pool locations map in the quantity section, shows there is an extensive area in the south of the Borough, where there are no swimming pool sites. Fortunately, there is not a lot of demand for swimming located in this area.

In terms of visits, the total unmet demand outside catchment, is 442 visits per week in the weekly peak period. This compares with the demand inside catchment, and which is being met, of 8,989 visits per week in the weekly peak period.

The overall key point, is not that unmet demand outside catchment exists, but the SCALE of the unmet demand, and which is more important. Plus, if this unmet demand is clustered enough to consider further pool provision, so as to improve accessibility to pools for residents.

Unmet demand is highest in the area south west of Blackburn Sports and Leisure Centre in the Feniscliffe and Mill Hill areas and totals between 20 - 25 sq metres of water. Whilst there are two

swimming pools located near to this area, it is likely there are residents who do not have access to a car and live outside the public transport catchment area of a swimming pool.

### OVERALL SUMMARY

The swimming pools assessment therefore identifies, the BwD demand for swimming pools can be met by the existing swimming pool provision. The level of BwD satisfied demand is very high at over 90% of total demand and unmet demand is very low at 5% of total demand, and this equates to just 76 sq metres of water.

Whilst unmet demand is very low, the two public swimming pools sites are estimated to be very busy pools. Any projected growth in population/swimming demand up to 2036, is therefore going to impact on the Blackburn Sports and Leisure Centre pool especially.

It may well be any increase in demand can be accommodated by changes in programming and re-distribution of demand across the two pool sites however the later latter consideration is likely to be challenging, given the location and catchment area of the two pool sites.

So, growth whilst not significant, will impact on swimming needs both in terms of the existing supply, which will become busier and *potentially* the need for additional pool provision. Particularly if there is any reduction in demand e.g. pool closures.

This assessment provides an indication that future investment will be required to maintain the current offer. This is endorsed by the consultation with Swim England. It is evident that any change (reduction) in swimming pool provision and, or community use will influence directly the available supply of swimming pools for community use.

Therefore, whilst the overall supply of swimming pools is currently sufficient to meet demand, new demand from growth and or any reduction in supply will increase this used capacity and increase the costs of managing and maintaining the centre.

For all these reasons, there is an evidence base to support continued investment in the swimming pool network across Blackburn and Darwen. Application of the Sport England Sports Facility Calculator (SFC) cost findings, to accommodate any requirements to modernise the centres to accommodate the increased usage will be applicable at the time any developments come forward.

Any loss in supply will further exacerbate this, particularly in the south of the borough.

In terms of assessing the need for contributions towards swimming pool provision the Council should therefore seek contributions towards swimming pool provision from developments. The exact needs

and level of contributions should be assessed at the time of development and assessed against the supply and demand position at the time

The most immediate concern is Half Fish HQ Swimming Centre, which is providing an extensive learn to swim programme and it is operated as a community asset transfer from the Council. It is important that the Half Fish HQ Swimming Centre does continue in operation, as it is making a contribution to meeting the overall demand for swimming in BwD. Should it cease then there will be more demand transferred to the public leisure centres and the findings are that both pool sites are very full at peak times. If the Half Fish HQ Swimming Centre should close then the assessment is that there may be a need for a small community swimming pool of 25m x 4 lanes in this area of the Borough.

## Indoor Built Facility Strategy

### Principles

4.9.29 The Strategy is based upon the following principles;

- Ensure any new or re-developed provision in the borough is developed in-line with the Built Facility Strategy priorities and the needs and evidence set out - Ensure planners adopt the evidence base as appropriate and the work directs funding.
- Focus should be placed on maximising resources – the strategy will seek to maximise the capacity and function of built facilities and to ensure that provision is adapted to meet with future requirements. This will include the continued use of school sites, which play a critical role in the provision of sports facilities in BwD.
- Sustainability is a key focus – all recommendations seek to deliver new and improved facilities in a sustainable manner, focusing on large sites that are efficient and effective to maintain, maximising the capacity of sites, supporting well established clubs and sports across BwD and promoting good practice.
- Quality of facilities is as important as the amount of provision – the strategy seeks to ensure that the borough contains the right amount of facilities, of the right quality and in the right place. While it promotes protection of current provision, it recognises the need to improve the quality of existing facilities and the subsequent investment required.
- Seek investment from development in line with CIL principles and adopting Sport England good practice guidance.
- Investment should focus upon interventions that will meet need and have the greatest impact – the strategy seeks to prioritise investment into sites where the highest impact



will be felt and where high numbers of users will benefit. It will seek to increase participation in sport and activity in terms of both numbers and standards.

- The objectives for the strategy based on the needs and evidence set out, for all sports, BwD Council and its partners will seek to:

***Protect***

- SO1: Safeguard all existing built sports facilities in line with Paragraph 99 of the National Planning Policy Framework, irrespective of ownership and the degree of access and use.



This strategy will clearly define any facilities that are not required to meet current or projected future needs.

- SO2: Protect and safeguard access to built sports facilities by promoting long term agreements with schools and other landowners to facilitate ongoing investment and improvement.
- SO3: Maximise community use of indoor built sports facilities where this will benefit the overall facility stock.

### ***Enhance***

- SO4: Ensure that new developments contribute towards the enhancement of existing facilities.
- SO5: Ensure that the quality of facilities provided is appropriate to the level and standard of play that is sustained and that it promotes participation in sport.
- SO6: Ensure that sports facilities are accompanied by appropriate ancillary facilities (e.g. sports lighting and changing provision)
- SO7: Ensure that facilities are maintained appropriately for the activities that they are sustaining and to maximise long term capacity.
- SO8: Work in partnership with key stakeholders and voluntary organisations to secure funding.

### ***Provide***

- SO9: Address existing deficiencies in provision.
- SO10: Ensure that new developments contribute towards the provision of new sports facilities and the enhancement of existing facilities.
- SO11: Support clubs in the management and development of facilities.

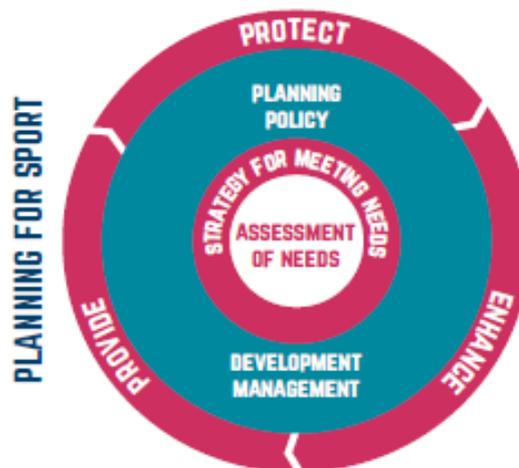
**Action Plan**

4.9.30 The above key issues for swimming across BwD have been developed into an Action Plan.

4.9.31 The Action Plan recommendations are categorised under the headings of 'Protect', 'Enhance' and 'Provide', as recommended by Sport England in the ANOG guidance.

4.9.32 The sport specific Action Plan for swimming and recommendations are set out in the next section. They link to the above strategic objectives and outline the key priorities for swimming provision. For ease of reference, recommendations are summarised and justifications for each recommendation, drawing upon the evidence presented in the assessment are provided. To support the implementation of these recommendations, the Action Plan also indicate the measures of success for each recommendation and who will deliver the action.

4.9.33 Subsequent sections will adopt the same strategy principles and objectives and will outline the sport specific Action Plan.





**Swimming Pool Action Plan**

Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation	Justification	Relevant Sites and Key Actions	Lead Partner	Measures of Success
<b>SO1 (Protect)</b>	1 Resist the loss of any swimming pool sites unless replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.	All Swimming pool sites are well used and well located to meet current and future demands across BwD.  The impact of any closures alongside growth would impact on the supply and demand balance.	All Swimming Pools.	BwD Planning / Leisure  Education Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retention of existing pool sites</li> </ul>
<b>SO1 and SO2 (Protect)</b>	2 Protect existing access to swimming pools on education, voluntary and commercial sites.  Seek investment to protect access and usage.  Ensure that existing community use agreements are delivered and renewed.	All existing sites are important to the provision for swimming in BwD and maintaining the supply and demand balance.  Loss of these facilities would impact on overall supply and demand balance.  Access to swimming opportunities at Half Fish HQ should be protected.	Half Fish HQ  Queen Elizabeth Grammar School	Half Fish HQ  Education Department  BwD Planning / Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to swimming opportunities on sites to be protected and enhanced through investment</li> </ul>
<b>SO4, SO5, SO6 and SO7 (Enhance)</b>	3 Support enhancements /upgrades to the existing swimming facility infra-structure.	The quality of facility provision is a key priority.  Whilst the stock is modern, it is ageing, approaching and exceeding 10-years old,	Blackburn Leisure Centre  Darwen Leisure Centre	BwD Leisure  Education Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved facility quality</li> <li>Successful investment and funding applications</li> </ul>



Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation	Justification	Relevant Sites and Key Actions	Lead Partner	Measures of Success
		and in line with Swim England comments future investment will be required to maintain the quality of the current offer.			
<b>SO4 and SO10 (Enhance and Provide)</b>	<p>4</p> <p>Seek investment to the swimming pool infrastructure from all developments.</p> <p>Seek investment to improve the quality and capacity at the key pool sites in line with the application of Sport England’s Sports Facility Calculator tool.</p> <p>Consider new provision to meet identified gaps if appropriate following consideration of supply and demand balance at the time.</p>	<p>Supply and demand clearly illustrates that there will be impacts of the projected growth that will require financial contributions.</p> <p>This will be exacerbated if the supply changes i.e. any of the current pools close.</p> <p>Gaps in the south of the borough may be exacerbated by growth and or future closures.</p>	<p>All swimming pool sites based on the catchment of proposed developments.</p> <p>Priority on Council sites where capacity pressures are greatest.</p>	BwD Leisure / BwD Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributions secured towards swimming pool facility infra-structure enhancements and new provision if appropriate.</li> </ul>

## 5 Section 5 - Assessment of need and evidence base for Sports Halls

### 5.4 Introduction

- 5.4.1 There is a full and separate assessment report for provision of sports halls across the BwD Council area. The findings are based on Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (fpm) data from Sport England's National assessment of sports halls. It was commissioned by BwD Council to provide an in-depth assessment, applying the extensive data which is available for sports halls and swimming pools, and which is not available for the other facility types.
- 5.4.2 The report is based on seven headings. total supply; total demand; supply and demand balance; satisfied/met demand; unmet demand; used capacity (how full the sports halls are); and equity share.
- 5.4.3 A summary of the findings from that report are set out here following the Assessment of Needs and Opportunities headings. It is provided, so there is consistency in the assessment reporting with the other indoor sports facility types.

### 5.5 QUANTITY

- 5.5.1 There are 17 individual sports halls located on 14 sites within BwD. The total supply of sports halls in badminton courts, is 68 courts, of which 43 are available in the weekly peak period for community use (known as the effective supply). The reason for the difference between the total supply of badminton courts and the effective supply, is because of the variable hours of access for community use at the sports halls located on education sites.
- 5.5.2 Details of the sports halls located in BwD are set out in table 5.1.

**Table 5.1 - Sports halls supply in BwD**

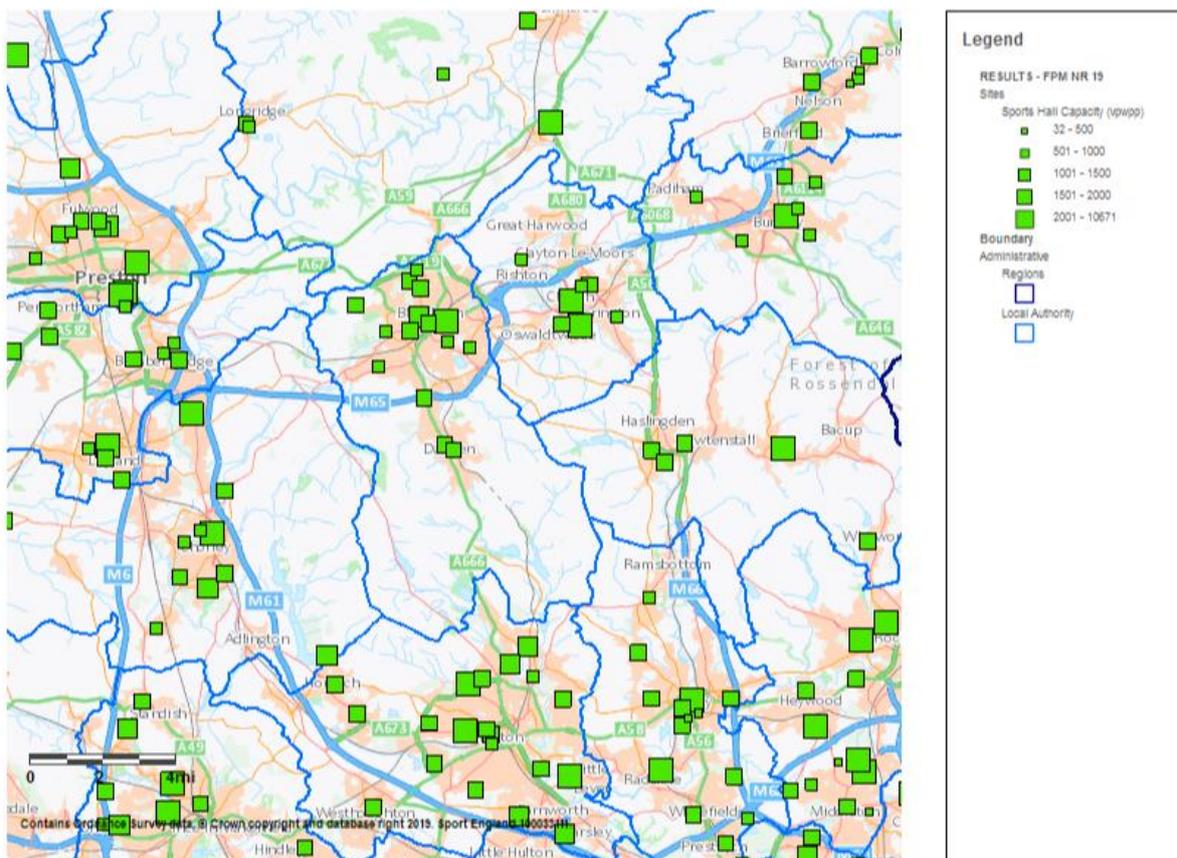
Name of Site	Type	Dimensions	Area	No of courts	Site Year Built	Site Year Refurb	Car % Demand	Public Tran % Demand	Walk % Demand
<b>BLACKBURN with DARWEN</b>							<b>68%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>23%</b>
AUDLEY CENTRE	Main	35 x 20	690	4	1985	2007	67%	11%	23%
AUDLEY CENTRE	Activity Hall	18 x 10	180						
BLACKBURN CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL WITH CROSSHILL	Main	35 x 20	690	4	2012		68%	11%	22%
BLACKBURN SPORTS LEISURE CENTRE	Main	33 x 18	594	4	2014		66%	10%	24%
BLACKBURN SPORTS LEISURE CENTRE	Main	33 x 18	594						
BLACKBURN YOUTH ZONE	Main	33 x 18	594	4	2012		69%	11%	20%
DARWEN ALDRIDGE COMMUNITY ACADEMY	Main	35 x 20	690	4	2010		67%	7%	25%

# Blackburn with Darwen Council Built Facility Strategy

DARWEN LEISURE CENTRE	Main	35 x 20	690	4	2010		69%	8%	23%
DARWEN VALE HIGH SCHOOL	Main	33 x 18	594	4	2012		72%	9%	19%
PLECKGATE HIGH SCHOOL	Main	35 x 20	690	4	2011		76%	8%	16%
QUEEN ELIZABETH'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL (HARRISON PLAYING FIELD)	Main	35 x 27	932	6	1988	2003	75%	8%	17%
ST BEDES R C HIGH SCHOOL	Main	27 x 18	486	3	2005		50%	6%	44%
ST MARY'S COLLEGE	Main	35 x 20	690	4	1983	2000	63%	8%	29%
ST WILFRIDS C OF E ACADEMY	Main	35 x 20	690	4	2003		64%	9%	26%
ST WILFRIDS C OF E ACADEMY	Activity Hall	18 x 17	306						
WESTHOLME SCHOOL	Main	35 x 20	690	4	1970	2007	84%	9%	6%
WITTON PARK ACADEMY	Main	35 x 20	690	4	2012		71%	9%	20%

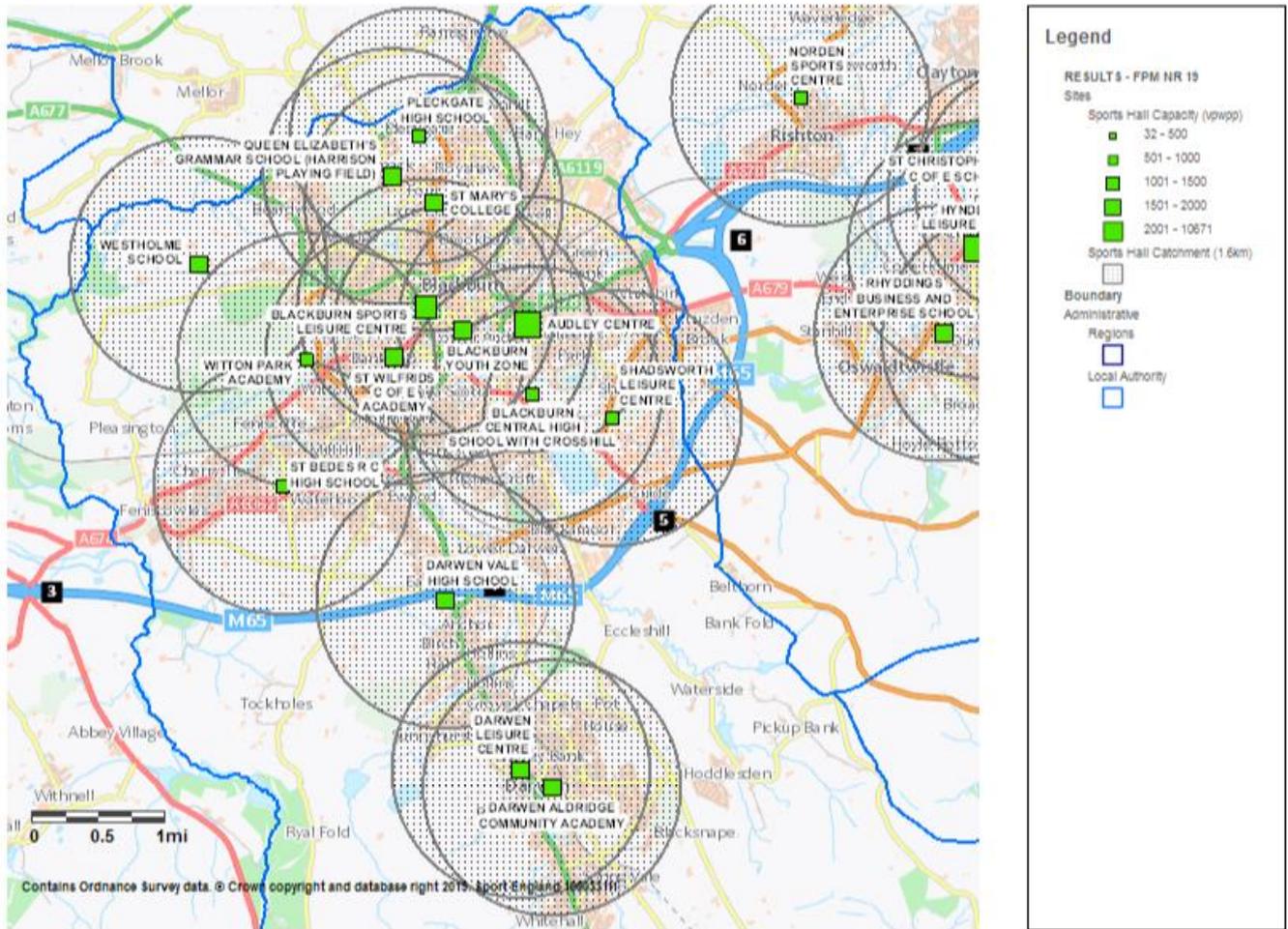
5.5.3 The location of all the sports hall sites in BwD are shown in Map 5.1 and in a bit more detail in Map 5.2 with the notional one mile/20 minutes walking catchment. The size of the green square reflects the size of the sports hall at each site, in terms of its capacity at peak times.

**Map 5.1 - Location of sports hall sites BwD**



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**Map 5.2 - Location of sports hall sites BwD**



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5.5.4 There are 2 public leisure centres, the Blackburn Sports and Leisure Centre (2012), which has 2 sports halls, each of four badminton courts and with dimensions of 33m x 18m. The Darwen Leisure Centre (2010) has a 4 badminton court sports hall of 35m x 20m. The Audley Centre (1985) is owned by BwD and is an asset transfer to a local community group. They now operate it on behalf of local residents, it has a 4 badminton court main hall, 35m x 20m and a smaller activity hall 18m x 10m.

- 5.5.5 The Blackburn Sports and Leisure Centre is the largest sports hall site in the Borough and the two main halls are separated. The centre is a joint venture with Blackburn College and under the funding and operating arrangements, the college has exclusive use of one of the halls for its physical education curriculum programmes. Outside of the college hours of use, the hall is available for community use, along with the other main hall.
- 5.5.6 In 2013 Sport England and the National Governing Bodies for hall sports reviewed the dimensions for main sports hall and set new guidance for a main sports hall of 4 badminton courts at 34.5m x 20m
- 5.5.7 There are nine sports hall sites which are owned by schools or colleges. The sports hall at Queen Elisabeth's Grammar School (1988) is a 6 badminton court main hall of 35m x 27m. This size of main hall can accommodate multi sports use at the same time, as well as providing a show court for events with spectating accommodation.
- 5.5.8 Six of the other education sports halls all have a 4 badminton court main hall with dimensions of 35m x 20m. Whist Darwen Vale High School (2012) has a main hall of 33m x 18m and St Bedes RC High School (2005) has a 3 badminton court main hall 27m x 18m.
- 5.5.9 There is one youth centre sports and which is supported by BwD, the Blackburn Youth Zone (2012), it has 4 badminton court main hall 33m x 18m.
- 5.5.10 The education sports halls have variable hours of access for community use outside of education use. Some schools and colleges proactively manage the venues for wider community use, and which is predominantly for sports club and community groups use. Other schools and colleges let their sports halls on a responsive basis, for a term or even shorter irregular lettings, and again this is usually to sports clubs or community groups.
- 5.5.11 The variable policy and hours and access for community use of the school and college venues, explains the reason for the difference between the total supply of sports halls, which is 68 badminton courts, and the supply available for community use, 43 badminton courts, in the weekly peak period. In effect, there is an aggregate total of 25 badminton courts, across the education sites, which are unavailable for community use.
- 5.5.12 The quantity of sports hall provision is therefore good as is the location of provision, there are no significant gaps, requiring large-scale provision. What is evident however is the importance of the education stock to maintain this balance and ensuring the right scale of provision.



## 5.5.13 A survey of school sports hall provision across the borough revealed the following;

- 40% of respondents use some facilities at sites other than the school. Both Westholme School and St Wilfrid’s use Cherry Tree Cricket Ground. It is also noted that St Wilfrid’s playing fields are approximately 1 mile away from the main academy buildings. Westholme School use some of the facilities at Witton Park.
- 60% of the schools have outsourced the maintenance of their pitches to external contractors.
- Only one of the respondents rated any of their outfield facilities as poor with the other four rating their facilities as a mix between good and average.
- 60% of the schools that responded to the survey have tennis courts
- 60% of the respondents have an indoor dance studio, the same respondents also benefit from a gymnasium too.
- One of the schools that responded benefits from a swimming pool
- All of the schools which responded believe that the facilities at the school site meet the circular and extracurricular needs of the school.
- 40% of the respondents have plans to expand, develop or improve some of their sports facilities. St Wilfrid’s Church of England Academy plan to resurface the artificial pitch and complete rejuvenation work at playing fields if funding allows. St Bede’s RC High School options include carpeting MUGA and providing floodlights, new sports hall/performance centre.
- 83% of the schools confirmed that they have facilities available for community use, with 50% of respondents having formal agreements in place.
- 83% of respondents confirmed that their outdoor facilities are currently used on a regular basis by community teams.
- Roughly 33% of the schools responding indicated that they have the capacity to increase the community use that takes place on their outdoor facilities.

School Name	Quantity	Quality	Community Use	Issues and Opportunities
<b>St Wilfrid’s Church of England Academy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grass Football Pitches x2</li> <li>• Junior Grass Football Pitch</li> <li>• Half size artificial pitch</li> <li>• Sports Hall</li> <li>• Multifunctional school hall used for sports</li> <li>• Gym</li> <li>• Fitness suite</li> <li>• Dance studio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indoor facilities all rated good to very good.</li> <li>• Artificial pitch rated good.</li> <li>• The overall pitch quality was rated as average with a gradient, line marking and freedom from litter being rated good. Ancillary provision was rated average.</li> </ul>	<p>Good community use. No formal agreement. Facilities manager oversees community use. Potential to increase the amount of community use of the grass pitches, artificial grass pitches and indoor facilities.</p> <p>Current facilities used include artificial pitch, dance studio, sports hall, gym and playing fields.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan to resurface the artificial pitch and complete rejuvenation work at playing fields if funding allows.</li> <li>• Priority artificial pitch.</li> </ul>
<b>Blackburn Central High School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One adult and one junior grass football pitch</li> <li>• An artificial cricket wicket</li> <li>• Rugby union pitch</li> <li>• A full-size artificial pitch</li> <li>• Four tennis courts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitch quality rated average overall, all element average apart from gradient and freedom from litter which are rated good.</li> <li>• Ancillary provision rated good.</li> </ul>	<p>Good community use. Formal agreement in place. In regular community use. No capacity to increase community use. Managed through community use team on site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No plans for development</li> </ul>



School Name	Quantity	Quality	Community Use	Issues and Opportunities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sports hall</li> <li>Dance studio</li> <li>Fitness suite</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tennis courts good. Artificial pitch rated average – some drainage issues.</li> <li>Sports hall and other facilities good.</li> </ul>		
<b>St Bede’s RC High School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Junior grass football pitch</li> <li>A full-size artificial pitch</li> <li>Sports hall</li> <li>Multifunctional school hall used for sports</li> <li>Dance studio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall pitch quality rated average – drainage, line markings and maintenance rated poorly. Ancillary facilities rated good.</li> <li>Artificial pitch rated good.</li> <li>Sports hall OK.</li> <li>Multipurpose hall and dance studio good.</li> </ul>	<p>Good community use. Formal agreement in place and in regular community use. Capacity to increase community use of grass pitches and indoor facilities.</p> <p>Current facilities used include artificial pitch, sports hall and grass pitch. Facilities are managed by school staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Options include carpeting MUGA and providing floodlights, new sports hall/performance centre.</li> <li>Priority sports hall.</li> </ul>
<b>Witton Park Academy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two adult and one junior grass football pitches.</li> <li>Artificial grass wicket.</li> <li>Rugby union pitch.</li> <li>Full size artificial pitch.</li> <li>Six tennis courts.</li> <li>Sports hall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall pitch quality good.</li> <li>Ancillary provision – changing facilities and showers good, car parking average.</li> <li>Tennis courts, artificial pitch, sports hall and other facilities rated good.</li> </ul>	<p>Good community use. Formal agreement in place and in regular community use. No capacity to increase community use.</p> <p>No details of facilities used. The facilitates are managed by Engie.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No plans for development</li> </ul>
<b>Westholme School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One adult and two junior grass football pitches.</li> <li>Grass cricket pitch.</li> <li>Artificial cricket wicket</li> <li>Rugby union pitch.</li> <li>Full size artificial pitch.</li> <li>Four tennis courts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall pitch quality rated average.</li> <li>Changing and shower facilities rated average, car parking rated good.</li> <li>Tennis courts and artificial pitches rated good.</li> <li>Swimming pool and sports hall rated fair quality.</li> </ul>	<p>Good levels of community use but potential to increase capacity. Football/rugby pitches not available after 6pm due to floodlight restrictions.</p> <p>Facilities in use include artificial pitch and sports hall. The facilitates are managed by the maintenance team.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No plans for development</li> </ul>
<b>Star Academies - Tauheedul Islam Boys’ High School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No information</li> </ul>	<p>No community use – at present decided not to pursue the lettings of field and sports facilities.</p>	
<b>Darwen Vale High School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grass pitches, tennis courts, Muga and sports hall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good</li> </ul>	<p>Formal agreement for community use. Managed externally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good provision no issues or development proposals</li> </ul>

5.5.14 Protecting on-going access to the school sports hall stock will be important strategically going forward. The growth will impact on the capacity, which is currently high. There will therefore also be a need for on-going investment in the education sports hall stock.



## 5.6 Sports halls per 10,000 population

- 5.6.1 Based on a measure of number of badminton courts available for community use per 10,000 population, BwD has 4.9 badminton courts. When compared with the neighbouring authorities, BwD has the joint third highest supply of courts based on this measure, along with Hyndburn. The highest supply is in Chorley with 5.9 courts per 10,000 population followed by South Ribble with 5.5 courts. The lowest supply is in Burnley with 3.5 badminton courts per 10,000 population.
- 5.6.2 The North-West Region average is 4.4 badminton courts per 10,000 population and for England wide it is 4.2 courts per 10,000 population in 2019.
- 5.6.3 So, the provision of sports hall space across BwD is close to the provision of its neighbours and higher than the North-West Region and the England wide average.

## 5.7 QUALITY AND THE SPORTS HALL OFFER

- 5.7.1 The average age of the sports hall sites is 19 years, however this is misleading as 8 of the sites (57% of the supply) have been opened post 2010. Two sports halls opened in the 2000 decade, none in the 1990's, three in the 1980's and one in the 1970's. The oldest sports hall is at Westholme School, opened in 1970 and the most recent sports hall to open is, Blackburn Sports Leisure Centre, in 2014.
- 5.7.2 Five of the education sports hall sites have opened post 2010 under the Building Schools for the Future Programme.
- 5.7.3 All the sports hall sites which opened before 2000, have been modernised, Audley Centre (1987 and modernised in 2007), Queen Elisabeth's Grammar School (1998 and modernised in 2003), St Mary's College (1983 and modernised in 2000) and Westholme College (1970 and modernised in 2007).
- 5.7.4 Modernisation is defined as one or more of, the sports hall floor upgraded to a sprung timber floor, the lighting system upgraded or the changing accommodation modernised.
- 5.7.5 A 4 badminton court sports hall can accommodate all the indoor hall sports halls at the local level of play. The 34.5m x 20m 4 court halls provide the best offer. The 4 court sports halls with smaller dimensions do have the correct sizes for the playing area dimensions, but the space between and behind courts is smaller.



5.7.6 The number and location of the twelve 4 court halls in BwD means there is a very good offer for the playing of indoor hall sports, across the borough.

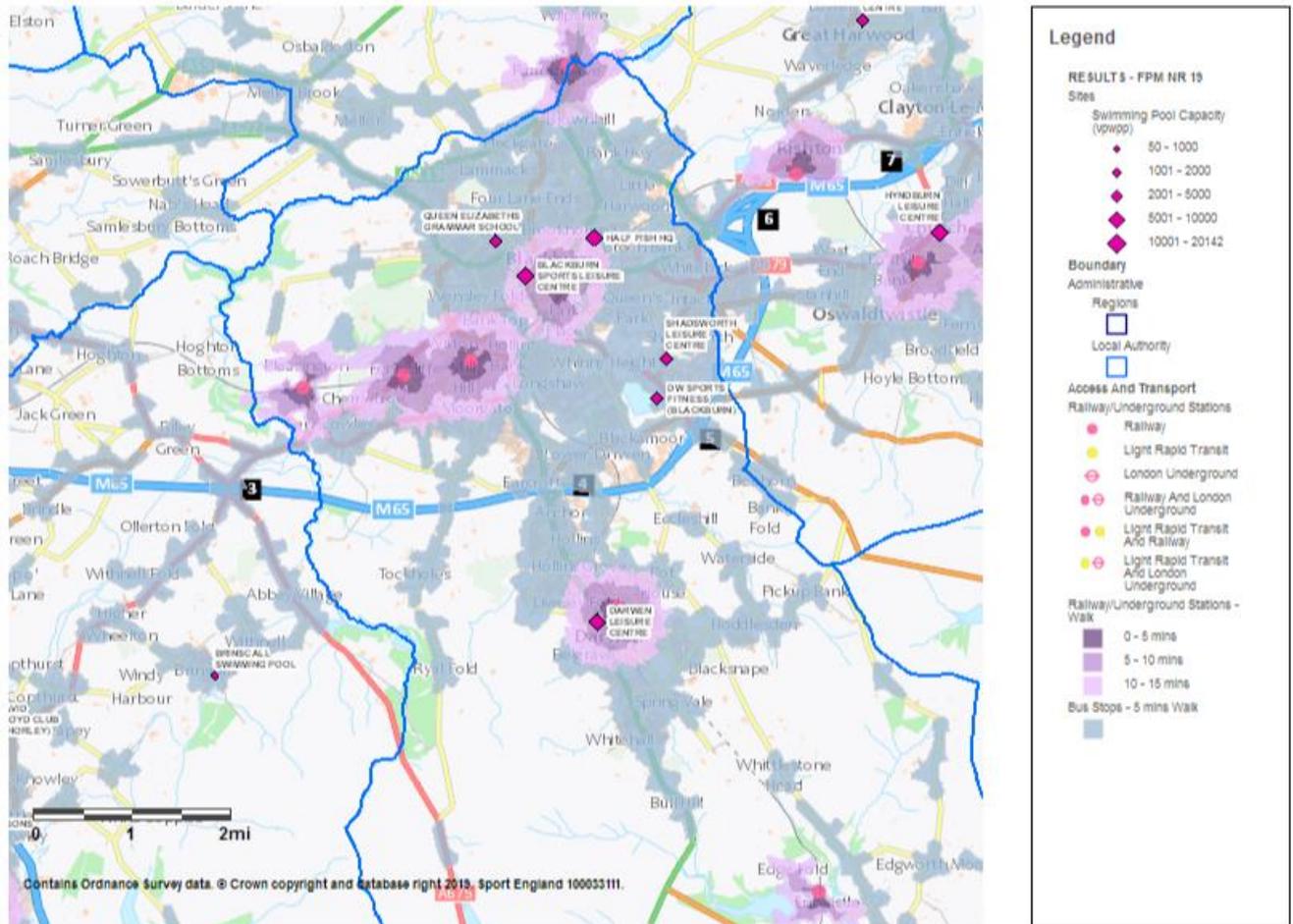
### **5.8 ACCESSIBILITY**

5.8.1 The findings for BwD are that, 66% of all visits to sports halls are by car, with 25% of visits by walking and 9% of visits by public transport. So the majority of visits are by car, but there are 34% of all visits, or, over one in three visits, by a combination of walking and public transport.

5.8.2 Based on the 2011 Census 29% of the BwD population do not have access to a car.

5.8.3 For the population that walks or uses public transport, a network of local accessible sports halls is important, to encourage and support participation in hall sports. Map 5.3 below shows the area covered by the 0 – 15 minutes' walk from the BwD railway stations (purple shades). Plus the area of the Borough within a 5 minutes' walk from a bus stop.

**Map 5.3 - Area within a 0 – 15 minute walk of the BwD railway stations and 5 minutes' walk from bus stops**



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## 5.9 AVAILABILITY

5.9.1 Availability is measured as the level of usage and throughput at sports halls and estimates how well used/how full facilities are. The facilities planning model is designed to include a 'comfort factor', beyond which, the venues are too full. For sports halls, Sport England sets the comfort level at 80% of capacity used at peak times. Above this level the time taken to change the sports hall for different activities starts to impinge on the activity time itself. Also, the changing and circulation areas become overcrowded and can discourage participation.

## Blackburn with Darwen Council Built Facility Strategy

5.9.2 The facilities planning model finding is that the BwD sports halls are estimated to be operating at 73% of used capacity in the weekly peak period of weekday evenings (up to 5 hours per day) and weekend days (up to 7 hours per weekend day). Sport England comfort level is 80%, so there is headroom in terms of sports halls.

5.9.3 The findings for each individual sports hall do vary from the Borough wide average, and the findings for each individual site are set out in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2 - Sports Hall Used Capacity BwD**

Name of Site	Type	Dimensions	Area	No of courts	Site Year Built	Site Year Refurb	% of Capacity Used	% of Capacity Not Used
<b>BLACKBURN with DARWEN</b>							<b>73%</b>	<b>27%</b>
AUDLEY CENTRE	Main	35 x 20	690	4	1985	2007	100%	0%
AUDLEY CENTRE	Activity Hall	18 x 10	180					
BLACKBURN CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL WITH CROSSHILL	Main	35 x 20	690	4	2012		59%	41%
BLACKBURN SPORTS LEISURE CENTRE	Main	33 x 18	594	4	2014		100%	0%
BLACKBURN SPORTS LEISURE CENTRE	Main	33 x 18	594					
BLACKBURN YOUTH ZONE	Main	33 x 18	594	4	2012		100%	0%
DARWEN ALDRIDGE COMMUNITY ACADEMY	Main	35 x 20	690	4	2010		59%	41%
DARWEN LEISURE CENTRE	Main	35 x 20	690	4	2010		100%	0%
DARWEN VALE HIGH SCHOOL	Main	33 x 18	594	4	2012		72%	28%
PLECKGATE HIGH SCHOOL	Main	35 x 20	690	4	2011		100%	0%
QUEEN ELIZABETH'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL (HARRISON PLAYING FIELD)	Main	35 x 27	932	6	1988	2003	43%	57%
ST BEDES R C HIGH SCHOOL	Main	27 x 18	486	3	2005		73%	27%
ST MARY'S COLLEGE	Main	35 x 20	690	4	1983	2000	55%	45%
ST WILFRIDS C OF E ACADEMY	Main	35 x 20	690	4	2003		63%	37%
ST WILFRIDS C OF E ACADEMY	Activity Hall	18 x 17	306					
WESTHOLME SCHOOL	Main	35 x 20	690	4	1970	2007	17%	83%
WITTON PARK ACADEMY	Main	35 x 20	690	4	2012		53%	47%

5.9.4 The variations in used capacity at individual venues can be for several inter related reasons and these are set out below.

5.9.5 Firstly - the estimated used capacity is above the Borough wide average at the public leisure centres, Blackburn Sports Leisure Centre and Darwen Leisure Centre, both at 100% .This is because (1) these venues have the highest accessibility, as they are available for sports club and public use, (2) they are available for day time use, which is not possible at education venues during term time (3) the Council actively promotes hall sports and physical activity participation, with a programme of use, which reflects the activities and times that customers want to participate. (4) There is not the requirement to pay a monthly membership fee to access the sports hall, as there is at commercial sports hall venues. For all these reasons there is a draw effect to the public leisure centre sports hall venues.

