



Indoor Sports & Facilities Assessment

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1 Introduction

1.1 Open space and sport and recreation facilities can make a major contribution to ensuring that villages, towns and cities are places in which people will choose to live. The main role of the planning system is to ensure there are sufficient facilities and that they are in the right locations. But this is not enough. There is a need also to ensure they are of high quality, attractive to users and well managed and maintained.

1.2 Therefore, as background evidence for the Local Development Framework, Lichfield District Council has undertaken a number of assessments to consider the District's current provision, local needs, future needs and standards. This Indoor Sports and Facilities Assessment has been produced alongside the following additional assessments:

- Open Space Assessment (Dec 2007)
- Playing Pitch Assessment (Dec 2006)

1.3 There is increasing evidence that highlights the need for, and importance of, a range of good quality accessible leisure facilities. The wide ranging benefits are set out below:

Healthy Living

1.4 An active lifestyle has a whole range of health benefits. These include the prevention and reduction of high blood pressure, halving the risk of heart disease, strokes and cancer, along with being an effective treatment for mental health and helping to cure clinical depression.

1.5 According to Sport England Active Design (2007), the World Health Organisation have estimated inactivity in developed countries accounts for nearly a quarter of heart disease cases, 15% of diabetes and similarly high levels of strokes and certain types of cancers.

Community Benefits

1.6 Getting youngsters involved in sport and clubs is proven to reduce boredom and antisocial behaviour. It also builds stronger communities by providing a focus and encourages people to challenge their perceptions of their neighbourhood.

Benefits to the Economy

1.7 This works in two ways: firstly, we spend 13 billion on sports related goods each year and the sector employs 435,000 people in this country.

1.8 Secondly, the estimated cost to the economy of physical inactivity is 8.2 billion annually with another 2.5 billion being directly attributed to inactivity caused by obesity.

Starting Early

1.9 Research has shown that people of a young age who get involved with sport regularly are more likely to continue with this throughout their adult life. This is also important because one million children are forecast to be obese by the year 2010, the highest figure in Europe. Education is also intertwined with sport and it has often been stated by the Government that the best achieving schools in sport are also the best academically, hence 'a healthy mind and body'

1.10 The main aim of this assessment is to highlight any deficiencies in the supply of specific facilities in the District and bring to the fore any issues with the quality and range of these facilities that the public may have. Sport England have published guidelines for the quantity of swimming pools, sports halls and indoor bowling greens needed per head of population.

1.11 The key aims of this assessment are to consider the following questions:

- what key indoor sports facilities are currently available to the community within Lichfield District?
- where are they located in Lichfield District?
- are they easily accessed by the local community?
- what is the demand for the use of these facilities by local people?
- are the facilities of a sufficient quality standard?
- where are the deficiencies in provision?
- what are the solutions?

1.12 This report sets out:

- a review of existing key documents and previous research undertaken by the District Council;
- the outcome of consultations with the public;
- a review of current levels of supply;
- demand modelling to ascertain current demand; and
- possible solutions for the future.

Aims & Scope of Assessment

1.13 In line with PPG17 guidance the District Council has assessed a number of indoor sports facilities in the area. These are:

- Indoor Tennis;
- Indoor Bowls;
- Leisure Centres;
- Swimming Pools;
- Sports Halls;



- Community Centres;
- Village Halls;
- Ice Rinks; and, in addition
- Squash Courts.

1.14 In addition to facilities within Lichfield District, facilities outside the District, but within a 3 km buffered zone around our boundary edge, have also been included. Lichfield District should not be treated as an island, as there are many facilities in settlements such as Rugeley, Tamworth and the Major Urban Area that all abut the District boundary. It could be argued that the inclusion of facilities outside the District boundary could skew the true picture of supply and not reflect accurately the nature of any deficiencies within the District. Therefore, for completeness, figures including and excluding facilities within a 3km buffer of Lichfield District will be indicated when reviewing supply.

1.15 Private sports facilities are included in the audit, as are school facilities which will be termed 'dual use' facilities from this point on. Sport England's guidance states that figures for supply should be reduced by 25% for a dual use facility to reflect restricted access.

2 Strategic Context

2.1 The following national, regional and local documents have been reviewed as they set the strategic context for indoor sports and facilities provision within Lichfield District:

- Sport England: Active Design 2007
- Sport England: Game Plan 2002
- Sport England: A Framework for Sport 2004
- Sport England Kitbag: Local Standards for Provision
- PPG17: Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation
- Regeneration through Culture, Sport and Tourism
- A Regional Plan for Sport in the West Midlands 2004-8
- Draft Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment (2005)
- Sport and Recreation Strategy 2002-7
- A Playing Pitch Strategy for Lichfield District Council

National & Regional Context

2.2 Currently, the main emphasis of national sports policy is to tackle poor health and the problem of obesity, by getting more people involved in sporting activity. The following documents contain a number of recommendations and standards which should inform any local targets and objectives when translating our recommendations into actions.

2.3 '**Game Plan: a strategy for delivering the government's sport and physical activity objectives**' outlined that the remit essentially was to highlight the link between physical activity and improving health and the vital role of young people's participation in this. The long-term vision of the strategy is:

'by 2020 to increase significantly levels of sport and physical activity, particularly amongst disadvantaged groups and to achieve sustained levels of success in international competition.'

2.4 It also has three overarching objectives:

- To significantly increase the level of mass participation in sport and physical activity amongst all age groups
- To improve the system at grass roots level and provide support to our world -class athletes to bring about success on the international sporting stage
- To adopt a different approach to hosting major sporting events in this country



2.5 'Active Design; promoting opportunities for sport and physical activity through good design' is a document aimed principally at planners, urban designers and architects to highlight the role of activity at the centre of new developments whether public or private.

2.6 David Lock associates came up with three key design objectives, 'the three A's':

- Improving Accessibility: providing easy, safe and convenient access to a choice of opportunities for participating in sport and physical activity and active travel for the whole community.
- Enhancing Amenity: promoting environmental quality in the design and layout of new sports and recreational facilities, their links and relationship to other buildings and the wider public realm.
- Increasing Awareness: raising the prominence and legibility of sports and recreational facilities and opportunities for physical activity through the design and layout of development.

2.7 'A Framework for Sport 2004-2008' has a vision that states we should be looking to become the most active and the most successful sporting nation in the world. It essentially takes the agenda setting idea of '*Game Plan*' and develops it into a workable process.

- It sets out a robust framework for increased participation and inclusion up to the year 2020.
- Twenty priority sports are identified at UK level and in England.
- It has detailed plans for delivery and forming partnerships at all levels.
- It looks at the impacts the framework will have on the future of sport and the wider benefits for local communities

Local Context

2.8 Lichfield District Council has previously produced an **Open Space Sport & Recreation Assessment**, published in 2005. This Indoor Sports and Facilities Assessment aims to expand on and improved the evidence base with regard to indoor sports and facilities provision, an area lacking in the original assessment. Open space and playing pitch assessments are considered in separate, but complementary assessments.

2.9 To ensure a level of continuity, elements of the **Playing Pitch Assessment** have been used as a guideline for this assessment. The Playing Pitch Assessment was carried out by the external consultants **PMP** and published at the end of 2006 on behalf of Lichfield District Council. The main objectives were to:

- Look at the current picture of provision
- Calculate demand and deficiencies
- Recommend priorities for action

2.10 The **Sport and Recreation Strategy 2002-7** produced by our