- 5.9.6 Secondly - the used capacity of a sports hall does depend on the hours available for community use. Self-evidently a sports hall on an education site and which is only available for a few hours a week, with an irregular pattern of club use, is very different from a public leisure centre programme and accessibility. Also an education venue with only a few hours of community use a week, can very quickly establish a high used capacity
- 5.9.7 Some schools and colleges actively promote community use, whilst other education venues let the sports halls, to requests from sports clubs or community groups on a term, or, even shorter periods.
- 5.9.8 The estimated range of used capacity at the education venues ranges from 17% in the weekly peak period at Westholme School, to 73% at St Bedes RC High School.
- 5.9.9 Thirdly - the amount of demand in the catchment area of sports halls. If there are sports hall locations where the catchment areas overlap, then the demand is shared between venues and this contributes to the used capacity at each venue. As the supply map in the quantity section illustrates, the catchment area of the sports halls in the Borough do overlap extensively, and there is no venue which has a unique catchment
- 5.9.10 Fourthly - the quality and range of the offer, along with the age and condition of a sports hall are all of increasing importance to customers. This includes a modern sports hall, with a sprung timber floor, good quality lighting and modern changing rooms, plus other facilities on site, such as a studio and/or a gym. Residents may travel further to use a sports hall with this all round offer, rather than participate at the sports hall which is nearest to where they live. This is another contributory reason for the used capacity at Darwen Leisure Centre and Blackburn Sports Leisure Centre.
- 5.9.11 Fifthly – it is important to consider the size of a sports hall and not just view the used capacity percentage figure in isolation. The Queen Elisabeth’s Grammar School sports hall (1988) is a 6 badminton court sports hall and so it can accommodate more usage than a 4 badminton court sports hall. Its estimated used capacity of 43% in the weekly peak period compares favourable – in terms of actual levels of usage – than (say) the 55% of used capacity at the St Mary’s College (1983) sports hall.
- 5.9.12 Overall for the reasons set out, the estimated used capacity is based on a number of inter-related factors and there is no one single reason for the used capacity findings.

### 5.10 DEMAND AND PARTICIPATION

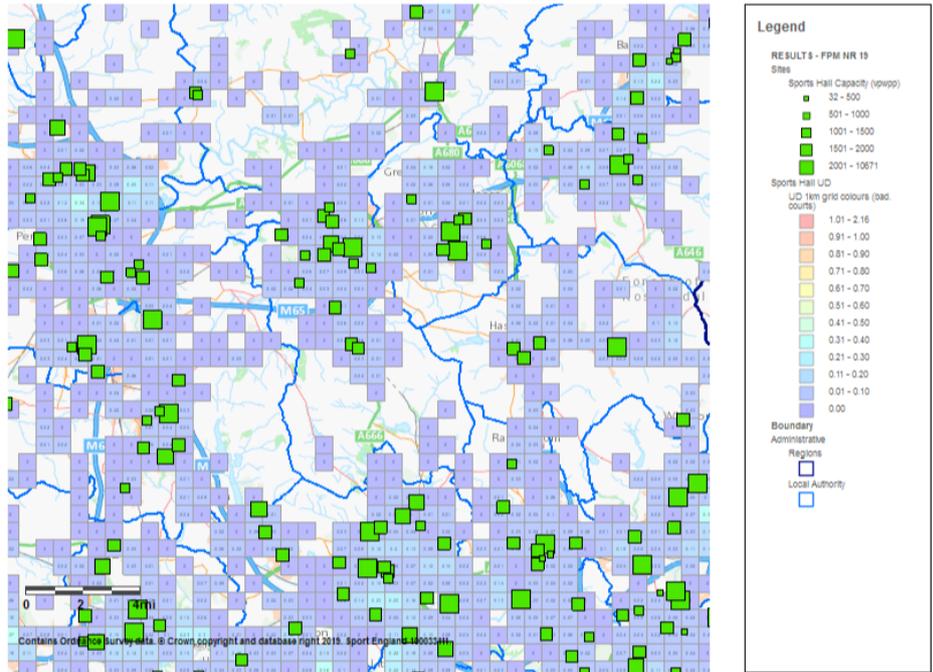
- 5.10.1 The resident population of BwD generates a demand for just fewer than 43 badminton courts in the weekly peak period. This compares to a supply of just over 43 badminton courts which are available for community use in the weekly peak period. So, the BwD supply and demand are almost in balance, with supply exceeding demand by 0.6 of one badminton court.
- 5.10.2 However, as set out in the quantity findings, the total supply of sports halls, is 68 badminton courts, and the supply available for community use, is 43 badminton courts, in the weekly peak period. There is an aggregate total of 25 badminton courts, at the education sites, which are unavailable for community use. So, the total supply exceeds the BwD demand by 25 badminton courts, if this provision is accessible. As set out on the whole there is a positive view on community use from the education sector across the borough.
- 5.10.3 A sub-set of the demand findings is retained demand, which measures how much of the BwD demand is met at sports halls in the Borough. This assessment is based on the catchment area of the Borough sports halls and BwD residents using the nearest sports hall to where they live. The finding is that retained demand is 89% of the total 95% BwD satisfied demand for sports halls.
- 5.10.4 This is consistent with the swimming pools findings, and shows the location and catchment area of the sports hall sites in the Borough are very closely correlated with the location of the BwD demand for sports halls. So much so, that the nearest sports hall to where a BwD residents lives, for nearly nine out of ten visits, is a venue located in the Borough
- 5.10.5 Unmet demand has two parts to it - demand for sports halls which cannot be met because (1) there is too much demand for any particular sports hall within its catchment area; or (2) the demand is located outside the catchment area of a sports hall and is then classified as unmet demand.
- 5.10.6 The finding for BwD is that total unmet demand is 4.9% of total demand for sports halls and this equates to just over 2 badminton courts.
- 5.10.7 Of the total unmet demand, 94% is from definition two - unmet demand located outside the catchment area of a sports hall, and 6% from lack of sports hall capacity.

- 5.10.8 Unmet demand outside catchment, is mainly by people who do not have access to a car, and live outside the walking or public transport catchment area of a pool. It represents 91% of the unmet demand outside catchment.
- 5.10.9 These findings on unmet demand outside catchment may appear to contradict the findings in satisfied demand, about the close correlation between the sports hall locations and catchment areas and the location of the BwD demand for sports halls.
- 5.10.10 Unmet demand outside catchment will always exist, this is because it is not possible to get complete spatial coverage, whereby all areas of an authority are inside catchment.
- 5.10.11 In terms of visits, the total unmet demand outside catchment, is 578 visits per week in the weekly peak period. This compares with the demand inside catchment, and which is being met, of 11,877 visits per week in the weekly peak period.
- 5.10.12 The significant finding is not that unmet demand outside catchment exists, but the scale and in BwD it equates to just over 2 badminton courts.
- 5.10.13 The location and scale of unmet demand across BwD is shown in Map 5.4 and in more detail in Map 5.5. The unmet demand is expressed in units of badminton courts in one kilometre grid squares and the squares are colour coded, with different values of unmet demand. The three shades of blue squares, have unmet demand in the range 0 – 0.2 of one badminton court, so very low values.
- 5.10.14 As the maps illustrate the distribution of unmet demand across the Borough, is in these very low values. There is not a location where there is a cluster of high unmet demand, to consider increasing the provision of sports halls, and improve accessibility for residents.

## Map 5.4 - Unmet Demand for Sports Halls BwD

### Facilities Planning Model - National Runs - Sports Halls 2019 Unmet Demand

Unmet Demand expressed as units of badminton courts (rounded to two decimal places). Data outputs shown thematically (colours) at either output area level or aggregated at 1km square (figure labels).



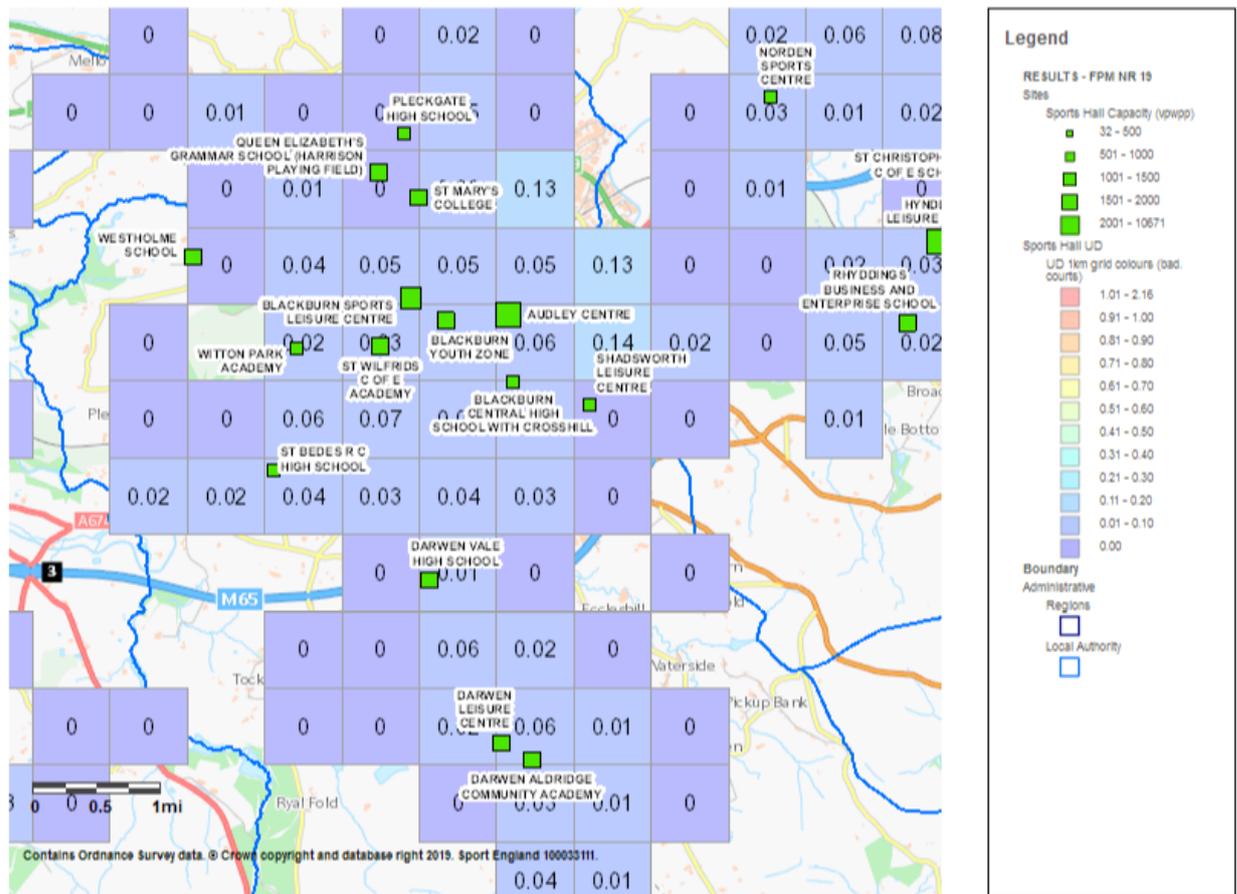
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**Map 5.5 - Unmet Demand for Sports Halls BwD**

### Facilities Planning Model - National Runs - Sports Halls 2019 Unmet Demand

Unmet Demand expressed as units of badminton courts (rounded to two decimal places). Data outputs shown thematically (colours) at either output area level or aggregated at 1km square (figure labels).



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### Participation Trends

- 5.10.15 Active Lives Adults (16+) was introduced in 2015 and there have now been 5 annual surveys, the most recent covering the November 2019 – November 2020 period most recent covering the November 2019 – November 2020 period. Active Lives Young People (people aged between 5 – 16 school years 1 - 11) was established in September 2017 and there have now been three annual surveys the most recent being November 2019 – 2020. It gathers data on how children engage with sport and physical activity, their attitudes and behaviours around sport and physical activity.
- 5.10.16 It is possible to compare changes in adult hall sports participation between Active Lives 1 November 2015 – 2016 to Active Lives 5, November 2019 – 2020 based on participating at least twice in the past 28 days. For most of Active Lives 5, the sports halls were closed because of Covid 19, so the comparison with changes in the baseline and the past twelve months are invalid.
- 5.10.17 The analysis shows that adult participation in all indoor hall sports is lower in Active Lives 5 for 2019 – 2020 than in Active Lives 1 for 2015 – 2016, except for handball, martial arts and Taekwondo, where there is no change. The percentage change is very small and under 1% over five years except for the collective grouping of racket sports where it is 2%.
- 5.10.18 These are national England wide findings and data for individual local authorities or regions for particular sports is not available however they show a trend in terms of the changing nature of sports hall usage.
- 5.10.19 On a broader front, the reasons for the changes in participation are being researched by Sport England and this has to be based on longer term trend data from Active Lives. What appears apparent is that the time, organisation, and fixed times for playing team or individual hall sports which require organisation and skill development are maybe becoming barriers to participation.
- 5.10.20 Individual activities which require little organisation and are available at times that suit the lifestyle of participants are becoming more popular. Gym and fitness classes are activities with a health benefit/motivation and are recreational. These may be more appealing, than playing sports where skill development is needed and can be competition based, both of which appear to be appealing to a smaller range of participants.



- 5.10.21 There is therefore emerging national evidence that there is less use of sports halls for sport. There is a decline in traditional sports hall sports, as the physical activity agenda gains momentum and the need for more flexible indoor spaces over formal sports halls gains traction e.g. less than 1% of a typical sports hall activity programme is filled by for example cricket and netball etc. Sport England themselves are recognising this by promoting more flexible, smaller, flexible indoor halls as part of their new innovation programmes and Leisure Local initiative. In this context providing larger halls to meet 'potential' sport needs, may be less justifiable going forward.
- 5.10.22 There will be a need to continue sports hall modernisation. The average age of all the sports hall sites is increasing, since the significant recent investment through BSF and at the Council's main leisure sites, but this should be assessed at the time in the context of the changing role of sports halls, with a declining rate (nationally as evidenced by Active Lives) in hall sports participation and the increasing use of sports halls for other activities.
- 5.10.23 In terms of future demand, it is a complex picture of a reduced need for sports halls for playing indoor hall sports and for them to provide a more all-round offer and with much more flexible use of the space for a wider range of activities, across by all age groups and focusing on activity for a healthy lifestyle benefit, which may require smaller flexible spaces.
- 5.10.24 The implications for BwD are that there are potentially enough large halls for sport, whilst this provision has to be protected and access and investment protected going forward, alongside provision of a network of smaller community spaces for health and physical activity programmes delivered through community settings.

### **National Governing Body (NGB) Priorities**

- 5.10.25 Consultation was undertaken with the sports hall sports who responded as follows;
- The north-west is a historic *hot bed* for the development of handball. Whilst we do not have any specific handball clubs in the Blackburn area, the clubs based in North Manchester, Warrington and Liverpool all travel significant distances to access appropriately sized facilities for training and matches.
  - The current priority for Netball in the area is to provide good use and suitable facilities for our members / our converted participation into membership. This involves the netball clubs and leagues we have in both Blackburn with Darwen and Hyndburn.

- Badminton activity in the area is relatively strong with 8 affiliated clubs within 5 miles of Blackburn and a further 13 within 10 miles. Of these 3 are within Blackburn and Darwen and 7 in Hyndburn. Likewise there are two affiliated adult badminton leagues; Blackburn & district badminton league which has 10 clubs and 2 divisions and Rossendale badminton league which has 11 clubs and 2 divisions. A number of the clubs also have junior sections and there is a Blackburn junior league and an M65 junior league where there is strong representation from East Lancashire
- Based on Badminton England records there are 16 (3+court) sports halls containing 65 courts in Blackburn with Darwen. One hall is for private use only; thus 61 courts are available for badminton. Overall the ngb consider that facilities do meet the demand and there are currently enough facilities and courts to satisfy badminton provision, although the majority of clubs rely on leisure and school facilities. Norden Leisure Centre, Hyndburn Leisure Centre, Darwen Leisure Centre and Accrington Academy are all very popular and used by clubs.
- England Basketball estimate there are 17 one court Basketball facilities across the borough with just one senior male club with 150 members playing at Darwen Vale HS.

5.10.26 Overall, ngbs are satisfied with the current sports hall provision in Blackburn, which matches the assessment conclusions, however they would recommend, based on age and expected life span, that future investment will be required to maintain the stock at the current levels and quality. The importance of the education sector in meeting ngb needs is also evident.

### **Impact of Growth**

5.10.27 Using the ONS figures (as used in the Local Plan and PPS) over the Plan period an increase the Blackburn with Darwen total population is projected to increase from 149,806 people in 2019 to 157,564 in 2037, an increase of 7,763. This generates a demand for 2.29 courts or 0.57 halls.

5.10.28 The growth, as with the current unmet demand, is however spread across the district in relatively small pockets and does not necessarily mean a future need for additional sports hall provision of the scale set out. This will need to be assessed at the time.



- 5.10.29 Whilst unmet demand is very low, and sports hall supply is extensive, with the education provision factored in, any projected growth in population up to 2037, will still impact. It may well be any increase in demand can however be accommodated by changes in programming and re-distribution of demand i.e. further increasing access to the education network. This will need to be assessed at the time, depending on the location of growth.
- 5.10.30 This assessment provides an indication that future investment may be required to maintain the current offer, as the current modern stock ages. This is endorsed by the consultation with the ngbs. It is evident that any change (reduction) in sports hall access and provision and, or community use will influence directly the available supply of sports halls for community use.
- 5.10.31 Therefore, whilst the overall supply of sports halls is more than sufficient to meet demand, new demand from growth and or any reduction in supply will increase this used capacity and increase the costs of managing and maintaining the centre.
- 5.10.32 For all these reasons, as the sports hall stock ages, there is an evidence base to support continued investment in the sports hall network across Blackburn and Darwen. Application of the Sport England Sports Facility Calculator (SFC) cost findings, to accommodate any requirements to modernise the centres to accommodate the increased usage will be applicable at the time any developments come forward.
- 5.10.33 In terms of assessing the need for contributions towards sports hall provision the Council should therefore seek contributions towards sports hall provision from developments. The exact needs and level of contributions should be assessed at the time of development and assessed against the supply and demand position at the time. *Protection of and enhancement* in existing pool stock will be the strategy priority over the life of the plan.

## Sports Halls Key Issues

### QUANTITY

There are 17 individual sports halls located on 14 sites within BwD. The total supply of sports halls in badminton courts, is 68 courts, of which 43 are available in the weekly peak period for community use (known as the effective supply). The reason for the difference between the total supply of badminton courts and the effective supply, is because of the variable hours of access for community use at the sports halls located on education sites.

The resident population of BwD generates a demand for just fewer than 43 badminton courts in the weekly peak period. This compares to a supply of just over 43 badminton courts which are available for community use in the weekly peak period. So, the BwD supply and demand are almost in balance, with supply exceeding demand by 0.6 of one badminton court.

However, as set out, the total supply of sports halls, is 68 badminton courts and there is an aggregate total of 25 badminton courts, at the education sites, which may not be available for community use. There does however to be overall good access to the education stock, so the total supply exceeds the BwD demand by 25 badminton courts.

### QUALITY AND THE SPORTS HALL OFFER

The average age of the sports hall sites is 19 years, however this is misleading as 8 of the sites (57% of the supply) have been opened post 2010. Two sports halls opened in the 2000 decade, none in the 1990's, three in the 1980's and one in the 1970's. The oldest sports hall is at Westholme School, opened in 1970 and the most recent sports hall to open is, Blackburn Sports Leisure Centre, in 2014.

Five of the education sports hall sites have opened post 2010 under the Building Schools for the Future Programme.

All the sports hall sites which opened before 2000, have been modernised, Audley Centre (1987 and modernised in 2007), Queen Elisabeth's Grammar School (1998 and modernised in 2003), St Mary's College (1983 and modernised in 2000) and Westholme College (1970 and modernised in 2007).

Modernisation is defined as one or more of, the sports hall floor upgraded to a sprung timber floor, the lighting system upgraded or the changing accommodation modernised.

A 4 badminton court sports hall can accommodate all the indoor hall sports halls at the local level of play. The 34.5m x 20m 4 court halls provide the best offer. The 4 court sports halls with smaller dimensions do have the correct sizes for the playing area dimensions, but the space between and behind courts is smaller.

The number and location of the twelve 4 court halls in BwD means there is a very good offer for the playing of indoor hall sports, across the borough.

### ACCESSIBILITY

The findings for BwD are that, 66% of all visits to sports halls are by car, with 25% of visits by walking and 9% of visits by public transport. So the majority of visits are by car, but there are 34% of all visits, or, over one in three visits, by a combination of walking and public transport.

Based on the 2011 Census 29% of the BwD population do not have access to a car.

For the population that walks or uses public transport, a network of local accessible sports halls is important, to encourage and support participation in hall sports

## AVAILABILITY

Availability is measured as the level of usage and throughput at sports halls and estimates how well used/how full facilities are. The facilities planning model is designed to include a 'comfort factor', beyond which, the venues are too full. For sports halls, Sport England sets the comfort level at 80% of capacity used at peak times. Above this level the time taken to change the sports hall for different activities starts to impinge on the activity time itself. Also, the changing and circulation areas become overcrowded and can discourage participation.

The facilities planning model finding is that the BwD sports halls **as a Borough wide average** are estimated to be operating at 73% of used capacity in the weekly peak period of week day evenings (up to 5 hours per day) and weekend days (up to 7 hours per weekend day). The comfort level for sports halls is 80%, so there is some headroom across the borough as a whole.

The estimated used capacity for the leisure centres is above the Borough wide average with both, Blackburn Sports Leisure Centre and Darwen Leisure Centre at 100%.

This is because (1) these venues have the highest accessibility, as they are available for sports club and public use, (2) they are available for day time use, which is not possible at education venues during term time (3) the Council actively promotes hall sports and physical activity participation, with a programme of use, which reflects the activities and times that customers want to participate. (4) There is not the requirement to pay a monthly membership fee to access the sports hall, as there is at commercial sports hall venues. For all these reasons there is a draw effect to the public leisure centre sports hall venues.

## DEMAND AND PARTICIPATION

As reported the BwD supply and demand for sports halls are almost in balance, with supply exceeding demand by 0.6 of one badminton court. The BwD demand is for just fewer than 43 badminton courts. This compares to a supply of just over 43 badminton courts which are available for community use in the weekly peak period, excluding schools.

However, as reported, the total supply of sports halls, is 68 badminton courts. In addition, there are a further 25 badminton courts aggregated across the education sites, so a further extended supply.

Some 95% of the total demand for sports halls from BwD residents is being met in 2019. This means this level of the BwD total demand for sports halls is located within the catchment area of a sports hall, and there is enough capacity at the venues to meet this level of total demand for sports halls.

Unmet demand has two parts to it - demand for sports halls which cannot be met because (1) there is too much demand for any particular sports hall within its catchment area; or (2) the demand is located outside the catchment area of a sports hall and is then classified as unmet demand.

The finding for BwD is that total unmet demand is 4.9% of total demand for sports halls and this equates to just over 2 badminton courts.

Of the total unmet demand, 94% is from definition two - unmet demand located outside the catchment area of a sports hall, and 6% from lack of sports hall capacity.

Unmet demand outside catchment, is mainly by people who do not have access to a car, and live outside the walking or public transport catchment area of a pool. It represents 91% of the unmet demand outside catchment.

Unmet demand outside catchment will always exist, this is because it is not possible to get complete spatial coverage, whereby all areas of an authority are inside catchment.



In terms of visits, the total unmet demand outside catchment, is 578 visits per week in the weekly peak period. This compares with the demand inside catchment, and which is being met, of 11,877 visits per week in the weekly peak period.

The significant finding is not that unmet demand outside catchment exists, but the SCALE and in BwD it equates to just over 2 badminton courts.

Unmet demand is distributed in very low values across the Borough (maps in the demand and participation section) There is not a location where there is a cluster of high unmet demand, to consider increasing the provision of sports halls, and improve accessibility for residents.

## **OVERALL SUMMARY**

BwD has a very extensive supply of modern sports halls and these are very accessible to BwD residents, in terms of the location of the BwD demand, the catchment area of the sports halls and travel patterns.

Supply and demand are almost in balance (excluding education provision) and this is reflected in a high estimated usage of the sports halls but with some headroom before the sports halls become uncomfortably full.

A theme in all the findings is the aggregate total of 25 badminton courts across the education sports hall venues. This has two impacts (1) if the education supply is reduced then demand will transfer to the public leisure centres (2) if however it can be retained and increased, then the supply of sports halls across the Borough can more than accommodate any increase in demand.

The requirement going forward, will be to maintain the quality of the sports hall buildings. At present this is not an issue, because the average age of all the sports hall sites is 19 years and for the public leisure centres it is 6 years. Five of the education sports hall sites have opened post 2010 under the Building Schools for the Future Programme. All the sports hall sites which opened before 2000, have been modernised.

Given the sports hall stock is very modern then protecting and enhancing the buildings is something that needs to be undertaken over the strategy period.



**Sports Hall Action Plan**

Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation	Justification	Relevant Sites and Key Actions	Lead Partner	Measures of Success
<b>SO1 (Protect)</b>	1 Resist the loss of any sports hall sites unless replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.	All sports hall sites are well used and well located to meet current and future demands across BwD.  The impact of any closures alongside growth would impact on the supply and demand balance.	All Sports Halls.	Education Department  BwD Planning / Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retention of existing sports hall sites</li> </ul>
<b>SO1 and SO2 (Protect)</b>	2 Protect existing access to sports hall on education sites.  Seek investment to protect access and usage.  Ensure that existing community use agreements are delivered and renewed.  Any new education provision should be subject to community use agreements.	Existing school sites are central to the provision for hall sports in BwD and maintaining the supply and demand balance.  Loss of these facilities would impact on overall supply and demand balance.  Sports hall supply and demand is in balance so any new education provision should be accessible and open for community use	Support all education sites with a positive view on community use	Education Department  BwD Planning / Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to sports halls on school sites to be protected and enhanced through investment</li> <li>CUAs are in place, kept up to date and are enforced through planning conditions</li> </ul>
<b>SO4, SO5, SO6 and SO7</b>	3 Support enhancements /upgrades to the	The quality of facility provision is a key priority.	All sites	BwD Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved facility quality</li> </ul>



Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation	Justification	Relevant Sites and Key Actions	Lead Partner	Measures of Success
<b>(Enhance)</b>	existing sports hall infrastructure.	Protecting the quality and access to specialist provision is important as set out by the ngbs.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful funding applications and investment</li> </ul>
<b>SO4 and SO10 (Enhance and Provide)</b>	<p>4</p> <p>Seek investment to the sports hall infrastructure from developments.</p> <p>Seek investment to improve the quality and capacity at the key sports hall sites in line with the application of Sport England's Sports Facility Calculator tool.</p> <p>Provide new provision to meet identified gaps if appropriate following consideration of supply and demand balance at the time.</p>	<p>Supply and demand illustrates that there will be impacts of the projected growth that will require financial contributions to maintain current quality and access</p> <p>This will be exacerbated if the supply changes i.e. any of the current sports halls close.</p> <p>Any new provision should focus on smaller flexible spaces to deliver health and physical activity programmes.</p>	<p>All sports hall sites</p> <p>Based on the catchment of proposed developments</p>	BwD Leisure / BwD Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributions secured towards the sports hall facility infra-structure enhancements</li> </ul>

## **6 Section 6 - Assessment of need and evidence base for Indoor Tennis**

### **6.4 Introduction**

- 6.4.1 The indoor tennis centre assessment includes three types of indoor tennis centres. All three can either be temporary or permanent structures, depending on where they are located and for how much of the year they are needed.
- 6.4.2 Air structures, more commonly known as bubbles are relatively inexpensive and efficient to construct. Air structures usually comprise single or multi-layered fabric, which are erected and supported using air pressure, provided by substantial air blowers, which are also used to ventilate and control the climate within the bubble.
- 6.4.3 Fabric frame structures comprise a steel, aluminum or wood framework, with a fabric similar to the fabric used on air structures, stretched tightly over the framework. An inner lining is often used in places where the climate is variable, to help retain the heat in winter and resist it in summer. The structures have sloped walls, as they need to be able to cope with modest snow falls and high winds. Fabric frame structures are modular and usually cover between one and four courts. However, they can be designed to cover as many courts as needed.
- 6.4.4 Steel is the most common material used to construct the frame of an indoor tennis centre. Steel buildings cost more to construct than air or fabric framed structure but will offer better insulation and therefore provide savings on the overall running costs. A steel framed building can last up to 65 years.

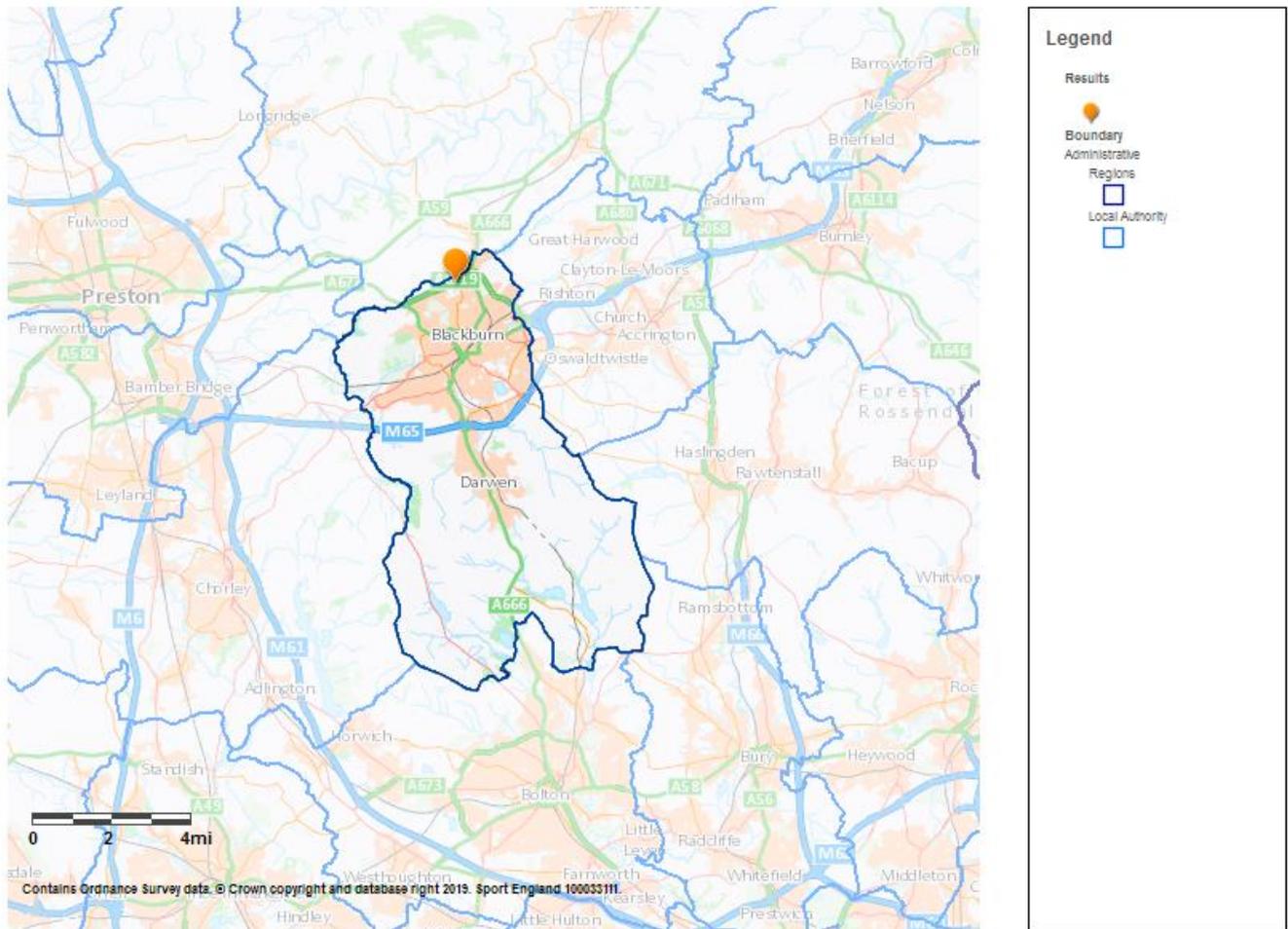
### **6.5 QUANTITY**

- 6.5.1 There is one indoor tennis centres located in BwD, which is the Blackburn Northern Sports Club which has 2 indoor courts within an air dome. The air dome was constructed in 2005 and according to the data has not been refurbished. Access to the indoor courts is through pay and play and the courts are available to the club membership and the public. The indoor tennis centre is owned by the Blackburn Northern Sports Club membership.

**Table 6.1 - Blackburn Northern Sports Club Indoor Tennis Centre**

Site Name	Facility Type	Facility Sub Type	Courts	Surface type	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type	Year Built	Ward Name
	Indoor Tennis Centre	Airhall	2	Acrylic	Registered Membership use	Sports Club	Sport Club	2005	Roe Lee

**Map 6.1 - Location of the Blackburn Northern Indoor Tennis Centre**



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- 6.5.2 The nearest indoor tennis centre to BwD is located in Burnley – Crow Wood Leisure, which has 2 textile surface courts, the centre opened in 2001. The courts are available to the centre membership and the centre also provides tennis coaching courses for the membership.
- 6.5.3 There are 4 further indoor tennis venues in Lancashire and which are within a 20 minute drive time of the BwD boundary. Details of the indoor tennis centres in the neighbouring local authorities and for which information is available in Active Places Power 2019, are set out in Table 6.2.
- 6.5.4 In total, there are 20 indoor courts at the other centres, the largest centres are the David Lloyd Club Chorley which has 7 courts and the South Ribble Tennis Centre which also has 7 indoor courts. There are then 2 courts located at each of Crow Wood Leisure Club, Ribble Valley Tennis Centre and Stoneyhurst College and Sports Club.
- 6.5.5 In terms of local authority areas, South Ribble and Chorley have the most courts with 7 each, followed by Ribble Valley with 4 courts and then Burnley with 2 courts. In terms of court surfaces, there are 9 textile courts, 9 acrylic courts and 2 macadam.
- 6.5.6 The average age of the centres is 17 years, the oldest centre is the Ribble Valley Tennis Centre opened in 1993 and the most recent is the Stonyhurst College and Sports Club opened in 2017. The South Ribble Tennis and Fitness Centre, opened in 1994 was modernised in 2009.

**Table 6.2 - Indoor Tennis Centres Lancashire Active Places Power**

Site Name	Facility Type	Sub Type	Courts	Surface type	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type	Year Built	Year Refurb	Local Authority Name
CROW WOOD LEISURE	Traditional		2	Textile	Registered Membership use	Commercial	Commercial	2001		Burnley
DAVID LLOYD CLUB (CHORLEY)	Traditional		7	Textile	Registered Membership use	Commercial	Commercial			Chorley
RIBBLE VALLEY TENNIS CENTRE	Framed Fabric		2	Acrylic	Pay and Play	Commercial	Commercial	1993		Ribble Valley
SOUTH RIBBLE TENNIS AND FITNESS CENTRE	Traditional		3	Acrylic	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Commercial	2002	2009	South Ribble

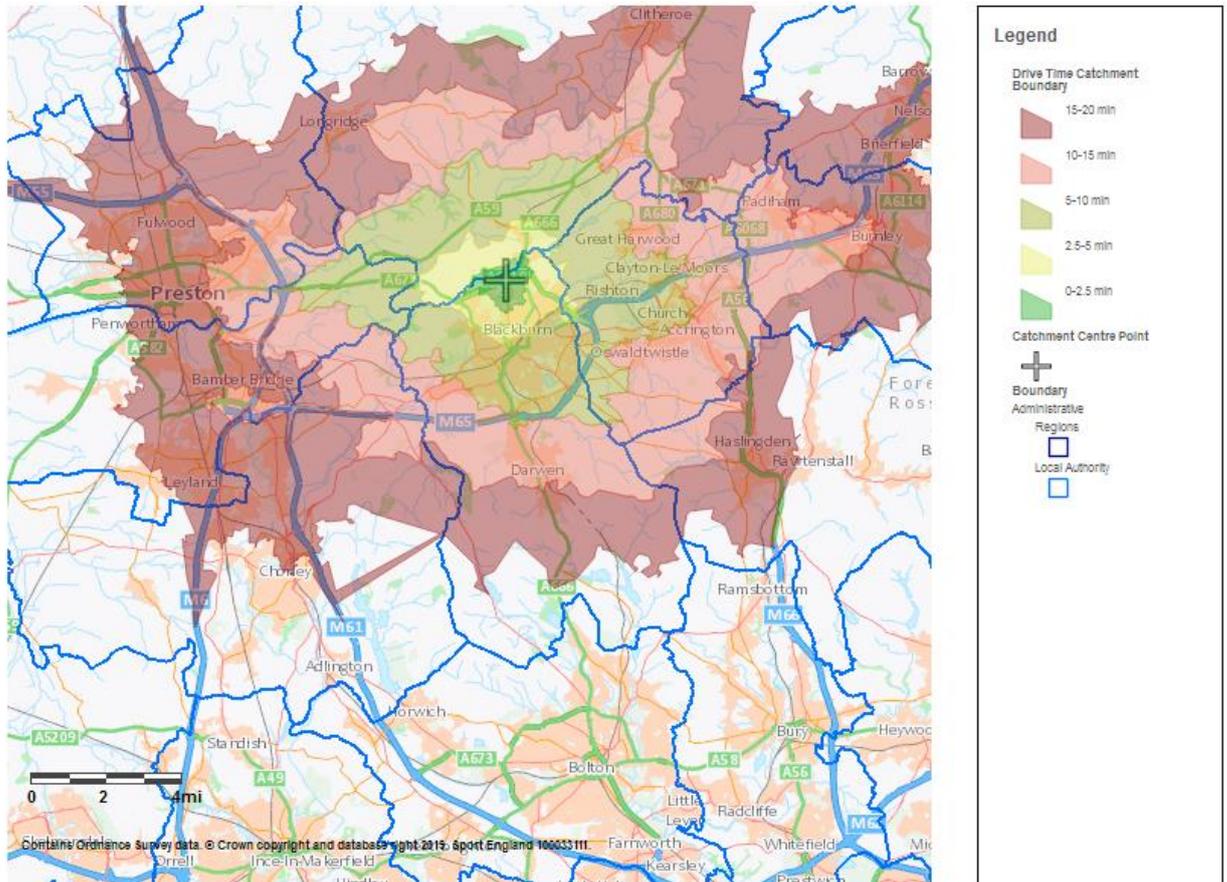


Site Name	Facility Type	Sub Type	Courts	Surface type	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type	Year Built	Year Refurb	Local Authority Name
SOUTH RIBBLE TENNIS AND FITNESS CENTRE	Traditional		4	Acrylic	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Commercial	1994	2009	South Ribble
STONYHURST COLLEGE & SPORTS CLUB	Airhall		2	Macadam	Pay and Play	Other Independent School	School/College	2017		Ribble Valley

## 6.6 Accessibility

- 6.6.1 Access to indoor tennis centres in BwD is based on the 20 minute drive time catchment area for the Blackburn Northern Sports Club and this is shown in map 6.2. As the centre is located in the northern boundary of the authority, the 20 minute drive time catchment are extends to most of the authority but the very south of BwD is outside catchment. There are no indoor tennis centres located in Bolton or Bury to provide access for BwD residents

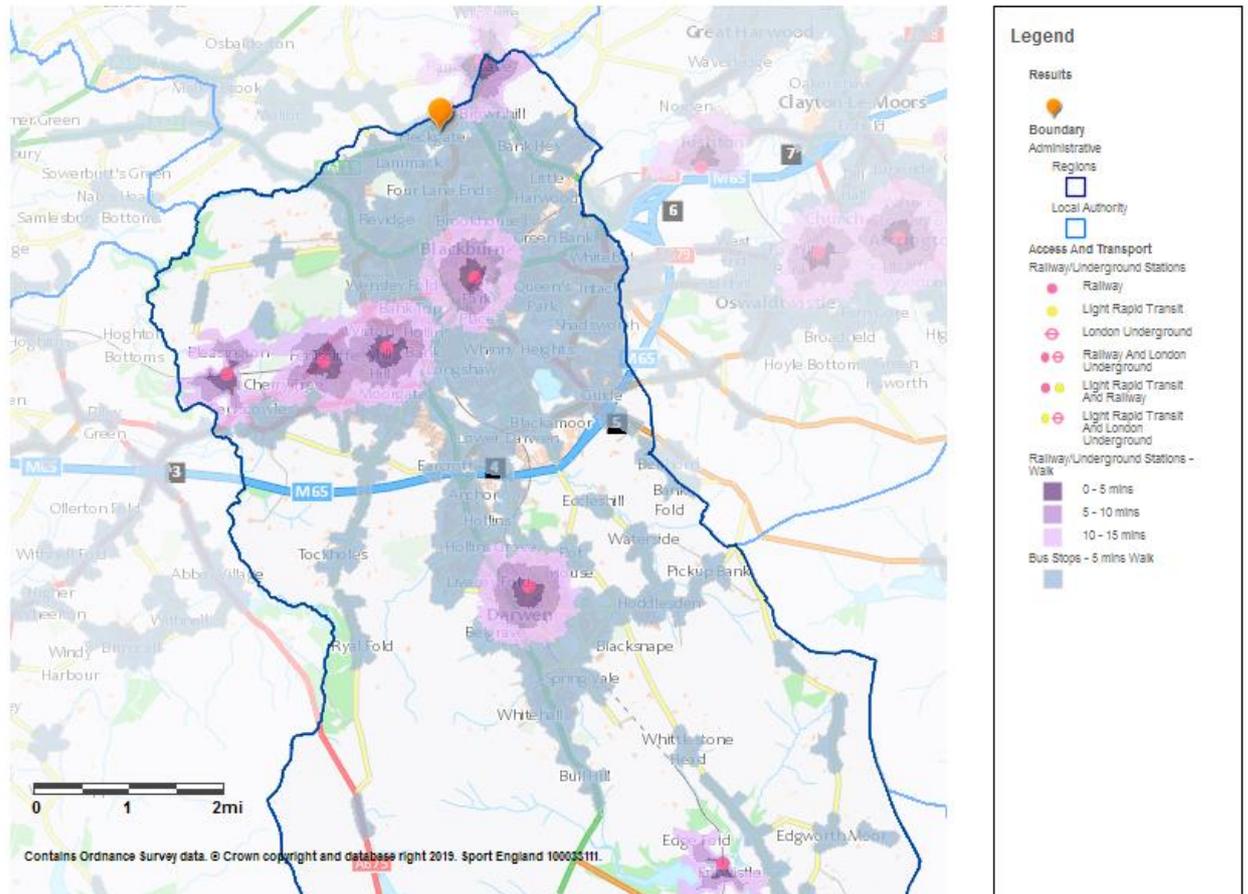
**Map 6.2 - Twenty minute drive time catchment area for the Blackburn Northern Sports Club**



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- 6.6.2 It is also important to set out how accessible the Blackburn Northern Sports Club is to residents who do not have access to a car and travel by public transport to venues. Map 6.3 shows the area of BwD which is inside the 15 minute walk of a BwD railway station (purple area) and the areas inside a 5 minute walk of a bus stop (grey area).
- 6.6.3 As the map shows, in the immediate area south of the club venue, there is an extensive area which is inside the bus catchment, so immediate access by bus is good. However, there are large areas of BwD to the south which are outwith a 5 minute walk of a bus stop and bus travel. In effect it is only residents living in the northern part of the authority who will have reasonable public transport access to the Blackburn Northern Indoor Tennis Centre.

**Map 6.3 - Are of BwD inside a 5 minute walk of a bus stop and 15 minute walk of a railway station**



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## 6.7 Availability

6.7.1 The Blackburn Northern Indoor Tennis Centre courts are available to the club’s membership and the indoor courts are available to non – members for pay and play, as a way of encouraging residents to become members. There is no available information on the level of use by each category.



### 6.7.2 DEMAND AND PARTICIPATION

#### Participation Trends

- 6.7.3 In September 2020, the LTA participation tracker confirmed that 3.99 million people play tennis annually. This represents a 6% increase from 2019 and the highest participation rate in the last two years. It means that 1.35 million people nationally are playing monthly and this is consistent with 2019 figures.
- 6.7.4 The majority of those engaging with tennis are aged 45 years or younger and LTA insight reveals that participation has grown 8% nationally since 2018.
- 6.7.5 0.25% of adults are estimated to play indoor tennis, applying this to the BwD adult population aged 15 – 60 in 2019 of 87,058 would generate 217 adult indoor tennis players. Based on all 217 players playing at least once a week, this could generate participation of 217 visits. This would equate to provision of 2 indoor court based on the LTA measure of 1 indoor court equating to 200 players and is the number of courts at the Blackburn Northern Indoor Tennis.
- 6.7.6 Previous years had seen a decline, and the LTA focus of addressing the decline in participation through the implementation of a long-term strategy is therefore starting to see success. In particular, the LTA highlight the importance of undertaking targeted activity to drive participation and continue to seek participation improvements.
- 6.7.7 To increase the amount of tennis that takes place in an area and to retain new participants, the LTA have devised several programmes. These are constantly evolving, but currently include;
- LTA Youth Start (6-week coaching offer for children)
  - Tennis for Free - free, inclusive weekly coaching sessions
  - Parks Tennis leagues
- 6.7.8 Reviews of participation also note the successes have come through the emphasis on parks tennis, with a 56% increase in court hours booked at venues where the LTA had worked with a local authority.

## National Governing Body (NGB) Priorities

### *LTA Vision and Mission (2019 – 2023)*

- 6.7.9 The LTA have recently updated their strategy. The Vision of the LTA is now to 'Open Tennis Up' grow tennis by making it more relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable. There are 3 key objectives;
1. Increasing the number of fans engaging with tennis
  2. Growing participation by increasing the number of adults and juniors playing tennis
  3. Enabling new players to break into the world top 100.
- 6.7.10 Given that this assessment of tennis relates to facilities, it is (2), growth in participation that is most pivotal. Successful delivery of this objective would have an impact on the number and quality of tennis courts required, but alongside this, the provision of an appropriate infrastructure will be central in the achievement of this objective.
- 6.7.11 The LTA strategy indicates that the key elements connected to growing participation include;
- Widening the appeal of tennis through inclusion of flexible formats of the game
  - Improving the customer journey by making it easier to find a court, book it, and find somebody to play with
  - Develop more relevant and enjoyable competitions at grass roots level for all abilities and ages
  - Support community facilities & schools to provide more opportunities to play
  - Help clubs grow & retain members
  - Create more opportunities for children to play at school
  - Facilitate partnerships to further increase rate of participation in parks
  - Support venues to provide a welcoming and enjoyable experience
  - Increase awareness of affordability.
- 6.7.12 The LTA has also worked hard to gain a better understanding of where people play tennis and understand some of the barriers that restrict participation levels.



- 6.7.13 The findings reveal that only 1 in 5 players play in a club. The majority of participation in the UK (44%) takes place in a park environment and it is this location where most new participants will start their tennis journey. For those that do not play, the majority of people who have expressed an interest in playing would see the park environment as their first option for play. Insight demonstrates that while the role (and potential role) of facilities in parks is clear, the club environment remains an important sector for participation.
- 6.7.14 More specifically in 2019 the Lawn Tennis Association produced a strategy for provision of indoor tennis centres and identified 72 locations for indoor tennis centres in England, The target locations have been prioritised according to the number of potential players in each area, with demographic profiles of the population for each target community.
- 6.7.15 To establish target locations for future community indoor tennis centres, the LTA have modelled data from existing successful Community Indoor Tennis Centre's (CITC's). This helped to identify the demographic type, volume and catchment size of a successful CITC. This modelling was applied across England, Scotland and Wales to establish the areas of potential demand.
- 6.7.16 The key metrics are;
- A target location must demonstrate a minimum threshold population of 70,000 within a 20-minute drive time of a target location. Of this population, at least 12,500 must identify as having an interest in playing tennis. Please note this drive time extends to 30 minutes for rural areas.
  - Filtered for competition within the catchment in order to prioritise the addressing of indoor tennis provision gaps.
- 6.7.17 A review of the LTA strategy does identify Blackburn/Burnley as a potential location for an indoor tennis centre and this is ranked at number 5 in the list of 72 potential locations in England. A list of the Lancashire locations and priority rankings in the strategy is set out below.
- 6.7.18 LTA Indoor tennis Centre Area Locations/Priority Rankings;
- 5 Blackburn / Burnley (North)
  - 23 Blackpool/Fylde (North)
  - 43 Lancaster (North)

- 48 Cheshire West & Chester (North)
- 55 Sefton (North)

6.7.19 The strategy sets out that funding to support provision of an indoor centre available from the LTA is an interest free loan. The LTA has evidently ranked Blackburn/Burnley as a very high priority location for an indoor tennis centre.

### Local Demand

- 6.7.23 There are four tennis clubs based in BwD; *Blackburn Northern, Crosshill, Darwen and Feniscowles and Pleasington* all clubs have capacity. As set out BwD is considered by the LTA to have higher specific tennis market across most LTA segments to be a target location for indoor tennis.
- 6.7.24 Participation in tennis is on the increase after a period of decline. Membership numbers are average across the borough. Club consultation through the PPS did not reveal any aspiration for indoor provision. Individual club development priorities are set out in the PPS.
- 6.7.25 There appears sufficient club court supply in BwD to accommodate current and aspirational future demand. Publicly available non-club courts are deemed to have spare capacity. When this is considered alongside latent demand there is a clear need to drive further usage of these courts and participation in tennis before consideration of indoor models is considered.
- 6.7.26 Therefore, focus should be to improve court quality at key public sites where tennis participation could be developed, as well as exploring implementation of the Clubspark operating system model. LTA initiatives such as Tennis for Kids, Tennis for Free and the Great British Tennis Weekends.
- 6.7.27 Whilst the LTA modelling identifies potential demand for indoor provision, given the capacity issues and work required to further develop the participation infra-structure it is recommended that the provision of indoor tennis is considered as a longer-term objective. As part of any future consideration attention should be given, in partnership with neighbouring authorities, clubs and the LTA, to which indoor tennis models, if any, are appropriate in BwD.

### **Indoor Tennis Key Issues**

There are three types of indoor tennis centres, all three can either be temporary or permanent structures

Air structures, more commonly known as bubbles are inexpensive and efficient to construct. Air structures usually comprise single or multi-layered fabric, which are erected and supported using air pressure, provided by substantial air blowers, which are also used to ventilate and control the climate within the bubble.

Fabric frame structures comprise a steel, aluminum or wood framework, with a fabric similar to the fabric used on air structures, stretched tightly over the framework. An inner lining is often used in places where the climate is variable, to help retain the heat in winter and resist it in summer. Fabric frame structures are modular and usually cover between one and four courts. However they can be designed to cover as many courts as needed.

Steel is the most common material used to construct the frame of an indoor tennis centre. Steel buildings cost more to construct than air or fabric framed structure but will offer better insulation and therefore provide savings on the overall running costs. A steel framed building can last up to 65 years.

### **QUANTITY**

There is one indoor tennis centres located in BwD, which is the Blackburn Northern Sports Club which has 2 indoor courts with an acrylic surface within an air dome. The air dome was constructed in 2005 and according to the data has not been refurbished. Access to the indoor courts is through pay and play and the courts are available to the club membership and the public. The indoor tennis centre is owned by the Blackburn Northern Sports Club membership.

There are five other indoor tennis venues in Lancashire and two are within a 20 minute drive time of the Blackburn boundary.

In total there are 20 indoor courts at the centres. The largest centres are the David Lloyd Club Chorley which has 7 courts and the South Ribble Tennis Centre which also has 7 indoor courts. There are then 2 courts located at each of Crow Wood Leisure Club Burnley, Ribble Valley Tennis Centre and Stoneyhurst College and Sports Club. In terms of local authority areas, South Ribble and Chorley have the most courts with 7 each, followed by Ribble Valley with 4 courts and then Burnley with 2 courts. In terms of court surfaces, there are 9 textile courts, 9 acrylic courts and 2 macadam.

The average age of the centres is 17 years, the oldest centre is the Ribble Valley Tennis Centre, opened in 1993 and the most recent is the Stonyhurst College and Sports Club opened in 2017.

### **ACCESSIBILITY**

Access to indoor tennis centres in BwD is based on the 20 minute drive time catchment area of the Blackburn Northern Tennis Centre.

The centre is located on the northern boundary of the authority, the 20 minute drive time catchment area extends to most of the authority but the very south of BwD is outside catchment. There are no indoor tennis centres located in Bolton or Bury to provide access for BwD residents

### **AVAILABILITY**

The Blackburn Northern Indoor Tennis Centre courts are available to the club's membership and to non-members for pay and play, as a way of encouraging residents to become members. There is no available information on the level of use by each category.

### **DEMAND AND PARTICIPATION**

There is no one consistent source/methodology to calculate the demand for indoor tennis. The LTA 'Priority Project Funding, Policy and Operational Procedures', states that one indoor court can serve 200 regular tennis players.

The Active People surveys by Sport England 2006 – 2016 provides data on the level of participation in indoor tennis. The caveat, as with all facility types, is that this does not equate exactly with demand, as the latter may be affected by levels of provision. However, the regularity of the surveys from 2006 to 2016 does provide consistent survey data on trends in indoor tennis participation.

The Active People benchmark measure is, 1 x 30 minutes of activity, at least once a week. Indoor tennis data is available at the England wide and North West Region level for 2011 – 2016. In 2006 some 0.29% of adults in North West Region and 0.22% people in England participated in indoor tennis.

The rate of participation had fallen slightly in North West Region and in 2016, some 0.25% of adults and 0.27% of adults in England played indoor tennis. Applying the North West Region figure for 2016 of 0.25% of adults playing indoor tennis to the BwD adult population aged 15 – 60 in 2019 of 87,058 would generate 217 adult indoor tennis players.

It is not possible to identify how frequently these residents would participate, so as provide a participation rate. However, based on all 217 players playing at least once a week, this could generate participation of 217 visits. This would equate to provision of 2 indoor court based on the LTA measure of 1 indoor court equating to 200 players and this is the number of courts at the Blackburn Northern Indoor Tennis Centre.

### **Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) strategy for indoor tennis**

The LTA's indoor tennis strategy, announced in June 2019 identified 72 priority target areas in England for the development of new indoor courts. The analysis overlays population data against the locations of existing indoor tennis facilities and is part of a new strategic approach to investment by the LTA.



The target locations have been prioritised according to the number of potential players in each area, with demographic profiles of the population for each target community used to ensure new facilities are developed in a way that also helps to broaden the participation base of the game.

Financial support from the LTA is in the form of an interest free loan, not capital grant aid.

A review of the LTA strategy does identify Blackburn/Burnley as a potential location for an indoor tennis centre and this is ranked at number 5 in the list of 72 potential locations in England – so evidently a high priority area for the LTA.

## **OVERALL SUMMARY**

The indoor tennis assessment does identify sufficient demand for provision of an indoor tennis centre in BwD. Based on the methodology applied this is for between 2 – 3 indoor courts. The Blackburn Northern Indoor Tennis Centre does have 2 indoor courts but these are within an air dome, which was constructed in 2005, so now nearly 15 years old.

There are four tennis clubs based in BwD; *Blackburn Northern, Crosshill, Darwen and Feniscowles and Pleasington* all clubs have capacity. As set out BwD is considered by the LTA to have higher specific tennis market across most LTA segments to be a target location for indoor tennis.

Participation in tennis is on the increase after a period of decline. Membership numbers are average across the borough. Club consultation through the PPS did not reveal any aspiration for indoor provision. Individual club development priorities are set out in the PPS.

There appears sufficient club court supply in BwD to accommodate current and aspirational future demand. Publicly available non-club courts are deemed to have spare capacity. When this is considered alongside latent demand there is a clear need to drive further usage of these courts and participation in tennis before consideration of indoor models is considered.

Therefore, focus should be to improve court quality at key public sites where tennis participation could be developed, as well as exploring implementation of the Clubspark operating system model. LTA initiatives such as Tennis for Kids, Tennis for Free and the Great British Tennis Weekends.

Whilst the LTA modelling identifies potential demand for indoor provision, given the capacity issues and work required to further develop the participation infra-structure it is recommended that the provision of indoor tennis is considered as a longer-term objective. As part of any future consideration attention should be given, in partnership with clubs and the LTA, to which indoor tennis models, if any, are appropriate in BwD.



**Indoor Tennis Action Plan**

Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation	Justification	Relevant Sites and Key Actions	Lead Partner	Measures of Success
<b>SO1, SO2 and SO4 (Protect and Enhance)</b>	1 Protect the Blackburn Northern Tennis Club for Indoor Tennis.  Seek investment in the site to protect access and usage.	The Northern Tennis Club has a role to play for the delivery of indoor tennis.  Loss of the facility would impact on indoor tennis opportunities.	Blackburn Northern	Blackburn Northern  LTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blackburn Northern to remain a venue for tennis, protected and enhanced through investment</li> </ul>
<b>SO9 and SO10 (Provide)</b>	2 Work alongside the LTA to explore the LTA's desire to provide an indoor tennis facility in BwD. This is identified as a strategic target for the LTA.  This should include detailed viability and feasibility work, demand modelling and consultation with neighbouring authorities, local clubs and the tennis community, to explore which indoor model if any is appropriate in the district.	BwD has been identified as a key priority for a new indoor tennis centre in LTA insight and is a strategic priority for the LTA.  Further research is required to determine whether this facility is required and the opportunities to deliver such a facility sustainability and in a manner that positively impacts tennis in BwD.  Longer-term consideration. Potential sub-regional role with Burnley and Hyndburn.	Borough-wide	BwD Leisure and Planning  LTA  Tennis Clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed outcome on potential viability of new facility</li> <li>Progress towards new provision if deemed viable and required</li> </ul>



Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation		Justification	Relevant Sites and Key Actions	Lead Partner	Measures of Success
<b>SO4 and SO10 (Enhance and Provide)</b>	3	Seek investment to the tennis infra-structure from developments.	PPS illustrates the priority need for investment in tennis.	Based on the catchment of proposed developments	BWD Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributions secured towards the tennis infra-structure</li> </ul>

## 7 Section 7 - Assessment of need and evidence base for Indoor Bowling

### 7.4 Introduction

7.4.1 Indoor bowling is played in a similar way to lawn bowls and although there are slight differences between the two, it is essentially an indoor version of the outdoor game. The length of a rectangular green is still between 31 metres and 40 metres. The width of a green can vary from as little as 8 metres (enough for one rink) to as much as 60 metres or more. The width of a rink for indoor play is a minimum 4.6 metres.

7.4.2 Indoor bowling centres are purpose built dedicated centres and are complete different from short mat bowls which is played on a rectangular carpet (15m x 2m) that is rolled out. Short mat bowls can be accommodated in any indoor space large enough to fit the carpet. Carpet mat bowls tends to be played at a recreational level

### 7.5 QUANTITY

7.5.1 There are no indoor bowls centres located in BwD, although there is indoor bowls programmed at Darwen Leisure Centre, using roll down mats. Somewhat surprisingly, there is only one indoor bowls centre in Lancashire, which is the Blackpool Newton Hall Indoor Bowls Club, located in Fylde local authority.

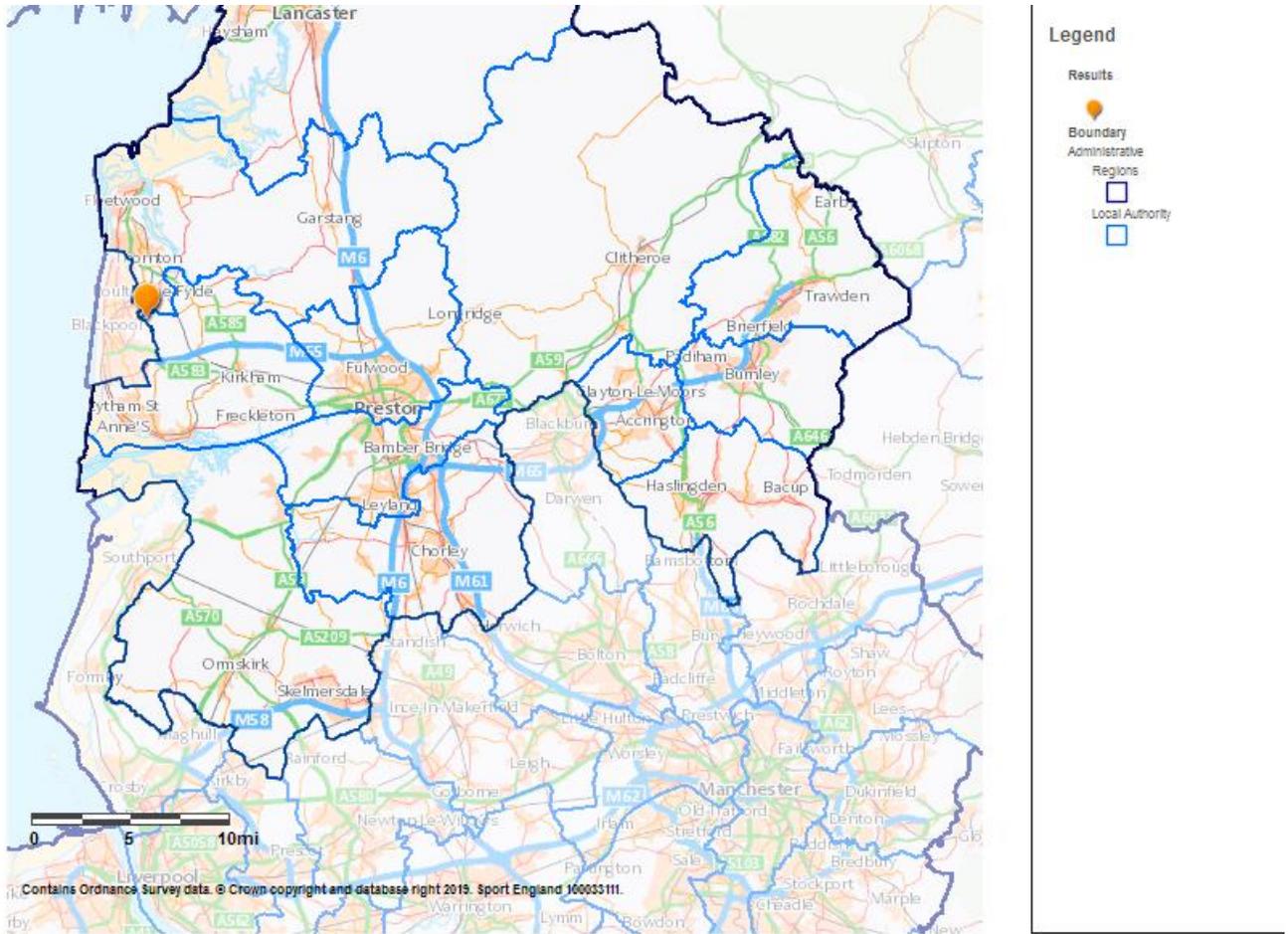
7.5.2 The centre opened in October 1985 and contained five rinks in 1995, it was extended to 7 rinks and the complete centre was refurbished in 2012. The centre has invested extensively: with a fully electronic scoreboard and scoring system; visual display enables bowlers to clearly see up to the minute match scores; and a 'Blue' Pro-Weave carpet, as seen at the World Bowls Tour Indoor Championships.

7.5.3 The centre is owned and managed by the centre membership and operates on a commercial basis.

**Table 7.1 - Indoor Bowling Centres Lancashire Active Places Power**

Site Name	Facility Type	Rinks	Access Type	Seasonality	Ownership Type	Man'ment Type	Year Built	Year Refurb
BLACKPOOL NEWTON HALL INDOOR BOWLS CLUB	Indoor Bowls	7	Sports Club / Community Association	All Year	Commercial	Commercial	1985	2012

**Map 7.1 - Location of Blackpool Newton Hall Indoor Bowls Club**



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**Facilities per 1000 population**

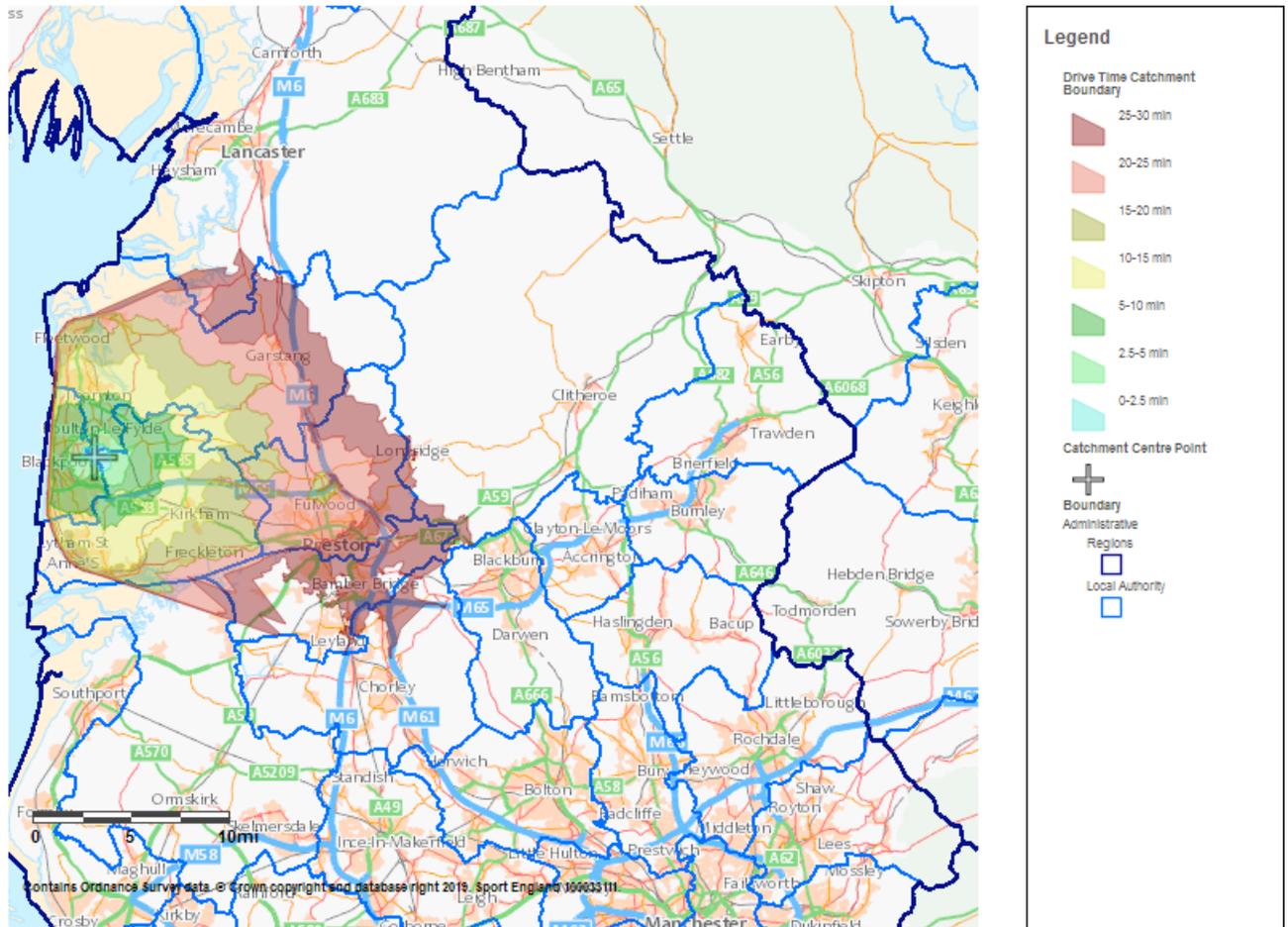
7.5.4 The measure of facilities per 1,000 population is not developed as there are no indoor bowling centres in BwD.



## 7.6 **ACCESSIBILITY**

- 7.6.1 Access to indoor bowling is based on the England Indoor Bowling Association, 20-minute drive time catchment area for a centre. Extending the drive time catchment area for the Blackpool Newton Hall centre to 30 minutes' drive time, only just reaches the western edge of BwD boundary. In effect BwD residents do not have access to any indoor bowling centre.

**Map 7.2 - Thirty minute drive time catchment area for the Blackpool Newton Hall Indoor Bowls Club**



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## 7.7 AVAILABILITY

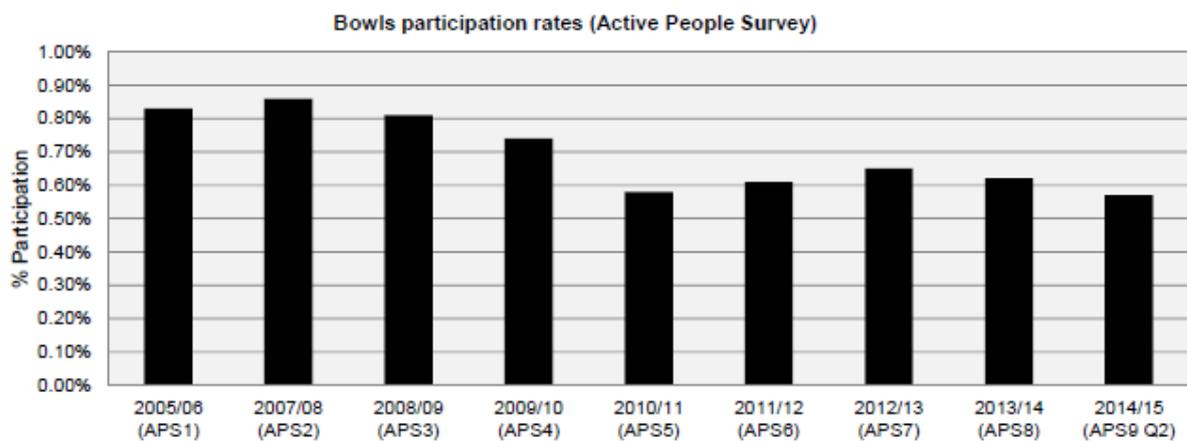
7.7.1 Given BwD residents do not have access to an indoor bowling centre, there are no comments to make on availability.



## 7.8 DEMAND AND PARTICIPATION

7.8.1 The Active People England wide data for once-a-week participation for indoor and outdoor bowls shows that participation has declined. It being 0.80% of the adult population participating at least once a week in Active People 1 for 2005 - 06 and 0.57% of the adult population participating at least once a week in Active People 9 for 2014 – 15.

**Chart 7.1 - Bowling participation in England 2005 – 2015**



7.8.2 Similarly participation in indoor bowls has also declined and the Active People data is only available at the England wide level for the period 2011 – 2016. In 2011, some 0.7% of the England adult population participated in indoor bowling at least once a week, and in 2016 the participation rate was 0.57% of all adults.

**Chart 7.2 - Indoor Bowling Participation in England 2011 – 2016**





## 7.9 DEMAND AND PARTICIPATION

7.9.1 In 2013 Sport England undertook a national indoor bowling facility assessment and this study sets out participation rates for indoor bowling for a range of age bands and for both genders. This provides more detailed information on the profile of participation than the Active People survey. However, the two sources have a different basis and so cannot be compared.

7.9.2 The findings based on Sport England research is set out in Table 7.2 below. The highest rates of participation for both genders are in the 65+ age ranges. Perhaps surprising is that participation is highest in the 75+ age group. Up until age 64 participation is below 1% of the adult population for females and is 1% for males.

**Table 7.2 - Participation rates in indoor bowling by age and gender. Sport England study 2013**

Age range	0 – 15 (%)	16-49 (%)	50-59(%)	60-64(%)	65-74(%)	75-79(%)
Male participation rate	0.00	0.09	0.49	1.03	2.84	4.01
Female participation rate	0.00	0.06	0.27	0.93	2.11	2.61

7.9.3 It is possible to apply these participation rates to the BwD population for indoor bowling, for both genders, so as to identify the numbers of potential bowlers, this applies the BwD 2019 population data provided by the Council

**Table 7.3 - BwD male population by age bands 2019 and participation rates for indoor bowling**

Male age range	0 – 15 (%)	16-49 (%)	50-59(%)	60-64(%)	65-74(%)	75-79(%)	Total male bowling population
BwD Male population	16,572	34,887	9,585	3,818	6,183	1,871	
Males indoor bowling participation rate	0.00	0.09	0.49	1.03	2.84	4.01	
2019 BwD male population participating in indoor bowls	0	31	46	39	175	75	366

**Table 7.4 - BwD female population by age bands 2019 and participation rates for indoor bowling**

Female age range	0 – 15 (%)	16-49 (%)	50-59(%)	60-64(%)	65-74(%)	75-79(%)	Total female bowling population
BwD female population	16,086	33,707	9,482	3,817	6,370	2,094	
2019 BwD female indoor bowling participation rate	0.00	0.06	0.27	0.93	2.11	2.61	
2019 BwD female population participating in indoor bowls	0	20	25	35	134	54	268

**Table 7.4 - Total BwD population participating in indoor bowling by age bands 2019**

Age range	0 – 15 (%)	16-49 (%)	50-59(%)	60-64(%)	65-74(%)	75-79(%)	Total bowling population
BwD 2019 total population participating in indoor bowls	0	51	71	74	309	129	634

7.9.4 The advantage of this assessment is that it allows Sport England participation rates to be applied to the BwD male and female population in 2019 and for the 6 age bands. It provides a more informed view of the potential demand for indoor bowling.

7.9.5 The key findings from the tables are;

- The overall total potential indoor bowling population is low at 634 people in 2019 and this is across all age bands from 16 – 79
- At an assumed per rink capacity of 100 bowlers per rink, this equates to just over 6 rinks in 2019
- The age band with the highest participation is the 65 – 74 age band for both females and males with 175 male bowlers and 134 female bowlers
- Participation in the 65 – 74 age band is higher than for the combined 16 – 64 age range for both females and males. This reinforces the narrow age range and significance of the age band with the highest participation.

7.9.6 The footnote to these findings is it assumes, the England wide participation rates for indoor bowls identified by Sport England does apply in BwD, but it is the best guide possible to identify the potential indoor bowling population and level of demand.

## National Governing Body (NGB) Priorities

7.9.7 The EIBA priorities are: *1. Recruitment of Participants 2. Retention of Participants 3. Clubs obtaining 'Clubmark Accreditation' 4. Retention and Improvement of Facilities. 5. New Indoor facilities in areas of Low-Supply and High-Demand.*

7.9.8 EIBA Plan 2017-2021 covers the following areas;

- Recruit and Retain 45+; Recruit and Retain 70+ - two different markets which requires the NGB to find a way to grow both specific groups. The 45+ requiring new versions/formats, the 70+ wishing to keep the current formats.
- Facilities – Build, Improve, Retain
- Youth and the Family
- Women – increased participation and retention
- Disability
- Competitions
- Internationals
- Promotion of our Sport
- Commercial partnerships

7.9.9 EIBA Objectives are;

- A growth in participation across the adult population in local Communities. Targeted work to increase Female participation
- A growth in participation in the 12-18 age range as part of the 'EIBA Development Pathway'
- The provision of an excellent sporting experience for new and existing participants
- A growth in Indoor Bowls participation by people who have disabilities

7.9.10 In terms of BwD, the assessment findings are supported by the ngb. They concur that at present there are no purpose-built Indoor Bowls sites within the Local Authority area. In addition, there are no sites within "30 minutes' drive-time".

7.9.11 BwD is classified as an "Area of Low Supply" by EIBA, as such, EIBA would like to find Partners to create a "Multi-Sport/Multi Community Use Facility", ideally linked to an Outdoor Bowling facility. They would envisage that this would be a Crown Green Outdoor facility.



7.9.12 There is a history of indoor bowls provision and previous aspirations, however it is felt that this has now passed. Blackburn Indoor Bowling Club was forced to close after its landlords shut its premises at the Albion Mill in August 2008. (4 rink facility). In 2009 there were approaches by a local group who were looking to establish a new Indoor Bowls facility at Glenfield Park. Sadly, this did not progress due to funding issues. Blackburn with Darwen Council was again approached in 2013 to consider providing an Indoor Bowls facility but the deliverability of a specialist indoor centre is not considered to be feasible in the current climate.

### **Local Demand**

7.9.13 There are 28 bowls greens across Blackburn, the average club membership stands at 57 but this is in decline. The overriding concerns are declining memberships, the number of clubs struggling to effectively maintain facilities and the number of clubs that have closed in recent years due to this. Club consultation through the PPS did not reveal any aspiration for indoor provision. Individual club development priorities are set out in the PPS.

7.9.14 There appears sufficient club supply in BwD to accommodate current and aspirational future demand. Publicly available rinks are deemed to have spare capacity. Therefore, focus should be to improve the current outdoor infra-structure and participation base before consideration of indoor models is considered. Whilst modelling identifies potential theoretical demand for indoor provision, and there is a good bowls infra-structure, given the capacity issues and work required to further develop the participation infra-structure, whilst there have been aspirations in the past, it is recommended that the provision of a dedicated indoor bowls centre is not considered to be a current priority objective.

## **Indoor Bowling Key Issues**

Indoor bowling is played in a similar way to lawn bowls and although there are slight differences between the two, it is essentially an indoor version of the outdoor game. The length of a rectangular green is between 31 metres and 40 metres. The width of a green can vary from 8 metres (enough for one rink) to 60 metres or more. The width of a rink for indoor play is a minimum 4.6 metres.

Indoor bowling centres are purpose built dedicated centres and are completely different from short mat bowls which is played on a rectangular carpet (15m x 2m) that is rolled out. Short mat bowls can be accommodated in any indoor space large enough to fit the carpet. Carpet mat bowls tends to be played at a recreational level

### **QUANTITY**



There are no indoor tennis centres located in BwD and somewhat surprisingly, there is only one indoor bowling centre in Lancashire, which is the Blackpool Newton Hall Indoor Bowls Club and which is located in Fylde local authority.

### ACCESSIBILITY

Access to indoor bowling is based on the England Indoor Bowling Association 20 minute drive time catchment area for a centre. Extending the drive time catchment area for the Blackpool Newton Hall centre to 30 minutes' drive time, only just reaches the western edge of the BwD boundary. In effect, BwD residents do not have access to any indoor bowling centre.

### AVAILABILITY

Given BwD residents do not have access to an indoor bowling centre there are no comments to make on availability.

### DEMAND AND PARTICIPATION

In 2013 Sport England undertook a national indoor bowling facility assessment, the study sets out participation rates for indoor bowling for a range of age bands and for both genders. This provides more detailed information on the profile of participation than the Active People survey. However, the two sources have a different basis and so cannot be compared.

The highest rates of participation for both genders are in the 65+ age ranges. Perhaps surprising is that participation is highest in the 75+ age group. Up until age 64 participation is below 1% of the adult population for females and is 1% for males.

Applying these participation rates to the BwD population for indoor bowling, for both genders, identifies the numbers of potential bowlers. This is based on the BwD 2019 population from the Council's population estimates.

The key findings are;

- The overall total potential indoor bowling population is low at 634 people in 2019 and this is across all age bands from 16 – 79
- At an assumed per rink capacity of 100 bowlers per rink, this equates to just over 6 rinks in 2019
- The age band with the highest participation is the 65 – 74 age band for both females and males with 175 male bowlers and 134 female bowlers
- Participation in the 65 – 74 age band is higher than for the combined 16 – 64 age range for both females and males. This reinforces the significance of this age band for indoor bowling.

The footnote to these findings is that it assumes the England wide participation rates for indoor bowls identified by Sport England do apply in BwD but it is the best guide to identify the potential indoor bowling population and demand.

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS



There are no indoor bowling centres in BwD and a significant finding is that there is one only centre in Lancashire, the Blackpool Newton Hall Indoor Bowls Club, located in Fylde local authority. This can be taken as evidence of a low level of demand for indoor bowling.

Extending the drive time catchment area for the Blackpool Newton Hall centre to 30 minutes' drive time, only just reaches the western edge of BwD boundary. In effect BwD residents do not have access to any indoor bowling centre.

Based on application of the 2013 Sport England national indoor bowling facility assessment and applying the participation rates from this study to the BwD 2019 population identifies a BwD total potential indoor bowling population of 634, across all age bands from 16 – 79.

At an assumed per rink capacity of 100 bowlers per rink, this equates to just over 6 rinks in 2019. The age band with the highest participation is the 65 – 74 age band with 175 male bowlers and 134 female bowlers.

Participation in the 65 – 74 age bands is higher than for the combined 16 – 64 age range for both females and males, reinforcing the importance of the 65 – 74 age range for indoor bowling.

The overall conclusion from the indoor bowling assessment is that there is insufficient demand to consider provision for an indoor bowling centre. There is a potential indoor bowling population which would equate to 6 rinks. However, the rate of indoor bowling participation has declined consistently since 2011 and only 0.25% of the adult population in North West Region play indoor bowls.

The potential demand for 6 rinks has to be set against this declining rate of indoor bowling participation and no track record of indoor bowling in BwD, nor the outdoor bowling population having experience of owning and managing an indoor bowling centre, which is of critical importance.

An option could be to promote carpet mat bowls further, from the current programmes at Darwen Leisure Centre, and investigate the scope to provide a longer version of carpet mat bowls, over a 30m x 6m length. This would require a new carpet and could only be played at the recreational level. It is, however, more likely to appeal to regular outdoor bowlers who are not challenged by the current short mat bowls game. It would also provide a new (and daytime) use of sports halls.

Whilst modelling identifies potential demand for indoor provision, given the capacity issues and work required to further develop the participation infra-structure it is recommended that the provision of indoor bowls is considered as a longer-term objective.



**Indoor Bowls Action Plan**

Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation	Justification	Relevant Sites and Key Actions	Lead Partner	Measures of Success
<b>SO4 and SO10 (Enhance and Provide)</b>	1 Seek investment to the bowls infra-structure from developments.  Seek investment to improve the quality and capacity at the key sports hall sites in line with the application of Sport England’s Sports Facility Calculator tool, to accommodate flexible indoor bowling opportunities.	Flexible indoor bowls programme opportunities can help to meet lack of specialist indoor provision.	Outdoor Greens  Indoor Leisure Centere sites	BwD Planning and Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributions secured towards bowls to support outdoor and indoor development programmes.</li> </ul>

## **8 Section 8 - Assessment of need and evidence base for Outdoor Athletic Tracks**

### **8.4 Introduction**

- 8.4.1 A local outdoor all weather synthetic athletics facility has a 400m track, with either a 6 or 8 lane 100 straight for all track running and hurdle distances. It has provision for jumps and throwing, with a high jump, long jump and triple jump runways and pits, pole vault runway and landing area, shot putt circle, discus circle and infield landing area for shot putt, discuss and javelin, ideally the track area and in field area should be floodlit. There should also be changing accommodation and depending on the level of local athletic events catered for, covered spectating accommodation and facilities for event management and car parking.
- 8.4.2 The England Athletics Facilities Strategy 2018 – 2025 sets out that in England, in 2017, there are 367 outdoor athletics tracks; synthetic, cinder and permanent grass. 73% of tracks are synthetic – and thus provide a reasonable or better ‘all weather’, all year round option. 67% of tracks are floodlit; making evening/all year-round use possible.

### **8.5 Supply of outdoor all weather athletic tracks**

- 8.5.1 There is one outdoor all-weather athletics track in BwD, the Witten Park Arena, it has a 6 lane 400m track with throwing and jump event provision, floodlights and changing accommodation. It is owned by BwD Council and the resident club is Blackburn Harriers & AC, founded in 1910.
- 8.5.2 The club competes in track & field, cross country, road and fell racing. The club is affiliated to the Northern track and field senior league, junior league the Mid Lancs track and field league, Mid Lancs cross country and Red Rose cross country league. The club participates in all the competitions organised by the various leagues.
- 8.5.3 There are 6 further local athletic facilities in Lancashire, details are set out in table 8.1, there are 5 synthetic tracks, all of which are floodlit and there is one cinder track at Marl Lane Pits in Rossendale and which is not floodlit.



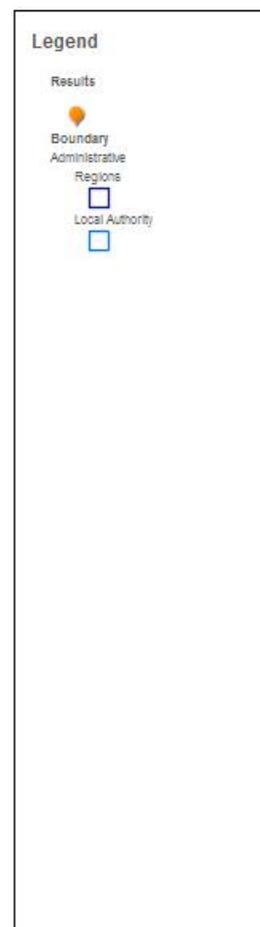
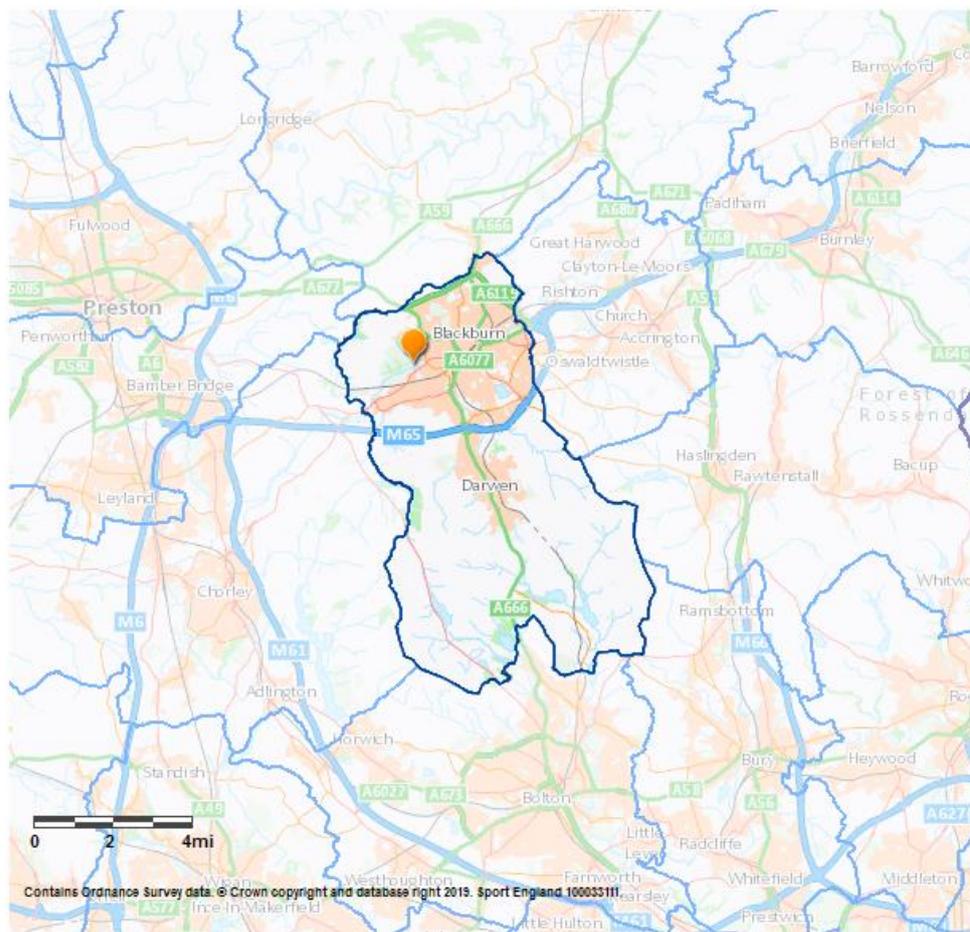
**Table 8.1 - Athletic tracks in BwD**

Site Name	Facility Type	Floodlit	Lanes	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type	Year Built	Year Refurb	Ward Name	
WITTON PARK ARENA	Athletics Track Synthetic	Yes	6	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Local Authority (in house)	1980	2015	Billinge Beardwood	&

**Table 8.2 -Athletic tracks in Lancashire County**

Site Name	Post Town	Facility Type	Facility Sub Type	Floodlit	Lanes	Access Type	Ownership Type	Man'ment Type	Year Built
BARDEN LANE ATHLETICS TRACK	BURNLEY	Athletics Tracks	Synthetic	Yes	6	Sports Club / Community Association	Local Authority	Local Authority (in house)	1955
EDGE HILL SPORT	Ormskirk	Athletics Tracks	Synthetic	Yes	8	Sports Club / Community Association	Higher Education Institutions	School/College /University (in house)	2014
MARL PITS TRACK	Rossendale	Athletics Tracks	Cinder	No	6	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Trust	1969
SALT AYRE LEISURE CENTRE	LANCASTER	Athletics Tracks	Synthetic	Yes	8	Sports Club / Community Association	Local Authority	Local Authority (in house)	1993
SEEDHILL ATHLETICS & FITNESS CENTRE	NELSON	Athletics Tracks	Synthetic	Yes	6	Sports Club / Community Association	Local Authority	Trust	1978
UCLAN SPORTS ARENA	PRESTON	Athletics Tracks	Synthetic	Yes	8	Sports Club / Community Association	Higher Education Institutions	School/College /University (in house)	2000
WILSON PLAYING FIELDS TRACK	CLAYTON-LE-MOORS	Athletics Tracks	Synthetic	Yes	6	Sports Club / Community Association	Local Authority	Trust	1974

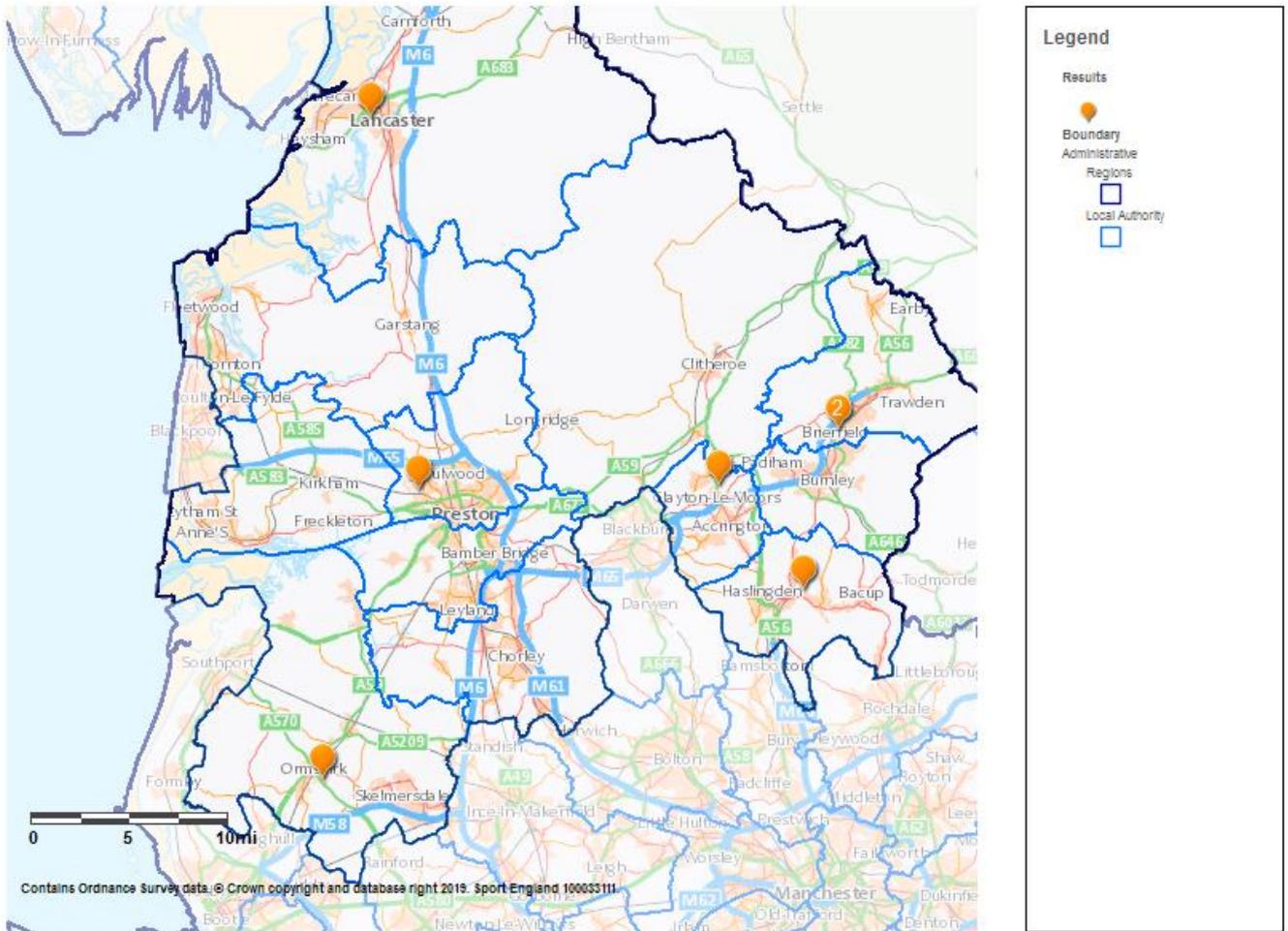
**Map 8.1 - Location of the Witton Park Arena**



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A map of the other athletic tracks located in Lancashire County is shown in Map 8.2 ,

**Map 8.2 - Outdoor athletic facilities within Lancashire 2019**



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## Supply of athletic tracks per 1,000 population

### 8.6 Quality

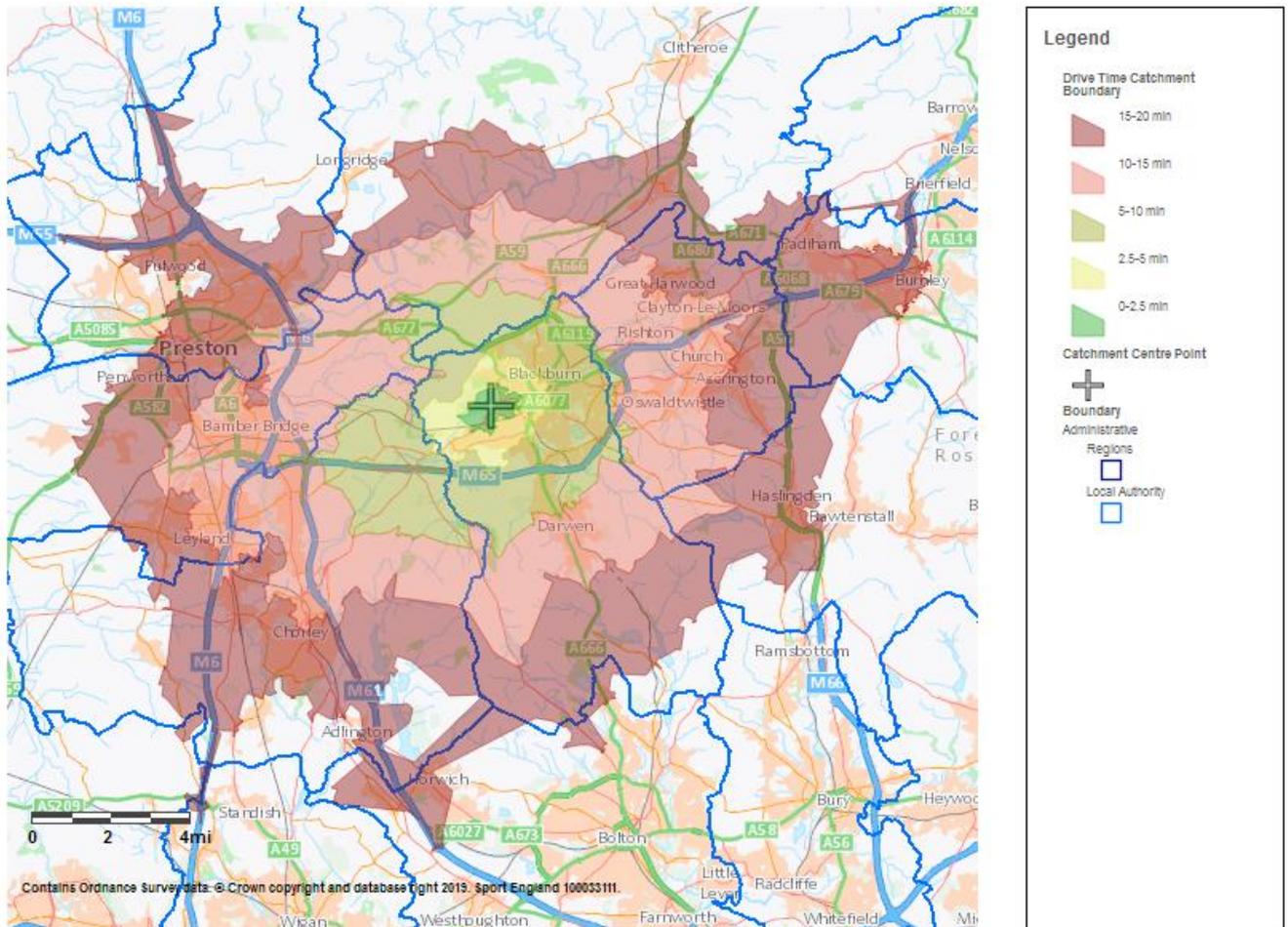
- 8.6.1 Quality is assessed based on the physical aspects of the venue: the age of the track, whether it has been re-surfaced, floodlighting, the provision of changing accommodation and car parking.
- 8.6.2 The Witton Park Arena track opened in 1980, and was last re-surfaced in 2015, the track is floodlit. The track, throwing and jumps areas and in field are described by England Athletics as being in good condition and maintained to a good standard. There is a changing accommodation block and car parking on site.

- 8.6.3 The Witton Park Arena is part of a major indoor and outdoor sports facility and in addition to the athletics track, it also includes an indoor 60 metres 6 lane sprint track/warm up track, an education room, a club room for the Blackburn Harriers & AC, a gym suite with 45 stations, free weights area, changing facilities and car parking for up to 150 vehicles. The indoor building, overlooks the track home straight, Witton Park Arena is an extensive athletics facility. The scale and quality of the venue, means it can accommodate track and field athletics up to inter county completion as well as providing an extensive year round club competition and training facility

### **8.7 Accessibility**

- 8.7.1 Access to outdoor athletics facilities is based on England Athletics recognised catchment area of up to 20 minutes travel time by car. Based on this catchment area all but the south east of the Borough is within the 15 – 30 minute drive time catchment area of the Witten Park Arena site, with around half of the Borough in the 5 – 10 drive time catchment area of the site, as shown in Map 8.3.
- 8.7.2 The up to 20 minute drive time catchment area (dark pink area in the map) extends to Hyndburn, and nearly all of Chorley (there is no all weather athletics track located in Chorley) and so the location of the Witton Park Arena has an extensive catchment area.

**Map 8.3 - 20 minute drive time catchment area of the Witton Park Arena track location**

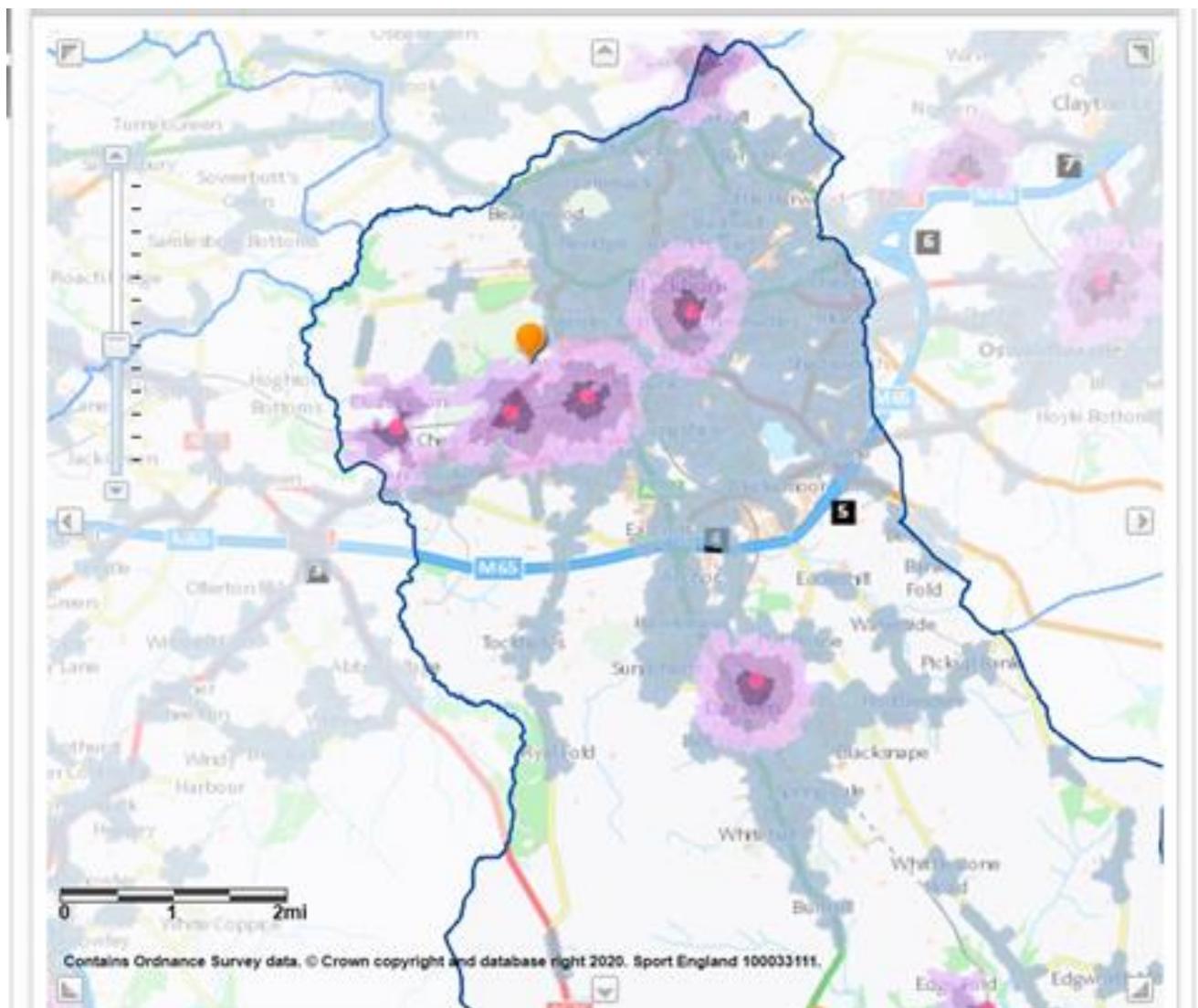


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- 8.7.3 Given a lot of athletes will be young people and will travel to the Witton Park Arena by either walking or public transport, it is important to set how accessible the athletics facility is by public transport.
- 8.7.4 Map 8.3 shows the athletics facility location (orange circle) and the grey areas are the areas of the Borough that are within 5 minutes of a bus stop (grey area) and up to 15 minutes' walk of a railway station.

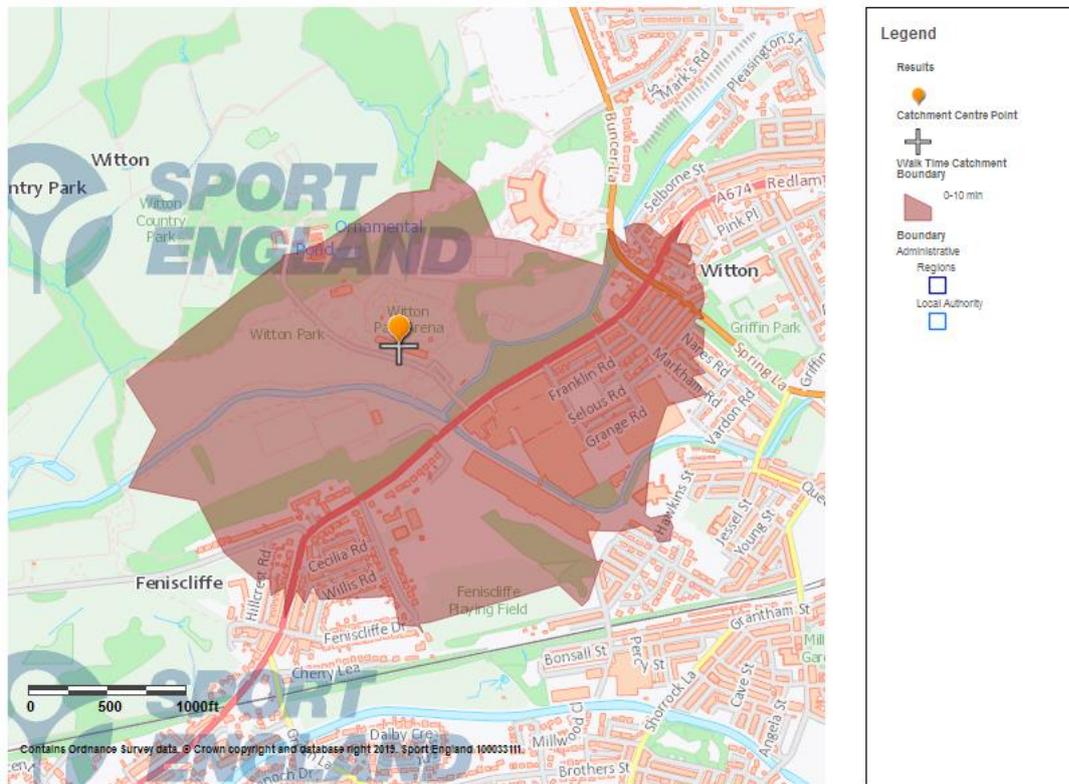
8.7.5 As Map 8.4 shows there is good public transport access to the Witten Park Arena from the east, north east and south but not from the west or north west. There is however parkland in the immediate area to the west and north of the Witten Park site and so this is not a problem in the immediate area of the track site.

**Map 8.4 - Area of BwD within 5 minutes of a bus stop and 15 minutes' walk of a railway station**



8.7.6 Map 8.4 shows the area covered by the 10 minute walk time catchment of the track and there is no housing to the north or west of the site, it is all to the south and east which is within catchment.

**Map 8.5 - 10 minute walking catchment area of the Witton Park Arena track location**



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## 8.8 Availability

- 8.8.1 The athletics facility is available to the Blackburn Harriers & AC, who operate club nights on three nights Tuesday to Thursday evenings for 2.5 hours. In the summer the club operates an introduction to athletics aimed at primary school children covering all disciplines – sprints, throws, endurance, jumps and hurdles before moving into a specific training group.
- 8.8.2 Outside of these hours, the athletics facility is available for other users by arrangement with BwD. The track and the indoor facilities are managed and maintained by BwD Council.



## 8.9 DEMAND AND PARTICIPATION

### Participation Trends

8.9.1 The Active Lives England wide data for adult participation in track and field athletics at least twice in the past 28 days and over the period of the five Active Lives surveys November 2015 – November 2020 is shown in the table below. Given the closure of outdoor athletic facilities for nine months from March 2020 to the end of the Active Lives survey in November 2020 because of Covid 19, the changes in the past twelve months are not valid for comment.

8.9.2 The most significant finding is the England wide adult participation figure for participating at least twice in the past 28 days of 122,300 players. Over the five years of the Active Lives survey, adult track and field athletics participation had declined by 0.3%, not a large decrease in participation over five years.

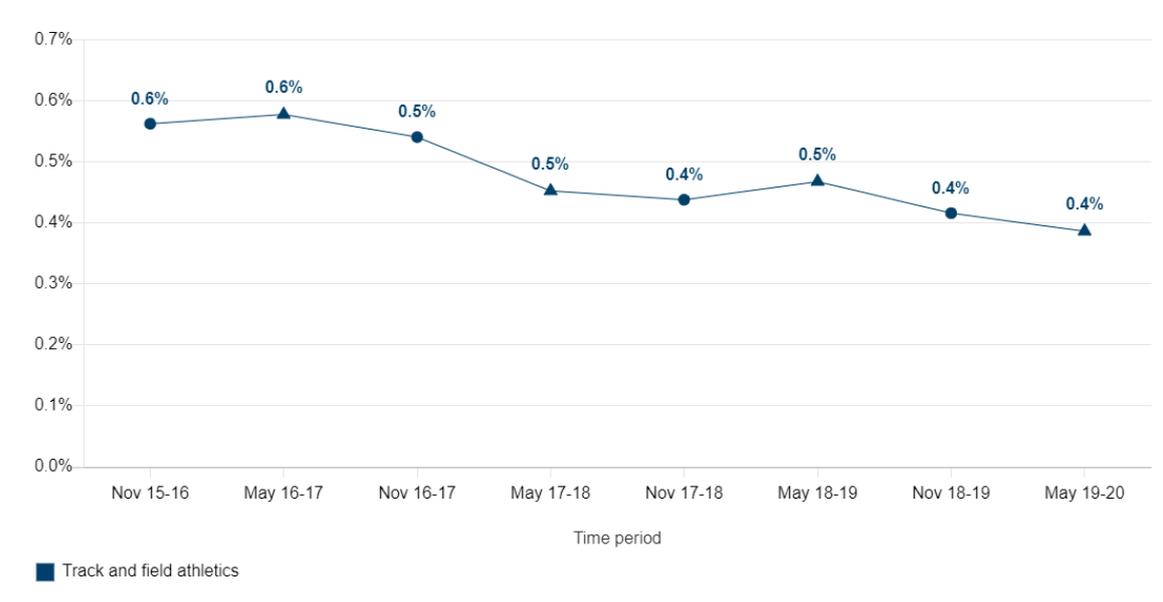
**Table 8.1 – Active Lives Track and Field Athletics Participation 2015-16 to 2019-20**

Sport	November 2019 - November 2020					Change from baseline		Change in the last 12 months	
	Respon dents	Populatio n total	Rate (%)	95% confidence interval		Absol ute	Significance	Absol ute	Significance
				Rate Lower	Rate Upper				
Track and field athletics	177,735	<b>122,300</b>	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	-0.3%	Significant decrease	-0.2%	Significant decrease

8.9.3 The Active Lives data for adult participation in track and field athletics based on the same measure but for each year of the surveys shows slightly different findings, with 0.6% of adults participating in the first Active Lives survey in 2015 – 16. The rate of participation has shown a steady decrease to 0.4% of adult participating in the 2019 – 20 Active Lives survey.



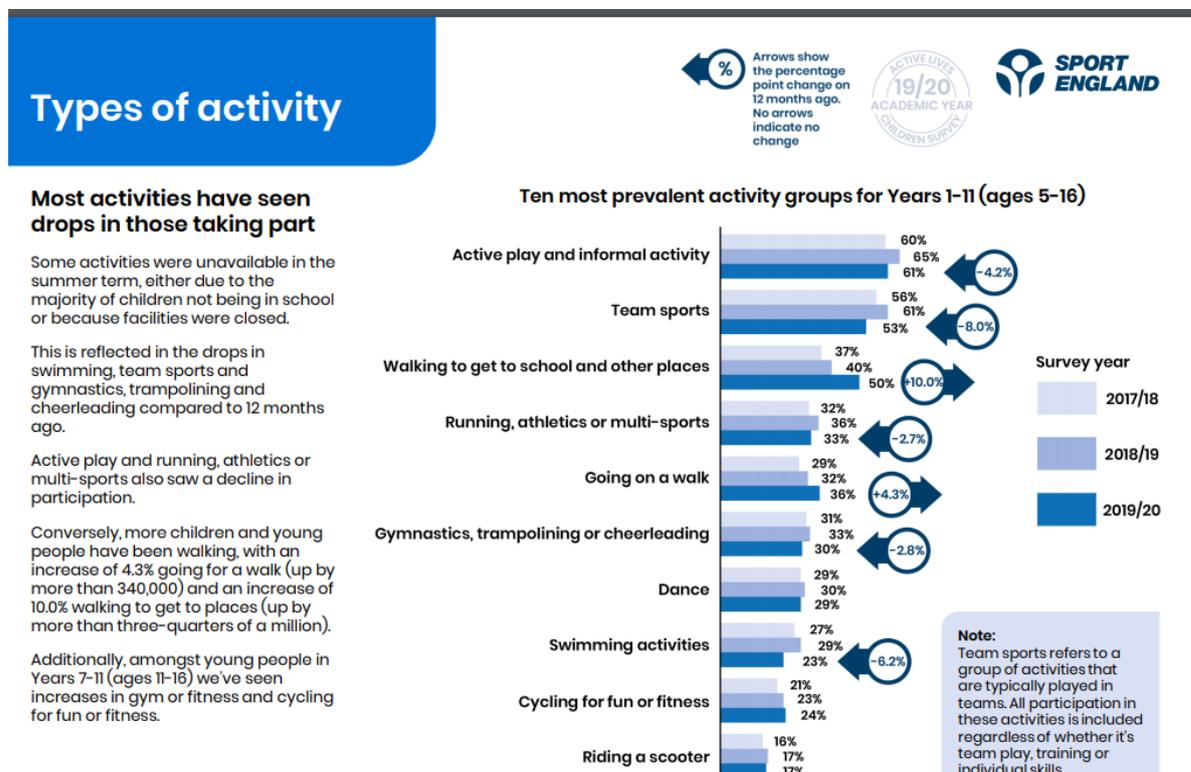
**Chart 8.1 - Active Lives track and field athletics participation England wide 2015 – 16 to 2019 – 20**



8.9.4 The same data table is not presented in the same way for the Active Lives Young People survey findings, the data is presented in reports for each academic year. The findings for the Active Lives Young People survey 2019 - 20 are presented in the table below. This includes a group with running, athletics and multi sports and measures activity as at least once in the past week.

8.9.5 The findings show that participation in this category, was 33% of young people in the 2019 -20 academic year, down from 36% in 2018 19 but 1% higher than in 2017-18. It is a consistently high percentage and ranked fourth out of the ten activity categories measured. However, it does include multi sports and so it a much wider category than just track and field athletics.

**Table 8.1 - Active Lives activity levels for young people aged 5 - 16**



### National Governing Body (NGB) Priorities

8.9.6 Nationally Athletics participation appears to be stable. England Athletics (EA) have 3 key facility priorities as follows;

- Ensure that the allocation of resources to new and existing track and field facilities is prioritised to those that have the greatest potential to impact positively on general participation, club membership growth and retention, and improved personal performance
- Actively encourage athletics and running facilities to be used to their fullest possible extent by the sport and by all sections of the community in order to maximise viability
- Encourage innovative approaches to the location and design of facilities for individual components of the sport in order to increase reach and create sustainability and viability.

8.9.7 In terms of BwD England Athletics commented as follows;



- Blackburn is not a priority area for any new athletics track developments. The priority for England Athletics in terms of BwD would be protect and safeguard existing athletics facilities.
- Witton Park Arena is important to the sport locally and regionally. As the venue hosts club training sessions for Blackburn Harriers (EA membership 19/20 299) on weekly basis. The venue has a full competition certification from 2014 and can host local and regional competitions.
- We would advice and recommend Blackburn maintain the UKA TrackMark accreditation scheme.

Running has been one of the few sports that people have been able to engage in during lockdowns which appears to be resulting in an increase in participation from the public. There may be opportunities for Blackburn Harriers to engage with and attract new members once they return to activity, which could result in a further increase in demand.

### **Outdoor Athletics Key Issues**

#### **QUANTITY**

BwD is only one of six local authorities in Lancashire which has an all-weather 400m athletics track with full provision for jumps and throwing events.



The Witton Park Arena is a 6 lane 400m track, with throwing and jump event provision, floodlights and changing accommodation. It is owned by BwD Council and the resident club is Blackburn Harriers & AC, founded in 1910.

The Witton Park Arena is part of a major indoor and outdoor sports facility, in addition to the outdoor athletics facility, it also includes an indoor 60 metres 6 lane sprint track/warm up track, an education room, a club room for the Blackburn Harriers & AC, a gym suite with 45 stations, free weights area, changing facilities and car parking for up to 150 vehicles.

There are also 2 full size floodlit synthetic grass pitches (opened in 2019) and extensive grass pitches which are part of the Witton Park Arena site – it is a very extensive centre for pitch sports and athletics.

The club competes in track & field, cross country, road and fell racing. The club is affiliated to the Northern track and field senior league and junior league, the Mid Lancs track and field league, Mid Lancs cross country and Red Rose cross country league. The club participates in all the competitions organised by the various leagues.

## **QUALITY**

The Witton Park Arena athletics facility opened in 1980 and the track was last re-surfaced in 2015. The scale and quality of the venue, means it can accommodate all track and field athletic disciplines, as well as providing an extensive year round indoor training facility, plus a gym and free weights area for strength and conditioning

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

Access to outdoor athletics facilities is based on England Athletics recognised catchment area of up to 20 minutes travel time by car. Based on this catchment area, all but the south east of the Borough is within the 15 – 200 minute drive time catchment area of the Witten Park Arena site, with around half of the Borough in the 5 – 10 drive time catchment area of the site.

The up to 20 minute drive time catchment area, extends to Hyndburn, and nearly all of Chorley (there is no all-weather athletics track located in Chorley) and so the location of the Witton Park Arena has an extensive catchment area.

## **AVAILABILITY**



The athletics facility is available to the Blackburn Harriers & AC, who operate club nights on three nights, Tuesday to Thursday evenings for 2.5 hours. In the summer the club operates an introduction to athletics aimed at primary school children, including all disciplines – sprints, throws, endurance, jumps and hurdles before moving into a specific training group.

Outside of these hours, the athletics facility is available for other users through BwD. The track and the indoor facilities are managed and maintained by BwD Council

## **DEMAND AND PARTICIPATION**

There is no recognised methodology or data to assess the demand for track and field athletics, at the local level. Based on applying the North West Region track and field participation rate from the most recent year of 2015, which is 0.28%, of adults participating, to the BwD population aged 10 - 44 (age range for most track and field participation identified by England Athletics) of 35,372, generates 99 athletes.

It is evident there is a higher participation rate for track and field athletics in BwD than the North West Region average, given the Borough has a permanent and well established athletics club, providing for people aged 5 upward and competing in competitions up to national level.

## **OVERALL SUMMARY**

The Witton Park Arena outdoor athletics facility provides for all track and field athletic disciplines. It is of a scale and quality to meet the demand for track and field athletics in BwD. The outdoor facility is complemented by the 60m indoor sprint and training track, gym, free weights area and home base for the extensive resident club. Blackburn Harriers & AC.

Overall, there is an extensive all year round indoor training facility to complement the outdoor training and competition track and field facility. The scale and quality of the venue means it can accommodate track and field athletics competitions, as well as providing this extensive year round indoor training facility.

There is no established methodology or data, to identify the demand and participation rate for track and field athletics. The participation findings for NW Region, from 2015, and applied to the BwD adult population in 2019, identifies only 99 track and field athletes. Given the Borough has an excellent facility and extensive resident athletics club, it is evident the track and field athletic participation is much higher in BwD, than the NW region average participation rate.

The overall assessment is that the Borough has a high quality indoor and outdoor athletics facility that is meeting the needs of the Borough. This is set within a much larger centre for outdoor pitch sports and athletics, again meeting Borough wide needs

The enhancement could be to extend the support facilities for events, by provision for spectators, pa systems and event management. However, the events it could stage will be limited because the track has only 6 lanes. Regardless of this the track should continue to be protected and enhanced to ensure its long-term sustainability.



**Athletics Action Plan**

Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation	Justification	Relevant Sites and Key Actions	Lead Partner	Measures of Success
<b>SO1, SO2 and SO4 (Protect and Enhance)</b>	1 Protect the Witton Park site for Athletics.  Seek investment to protect access and usage.	The Witton Park site is an important site for the delivery of athletics.  Loss of these facilities would impact on delivery of athletics across the district.	Witton Park	BwD Planning / Leisure  Blackburn Harriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Witton Park to remain an important athletics venue, protected and enhanced through investment</li> </ul>
<b>SO4 and SO10 (Enhance and Provide)</b>	2 Seek investment to the athletics infra-structure from developments.  Seek investment to improve the quality and capacity at Witton Park	Supply and demand illustrates the need for continued investment at Witton Park to protect and enhance the quality of this crucial facility.	Based on the catchment of proposed developments	BwD Leisure / BwD Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributions secured towards the athletics infra-structure at Witton Park</li> </ul>



Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation	Justification	Relevant Sites and Key Actions	Lead Partner	Measures of Success
SO1 and SO2 (Protect)	3 Running events should be protected and enhanced through continued access to routes within towns and parkland settings	Running has been one of the few sports that people have been able to engage in during lockdowns which appears to be resulting in an increase in participation from the public.  Events are an important part of the athletics offer and mix across the borough, aligned to increasing participation and delivering wider health benefits.	Borough-wide.	BwD Leisure / BwD Planning  Athletics Clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protection and enhancement of the Athletics Event programme and Parklife offer</li> </ul>

## 9 Section 9 - Assessment of need and evidence base for Squash and Suash courts

### 9.4 Introduction

#### 9.4.1 QUANTITY (Supply)

9.4.2 There are 2 squash court venues located in BwD in 2019 with a total of 5 courts. There are 2 courts located at the Blackburn Northern Sports Club and 3 courts at the East Lancashire Club, all 5 courts are solid wall courts and there are no glass backed courts.

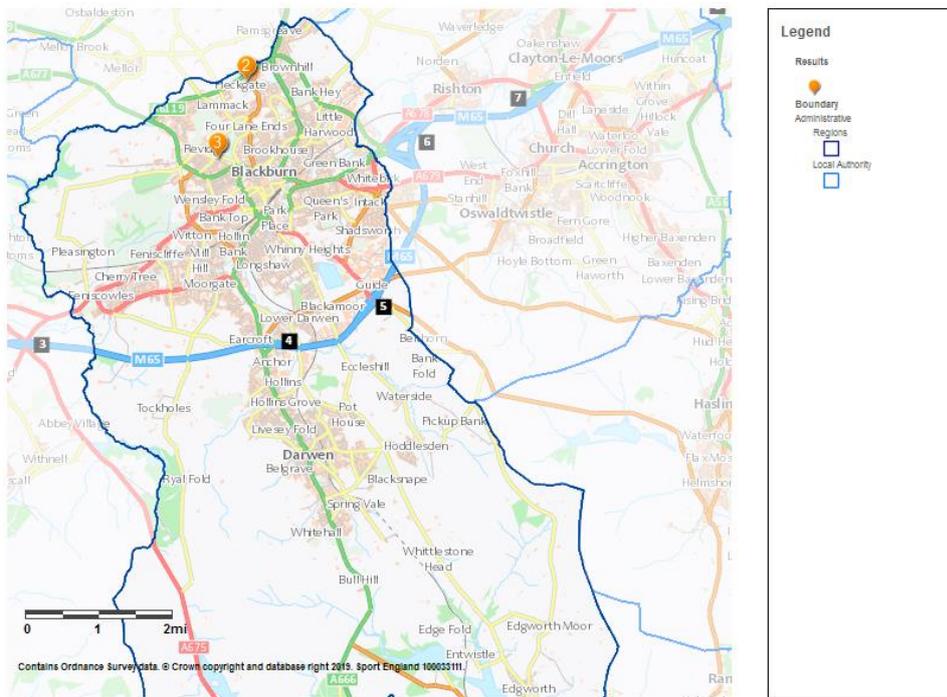
9.4.3 A description of the squash court provision is set out in Table 9.1.

**Table 9.1 - Squash court provision BwD**

Site Name	Facility Type	Facility Sub Type	Courts	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type	Year Built	Ward Name	
BLACKBURN NORTHERN	Squash Courts	Normal	2	Registered Membership use	Sports Club	Sport Club	1978	Roe Lee	
EAST LANCASHIRE CLUB	Squash Courts	Normal	3	Registered Membership use	Sports Club	Sport Club	1965	Shear Brow & Corporation Park	

9.4.4 The location of the squash court venues are shown on Map 9.1. The number in the symbol is for the number of courts at the site.

**Map 9.1 - Location of the BwD Squash Courts**



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## 9.5 QUALITY AND THE SQUASH OFFER

- 9.5.1 The Active Places data shows that the East Lancashire Club courts were provided in 1965 and 1978 at the Blackburn Northern Sports Club. So both venues opened at the height of the squash boom and they are now 54 and 41 years old respectively. All 5 courts are solid wall court, there are no glass backed courts. Both centres do have changing accommodation and are part of a multi sports club offer with indoor and outdoor facilities.
- 9.5.2 As both squash venues are part of dedicated sports clubs, the squash offer is supportive of squash development, not just pay and play. The East Lancashire club enters two teams in the North West Counties squash league and one team in the East Lancashire Summer League. Club competitions and social squash is played all year round and new members have a reduced membership fee for the first year.

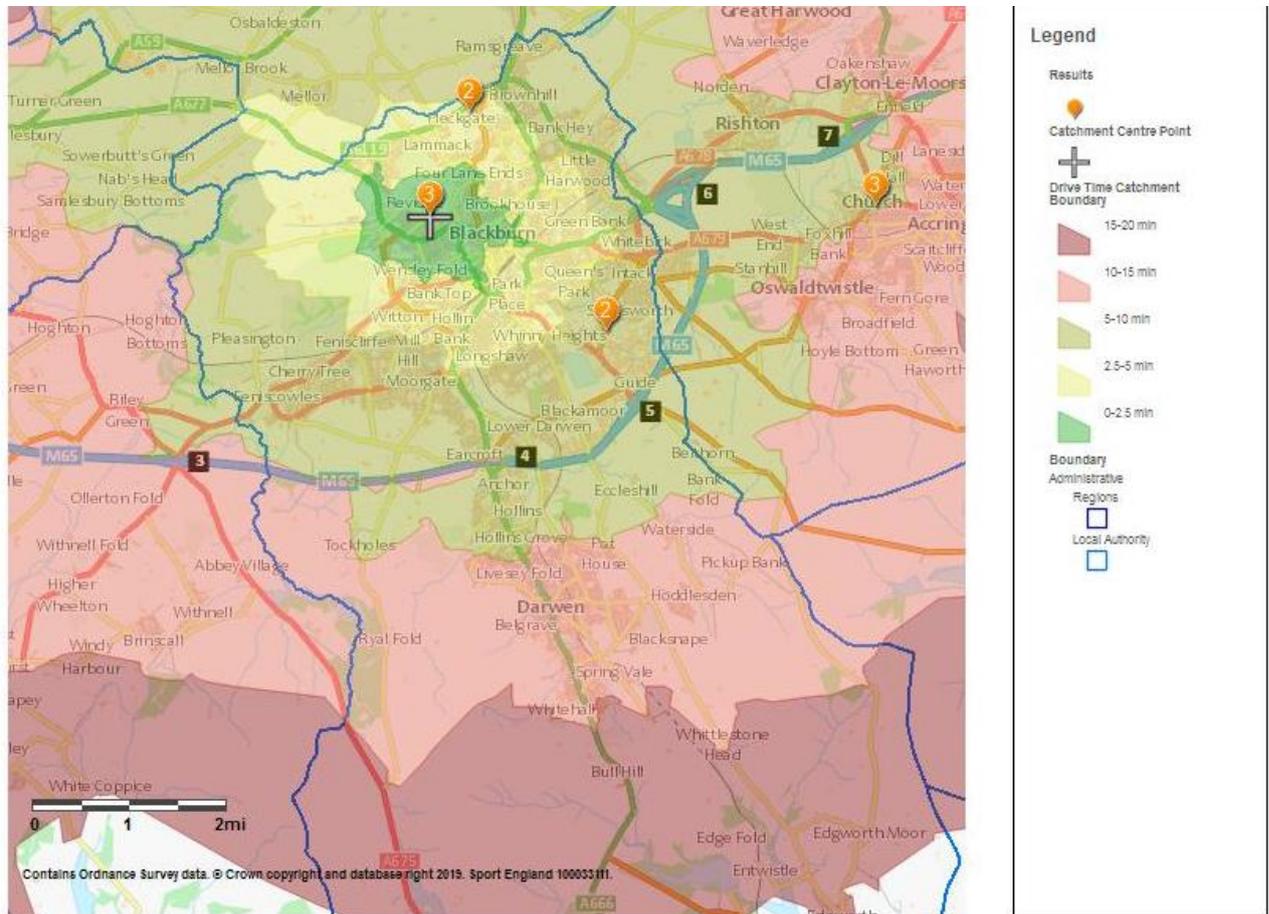


- 9.5.3 The Blackburn Northern Squash club enters four teams in the North West Counties Squash League. During the summer a team is entered in the Preston & District Intermediate League and two teams compete in the East Lancashire Summer League. A club championship is held every year and other competitions such as handicapped events and team of three are held throughout the year. A team is also entered in the annual Isle of Man Open Squash Championships.
- 9.5.4 So the squash offer at both squash club is extensive in terms of court provision and support to encourage squash participation and improvement.

### **9.6 ACCESSIBILITY**

- 9.6.1 Based on a 20 minute drive catchment for the East Lancashire club venue, most of BwD is within this catchment area, although the south of the authority is outside catchment. The drive time for residents in the south of the authority to reach the East Lancashire club venue, or, the Blackburn Northern venue (located on the northern edge of the authority), is likely to discourage pay and play participation.

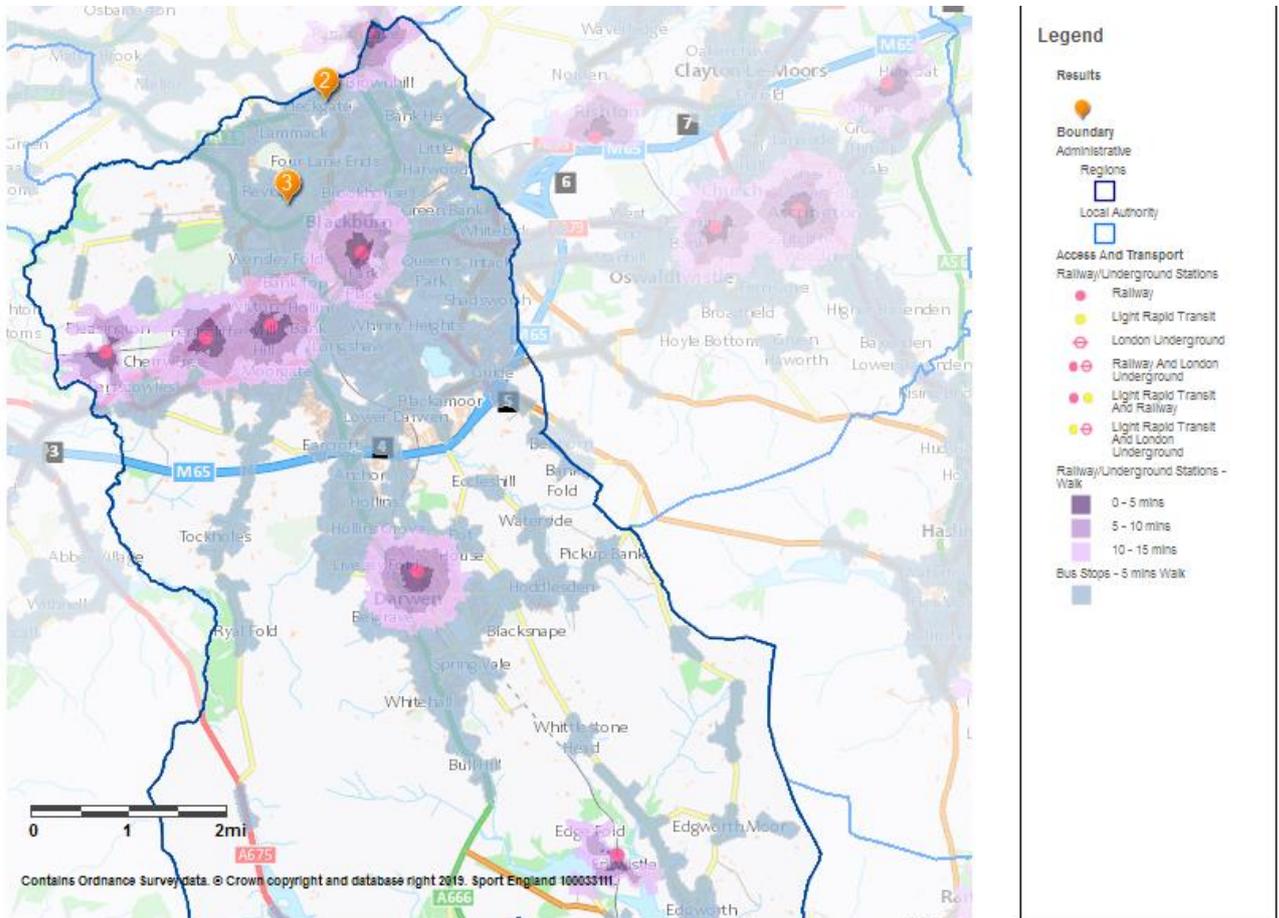
**Map 9.2 - 20 Minute Drive Time Catchment Area for the East Lancashire Club squash venue**



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- 9.6.2 It is also important to establish how accessible both venues are by public transport, given both clubs have a focus on encouraging junior squash participation.
- 9.6.3 Map 9.3 shows the location of the two venues and the area of the Borough within 5 minutes of a bus stop (grey areas) and the area of the Borough within a 15 minute walk of a railway station (purple areas). The map shows there is good Accessibility by both travel methods in the area immediately around the venues.

**Map 9.3 - Area of BwD within 5 minutes walk of a bus stop and 15 minutes walk of a railway station**



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## 9.7 AVAILABILITY

9.7.1 There are no public courts in Blackburn with Darwen however as set out the squash courts at both venues are available to the centre membership for regular participation and both venues do provide for pay and play by non-members as a way of encouraging squash participation and developing new memberships. The clubs also provide coaching for juniors, again as a way of developing squash participation and new members.

- 9.7.2 The courts are available and booked with near to full occupancy in the peak period of weekday autumn – winter evenings between 6pm and 10pm, Monday - Thursday. There is limited weekend use or daytime weekday off peak use, but these are findings consistent with other squash venues.
- 9.7.3 Since the closure of Shadsworth Leisure Centre the Council no longer operate squash and this position is unlikely to change. Both the financial and more importantly the health benefits and returns from the use of spaces for squash as opposed to other activities is under question. Covid has precipitated this assessment, with the need for increased flexibility and space to manage social distancing.

## 9.8 DEMAND AND PARTICIPATION

### Participation Trends

- 9.8.1 There are two sources for identifying participation and trends in squash; Active People (2005/06 to 2015- 16) and Active Lives (2015 – 16 to 2019/20). The benchmark measure used in Active People is 1 x 30 minutes of activity, at least once a week. The Active People survey findings for squash at an England wide level.
- 9.8.2 The England participation rate was 0.69% of adults playing at least once a week in 2007 - 08, and 0.43% participating in 2016.
- 9.8.3 The Active Lives England wide data for adult participation in squash at least twice in the past 28 days and over the period of the five Active Lives surveys is shown in the table. Given the closure of squash courts for nine months from March 2020 to the end of the Active Lives survey in November 2020 because of Covid 19, the changes in the past twelve months are not valid for comment.
- 9.8.4 The most significant finding is the England wide adult participation figure for playing at least twice in the past 28 days of 163,400 players. Also that over the five years of the Active Lives survey, adult squash participation had declined by 0.6%. Possibly not a large decrease in participation over five years but this is from a start point of 163,400 players across England in November 2015, which is a low participation total.



**Table 9.2 - Active Lives adult squash participation November 2015 – November 2020**

Activity	November 2019 - November 2020					Change from baseline		Change in the last 12 months	
	Respondents	Population total	Rate (%)	95% confidence interval		Absolute	Significance	Absolute	Significance
				Rate Lower	Rate Upper				
Squash	177,735	163,400	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	-0.6%	Significant decrease	-0.3%	Significant decrease

9.8.5 Whilst direct comparison between the Active People and Active Lives squash participation is not possible, it is evident at the England wide level there has been a steady annual decline in squash participation. Further interrogation of the Active Lives data shows that 50% of the casual (once a year or more) players did not play in the last three months and 30% did not play in the past 6 months. So, there has been a drop of in casual use, which reflects the experience in Blackburn.

9.8.6 England Squash attributes the reasons for the reduction in squash participation to many factors;

- Decreasing popularity of the sport after the very extensive rise in participation in the 1970’s and 1980’s. The sport could not retain the levels of participation, estimated at over 2m players at its height
- Increasing attractiveness of other activities, most noticeably health and fitness, which appeals to the same demographic (16 – 44) as squash
- An ageing average age of squash participation, it is estimated to now be between 52 – 55 years of age. As people grow older, they participate less frequently and for recreational play. They have not been replaced by younger participants being attracted into the sport.

9.8.7 England Squash are however also keen to stress that Sport England insight has identified squash as a sport that is in a stable position in terms of participation numbers. The most recent Active Lives survey estimated that there are 420,000 fortnightly participants in squash, which ranks it in the top 10 participation sports, higher than rugby, cricket and basketball. Furthermore, England Squash are also keen to stress that despite it being seen as a sport dominated by white middle class males aged 40-60, there has been an increase in females and 18-30 year olds accessing England Squash programmes.

9.8.8 The flagship England Squash programme Squash 101 which aims to get more participants engaged in the sport and can be delivered in the area. England Squash are offering community programmes and support locally through partner organisations, such as the Regional Forum. England Squash requires facilities for these programme to be delivered, losing any courts would have a detrimental impact on being able to provide this intervention. The Squash 101 financial analysis tool enables clubs to see what revenue can be made from running this type of course.

### **National Governing Body (NGB) Priorities**

9.8.9 As is evident from the participation analysis in recent years squash has experienced challenging times.

9.8.10 The England Squash Strategy (2017-2021) provides an overview of business aims. It states that the mission is *'to create a thriving squash community by redefining and enhancing the squash experience for players, coaches and officials and volunteers through the development of a technology based model that enables ES to sustain the sport, maximise revenue potential and develop world leading teams and individuals.'* The role of facilities is acknowledged as key and ES are committed to working with court providers to enhance their squash offer, improve the experience for players and help to grow influence and better support those who play the game.

9.8.11 This is underpinned by a Performance and Commercial Strategy.

9.8.12 In comparison to other counties, the need for investment and required impact on deliverers makes Blackburn with Darwen a key area for future delivery and squash participation according to England Squash (ES). The specific demographic within the local area also lend itself to squash participation and target markets for the sport

9.8.13 ES comment that there is a poor spread of facilities across the area, the large population means that there needs to be a large spread of courts to meet the needs of the local population. As such ES feel it is imperative sites are maintained and more sites are added in the future. There are currently only 17 sites within a 10-mile radius of Blackburn with Darwen. However, there is only 2 sites within a 5-mile radius.

9.8.14 Blackburn with Darwen with its population of approximately 147,000 and, with 2 sites and 5 courts in total, does not meet the national requirement of 1 court per 10,000 people, currently for BwD the figure stands at 1:36,000 approximately.



9.8.15 England Squash feel that more investment is immediately required into new and existing facilities to ensure the ratio figure is met. The Council has not operated squash since the closure of Shadsworth, squash was not considered in the mix of the leisure centre redevelopment, there is no public squash court offer and this is unlikely to change. Exploring this issue further is set out below.

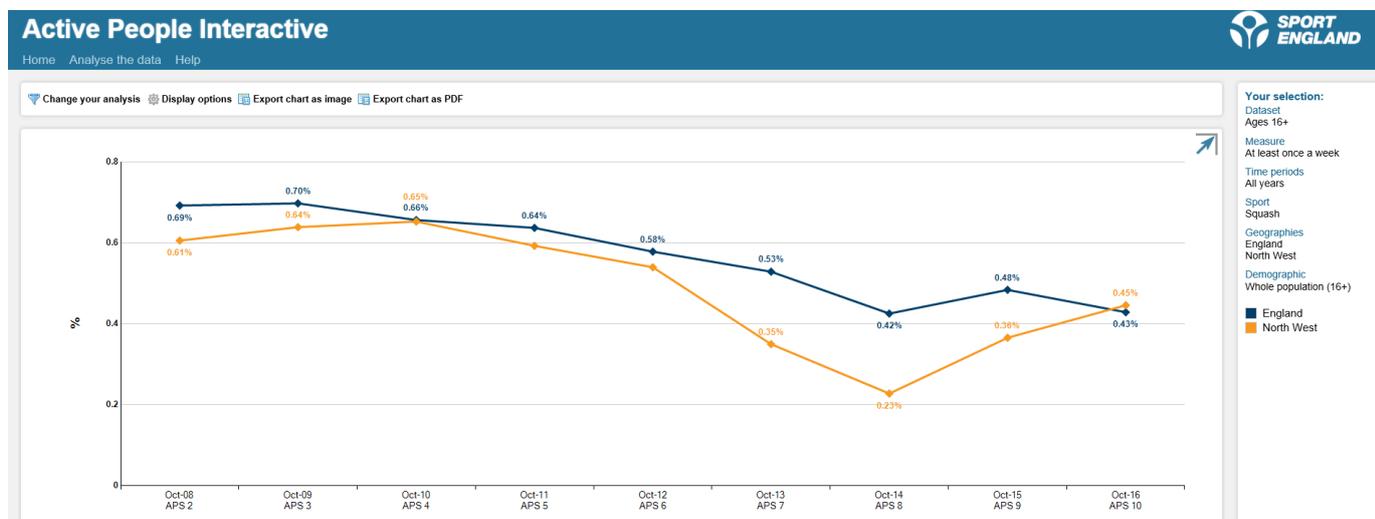
### **Active People**

9.8.16 There is no established methodology for estimating the level of total demand, satisfied and unmet demand as with other planning tools. The benchmark measure used in Active People is 1 x 30 minutes of activity, at least once a week. The Active People survey findings for squash are only available at an England wide level and North West Region level for the Active People surveys 2006 – 2016.

9.8.17 The findings are set out in Chart 9.3 and show the rate of adult participation for England wide (blue line) and for North West Region (orange line). The England participation rate declined from 2006 to 2013 and then increased slightly from 2014 – 2016, and was 0.43% of adults playing squash at least once a week in 2016

9.8.18 The rate of adult squash participation in North West Region was 0.61% of adults playing at least once a week in 2006 and 0.45% of adults playing in 2016.

**Chart 9.3 - Participation in squash England wide and North West Region 2006 – 2016**



- 9.8.19 Applying the North West Region 2016 participation figure of 0.45% of adults playing at least once a week, to the 2019 BwD adult population (15 - 54) of 68,035 people, would generate 306 squash players.
- 9.8.20 This estimate of participation would appear to be in line with the capacity of the 5 courts in BwD, at 60 players/visits per court.
- 9.8.21 Working on a capacity of one court for 2 players for a 45 minute session, and 5 sessions between 6pm – 10pm for 5 weekday evenings, would provide a per court capacity of 50 player visits.
- 9.8.22 The caveats to this assessment are that whilst the Active People findings do provide guidance on participation in squash, it is accepted that this does not equate exactly with demand, as the latter may be affected by current provision. However, the regularity of the surveys from 2006 – to 2016 and with consistent survey questions and data, does mean there is rigour in the data on participation.
- 9.8.23 So, in terms of the ES ratio, Blackburn provision is well out of kilter, in terms of supply and demand balance the picture is less clear. It is highly unlikely that there will be any future public investment in squash given the cost benefit the Council are currently undertaking to all investment in terms of both health and financial returns. Other developmnets should however be supported and existing provision protected and invested in.

## Squash and Squash Courts Key Issues

### QUANTITY

There are 2 squash court venues located in BwD in 2019 with a total of 5 courts. There are 2 courts located at the Blackburn Northern Sports Club and 3 courts at the East Lancashire Club, all 5 courts are solid wall courts and there are no glass backed courts.

The Active Places data shows that the East Lancashire Club courts were provided in 1965 and 1978 at the Blackburn Northern Sports Club. So both centres opened at the height of the squash boom, and they are now 54 and 41 years old respectively. The squash provision is part of a multi sports club offer, with other indoor and outdoor sports facilities.

### QUALITY AND THE SQUASH OFFER

As both squash venues are part of dedicated sports clubs, the squash offer is supportive of squash development, not just pay and play. The East Lancashire club enters two teams in the North West Counties squash league and one team in the East Lancashire Summer League. Club competitions and social squash is played all year round and new members have a reduced membership fee for the first year.

The Blackburn Northern Squash club enters four teams in the North West Counties Squash League. In the summer a team is entered in the Preston & District Intermediate League and two teams compete in the East Lancashire Summer League. A club championship is held every year and other competitions such as handicapped events and team of three are held throughout the year. A team is also entered in the annual Isle of Man Open Squash Championships.

### ACCESSIBILITY

Based on a 20 minute drive catchment for the East Lancashire club venue, most of BwD is within this catchment area, although the south of the authority is outside catchment. The drive time for residents in the south of the authority to reach the East Lancashire club venue, or, the Blackburn Northern venue (located on the northern edge of the authority), is likely to discourage pay and play participation.

It is also important to establish how accessible both venues are by public transport, given both clubs have a focus on encouraging junior squash participation.

Map xx shows the location of the two venues and the area of the Borough within 5 minutes of a bus stop and the area of the Borough within a 15 minute walk of a railway station. The map shows there is good Accessibility by both travel methods in the area immediately around the venues.

### AVAILABILITY

The squash courts at both venues are available to the centre membership for regular participation. Both venues do provide for pay and play by non-members as a way of encouraging squash

participation and developing new memberships. The clubs also provide coaching for juniors, again as a way of developing squash participation and new members.

The courts are available and booked with near to full occupancy in the peak period of weekday autumn – winter evenings between 6pm and 10pm, Monday -Thursday. There is limited weekend use or day time weekday off peak use, but these are findings consistent with other squash venues.

### **DEMAND and PARTICIPATION**

There is no established methodology for estimating the level of total demand, satisfied and unmet demand as with other planning tools. The benchmark measure used in Active People is 1 x 30 minutes of activity, at least once a week. The Active People survey findings for squash are only available at an England wide level and East Region level for the ten Active People surveys 2006 – 2016.

The Active People survey findings for squash are only available at an England wide level and North West Region level for the Active People surveys 2006 – 2016.

The England wide participation rate declined from 2006 to 2013 and then increased slightly from 2014 – 2016, with 0.43% of adults playing squash at least once a week in 2016

The rate of adult squash participation in North West Region was 0.61% of adults playing at least once a week in 2006 and 0.45% of adults playing in 2016.

Applying the lower rate of participation on the basis it is most of the authority, to the BwD adult population in 2019 of 86,658 aged 15 - 59 generates 866 squash players, playing at least once a month. This compares with the 292 squash players identified by the Active People data, playing at least once a week.

### **ENGLAND SQUASH**

England Squash developed a more detailed analysis of the Active People data to look at explanations for the decline in squash participation nationally.

Findings identified showed that organised squash represents about 27% of all participation, and that coaching and tuition have increased over time. The remainder of participation is in casual pay and play.

Other key findings are that that (1) squash participation for the 16-25 age group, has halved in the last 10 years from 66,000 to 33,500 players at the England wide level. Data for the years 2011/12 to 2014/ 15, shows 428,400 people playing squash at least once a month in 2011/12 and 325,000 playing in 2014 /15.

(2) England Squash attributes the reasons for the reduction in squash participation to many factors; decreasing popularity of the sport after the very extensive rise in participation in the 1970's and 1980's. The sport could not retain the levels of participation, estimated at over 2m players at its height; (3) Increasing attractiveness of other activities, most noticeably health and fitness, which appeals to the same demographic (16 – 44) as squash;

(4) An ageing average age of squash participation, it is currently estimated to be between 52 – 55



years of age. As people grew older they participate less frequently and for recreational play. They have not been replaced by younger participants being attracted into the sport.

## **OVERALL SUMMARY**

BwD has 2 squash venues and what is most significant, is that both venues are part of multi sports clubs. This gives more critical mass and sports/cost benefit, than if the squash venues are stand-alone squash clubs. Also being part of a multi sports club means there is focus on coaching, tuition and competition play.

The two clubs are Blackburn Northern Sports Club (2 courts) (opened in 1978) and the East Lancashire Sports Club (3 courts) (opened in 1965). Very significant, is that both centres opened during the squash boom and have remained open for 41 and 54 years respectively, testament to continuing participation in squash over this time, despite decreasing squash participation nationally and regionally.

Both clubs are located in the north of the Borough and the 20 minute drive time catchment area does not extend to the very south of the borough. It is likely that the travel time to the venues from the south of the Borough, does discourage pay and play/casual participation. There are no squash venues located in either Bury or Bolton.

The squash courts at both venues are available to the centre membership and both venues do provide for pay and play by non-members, as a way of encouraging squash participation and developing new memberships. The clubs also provide coaching for juniors, again as a way of developing squash participation and new members.

The courts are available and booked with near to full occupancy in the peak period of weekday autumn – winter evenings between 6pm and 10pm, Monday - Thursday. There is limited weekend use or day time weekday off peak use, but these are findings consistent with other squash venues. Overall BwD has 2 squash club venues that are very well established over a very long period of time and they provide for members to play pay and play and competitive play.

There is not an identified demand to increase the number of courts at either venue, or provide another venue. The challenge is to maintain squash participation and attract a younger membership. As BwD has two squash venues and which are integral parts of multi sports clubs.

In terms of the ES ratio, Blackburn provision is well out of kilter, in terms of supply and demand balance the picture is less clear. It is highly unlikely that there will be any future public investment in squash given the cost benefit the Council are currently undertaking to all investment in terms of both health and financial returns. Other developments should however be supported and existing provision protected and invested in.



**Squash Action Plan**

Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation		Justification	Relevant Sites and Key Actions	Lead Partner	Measures of Success
SO1, SO2 and SO4 (Protect and Enhance)	1	Protect all squash sites across the borough.  Seek investment to protect access and usage.  Support partners with proposals to provide new squash provision across the borough.	To maintain the ratios of provision all courts should be protected.  Loss of these facilities would impact on delivery of squash across the district.  Ensure pay and play access is protected.	All sites	BwD Planning / Leisure  Blackburn Northern  East Lancashire Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Courts numbers to be maintained, protected and enhanced through investment.</li> <li>Pay and play access to continue.</li> </ul>

## **10 Section 10 - Assessment of need and evidence base for Gymnastics and Trampoline**

### **10.4 Introduction**

10.4.1 There are different forms of gymnastics and it is recognised that most gymnastic activities take place in non-dedicated gymnastics facilities.

10.4.2 The sport is a complex combination that involves physical strength, flexibility, power, agility, coordination, grace, balance and control. Out of all the different disciplines, competitive artistic gymnastics is the most well-known, but the other forms of gymnastics, including rhythmic gymnastics aerobic gymnastics and trampoline, the main types of gymnastics are set out.

10.4.3 Artistic gymnastics - the most popular and widely-practiced form, artistic gymnastics is divided into women's and men's gymnastics. Women compete on four events: vault, uneven bars, balance beam and floor exercise, while men compete on six events: floor exercise, pommel horse, still rings, vault, parallel bars, and high bar. The sport consists mainly of the use of various gymnastic apparatus, as well as the use of the floor for different exercises.

10.4.4 Rhythmic gymnastics - rhythmic gymnastics is the performance of various gymnastics moves and dance exercises to music, with or without various gymnastic apparatus. Only women compete in the sport, which combines elements of ballet and gymnastics in the performance of five separate routines with the use of one of the five apparatuses: ball, ribbon, hoop, clubs and rope. There are also group routines consisting of two to six gymnasts, performing with a maximum of two apparatuses of their choice.

Aerobic gymnastics - aerobic gymnastics, also known as sport aerobics, involves the performance of routines by individuals, pairs, trios, or groups of up to six people. These routines typically emphasise strength, flexibility and aerobic fitness, rather than acrobatic or balance skills. Routines typically lasting 60 to 90 seconds are performed on floors, without the use of other apparatus.

10.4.5 Ideal for young people aged 11+ gymnasts, but suitable for all ages is introductory aerobics incorporating flexibility, strength and stamina, and gives gymnasts the opportunity to learn new skills and perform alongside their friends.

## 10.5 SUPPLY OF GYMNASTICS FACILITIES

10.5.1 For context, the British Gymnastics clubs facility audit in 2014 indicated, that 31% of all clubs operated out of their own dedicated facilities, with 55% of these based in converted industrial units. This has risen from 17% in 2010 (33% of these in industrial units) and British Gymnastics expects the trend to continue and accelerate across 2017-21.

10.5.2 Currently approximately a third of clubs operate from their own facility, a third in non-dedicated school venues and a third from non-dedicated leisure centres

10.5.3 Again for context the type of gymnastics facilities are;

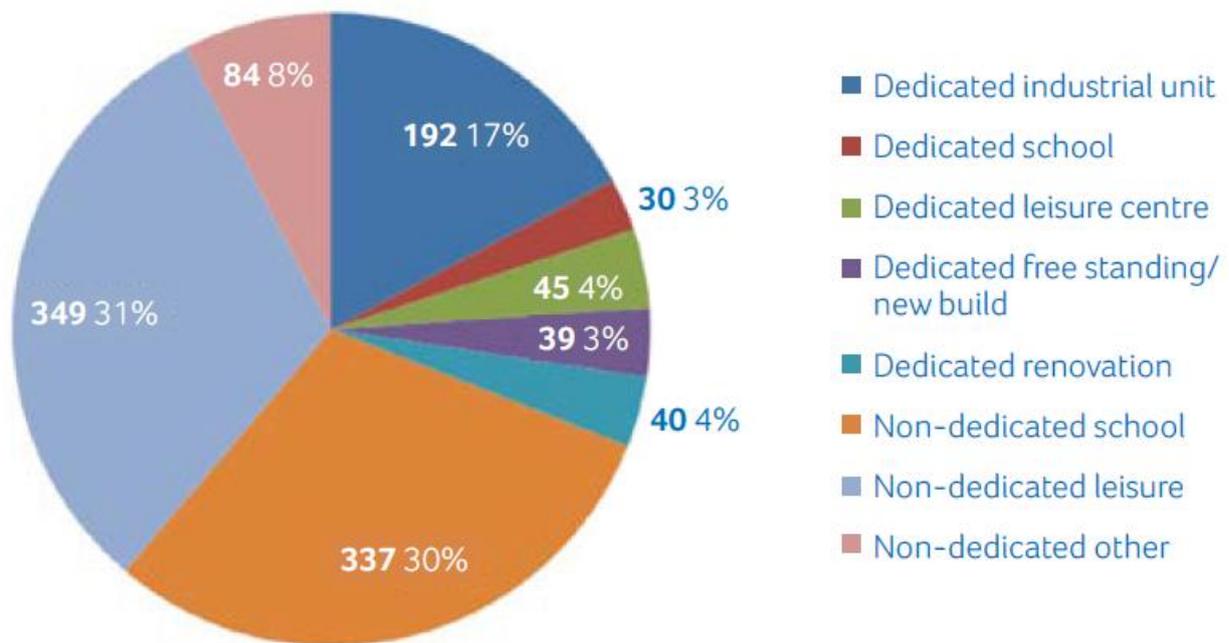
- **Dedicated facility (industrial unit conversion)** suitable as a club based venue for introduction and local competition
- **Multi-venue, dedicated facilities** large club based organisations looking to further expand participation and performance opportunities.
- **Dedicated facility as part of a multi-sport venue (leisure centre)** sometimes run by clubs but most likely to be leisure providers or local authority based projects.
- **New build dedicated facility** financially the most challenging to deliver but can include opportunities for both participation and performance programmes along with competitions.

British Gymnastics estimates that the average annual turnover for a dedicated gymnastics facility is around £250,000.

- **Non-dedicated space as part of leisure centre or school** ideal for developing club delivery and mass participation activities. Can also be suitable for performance programmes in some disciplines.
- **Satellite venues** opportunity for clubs to scale up their programmes and increase activity options.
- **Non-dedicated spaces in leisure centre operated by local authority or leisure providers and** where the space is shared with other sports ideal for introductory level, mass participation gymnastics programmes.

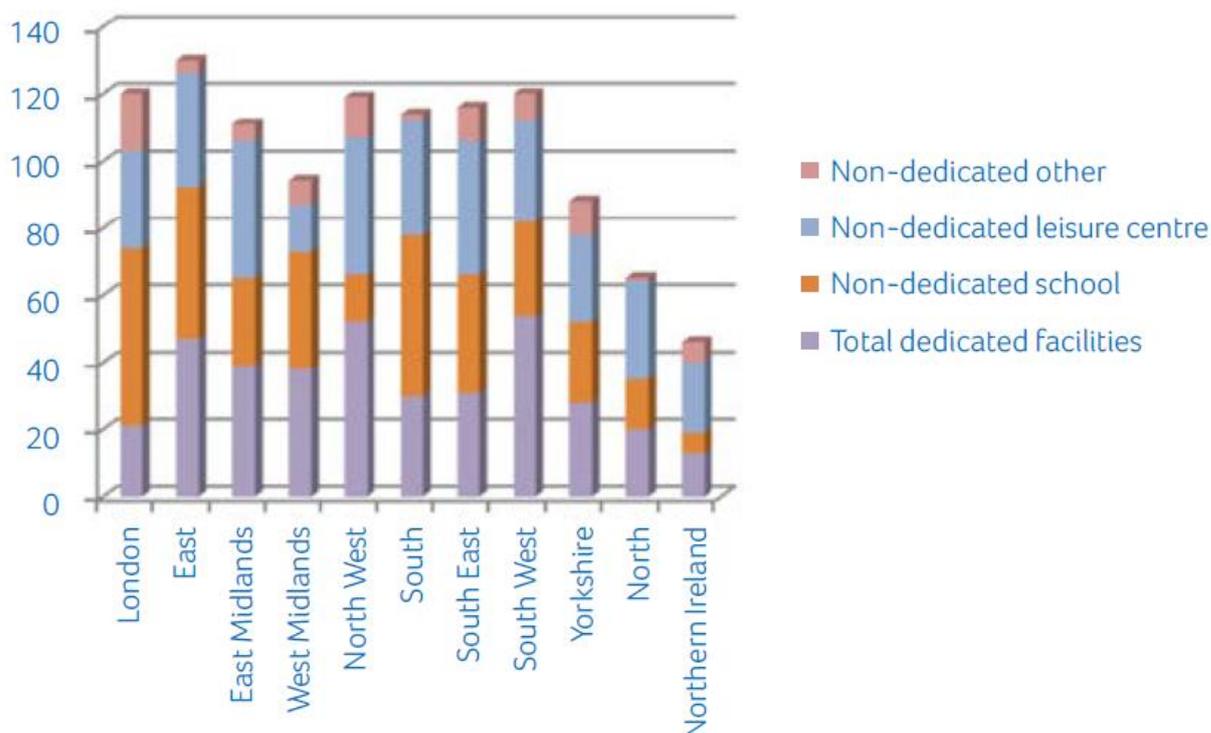
10.5.4 The breakdown of the different types of gymnastics centres in England from British Gymnastics audit in 2014 is shown in chart 10.1.

**Chart 10.1 - Gymnastic club facility types number and percentage**



10.5.5 The geographical distribution of gymnastics centres from the British Gymnastics 2014 audit is shown in chart 10.2.

**Chart 10.2 - Geographical distribution of gymnastic centres**  
Gymnastics venue type by region



## 10.6 QUANTITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

10.6.1 There are four gymnastics centres/clubs located in BwD and a dedicated trampoline centre;

- **Blackburn with Darwen Acrobatic Gymnastics Club** located at Duttons Way Industrial Park Shadsworth, the centre provides gymnastics coaching to children of all ages and abilities. It focuses on aerobic and rhythmic gymnastics classes, principally for children and young people from 3 years old to adulthood. The club has 200 members and operates from a dedicated facility.
- **Tumble Bee'z Gymnastics Club located at Darwen Leisure Centre.** The club are a British Gymnastics Gym Mark registered club who provide Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced recreational gymnastics classes, plus providing training in floor and apparatus gymnastic disciplines. The club has 79 members.
- **Ribble Valley Gymnastics Academy** located at Ribble Business Park, Blackburn. The academy provides for artistic gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics and gymfit. The centre

provides for children and young people from 3 years old to adulthood. The club has 219 members and operates from a dedicated facility.

- **Flip Out Blackburn** located at the Soccordome, Haslingden Road, Blackburn, a commercial trampoline centre, opened in 2018 and which has over 30 trampolines of different sizes as well as soft play, and small scale basketball/hoop courts. The focus is on fun and exercise as individual or as group activity.
- **Quantum Leap Gymnastics** has 174 members and operates from a school facility.

There is therefore a good club infra-structure operating from a range of different provision across BwD.

### 10.7 Demand and participation

10.7.1 Given the majority of participants in gymnastics and trampoline are aged 3 – 15, the most valid source of data on participation is the Active Lives Young People survey findings. There are not specific findings at the BwD level for gymnastics and trampoline but the findings on the levels of activity by BwD is indicative of demand for gymnastics and trampoline.

#### **Active Lives and Young People**

10.7.2 To recap, Sport England's remit has been extended to increase participation and physical activity with children and young people aged five and upwards.

10.7.3 Each term, a number of schools are randomly selected to take part in the survey, with the aim of getting 100,000 children and young people in Years 1 to 11 across England to complete it each academic year. The survey covers measures of children's activity levels, physical literacy, swimming proficiency, wellbeing, self-efficacy and levels of social trust.

10.7.4 The aim of the Active Lives Young People's survey is to shape and influence local decision-making, as well as inform government policy on the Primary PE and Sports Premium, and other cross-departmental programmes.

### 10.8 Active Lives Young People and BwD

10.8.1 For overall context before looking at the Active Lives findings, the demographic projections for BwD, shows the 0 – 14 age band is projected to decrease from 32,658 people in 2019 to 31,116, a 4.7% decrease between 2019 – 2037.

10.8.2 The Active Lives Young People key findings for BwD are;

- In the active every day (60+ minutes of activity) BwD has 11.2% of children in this category. The Lancashire average is 18.6% of children active every day and the highest rate is in Chorley with 30.1% of children active every day, data is not available for Ribble Valley or Rossendale.
- In the active across the week (average of 60 minutes or more of activity a day but not every day), BwD has 19.5% children in this category. The local authority with the highest percentage of children in the active category is in Bury with 30.2% and the Lancashire average is 24.6% of children in the active category.
- In the fairly active category (average of 30 – 59 minutes activity a day) BwD has 24.1% of children in this category. The Lancashire average is just above the BwD finding, at 24.5% of children being fairly active.
- In the less active category (less than an average of 30 minutes activity a day) BwD has 45.2% of children in this category. The Lancashire average is 32.3% of children in the less active category.

10.8.3 In summary, the Active Lives Young People findings for BwD show that, BwD in the three active categories has a low percentage of children doing activity. Across the three categories combined just over five out of ten children are in these categories. It then follows that in the less active category BwD has a high number of children with over four out of ten children in this category.

10.8.4 The comparable findings for Lancashire County are, nearly seven out of ten children in the three active categories and just over three out of ten children in the less active category.

10.8.5 The challenge in BwD is to get more of the least active children (less than an average of 30 minutes activity a day) which is 45.2% of children to be more active.

10.8.6 Given the popularity of gymnastics with young people and the Borough already has 4 centres, plus a commercial trampoline centre, then gymnastics/trampoline are activities which could be developed to increase the rate of activity by young people and outside of the school physical activity curriculum.



10.8.7 A key finding from the Active Lives Young People survey was that - there's not a lot of difference in the amount of sport and physical activity that takes place inside school, compared to activity levels outside of school, so both have a critical role to play. With 22% of children active for at least 30 minutes per day outside of school, while 28% of children do so in school.

### **10.9 Taking Part Survey Gymnastics and Trampoline**

10.9.1 Preceding Active Lives the national source of data on participation in sports and physical activity was the Taking Part survey. It is a survey of children aged 5 to 15 years old in England. It has run since 2005 and is the main evidence source for DCMS and its sectors. The survey's main objectives are to provide a central, reliable evidence source that can be used to analyse cultural and sporting engagement, providing a clear picture of why people do or do not engage.

10.9.2 Taking Part is an England wide survey and data is only available at England level. The survey for young people is split between 5 – 10 year olds and 11 – 15 year olds. It measures participation at least once in the past four weeks and therefore differs from the Active People benchmark measure of once a week participation.

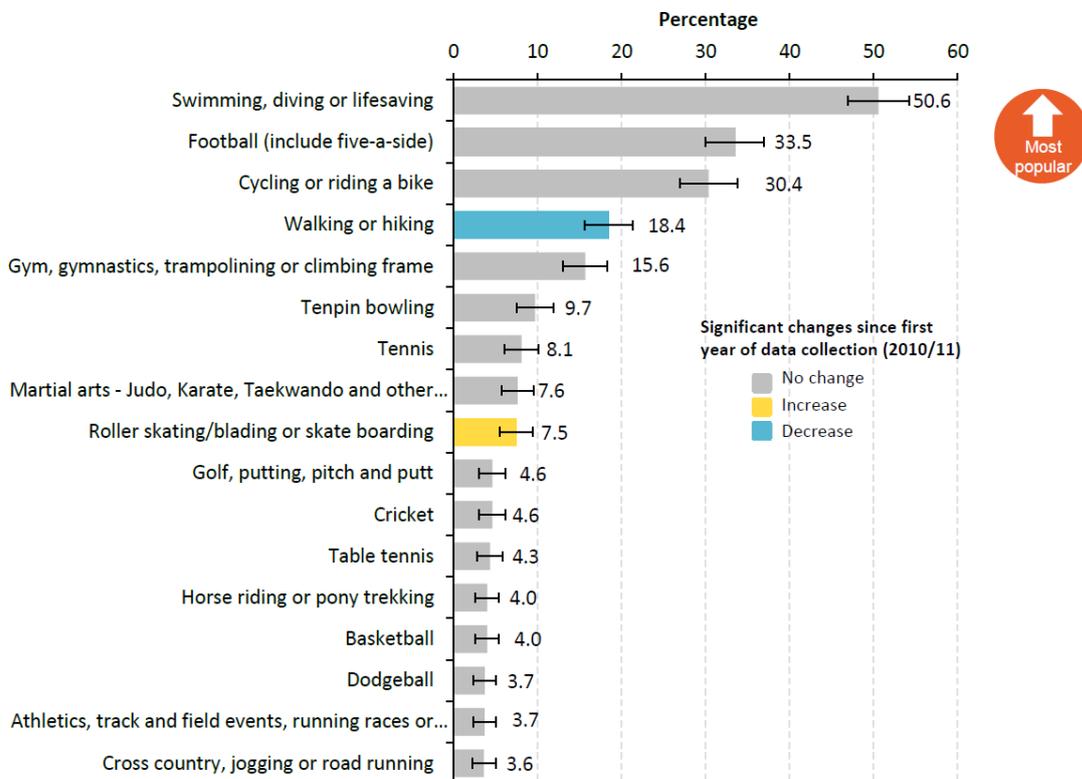
10.9.3 It is a reliable source for understanding young people's participation by these two age bands and by gender.

10.9.4 The findings for participation are set out in table 10.1 to 10.4 below.

10.9.5 The first table sets out participation in different sports by children aged 5 – 10. It shows that gym, gymnastics and trampoline is the fifth most popular sports activity and the second most popular indoor activity for this age group. Some 15.6% of 5 – 10 year olds participated at least once a month and this shows no change since 2010 -11.

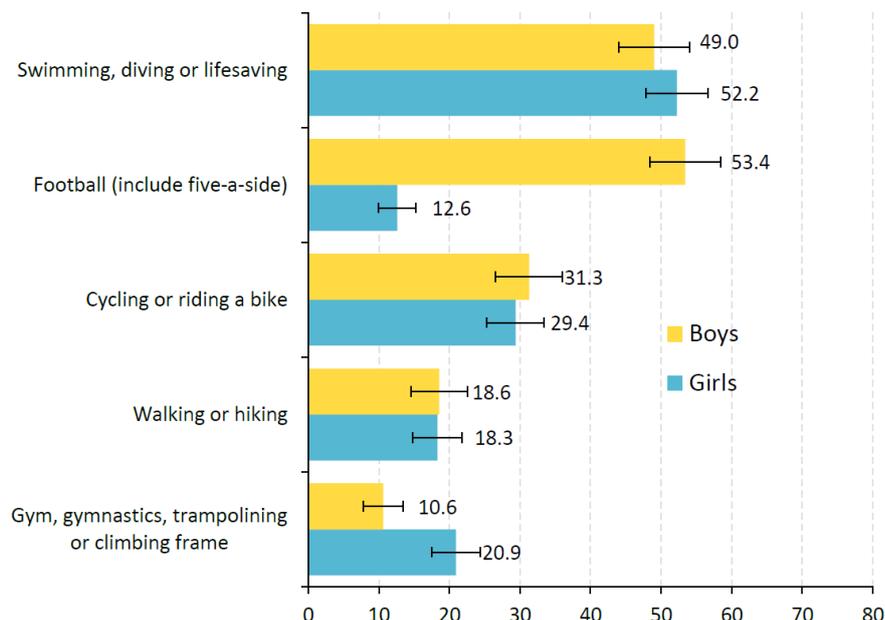
10.9.6 A high level of participation however and based on the children in the 5 – 9 age group (not available for 5 – 10) in 2019 in BwD of 5,721 this would generate a participation rate of 892 young people aged between 5 – 9 participating in gymnastics and trampoline at least once a month.

**Table 10.1 - Taking Part Survey: Participation in individual sports, ages 5-10 years**



10.9.7 In terms of participation by gender some 10.6% of boys participated at least once a month and 20.9% of girls. So gymnastics and trampoline is almost twice as popular/participation rate for girls than boys.

**Table 10.2 - Taking Part Survey Top 5 sports participated in by 5-10 year olds by gender**

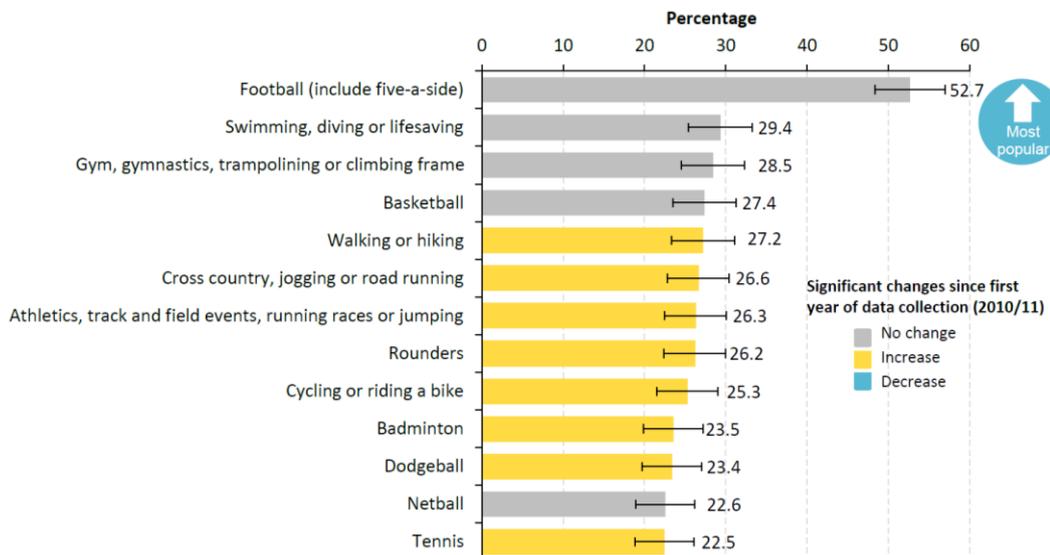




10.9.8 In terms of the 11- 15 age group gym gymnastics and trampoline is the third most popular activity and the second most popular indoor activity. Some 28.5% of this age band participated at least once a month, possibly a higher percentage doing gym than in the 5 – 10 year olds and this may account for the higher rate of participation.

10.9.9 There are 5,476 people aged 10 – 14 (nearest comparable age range) in BwD in 2019 and so this would create a participation rate of 1,560 people in this age band doing gymnastics and trampoline (and gym) at least once a month.

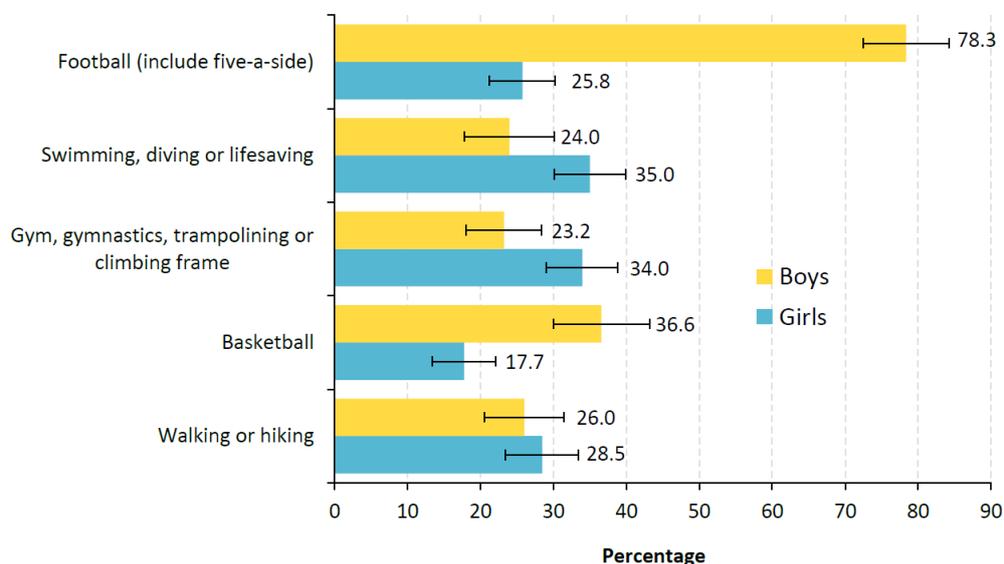
**Table 10.3 - Taking Part Survey Participation in individual sports, ages 11-15 years**



10.9.10 In terms of the gender split, some 23% of boys were participants and 34% were girls. So a closer participation rate by gender for this age group than for the 5 – 10 year olds.



**Table 10.4 - Taking Part Survey Top five sports participated in by 11-15 year olds in the last 4 weeks by gender**

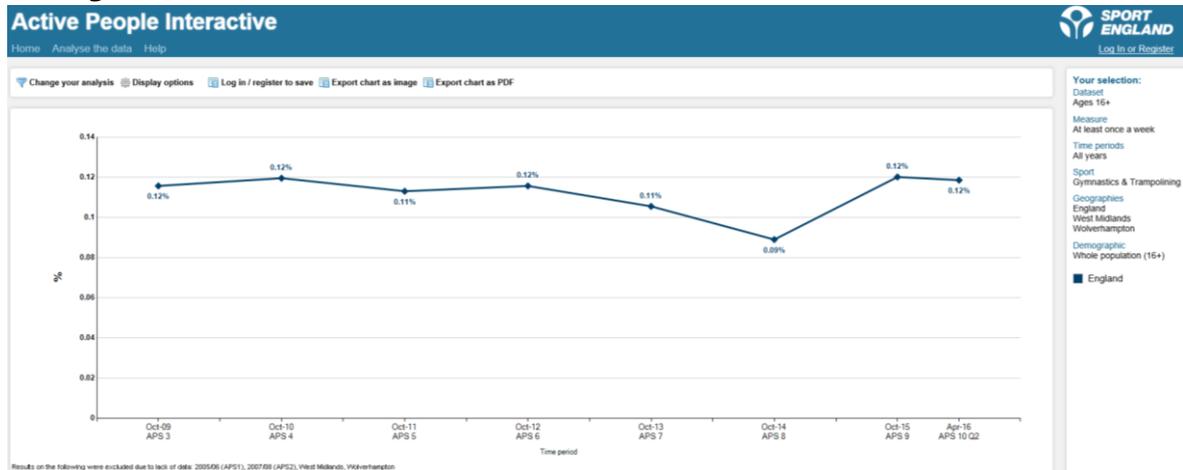


### 10.10 Active People Gymnastics and Trampoline

- 10.10.1 In terms of adults’ participation in gymnastics and trampoline, the source of data on participation is the Active People survey. It measures participation from 16 upwards and for 14 – 16 since 2014.
- 10.10.2 Active People data is only available at the England wide level and for full years for 2009 – 2015. In both years 0.12% of adult participated at least once a week in gymnastics and trampoline, it dipped to 0.09% participating in 2014 as shown in Table 10.5 below.
- 10.10.3 So the England wide rate of adult participation has remained level over these years there is no breakdown of data or information below the England wide level.



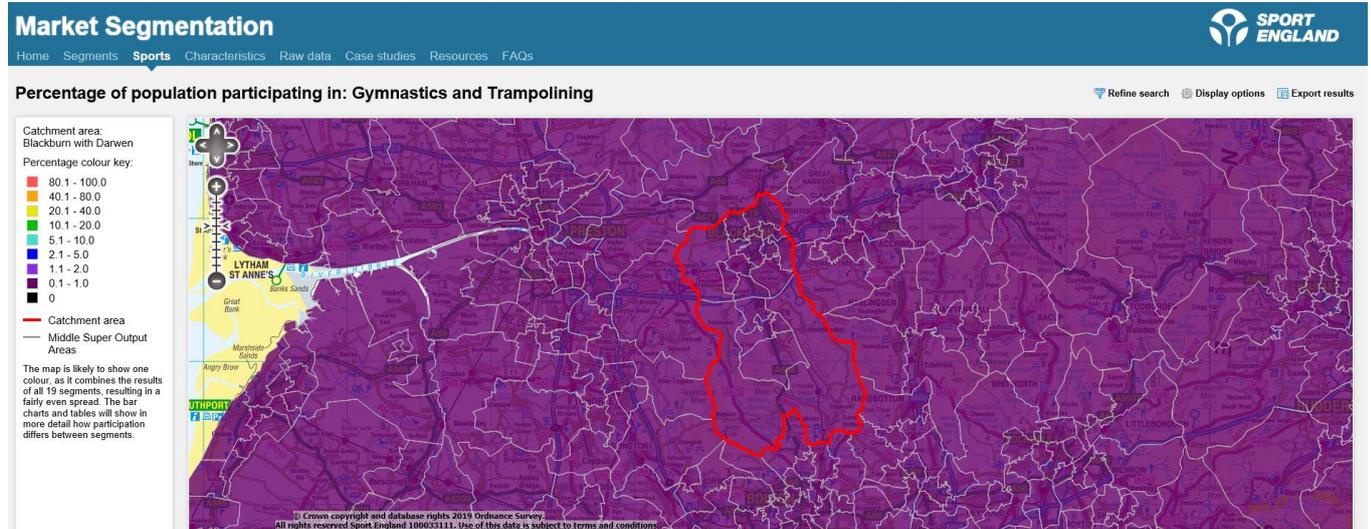
**Table 10.5 - Once a week participation in gymnastics and trampoline 2009 – 15 for England**



**Active People Market segmentation – demand and latent demand for gymnastics and trampoline**

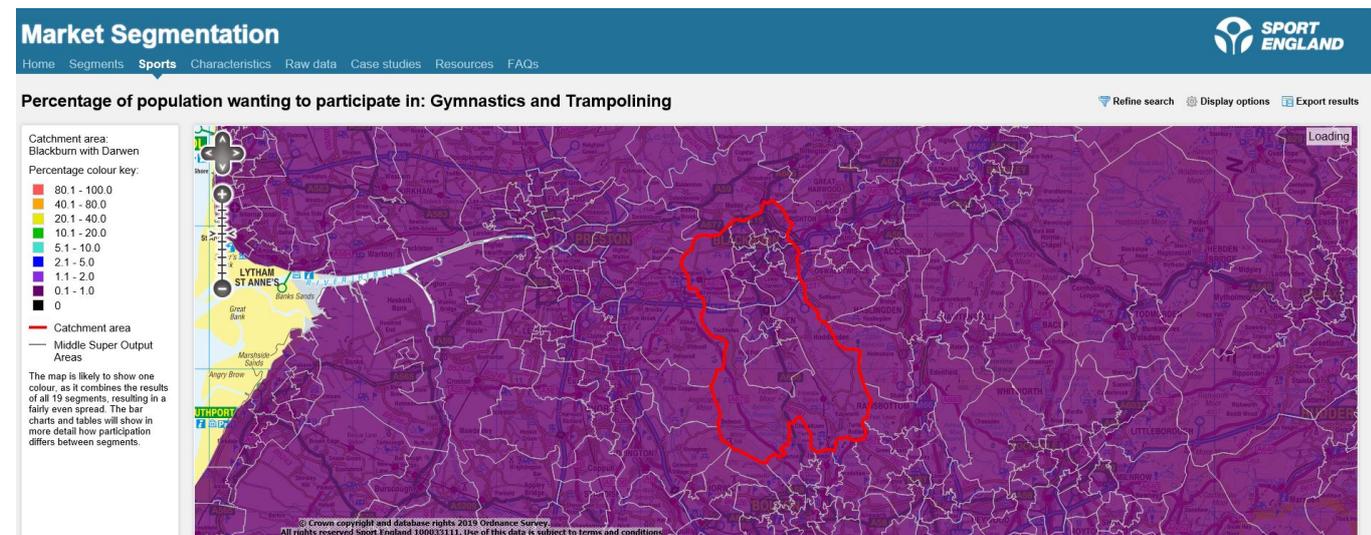
- 10.10.4 The Active People market segmentation data, can establish a profile of current and latent levels of demand for gymnastics and trampoline. This is for the BwD population but the caveats are (1) it is adult’s participation and latent demand and (2) the data is from 2011 – 2012. However, it does provide a useful guide to participation and latent demand although the data is now quite dated.
- 10.10.5 Map 10.1 shows the percentage of the adult population who participated in gymnastics and trampoline in BwD in 2012. The rate of participation is the same across the Borough at between 0.1%. – 1% of adults
- 10.10.6 Applying the higher rate of participation to the BwD adult population in 2019 aged 15 - 29 of 15,013 generates 150 gymnasts.

**Map 10.1 - BwD adult participation in gymnastics and trampoline 2011 - 12**



10.10.7 Market segmentation also measures latent demand and how many people, would like to participate in gymnastics and trampoline. These findings are set out in Map 10.2 and the finding is the same for the adults WHO DO participate at between 0.1% – 1% of the BwD population. It is likely they would like to participate, is at the lower end of the percentage range, so taking a rate of 0.5% of adults and based on the BwD adult population of 15,013, creates a latent demand of 75 participants. Again, the caveat to this finding is that it is at least once a month participation.

**Map 10.2 - BwD adult population who would like to participate in gymnastics and trampoline 2011 – 12**





## **National Governing Body (NGB) Priorities**

- 10.10.8 Participation in gymnastics is increasing rapidly. British Gymnastics (BG) membership reached 390,500 in 2017 has been increasing at about 12% per year over 2013-17. The emphasis for 2017 – 2021 will be using gymnastics as a foundation sport for 5 to 11-year olds.
- 10.10.9 As set out, the majority of participants in gymnastics are aged 3 – 15, which means the sport has a particular role to play in encouraging participation amongst young-people, especially girls. This is further highlighted in the Active Lives Young People survey findings and the Taking Part survey, which illustrate high levels of participation in gymnastics amongst young-people.
- 10.10.10 This strong participation base is reflected in the demand for more gymnastics opportunities, with the majority of club's nationally report waiting lists. The total number of people estimated to be on waiting lists for gymnastics is 1 million (Freshminds Latent Demand Research, 2017). Furthermore, this research also shows that a further 1.9 million would like to participate but are not currently, not on a waiting list. As set out these national trends are reflected in BwD.
- 10.10.11 British Gymnastics priorities for the period 2017 – 2021 are outlined in the Strategic Framework and are;
- Diversify sources of revenue to develop and grow the provision of gymnastics
  - Build the capacity and grow the demand in gymnastics.
- 10.10.12 British Gymnastics Facility Development Priorities (for the period 2017 - 2021) outlined are;



- Support increased capacity within gymnastics through clubs, leisure providers and other delivery providers
- Guide funding investment through the United Kingdom from British Gymnastics, Home Country Sports Councils, Local Authorities and other potential funders
- Maintain and improve the quality of facilities and equipment within existing delivery partners
- Develop insight, understanding and direction of how Facility Developments can contribute towards other BG Strategic Priorities
- Raise the profile and increase the appeal of gymnastics.

10.10.13 As set out these national trends are reflected in BwD, with four good clubs with waiting lists, two of which are already operating from dedicated facilities.

10.10.14 A key part of BG's strategy to increase participation is to support clubs moving into their own dedicated facility, offering more time and space for classes. There is a definite trend for gymnastics clubs to move into their own dedicated facilities. Approximately 30 clubs moved into their own spaces last year and BG expects this trend to continue and an increased amount of clubs move their activities to dedicated spaces/facilities.

10.10.15 BwD is already in a good position with two clubs enjoying access to dedicated provision. The existing gymnastics centres are meeting demand, however waiting lists remain and therefore any proposals for enhancement or expansion of these centres, should be supported. Indeed, BG comment that it is key to safeguard the dedicated sites across BwD and to also seek further development should the clubs wish to access more space.

10.10.16 A key part of BG's strategy to increase participation is to support clubs, leisure providers and other partners. BG offer a vast range of products and programmes and expert assistance to support local delivery; gymnastic activities supported by British Gymnastics are proving successful in the growth of membership and retention of members across the country.

## Gymnastics and Trampoline Key Issues

### GYMNASTICS DEFINITION

There are three types of gymnastics

**Artistic gymnastics** - the most popular and widely-practiced form, artistic gymnastics is divided into women's and men's gymnastics. Women compete on four events: vault, uneven bars, balance beam and floor exercise, while men compete on six events: floor exercise, pommel horse, still rings, vault, parallel bars, and high bar. The sport consists mainly of the use of various gymnastic apparatus, as well as the use of the floor for different exercises.

**Rhythmic gymnastics** - rhythmic gymnastics is the performance of various gymnastics moves and dance exercises to music, with or without various gymnastic apparatus. Only women compete in the sport, which combines elements of ballet and gymnastics in the performance of five separate routines with the use of one of the five apparatuses: ball, ribbon, hoop, clubs and rope. There are also group routines consisting of two to six gymnasts, performing with a maximum of two apparatuses of their choice.

**Aerobic gymnastics** - aerobic gymnastics, also known as sport aerobics, involves the performance of routines by individuals, pairs, trios, or groups of up to six people. These routines typically emphasise strength, flexibility and aerobic fitness, rather than acrobatic or balance skills. Routines typically lasting 60 to 90 seconds are performed on floors, without the use of other apparatus.

Ideal for young people aged 11+ gymnasts, but suitable for all ages is introductory aerobics incorporating flexibility, strength and stamina, and gives gymnasts the opportunity to learn new skills and perform alongside their friends.

### QUANTITY

British Gymnastics club facility audit in 2014 found that, 31% of all clubs operated out of their own dedicated facilities, with 55% of these based in converted industrial units. This has risen from 17% in 2010 (33% of these in industrial units) and British Gymnastics expects the trend to continue and accelerate across 2017-21.

Currently approximately a third of clubs operate from their own facility, a third in non-dedicated school venues and a third from non-dedicated leisure centres

There are four gymnastics centres/clubs located in BwD and a dedicated trampoline centre

- **Blackburn with Darwen Acrobatic Gymnastics Club** located at Duttons Way Industrial Park Shadsworth, the centre provides gymnastics coaching to children of all ages and abilities. It focuses on aerobic and rhythmic gymnastics classes, principally for children and young people from 3 years old to adulthood.
- **Tumble Bee'z Gymnastics Club** located at Darwen Leisure Centre. The club are a British Gymnastics Gym Mark registered club who provide Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced



recreational gymnastics classes, plus providing training in floor and apparatus gymnastic disciplines.

- **Ribble Valley Gymnastics Academy** located at Ribble Business Park, Blackburn. The academy provides for artistic gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics and gymfit. The centre provides for children and young people from 3 years old to adulthood.
- **Flip Out Blackburn** located at the Soccordome, Haslingden Road, Blackburn, a commercial trampoline centre, opened in 2018 and which has over 30 trampolines of different sizes as well as soft play, and small scale basketball/hoop courts. The focus is on fun and exercise, as individual or as group activity.
- **Quantum Leap Gymnastics** has 174 members and operates from a school facility.

### DEMAND AND PARTICIPATION

The majority of participants in gymnastics and trampoline are aged 3 – 15, the most valid source of data on participation is the Active Lives Young People survey findings and the Taking Part survey. There are not specific findings at the BwD level for gymnastics and trampoline but the findings from both the Active Lives Young People and the Taking Part survey are supportive of the provision of gymnastics facilities in BwD

#### *Active Lives and Young People*

To recap, Sport England’s remit has been extended to increase participation and physical activity with children and young people aged five and upwards. The aim of the Active Lives Young People’s survey is to shape and influence local decision-making, as well as inform government policy on the Primary PE and Sports Premium, and other cross-departmental programmes.

#### *Active Lives Young People and BwD*

For overall context, the BwD demographic projections shows that the 0 – 14 age band is projected to decrease between 2019 -2037, from 32,658 people in 2019 to 31,116, a 4.7% decrease.

The Active Lives Young People key findings for BwD are

- In the active every day (60+ minutes of activity) BwD has 11.2% of children in this category. The Lancashire average is 18.6% of children active every day and the highest rate is in Chorley with 30.1% of children active every day.
- In the active across the week (average of 60 minutes or more of activity a day but not every day), BwD has 19.5% children in this category. The local authority with the highest percentage of children in the active category is in Bury with 30.2%, the Lancashire average is 24.6% of children in the active category.
- In the fairly active category (average of 30 – 59 minutes activity a day) BwD has 24.1% of children in this category. The Lancashire average is just above the BwD finding, at 24.5% of children being fairly active.

- In the less active category (less than an average of 30 minutes activity a day) BwD has 45.2% of children in this category. The Lancashire average is 32.3% of children in the less active category.

In summary, the Active Lives Young People findings for BwD show that in the three active categories BwD has a low percentage of children doing activity. Across the three categories combined just over five out of ten children are in these categories. It then follows that in the less active category BwD has a high finding, with over four out of ten children in this category.

The comparable findings for Lancashire County are, nearly seven out of ten children in the three active categories and just over three out of ten children in the less active category.

The challenge in BwD is to get more of the least active children (less than an average of 30 minutes activity a day) which is 45.2% of children to be more active.

Given the popularity of gymnastics with young people and the Borough already has 4 centres, plus a commercial trampoline centre, then gymnastics/trampoline are activities which could be developed, to increase the rate of activity by young people and outside of the school physical activity curriculum.

A key finding from the Active Lives Young People survey was that - *there's not a lot of difference in the amount of sport and physical activity that takes place inside school, compared to activity levels outside of school, so both have a critical role to play. With 22% of children active for at least 30 minutes per day outside of school, while 28% of children do so in school.*

#### ***Taking Part Young People participation in gymnastics and trampoline with BwD participation projection.***

The Taking Part survey is a national source of data on participation in sports and physical activity. It is a survey of children aged 5 to 15 years old in England. It has run since 2005 and is the main evidence source for Government Departments and National Agencies. The survey's main objectives are to provide a central, reliable evidence source that can be used to analyse cultural and sporting engagement, providing a clear picture of why people do or do not engage.

Taking Part is an England wide survey and data is only available at England level. The survey for young people is split between 5 – 10 year olds and 11 – 15 year olds. It measures participation at least once in the past four weeks and therefore differs from the Active People benchmark measure of once a week participation.

For children aged 5 – 10, **gym, gymnastics and trampoline is the fifth most popular sports activity and the second most popular indoor activity for this age group.** Some 15.6% of 5 – 10 year olds participated at least once a month and this shows no change since 2010 -11

A high level of participation and based on the children in the 5 – 9 age group (not available for 5 – 10) in 2019 in BwD of 5,721 this would generate a participation rate of 892 young people aged between 5 – 9 participating in gymnastics and trampoline at least once a month.

In terms of participation by gender at the England wide level, some 10.6% of boys participated at least once a month and 20.9% of girls. So gymnastics and trampoline is almost twice as popular/participation rate for girls than boys.

In terms of the 11- 15 age group gym gymnastics and trampoline is the third most popular activity and the second most popular indoor activity at the England wide level. Some 28.5% of this age band participated at least once a month, possibly a higher percentage doing gym than in the 5 – 10 year olds and this may account for the higher rate of participation.

There are 5,476 people aged 10 – 14 (nearest comparable age range) in BwD in 2019 and so this would create a participation rate of 1,560 people in this age band doing gymnastics and trampoline (and gym) at least once a month.

In terms of the gender split, some 23% of boys were participants and 34% were girls. So a closer participation rate by gender for this age group than for the 5 – 10 year olds.

### OVERALL SUMMARY

There are four gymnastics venues and one commercial trampoline facility in BwD. The focus for the gymnastics centres is to provide for introductory programmes, aerobic, artistic and rhythmic gymnastics, for beginners to experienced gymnasts, aged 3 to 15 and for adults.

There is not one source of definitive data to measure the potential demand for gymnastics and trampoline in BwD. However, the sources which do exist are supportive of demand and participation in gymnastics and trampoline. The sources and findings for BwD are:

- **Taking Part** - for children aged 5 – 10, gym, gymnastics and trampoline is the fifth most popular sports activity and the second most popular indoor activity for this age group. Some 15.6% of 5 – 10 year olds participated at least once a month and this shows no change since 2010 -11
- Applying this participation rate to BwD children in the 5 – 9 age group (not available for 5 – 10) in 2019 of 5,721 this would generate a participation rate of 892 young people aged between 5 – 9 participating in gymnastics and trampoline at least once a month.
- **Taking Part** for children aged 11 – 15, gym gymnastics and trampoline is the third most popular activity and the second most popular indoor activity at the England wide level. Some 28.5% of this age band participated at least once a month, possibly a higher percentage doing gym than in the 5 – 10 year olds and this may account for the higher rate of participation.
- Applying the Taking Part findings to the BwD population of 5,476 people aged 10 – 14 (nearest comparable age range) in 2019 would create a participation rate of 1,560 people in this age band doing gymnastics and trampoline (and gym) at least once a month.

Overall the findings are very supportive of the need to provide for gymnastics and trampoline in BwD, evidenced by the Taking Part findings on the popularity of gymnastics and trampoline amongst young people, these findings do generate a high level of participation in BwD.



The existing gymnastics centres are meeting current demand and any proposals for expansion of these centres, or provision of new dedicated centres should be supported. The commercial trampoline centre is meeting a current demand. However to note, these dedicated trampoline centres have expanded very rapidly in the last 2- 3 years, and there are the same Flip Out centre franchises in Rochdale and Manchester. The Blackburn Centre will provide for the demand in BwD.

Gymnastics therefore has significant potential to further grow across BwD and address inactivity across young people. There is good base, which should be supported and further built on in order to maximise potential. This is endorsed by the ngb.



**Gymnastics Action Plan**

Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation	Justification	Relevant Sites and Key Actions	Lead Partner	Measures of Success
<b>SO1, SO2 and SO4 (Protect and Enhance)</b>	1 Protect the existing gymnastic sites.  Seek investment in the sites to protect access and usage.	The existing gymnastic sites are key community sports clubs serving the needs of young people across BwD.  Loss of facilities and access would impact on gymnastic opportunities across BwD.	All clubs.	BwD Planning / Leisure  Gymnastics Clubs  British Gymnastics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All gymnastics sites to remain protected and enhanced through investment</li> </ul>
<b>SO4 and SO10 (Enhance and Provide)</b>	2 Seek investment to the gymnastics infrastructure from developments.	Sites play a key role in a key sport for young people with waiting lists and increasing participation.	Based on the catchment of proposed developments	BwD Leisure / BwD Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributions secured towards the tennis infrastructure</li> </ul>

## **11 Section 11 - Assessment of need and evidence base for Health and Fitness**

### **11.4 Introduction**

11.4.1 Sport England defines health and fitness suites as those facilities providing fitness stations for both cardiovascular and strength training, more commonly known as gyms. The assessment below is based on the tools available from Sport England and from local consultations and site visits.

### **11.5 Quantity (supply)**

11.5.1 In 2019 there are 16 health and fitness centres, located at 16 sites (according to the data there are two separate health and fitness areas at the Audley Centre) providing a total of 790 health and fitness stations.

11.5.2 The largest health and fitness centre is located at Pure Gym (Blackburn Mall) with 220 stations, the average number of stations per venue is 52 stations.

11.5.3 Of the total stations, some 200 stations, 25.3% of the total number of stations are available at 3 local authority centres: Blackburn Sports Leisure Centre with 80 stations; Darwen Leisure Centre also with 80 stations; and Witton Park Arena with 40 stations.

11.5.4 There are 4 commercial venues and they have a total of 412 stations, which is 52.1% of the total supply. The largest commercial gym as reported is Pure Gym with 220 stations; DW Sports Fitness Blackburn has 110 stations; Probodies has 49 stations; and The Mill Gym is the smallest with 33 stations.

11.5.5 There are 5 centres which are owned by community organisations with a total 11 stations and which is 14% of the total supply. These range in size from 35 stations at My Gym@ Bangor Street to 7 stations at the smaller of the two areas at The Audley Centre. The community owned centres are small scale and average 22 stations per site

11.5.6 There are 4 centres owned by education, with a total of 67 stations, which is 8.4% of the total supply. These range in size from 24 stations at Darwen Aldridge Community Academy to 10 stations at The Heights Free School. The education sites are also small scale and have an average of 16 stations per site.

11.5.7 The oldest gym is at The Audley Centre which opened in 1985, no gyms opened in the 1990's, Then 7 sites opened in the 2000 decade and 8 centres have opened post 2010. The most recent gym to open is the Pure Gym Blackburn, and which is the largest gym, it opened in 2016

11.5.8 Details of all the health and fitness centres in BwD are set out in Table 11.1.

**Table 11.1 - Health and Fitness Centres BwD**

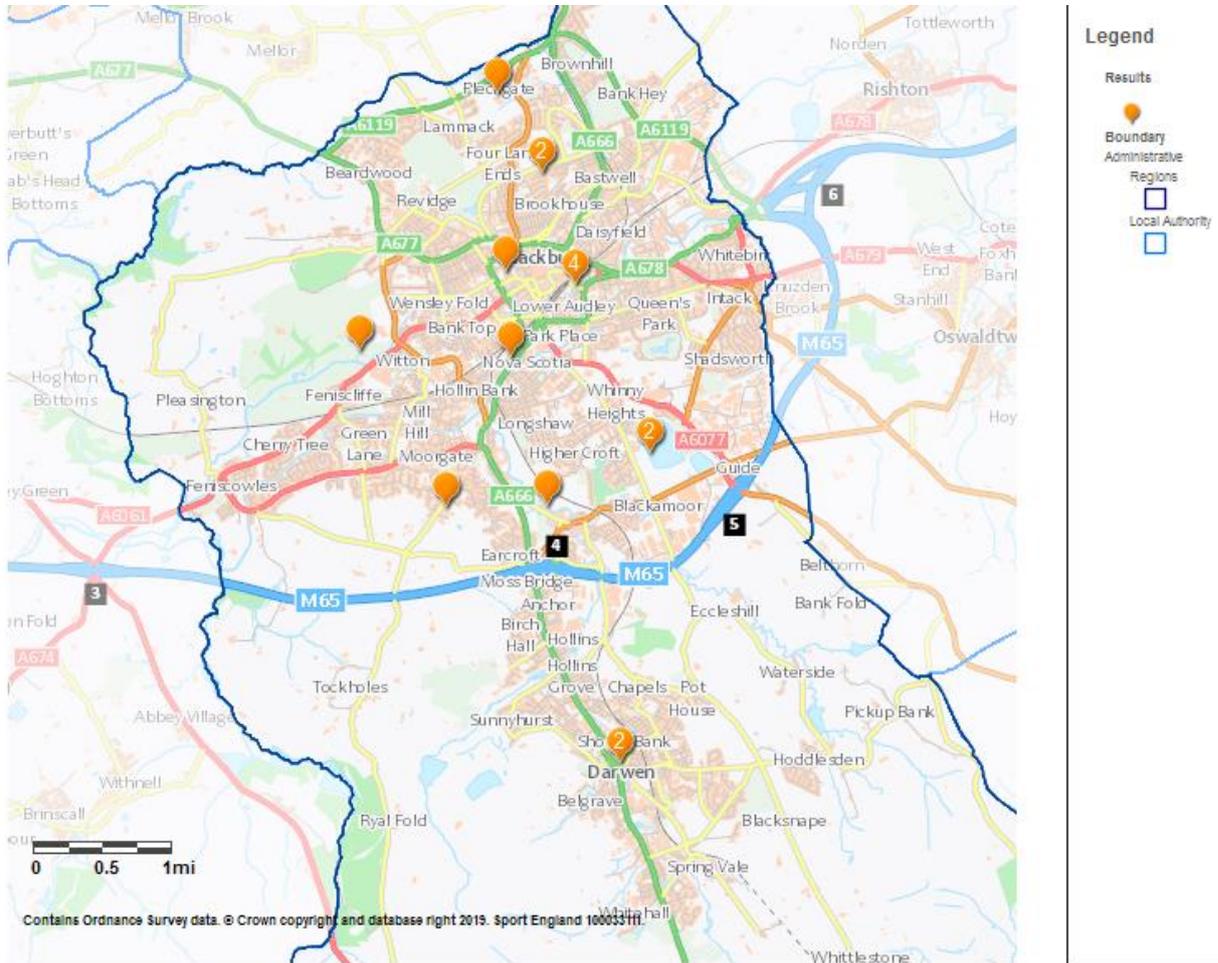
Site Name	Facility Type	Stations	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type	Year Built	Year Refurb
AUDLEY CENTRE	Health and Fitness Suite	14	Pay and Play	Community Organisation	Local Authority (in house)	1985	2009
AUDLEY CENTRE	Health and Fitness Suite	7	Pay and Play	Community Organisation	Sport Club	2009	
BLACKBURN SPORTS LEISURE CENTRE	Health and Fitness Suite	80	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Local Authority (in house)	2015	
BLACKBURN YOUTH ZONE	Health and Fitness Suite	15	Pay and Play	Community Organisation	Community Organisation	2012	
DARWEN ALDRIDGE COMMUNITY ACADEMY	Health and Fitness Suite	24	Sports Club / Community Association	Academies	School/College/University (in house)	2010	
DARWEN LEISURE CENTRE	Health and Fitness Suite	80	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Local Authority (in house)	2010	
DW SPORTS FITNESS (BLACKBURN)	Health and Fitness Suite	110	Registered Membership use	Commercial	Commercial Management	2004	2010
MY GYM @ BANGOR STREET	Health and Fitness Suite	40	Registered Membership use	Community Organisation	Community Organisation	2008	
MY GYM @ HIGHERCROFT	Health and Fitness Suite	35	Registered Membership use	Community Organisation	Community Organisation	2006	2017
PLECKGATE HIGH SCHOOL	Health and Fitness Suite	20	Sports Club / Community Association	Community school	Local Authority (in house)	2011	
PROBODIES	Health and Fitness Suite	49	Registered Membership use	Commercial	Commercial Management	2003	2005
PURE GYM (BLACKBURN THE MALL)	Health and Fitness Suite	220	Registered Membership use	Commercial	Commercial Management	2016	



ST MARY'S COLLEGE	Health and Fitness Suite	13	Registered Membership use	Further Education	School/College/University (in house)	2004	2013
THE HEIGHTS FREE SCHOOL	Health and Fitness Suite	10	Sports Club / Community Association	Community school	School/College/University (in house)	2013	
THE MILL GYM	Health and Fitness Suite	33	Pay and Play	Commercial	Commercial Management	2007	
WITTON PARK ARENA	Health and Fitness Suite	40	Registered Membership use	Local Authority	Local Authority (in house)	2014	

11.5.9 The location of the health and fitness sites is shown in Map xx, most venues are located in and around Blackburn town but there is good geographical spread of sites across the Borough.

**Map 11.1 - Location of the Health and Fitness Centres BwD**



Sport England assumes no responsibility for the completeness, accuracy and currency of the information contained on this map/report. This information is taken from the Active Places Power website and its terms and conditions apply. 27/12/2019 16:16

## 11.6 Quality

11.6.1 Information on the quality of the gyms is taken from Sport England Active Places Power, which highlights the age of the gym and refurbishment, this measure is used as a proxy for quality.

**Table 11.2 - Age and refurbishment of health and fitness centres BwD**

	<b>Built</b>	<b>Refurbished</b>
1980-1989	1	1 (2009)
1990-1999	0	0
2000-2009	7	4 with one in each of 2005, 2010, 2013 and 2017 and 3 not refurbished
2010 - present	8	none

11.6.2 Overall, of the centres opened in the 2000 four have been modernised and 3 have not. None of the 2010 onwards centres have been modernised. The findings for the post 2000 centres are surprising, given the competition between centres for membership and equipment quality is a key draw for residents in taking out a membership.

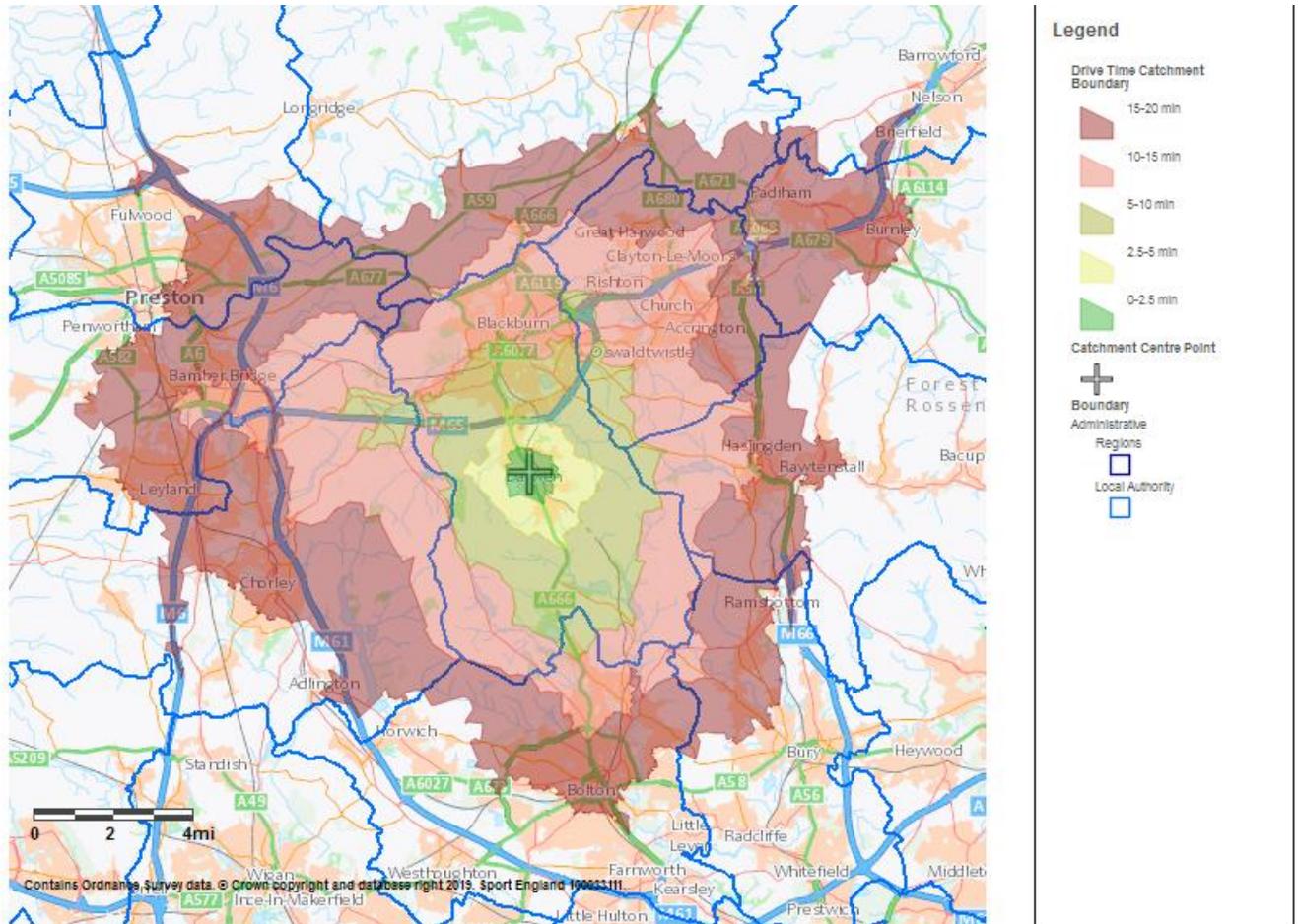
## 11.7 Accessibility

11.7.1 The location and 20 minute drive time catchment area for Darwen Leisure Centre is shown in Map 11.2. The Darwen centre is selected because it is in the centre of the Borough, and it is best placed to assess the extent of the catchment area for health and fitness facilities.

11.7.2 All of BwD is within the 10 - 15 minute drive time catchment area of the Darwen Centre (light pink travel band).

11.7.3 There are eight health and fitness centre sites located north of Darwen, four south and one west of Darwen. Overall, the location and drive time catchment area of the health and fitness sites, provides very good accessibility for BwD residents.

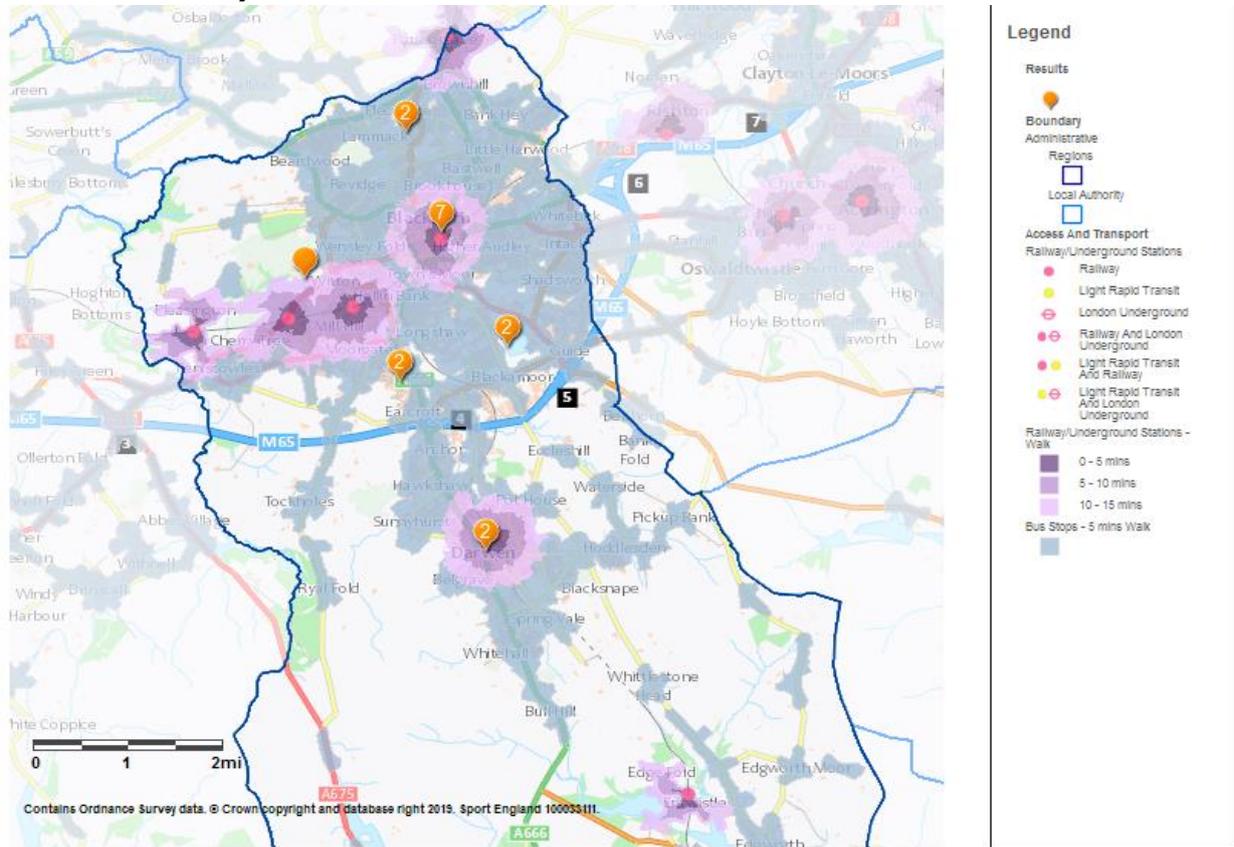
**Map 11.2 - Twenty minute drive time catchment area for Darwen Leisure Centre**



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11.7.4 It is also important to establish how accessible the health and fitness centers are to residents who travel by public transport. Set out in Map 11.3 is the location of the health and fitness centres in the Borough and the area of the Borough that is within a 5 minute walk of a bus stop (grey area). Also the area of the Borough that is within a 15 minute walk of a railway station (purple areas). As the map shows the location of all the health and fitness centres do correlate with the location of bus stops and the 5 minute walking catchment of the bus stops. Plus the centres in and around Blackburn town are very accessible by train.

**Map 11.3 - Area of BwD within 5 minutes' walk of a bus stop and 15 minutes' walk of a railway station**



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11.7.5 The Council had expressed a view that there may be a need for a small gym in the Shadsworth area of the Borough. However as the two accessibility maps and the location map in the quantity section show, there is good access for residents in the Shadsworth area to the existing gyms. The location of the former Shadsworth Leisure Centre is shown in map 11.4 below. The findings on the demand for gyms in BwD is set out under the demand and participation section

**Map 11.4 - Location of the former Shadsworth Leisure Centre**



## 11.8 Availability

- 11.8.1 As reported, of the total 790 stations, some 200 stations, 25.3% of the total number of stations are available at 3 local authority centres: Blackburn Sports Leisure Centre with 80 stations; Darwen Leisure Centre also with 80 stations; and Witton Park Arena with 40 stations. So there is a good level of availability at 3 public leisure centres for health and fitness.
- 11.8.2 For residents who wish to use a commercial health and fitness centre, there are 4 commercial venues and they have a total of 412 stations, which is 52.1% of the total supply. The largest commercial gym is Pure Gym with 220 stations; DW Sports Fitness Blackburn has 110 stations; Probodies has 49 stations; and The Mill Gym is the smallest with 33 stations.



11.8.3 So nearly 80% of the health and fitness centres are available to residents who either participate at a public leisure centre or a commercial gym. Both types of centres are available to residents through membership.

11.8.4 The health and fitness centres located on education sites are very small scale and not really suitable for wider community use. There are 4 centres owned by education, with a total of 67 stations, which is 8.4% of the total supply. These range in size from 24 stations at Darwen Aldridge Community Academy to 10 stations at The Heights Free School. The education sites have an average of 16 stations per site

## 11.9 DEMAND and PARTICIPATION

### Active Lives

11.9.1 The Active Lives participation data for gym sessions at the England wide level (not available at other geographic levels) shows a participation rate of 13.5% of adults participating in a gym session in the November 2017 – November 2018 year, This is a 1.5% increase in the past twelve months.

**Table 11.3 - Active Lives participation data for gym sessions England wide 2015 - 2019**

Activity	November 2017-18				Change compared to Nov 2015-16		Change in the last 12 months	
	Participation Rate	Lower	Upper	Absolute	Significance	Absolute	Significance	
Gym session <sup>1</sup>	13.5%	13.2%	13.7%	*	*	1.5%	Significant increase	

<sup>1</sup>During the surveying review it became evident a number of respondents were double counting a gym session and the individual activities that they did within the gym. This was resolved by re-wording the question, however, this means the data available is limited.

11.9.2 To place the Active Lives gym session participation rate into context, the findings from Active Lives for sports and activities which appeal to the same age range as gym sessions, are set out in Table 11.4.

11.9.3 As the table shows, the participation rate for gym sessions are on a par with running (not track and field athletics), cycling for leisure and sport and not surprisingly fitness classes. The gym session participation rate in the table above is considerably higher than for gymnastics, badminton and football. (Note the full Active Lives table for all sports and activities is set out in the demographic and participation section of this assessment report).



**Table 11.4 - Active Lives participation data for sports/activities England wide 2015 – 2018**

Activity	November 2017-18			Change compared to Nov 2015-16		Change in the last 12 months	
	Participation Rate	Lower	Upper	Absolute	Significance	Absolute	Significance
Cycling for leisure and sport	13.6%	13.3%	13.8%			-0.7%	Significant decrease
Cycling for travel	6.8%	6.7%	7.0%	-0.4%	Significant decrease	-0.3%	Significant decrease
Fitness class	14.1%	13.9%	14.3%	-0.2%	No change	-0.4%	Significant decrease
Football	4.5%	4.4%	4.7%	-0.7%	Significant decrease	-0.4%	Significant decrease
Badminton	1.9%	1.8%	2.0%	-0.3%	Significant decrease	-0.1%	No change
Running	15.2%	14.9%	15.5%	-0.3%	No change	-0.3%	No change
Gymnastics (includes trampolining)	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%	0.0%	No change	-0.1%	No change

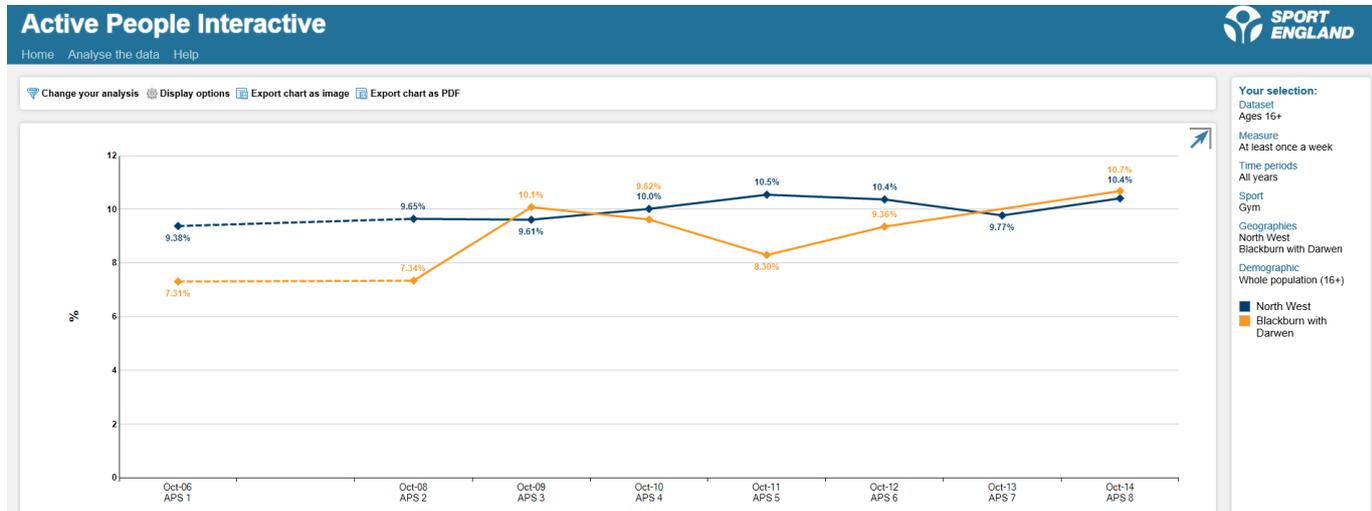
### 11.10 Active People

11.10.1 The benchmark participation measure for health and fitness used in Active People is 1 x 30 minutes of activity, at least once a week. The Active People survey findings for gym participation is available at the BwD and NW Region levels for 2006 to 2014.

11.10.2 The findings are set out in Chart xx and show the rate of participation for BwD (orange line) was 7.3% of adults participating at least once a week in 2006 and this increased to 10.7% in 2014. For NW Region the participation rate was 9.3% of adults participating at least once a week in 2006, and 10.4% in 2014.



**Chart 11.1 - Participation in health and fitness yndburn HHBwD and NW Region 2006 - 2014**



- 11.10.3 Applying the BwD 2014 participation figure of 10.7% of adults participating at least once a week, to the 2019 BwD adult population (15 - 59) in 2019 of 44,472 people, generates 4,758 participants.
- 11.10.4 A commercial benchmark is each station having a capacity of 20 and applying that capacity to the Active People participation rate for BwD, creates a demand for 951 stations. This compares to a TOTAL supply of 790 stations across the health and fitness centres in 2019.
- 11.10.5 Using this methodology, suggests there is an oversupply of health and fitness of around 161 stations. It is unlikely the difference is that much, as the provision of health and fitness centres is very much commercially driven, and if there is an oversupply there would be an adjustment. Nevertheless the methodology does set out some broad parameters for assessing the demand for health and fitness stations for BwD.
- 11.10.6 Perhaps it is significant that the largest gym to open in BwD is also the most recent, PureGym in 2016 and with 200 stations. This may have created a supply and demand balance, as no new gyms have opened for nearly three years in BwD.



### **Participation Trends**

- 11.10.7 The Leisure Database Company (TLDC) are the leading provider in analysing demand for health and fitness through latent demand reports. Many of the country's leading leisure operators will use the TLDC to provide an accurate assessment of the level of demand for a fitness facility.
- 11.10.8 TLDC produce a 'State of the UK Fitness Industry Report' every year. In 2019 and pre Covid, the report stated that the industry has continued to grow to above 15% to a total penetration rate of 15.6%, now equating to 1 in 7 people being a member of a gym. The fitness market therefore continues to be buoyant.
- 11.10.9 Overall across BwD supply appears to be currently matching demand. To maintain the current health and fitness offer at the public leisure centres will however be important, keeping up with trends; the moves to greater demand for strength and conditioning, cross-training, free weights, may mean different gym configurations and use of space. As Darwen Leisure Centre and Balckburn Leisure Centre evolve, the health and fitness offer will have to develop.
- 11.10.10 There will be a need is to maintain the quality of the public leisure centre health and fitness offer. The size and scale of the health and fitness offer will be a key aspect of any future development of the Council's facilities.

## Health and Fitness Key Issues

Sport England defines health and fitness suites as facilities providing fitness stations for both cardiovascular and strength training, more commonly known as gyms. For the reasons set out, it is straight forward to provide an audit and assessment for the supply of health and fitness in BwD. Then to break this down into the number of stations at each site, by each provider, local authority leisure centres, commercial centres, education sites and community organisations.

What is far more challenging is projecting the demand for health and fitness centres, as there is no established methodology for this work. In the absence of an established demand methodology, the approach has to be pragmatic. This is based on data for adult participation in health and fitness at the BwD Borough level and applying this to the BwD adult population (15 – 59) in 2019.

### QUANTITY

In BwD in 2019 there are 16 health and fitness sites. The largest health and fitness centre is Pure Gym (Blackburn Mall) with 220 stations, the average number of stations per venue is 52 stations.

Of the total stations, some 200 stations, 25.3% of the total number of stations are available at 3 local authority centres: Blackburn Sports Leisure Centre with 80 stations; Darwen Leisure Centre also with 80 stations; and Witton Park Arena with 40 stations.

There are 4 commercial venues and they have a total of 412 stations, which is 52.1% of the total supply. The largest commercial gym as reported is Pure Gym with 220 stations; DW Sports Fitness Blackburn has 110 stations; Probodies has 49 stations; and The Mill Gym is the smallest with 33 stations.

There are 5 centres which are owned by community organisations, with a total 11 stations and which is 14% of the total supply. These range in size from 35 stations at My Gym@ Bangor Street to 7 stations at the smaller of the two areas at The Audley Centre. The community owned centres are small scale and average 22 stations per site

There are 4 centres owned by education, with a total of 67 stations, which is 8.4% of the total supply. These range in size from 24 stations at Darwen Aldridge Community Academy to 10 stations at The Heights Free School. The education sites are also small scale and have an average of 16 stations per site

The oldest gym is at The Audley Centre which opened in 1985, no gyms opened in the 1990's, Then 7 sites opened in the 2000 decade and 8 centres have opened post 2010. The most recent gym to open is the Pure Gym Blackburn, and which is the largest gym, it opened in 2016

### QUALITY



**Information on the quality of the gyms is taken from Sport England Active Places Power, which highlights the age of the gym and refurbishment, this measure is used as a proxy for quality.**

Four of the centres opened in the 2000 decade have been modernised and 3 have not. None of the 2010 onwards centres have been modernised. The findings for the post 2000 centres are surprising, given the competition between centres for membership and equipment quality is a key draw for residents in taking out a membership.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

The accepted catchment area for a health and fitness centre is up to 20 minutes travel time by car. Based on the location and drive time catchment area for Darwen Leisure Centre all of BwD is within the 10 – 15 minute drive time catchment area of a gym. The Darwen Centre is selected because it is in the centre of the Borough, and it is best placed to assess the extent of the catchment area for health and fitness facilities.

There are eight health and fitness centre sites located north of Darwen, four south and one west of Darwen. Overall, the location and drive time catchment area for all the health and fitness sites, provides very good accessibility for BwD residents.

It is also important to establish how accessible the health and fitness centers are to residents who travel by public transport. The accessibility map in the main report shows, the location of the health and fitness centres in the Borough and the area of the Borough that is within a 5 minute walk of a bus stop and the area of the Borough within a 15 minute walk of a railway station. As the map shows the location of all the health and fitness centres do correlate with the location of bus stops and the 5 minute walking catchment of the bus stops. Plus the centres in and around Blackburn town are very accessible by train.

The Council had expressed a view that there may be a need for a small gym in the Shadsworth area of the Borough. However, as the two accessibility maps and the location map in the quantity section show, there is good access for residents in the Shadsworth area to the existing gyms. The findings on the demand for gyms in BwD is set out under the demand and participation section

## **AVAILABILITY**

As reported, of the total 790 stations, some 200 stations, 25.3% of the total number of stations are available at 3 local authority centres. So there is a good level of availability at 3 public leisure centres for health and fitness.

For residents who wish to use a commercial health and fitness centre, there are 4 commercial venues and they have a total of 412 stations, which is 52.1% of the total supply.

So nearly 80% of the health and fitness centres are available to residents who either participate at a public leisure centre or a commercial gym. Both types of centres are available to residents through membership.



The health and fitness centres located on education sites are very small scale and not really suitable for wider community use. There are 4 centres owned by education, with a total of 67 stations, which is 8.4% of the total supply. The education sites have an average of 16 stations per site

## **DEMAND AND PARTICIPATION**

As reported, there is no established methodology for assessing the demand for health and fitness. The benchmark participation measure used in Active People is 1 x 30 minutes of activity, at least once a week.

The Active People survey findings for gym participation is available at the BwD and NW Region levels for 2006 to 2014.

The rate of participation for BwD was 7.3% of adults participating at least once a week in 2006 and this increased to 10.7% in 2014. For NW Region the participation rate was 9.3% of adults participating at least once a week in 2006, and 10.4% in 2014

Applying the BwD 2014 participation figure of 10.7% of adults participating at least once a week, to the 2019 BwD adult population (15 - 59) of 44,472 people, generates 4,758 participants.

A commercial benchmark is each station having a capacity of 20 and applying that capacity to the Active People participation rate for BwD, creates a demand for 951 stations. This compares with a TOTAL supply of 790 stations across the health and fitness centres in 2019.

Using this methodology, suggests there is an oversupply of health and fitness, in terms of number of stations of around 161 stations. It is unlikely the difference is that much, as the provision of health and fitness centres is very much commercially driven. If there is an oversupply there would be an adjustment. Nevertheless the methodology does set out some broad parameters for assessing the demand for health and fitness stations for BwD.

Perhaps it is significant that the largest gym to open in BwD is also the most recent, PureGym in 2016 and with 200 stations. This may have created a supply and demand balance, as no new gyms have opened for nearly three years in BwD.

## **OVERALL SUMMARY**

BwD does have an extensive supply of 16 health and fitness centres in 2019, of which seven sites are available through membership of public leisure centres or commercial centres. The remainder are very small scale gyms located at school or community organisation sites.

There is very good accessibility to the centres, all of the Borough is within a 10 – 15 minute drive time catchment of between 6 - 8 sites, there is also good accessibility to the centres by public transport.



The BwD demand assessment for health and fitness suggests there is an oversupply of around 160 stations but given that health and fitness is very much demand and market driven, if there is an oversupply then it would adjust.

The overall assessment is that there is a sufficient supply of health and fitness centres in BwD to meet the demand in the Borough. Of note is that according to the data, four of the centres opened in the 2000 decade have been modernised and 3 have not. None of the 2010 onwards centres have been modernised.

So the quality of the centres in terms of the equipment and the adaption/change to meet the demand for new types of cardio vascular exercise and strength and conditioning workouts maybe an issue.

Also of note, is that the most recent (and largest) gym to open is PureGym in 2016 and with 200 stations. This centre may have created overall supply and demand balance, as no new gyms have opened for nearly three years in BwD.

Overall across BwD supply appears to be currently matching demand. To maintain the current health and fitness offer at the public leisure centres will however be important, keeping up with trends; the moves to greater demand for strength and conditioning, cross-training, free weights, may mean different gym configurations and use of space. As Darwen Leisure Centre and Balckburn Leisure Centre evolve, the health and fitness offer will have to develop.

There will be a need is to maintain the quality of the public leisure centre health and fitness offer. The size and scale of the health and fitness offer will be a key aspect of any future development of the Council's facilities.



**Health and Fitness Action Plan**

Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation	Justification	Relevant Sites and Key Actions	Lead Partner	Measures of Success
<b>SO1 (Protect)</b>	1 Resist the loss of any health and fitness sites.	All sites are well used and well located to meet current and future demands across BwD.  The impact of any closures alongside growth would impact on the supply and demand balance.  .	All sites.	BwD Planning / Leisure  All Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retention of existing sites</li> </ul>
<b>SO4 and SO10 (Enhance and Provide)</b>	2 Seek continued investment to the health and fitness infrastructure from developments.  Seek investment to maintain and improve the quality and capacity at the key leisure centre sites, to ensure the health and fitness offer remains up to date and relevant.	Supply and demand illustrates that there will be impacts of the projected growth that will require financial contributions.  This will be exacerbated if the supply changes.  Any new provision should focus on maintaining the quality and relevance of the health and fitness offer across the Council provision.	Blackburn Leisure Centre  Darwen Leisure Centre	BwD Leisure / BwD Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributions secured towards the health and fitness offer across BwD.</li> </ul>

## **12Section 12 - Assessment of need and evidence base for Indoor Climbing Walls**

### **12.4 Introduction**

- 12.4.1 A climbing wall is an artificially constructed wall with grips for hands and feet, usually used for indoor climbing, but sometimes located outdoors. Some are brick or wooden constructions, but on most modern walls, the material used is a thick multiplex board with holes drilled into it.
- 12.4.2 Indoor climbing is typically divided into three disciplines, bouldering, top roping, and lead climbing.
- 12.4.3 Bouldering is a form of climbing close to the ground above matting, so ropes and harnesses are not required. It challenges the climber to complete short but technical boulder “problems” using strength, technique, power and balance. Indoor bouldering is considered the most accessible form of climbing, requiring the least amount of equipment. Climbs or ‘problems’ are graded upon difficulty using an international grading system. Boulder UK, is a lead organisation with climbs for all abilities, from absolute beginners through to elite level climbers; climbers of all abilities can climb on the same sections of wall.
- 12.4.4 Top roping is where a pre-fixed rope is threaded through a strong anchor point at the top of the climb, with both ends on the ground. The climber is attached to one end of the rope, while the other end is threaded through a belay device and continually adjusted in order to remain reasonably taut as the climber makes progress. Having reached the anchor point the climber is lowered back to the ground by the belayer.
- 12.4.5 Lead climbing is where the lead climber trails the safety rope from the ground upwards, clipping it into quick draws as progress is made. A fall can be limited by the belayer. Lead climbing is both more exciting and inherently riskier than top roping. Communication is important, often distilled to curt unambiguous commands such as “slack!”, or “take-in!” usually meaning that the leader is nervous or about to be airborne.

### **12.5 QUANTITY**

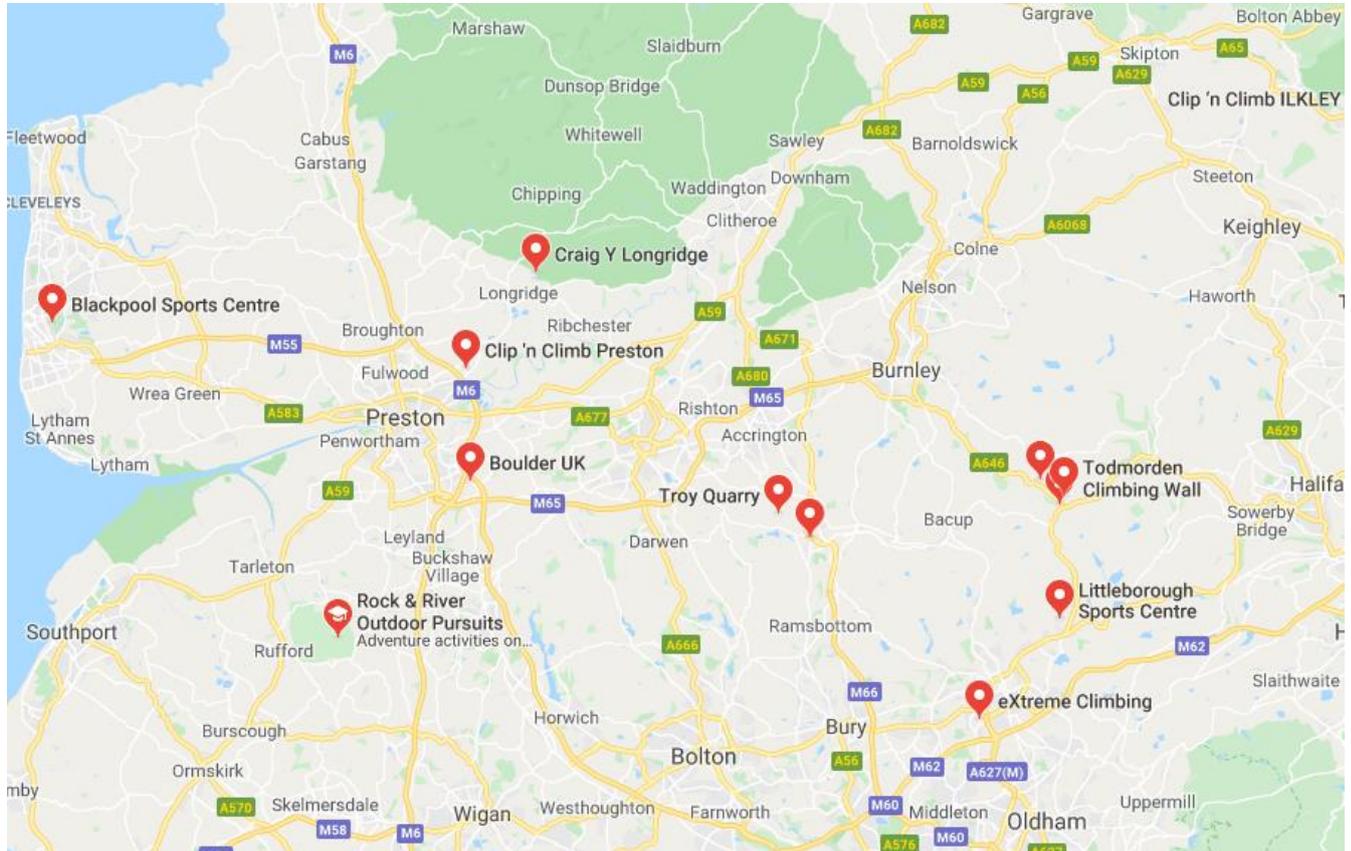
- 12.5.1 There are no indoor climbing walls in BwD. Details of the indoor climbing walls nearest to BwD are;



- **Grip & Go** indoor climbing centre Haslingden Rossendale - is an indoor climbing activity centre from age 4 with participation under supervision and the focus is on adventure and skill.
- **Todmorden Climbing Wall and Indoor Centre** - with 12 roped routes all around 8m tall that vary in grade. A bouldering area that has around 40 bouldering problems and gets reset every 6 weeks. A circuit board which is 14m long and has a 10 degree overhang and with a mixture of circuits
- **Littleborough Sports Centre Rochdale** - an indoor climbing wall with instruction available from the Council's climbing instructors, no further details of the wall itself.
- **Boulder UK Preston** - indoor rock climbing/bouldering walls with slabs, overhanging walls and roofs Over 150 problems graded from V0 (very easy) to V8 + (very difficult), Boulders are reset each week, Dedicated rock training gym with campus board, finger boards and 11 circuits
- **Clip and Climb** - Preston has 20 individual climbing wall challenges of various designs and difficulty and testing agility, there are 24 climbs to attempt.

12.5.2 The location of indoor climbing walls located nearest to BwD are shown in Map 12.1.

**Map 12.1 - Location of Indoor Climbing Walls in Lancashire**



Note the map includes Troy Quarry in Rossendale which is a quarry

## 12.6 Quality, accessibility and Availability

12.6.1 As there are no indoor climbing walls in BwD there are no findings to report on quality, accessibility and availability

## 12.7 DEMAND and PARTICIPATION

12.7.1 There is a range of limited data on the demand for indoor climbing and rates of participation. The data applies different sources and measurements.

12.7.2 The Active Lives England wide findings comparing Active Lives 3 with Active Lives 1 and changes in the past 12 months, shows that;

- **Adventure sports** (ropes courses, climbing indoor snow and skateboarding) are increasing with 6.9% of adult's participating in 2015. A 1.8% increase in the past 3 years and 1% in the past 12 months.

- 12.7.3 The England wide Active Lives Young People survey does not identify the changes in activity for particular sports and activities and there is no trend data available yet.
- 12.7.4 The Active People survey does include adventure sports as a type of sport grouping. However the content of the heading is much broader than the Active Lives survey and it includes;
- Sea fishing, running (cross country / beach, ultra-marathon), canoeing/kayaking, canoe polo, rafting, bmx, cyclo-cross, mountain biking, rock climbing, bouldering, mountaineering, mountaineering - high altitude, orienteering, ski-ing (barefoot snow, parachute, extreme, free), swimming (deep water, open water, outdoor swimming / diving ), diving - deep water / free, kite surfing, paragliding, sub aqua /scuba diving, surfing, abseiling, caving / pot holing, ice climbing, parachuting, fell running, sky diving, gorge walking.
- 12.7.5 Given the number and range of activities it does not provide a source of data for participation in indoor climbing.
- 12.7.6 The Association of British Climbing Walls consider that around 1 million people currently climb independently indoors in the UK, including about 100,000 regulars, and of these, 59% are estimated to climb exclusively indoors.
- 12.7.7 The UK Director of Entre-Prises Climbing Walls and Clip'n Climb identified in 2018 sales were split 71% for Clip'n Climb and 29% for climbing walls. The growth is attributed to clip and climb is bright, colourful and encourages people to come and have a go as they would do with a theme park. It's less intimidating than a climbing wall environment, but it's an activity experience. The company estimates that in England, 400,000 under-18s are currently climbing under supervision.



12.7.8 The other sources of data on participation are from the British Mountaineering Council which is extensive but relates to data from the 1990's and 2003 – 04.

## Indoor Climbing Key Issues

Indoor climbing is typically divided into three disciplines, bouldering, top roping, and lead climbing.

**Bouldering** is a form of climbing close to the ground above matting, so ropes and harnesses are not required. It challenges the climber to complete short but technical boulder “problems” using strength, technique, power and balance. Indoor bouldering is considered the most accessible form of climbing, requiring the least amount of equipment. Climbs or ‘problems’ are graded upon difficulty using an international grading system. Boulder UK, is a lead organisation with climbs for all abilities, from absolute beginners through to elite level climbers; climbers of all abilities can climb on the same sections of wall.

**Top roping** is where a pre-fixed rope is threaded through a strong anchor point at the top of the climb, with both ends on the ground. The climber is attached to one end of the rope, while the other end is threaded through a belay device and continually adjusted in order to remain reasonably taut as the climber makes progress. Having reached the anchor point the climber is lowered back to the ground by the belayer.

**Lead climbing** is where the lead climber trails the safety rope from the ground upwards, clipping it into quick draws as progress is made. A fall can be limited by the belayer. Lead climbing is both more exciting and inherently riskier than top roping. Communication is important, often distilled to curt unambiguous commands such as “slack!”, or “take-in!” usually meaning that the leader is nervous or about to be airborne.

## QUANTITY

There are no indoor climbing walls in BwD, the nearest centres are located in Rossendale Calderdale, Rochdale and 2 centres in Preston. These centres and locations are not really accessible to BwD residents for regular participation, especially participation by young people aged from 10 upwards.

## DEMAND and PARTICIPATION

There is very limited data on indoor climbing participation and no long term trend data, reflecting its recent increase in popularity. The Active Lives Adult survey does identify that the adventure sports category of activities (ropes courses, climbing indoor snow and skateboarding) are increasing, with 6.9% of adult’s participating in 2015. A 1.8% increase in the past 3 years and 1% in the past 12 months. The Active Lives Young People survey does not (yet) have data on participation in adventure sports.

The UK Director of **Entre-Prises Climbing Walls and Clip'n Climb**, identified in 2018 sales were split 71% for Clip'n Climb and 29% for climbing walls. The growth is attributed to clip and climb being bright, colourful and encourages people to come and have a go, as they would do with a theme park. It's less intimidating than a climbing wall environment, but it's an activity experience. The company estimates that in England, 400,000 under-18s are currently climbing under supervision.

## OVERALL SUMMARY



The assessment for indoor climbing walls is limited in scope but the data that is available does support that it is a sport/activity that is growing in popularity. To establish if there is a sufficient demand for an indoor climbing wall in BwD, it will need a specific study investigating a particular type of indoor climbing wall or product, such as clip and climb. Then relating those findings to the BwD demographic profile, to establish the potential demand and feasibility for an indoor climbing wall in the Borough.

The Active Lives findings are that the activities experiencing the biggest increase in participation are fun, thrill and adventure type activities, so these findings are supportive of provision of an indoor climbing wall project.

## **13Section 13 - Assessment of need and evidence base for Boxing and Martial Arts**

### **13.4 Introduction**

- 13.4.1 Boxing – the modern day sport of boxing involves two athletes punching each other with padded gloves, trying to knock their opponent down and out. These fights usually last three to twelve rounds, with each round usually lasting three minutes.
- 13.4.2 In the fitness industry, there are boxing gyms and boxing boot-camps, these types of workouts usually include various types of punches bags, jumping rope, and other common exercises/equipment performed by boxers.
- 13.4.3 These high intensity boxing types of exercise are a form of aerobic exercise. Aerobic exercise is any type of exercise that involves large groups of muscle, stresses the cardiovascular system and increases a person's rate of breathing.
- 13.4.4 Martial arts - the term martial arts refers to all the various systems of training for combat that have been arranged. Generally, these different systems or styles are all designed for one purpose: physically defeating opponents and defending against threats. In fact, the word 'martial' derives from the name Mars, who was the Roman god of war.
- 13.4.5 Martial arts can be broken down into five distinct categories: Stand-up or striking styles, grappling styles, low impact styles, weapons based styles, and MMA (a hybrid sports style). The particular disciplines within each category are
- 13.4.6 Striking or Stand-Up Styles Boxing Karate Kung Fu Kickboxing Tae Kwon Do Grappling or Ground Fighting Styles Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Russian Sambo Shoot fighting Wrestling Throwing or Takedown Styles Aikido. Judo, Hapkido, Shuai Jiao Weapons Based Styles Iaido Kali Kendo Low Impact or Meditative Styles Baguazhang Tai Chi Gong based styles MMA- a Hybrid Sports Style

### **13.5 QUANTITY**

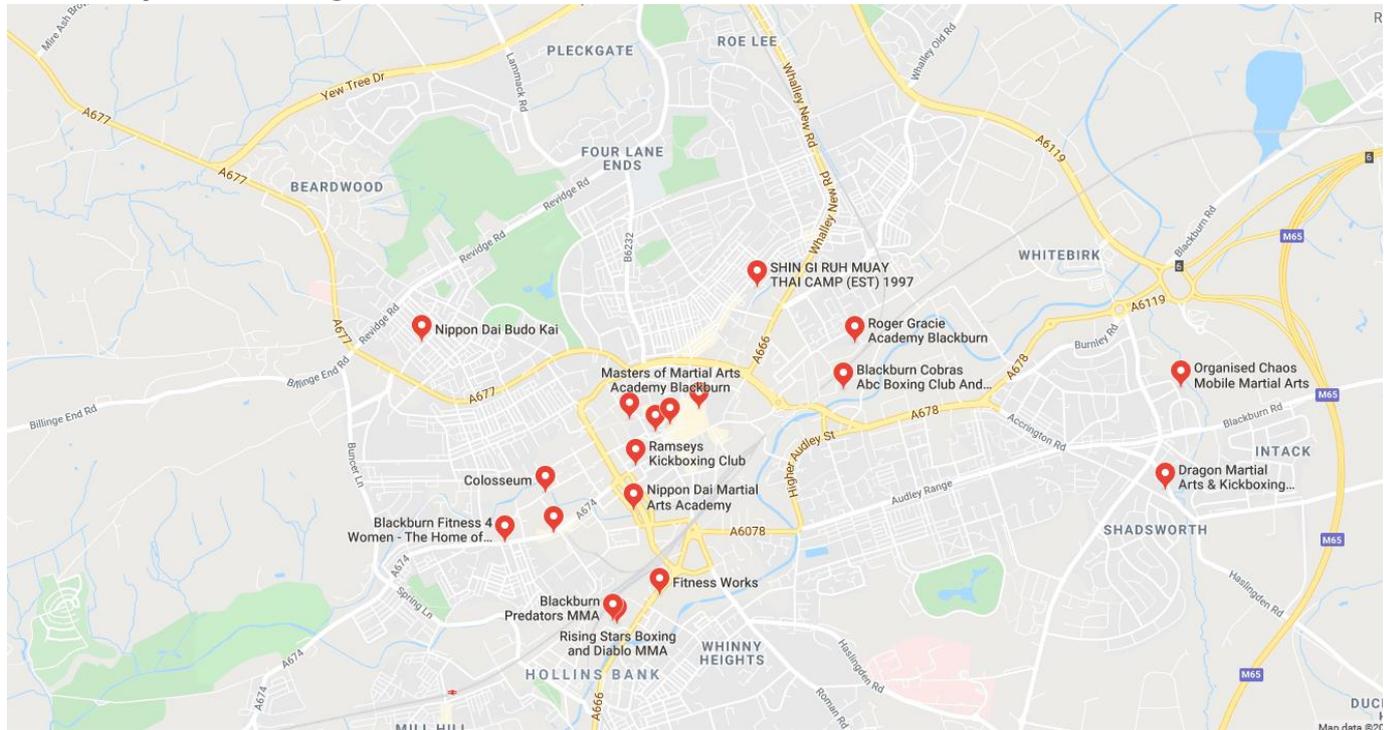
- 13.5.1 Boxing and martial arts centres are usually small scale and owned/managed by people or individuals with a long-term interest and dedication to the sports. As far as can be established, there are ten centres in BwD and one centre which has closed in 2019. These centres provide for boxing, with fitness boxing and/or some form of martial arts.

13.5.2 Information is limited on the types of activities they provide and it is not known how many of these centres are accredited or affiliated to the national governing body for boxing or one of the martial arts. The centres are;

- **Masters of Martial Arts Academy**, Blackburn, tuition in self-defence classes for all ages: Dragon Tots age 3 & 4; Little Dragons ages 4, 5 and 6; Juniors Ju Jitsu 7 - 12 years; Junior Teens age 13 -15; Adults age 16 +; Ladies Only self - defence classes. In September 2018 the Academy was recognised as a not for profit Community Amateur Sports Club.
- **Blackburn Kick Boxing and Martial Arts Centre**, - a 1500sq ft mat, numerous bags and equipment and a 16ft boxing ring with two mats either side of the ring adding a further 500sq ft. In November 2004, a dedicated martial arts room equipped with a second 1500sq ft mat opened to accommodate growing demand the centre incorporates separate training mats and a boxing ring. The separate mat areas allow all the different classes to be run concurrently, kempo, kickboxing, mixed martial arts, judo and ju-jitsu. The club provides a wide variety of punch bags, crash mats, pads and fitness equipment for students there are male and female changing rooms
- **Shin GI Ruh Muay Thai Camp**, Boyle St, Blackburn, Thai boxing classes for boys and girls from 5 years of age
- **Blackburn Predators** Chadwick St, Blackburn Mixed martial arts classes designed to equip people for self-defence and physical fitness.
- **White Cloud Tai Chi & Chinese Martial Arts Kung Fu Society** St Wilfrids Community Leisure Centre, Blackburn founded in 1962 as the "*Blackburn* YMCA and adopted the name *White Cloud Kung Fu Society* or *Blackburn Martial Arts Academy*, instructors teaching *chinese martial arts*.
- **Fight Rite Kickboxing** Rishton, Blackburn no details
- **Ramseys Kickboxing Club** King St, Blackburn – no details
- **Technique ABC boxing club** Blackburn – no details
- **Blackburn Cobras abc Boxing Club And Fitness Centre** Forrest St, Blackburn – no details
- **Nippon Dai Martial Arts Academy** Byrom St, Blackburn – no details
- **Fit2xl Community Boxing Club Duchess Street**, Darwen – now closed

13.5.3 The location of the centres in BwD is shown in map 13.1, this does include centres which have closed, and fitness centres that include a free weights area, but do not provide for martial arts or boxing.

**Map 13.1 - Boxing and Martial Arts Centres BwD 2019**



## 13.6 DEMAND and PARTICIPATION

### Active Lives

- 13.6.1 The Active Lives adult findings at the England wide level show the national participation rate for combat sport, including martial arts and boxing all have low rates of adult participation in 2015 – 16. There is however an absolute increase of 0.1% in combat sport, including martial arts, and boxing in the past 12 months and a 0.2% increase in the martial arts category. So the sports at an England level do show an increase in participation from 2015 – 16.
- 13.6.2 There is no breakdown of participation levels below the England wide findings. The findings for all sports/activities in the Active Lives survey are set out in section 2 of the assessment report.

**Table 13.1 - Active Lives 2015 – 16 and 2017 -18 participation in combat sports, martial arts and boxing**

Sport/Activity	Adult Lives 1			Change in participation in the last 12 months Adult Lives 3			
	P'ton Rate	Lower	Upper	Absolute	Significance	Absolute	Significance
Combat sports, martial arts or target sports	1.9%	1.8%	2.0%	0.1%	Slight increase	0.0%	No change
Boxing (includes boxing fitness classes)	1.7%	1.6%	1.8%	0.1%	Slight increase	0.0%	No change
Martial Arts (as one category)	0.6%	0.5%	0.6%	0.2%	Slight increase	0.1%	No change

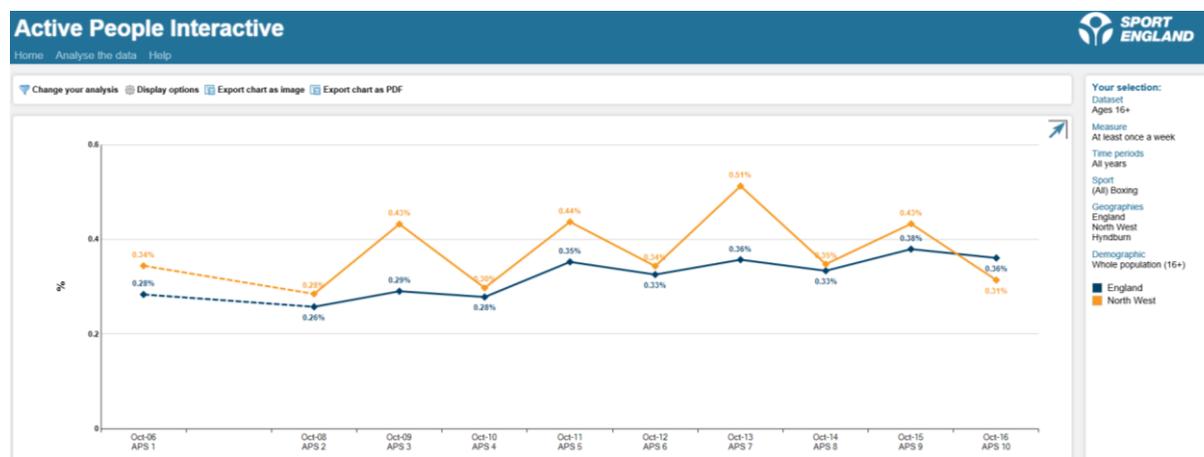
### 13.7 Active People and Active Lives participation in boxing

- 13.7.1 Active People did measure adult participation for boxing and martial arts, based on the benchmark measure of once week participation of 1 x 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity. Moderate intensity is defined as where the participant should have a raised heart rate and be breathless but still able to hold a conversation
- 13.7.2 Adult participation data is available over the 2006 – 2016 Active People surveys and the findings are at the England wide and North West Region level.

### 13.8 Boxing

- 13.8.1 Boxing includes all types of boxing including fitness boxing, the trends in participation are shown in chart 13.1 below. At the England wide level, 0.28% of adults participated in boxing at least once a week in 2006 and in 2016, this had increased to 0.36% of adults in 2016.
- 13.8.2 At the North West Region level 0.34% of adults participated in boxing in 2006 and it was 0.31% of adults in 2016.
- 13.8.3 So applying the North West Region figure for 2016 of 0.31% of adults participating in boxing to the BwD adult population aged 15 – 39 in 2019 of 25,246 (as a proxy for the age range of boxers – including fitness boxing and recognising that fitness boxing is an activity which females participate in) would generate 78 boxers. This is a proxy assessment for adult boxing participation as there is no data available at the BwD level for adults or young people.

**Chart 13.1 - Active People adult participation in boxing England wide and North West Region 2006 - 2016**

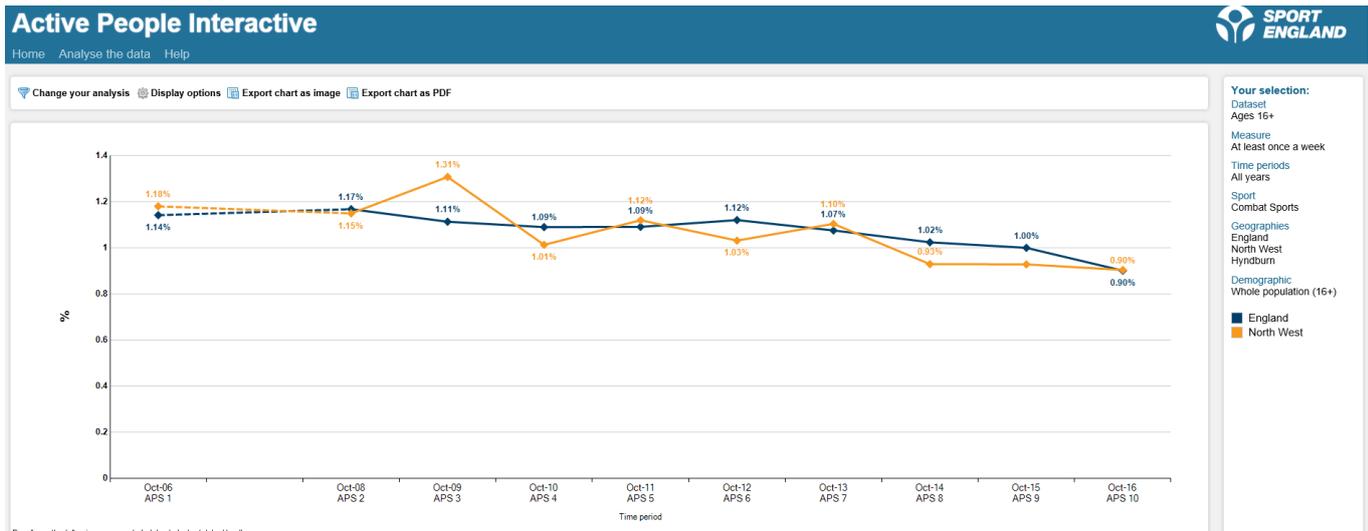


- 13.8.4 Applying the Active Lives 2017 – 18 England wide adult boxing participation rate of 1.8% to the BwD 2019 adult population aged 15 – 39 generates 454 boxers.
- 13.8.5 Active People and Active Lives participation in combat sports
- 13.8.6 Active People measurement of combat sports includes boxing, fencing, judo, taekwondo, wrestling (freestyle, Cumberland, Greco-Roman, Olympic, Westmoreland, Cornish, grappling, beach, Lancashire or 'catch as catch can'), aikido, karate, ju-jitsu, kendo, martial arts, Chinese martial arts, sombo, tai chi, tang soo do.
- 13.8.7 In effect, it is the recognised martial arts, but it does also include boxing and fencing.
- 13.8.8 Participation data is available at the England wide level and for North West Region for the 2006 to 2016 period and are shown in chart 13.2 below.
- 13.8.9 At the England wide level, 1.14% of adults participated in combat sports at least once a week in 2006 and 0.9% of adults in 2016.
- 13.8.10 At the North West region level, 1.18% of adults participated in combat sports in 2006 and it was 0.9% of adults in 2016, the same rate as for England.
- 13.8.11 Applying the North West Region figure for 2016 of 0.9% of adults participating in combat sports to the BwD adult population aged 15 – 39 in 2019 of 25,246 generates 227 people doing combat sports at least once a week.



13.8.12 Given there are ten centres in BwD in 2019, the BwD participation rate is much more likely to be much higher than the Active People participation rate for combat sports.

**Chart 13.2 - Active People adult participation in combat sports England wide and North West Region 2006 - 2016**



13.8.13 Applying the Active Lives 2017 – 18 England wide adult participation rate of 2% for combat sports to the BwD 2019 adult population aged 15 – 39 generates 504 participants.

## Boxing and Martial Arts Key Issues

**Boxing** – includes two athletes punching each other with padded gloves, trying to knock their opponent down and out. It also includes fitness boxing which is part of the wider participation in fitness, strength and conditioning activities. Fitness boxing includes gyms and boxing boot-camps, with workouts including punches bags, jumping rope, and other common exercises performed by boxers.

Fitness boxing is a form of aerobic exercise that involves large groups of muscle, and which stresses the cardiovascular system and increases a person's rate of breathing.

**Martial arts** - the term martial arts refers to all the various systems of training for combat that have been arranged. Generally, these different systems or styles are all designed for one purpose: physically defeating opponents and defending against threats. In fact, the word 'martial' derives from the name Mars, who was the Roman god of war.

Martial arts are broken down into five distinct categories: Stand-up or striking styles, grappling styles, low impact styles, weapons based styles, and MMA (a hybrid sports style).

### QUANTITY

Boxing and martial arts centres are most usually small scale and owned/managed by people or individuals with a long term interest and dedication to the sports. As far as can be established, there are ten centres in BwD in 2019 and one centre has closed. These centres provide for boxing, with fitness boxing and/or some form of martial arts.

Information is limited on the types of activities they provide and it is not known how many of these centres are accredited or affiliated to the national governing body for boxing, or one of the martial arts.

### QUALITY ACCESSIBILITY AND AVAILABILITY

There is virtually no information on these three headings. The centres seem to provide for residents undertaking courses in one type of activity, especially thai kick boxing, or, residents paying a monthly membership fee to access particular classes or sessions.

### DEMAND AND PARTICIPATION

The **Active Lives** adult findings at the England wide level, show the national participation rate for combat sport, including martial arts, and then martial arts as a separate category but including boxing, all have low rates of adult participation in 2015 – 16.

There is however an absolute increase of 0.1% in combat sports, including martial arts, and boxing in the past 12 months from 1.8% and 1.9% of all adults respectively, and a 0.2% increase in the wider martial arts category, from 0.6% to 0.8%. So the sports at an England level, do show an increase in participation in 2017 – 18 when compared with 2015 – 16.

**The Active People findings for boxing** - including fitness boxing at the England wide level show that 0.28% of adults participated in boxing at least once a week in 2006 and in 2016, this had increased to 0.36% of adults.

At the North West Region level, 0.34% of adults participated in boxing in 2006 and 0.31% of adults in 2016.

Applying the North West Region figure for 2016 of 0.31% of adults participating in boxing to the BwD adult population aged 15 – 39 in 2019 of 25,246 (as a proxy for the age range of boxers – including fitness boxing and recognising that fitness boxing is an activity which females participate in) would generate 78 boxers.

**The Active People findings for combat sports** includes boxing, fencing, judo, taekwondo, wrestling (freestyle, Cumberland, Greco-Roman, Olympic, Westmoreland, Cornish, grappling, beach, Lancashire or 'catch as catch can'), aikido, karate, ju-jitsu, kendo, martial arts, Chinese martial arts, sombo, tai chi, tang soo do.

Participation data is available at the England wide level and for North West Region for the 2006 to 2016 period. At the England wide level, 1.14% of adults participated in combat sports, at least once a week in 2006 and 0.9% of adults in 2016.

At the North West region level, 1.18% of adults participated in combat sports in 2006 and it was 0.9% of adults in 2016, the same rate as for England.

Applying the North West Region figure for 2016 of 0.9% of adults participating in combat sports to the BwD adult population aged 15 – 39 in 2019 of 25,246, generates 227 people doing combat sports at least once a week.

Given there are ten centres in BwD in 2019, the BwD participation rate is likely to be much higher than the Active People NW Region/England wide participation rate for combat sports.

## OVERALL SUMMARY

Participation in boxing, based on the Active Lives data is increasing very slightly (England level) but declining based on the Active People data at the North West Region level, there is no data below NW region level. On both measures the participation rate, is only around 1% of adults participating on a regular basis.

However, it is likely that both surveys do not account for the rise in popularity of fitness boxing, which is part of the wider participation increase in fitness, strength and conditioning activities. So participation could be much higher in BwD, but subject to fluctuations in the ever changing trends of fitness and conditioning activities.

Participation in combat sports which includes all the martial arts activities, is also low and at the North West region level, 0.9% of adults participated at least once a week in 2016, the same rate as for England.



From information available, there are ten boxing/martial arts centres in BwD in 2019 but the number of centres does change frequently.

It is most likely that supply and demand does regulate the number of centres in BwD and this provides sufficient number of centres to meet demand. Should the Council wish to investigate the provision of a boxing or martial arts centre in more detail, it is recommended that a specific and detailed BwD participation survey in boxing and martial arts is undertaken, as a first step.

- 13.8.14 Given the nature of the sports, the Council's role findings there are no specific Action Plans for Climbing or Boxing / Martial Arts.

## 14.0 Conclusion and Way Forward

### Introduction

- 14.1 Investment will only be achieved to deliver the Built Facility Strategy, through a combination of opportunities and funding sources as well as partnership opportunities.
- 14.2 Local authority finances remain under pressure and previous major national funding programmes are no longer available. Some funding opportunities, however, still remain. While education capital funding programmes will continue to change over time, there will still be a need for investment to take place on school sites during the strategy period and opportunities for joint projects may arise.
- 14.3 The council will seek to use assets innovatively and work on a multi-agency approach to address the facility requirements in the strategy.
- 14.4 The main funding delivery mechanisms for BwD and others in delivering this strategy are;
- Planning contributions – new development and population growth will generate demand for additional indoor and outdoor sports facilities. All new developments should contribute towards the provision of outdoor and indoor sports, whether through the provision of new facilities or the improvement of existing. The Local Plan policy sets out how this will be achieved across the borough
  - Capital Grant funding: From schools and national agencies such as Sport England
  - National Governing Body (NGB) support
  - Council funding: capital funding allocated to deliver facilities within the council's ownership, and potentially the use of capital receipts from the sale of existing assets
  - Education and Further Education sector: while the previous sources of funding (including BSF and Primary Schools Programme) have changed and

the scale of the education capital programmes have been reduced, the education sector is still likely to be a key funding stream.

- 14.5 The Council will have to establish its approach to securing contributions, either through a CIL mechanism or s106 contributions. This report provides the background and evidence to develop robust policy. Set out below is the suggested approach.

## Local Plan Policy

### Local Plan Policy - Built Sports Facilities

#### *Introduction*

**The BwD Council Built Facility Strategy Assessment Report and Action Plan (January 2022)** provides a robust evidence base, which sets out the current and future demand for built sports facilities across the borough. This is the key evidence base and compliments the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS), which sets out current and future playing field needs.

#### *Policy*

In order to provide appropriate indoor / built sports facilities for the communities of BwD, the Council will:

#### **1. Protect existing indoor / built sports facilities, unless:**

- a.) They are proven to be surplus to need as outlined in the Built Facility Strategy (or an updated needs assessment); or
- b.) Improved alternative provision will be created in an appropriate catchment location related to the former provision.

And in all cases:

- c.) The proposal would not result in the loss of a facility important for its amenity or contribution to the character of the area in general.

*Improved alternative provision means a full quantity and quality replacement to accord with paragraph 98 and 99 of the NPPF and Sport England policy, unless alternative (different type of) provision can be demonstrated to better meet future sport and physical activity needs.*

#### **2. Support new indoor / built sports facilities where:**

- a.) They are evidenced by need as outlined in the Built Facility Strategy (or an updated needs assessment) and will meet an identified gap in provision.



- b.) They are listed in the action plan in the Sports Facility Strategy and subject to the recommendations in the Action Plan.
- c.) The proposed facilities are of a type and scale appropriate to the size of the need and catchment identified.
- d.) They are located to maximise usage, are publicly accessible with community use polices built in as part of the development proposals; and
- e.) They are readily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.

**3. Ensure that residential developments contribute, through land assembly and/or financial contributions, to new or improved indoor / built sports facilities where development will increase demand and/or there is a recognised shortage in the locality that would be exacerbated by the increase in demand arising from the development. Justification:**

- a.) Publicly accessible built / indoor sports facilities have a vital role to play in helping to promote more healthy lifestyles.
- b.) The existing built / indoor sports facilities of the district represent important assets serving the communities in which they are located and in some instances the wider borough.
- c.) Any proposal affecting an indoor / built sports facility will be assessed in relation to the Sports Facility Strategy or subsequently adopted Strategies.

The type and scale of development will depend upon a number of factors:

- The application of the Sport England Sports Facility Calculator (SfC), which should be used as the starting point for any contributions.
- The supply and demand factors relevant at the time of the development. It is understood that the supply and demand picture will evolve over time. The Sports Facility Strategy should provide the baseline and starting point for consideration of investment needs.
- Following on from the above, assessment of whether existing sports facilities have the capacity to meet the demand identified from development. If not, whether investment and enhancement in existing facilities will enable them to meet some or all of the demand generated or whether new provision is required.

In terms of the development of appropriate facilities, this will be determined through evidence from the Sports Facility Strategy, other work with the community and sports governing bodies and clubs, to determine particular community's needs at the time of development.



## New Facilities

14.6 In addition to the overarching strategy principles outlined earlier in this section, the following should be considered when providing any new facilities (or new sites to facilitate club relocation).

- **Location** - When planning new facilities, the existing sporting infrastructure should be taken into account
- **Community Use** – any new provision should seek to maximise usage through community use agreements, this is particularly relevant in relation to proposed new education sites. With supply and demand generally in balanced new education provision should be accessible out of hours to the wider community, in line with Sport England community use principles
- **Quality** - Any new pitch provision should meet with the design and quality standards guidance provided by Sport England and/or the relevant NGB (detailed below)
- The following general criteria must also be met:
  - A high standard of design, construction and maintenance appropriate to the standard of play
  - Adequate changing facilities that: are flexible, fit for a variety of purposes
  - fully comply with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act
  - provide for a number of different groups to use the facility at the same time, in safety and comfort; and
  - meet current standards - Sport England & NGB guidelines
  - Managed community access
  - Accessible by public transport and by car
  - Sufficient car parking
  - Size of facilities comply with NGB specification
  - Security of tenure (at least 25 years) if a club is to be based at the site.

All new and enhanced sports facilities must be designed in accordance with the relevant Sport England and (where applicable) National Governing Body (NGB) design guidance in order to ensure that the facilities are fit for purpose and of a suitable quality.

Sport England's web site [www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org) contains a range of current guidance documents which provide detailed specifications and information regarding the design of sporting and ancillary facilities.

### **Evaluating the Impact of New Development**

- 14.7 Sport England has developed tools for determining the impact of new development on demand for indoor sports facilities and they should be used to guide the investment required in facilities from new development.

#### **Sport England Facility Calculator**

- 14.8 The Sports Facility Calculator considers the needs for sports halls and swimming pools and indicates how much demand will be created by a new development and the cost associated with this.
- 14.9 As in the Playing Pitch Calculator, the Sports Facility Calculator does not take into account the current levels of unmet demand in the area and so the resulting figures are then considered in the context of the strategic findings of the assessment in order to determine the ability of the existing facilities to sustain the additional demand and any requirements for new and / or improved provision. The actions that should be taken to address any identified needs should therefore be guided by the findings of this strategy.

#### **Monitoring and Review**

- 14.10 The evolving context of participation in sport and active recreation means that monitoring and review of the strategy is as important as the initial preparation of the document to ensure it remains sufficiently robust.
- 14.11 Reflecting the importance of this phase of work, monitoring of the strategy is a key component of both the Assessing Needs and Opportunities guidance (ANOG) and the Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance (Sport England).
- 14.12 The Action Plans in each section should be used as the basis for monitoring and review.
- 14.13 The steering group are committed to keeping the strategy alive through;



- Monitoring the delivery of the recommendations and actions and identifying any changes that are required to the priority afforded to each action
  - Recording changes to the facility stock and evaluating the impact of this on the supply and demand information
  - Assessing the impact of changes to participation and changing trends on the amount and type of facilities required
  - Assessing the impact of demographic changes and any changes to forecasted plans for housing growth
  - Ongoing consultation to understand the evolving needs of clubs and governing bodies, and any requirements for new or improved facilities in the area
  - Analysis of funding sources and new funding opportunities for the provision/improvement of sports facilities
  - Reviewing growth of emerging sports, their participation rates, facilities available for them and likely facilities necessary for their support and development; and
  - Ensuring that the strategy continues to provide an up to date and robust evidence base to underpin CIL / S106 obligations.
- 14.14 The working group will continue to meet to review progress by all key partners on the strategy delivery and to discuss any issues arising.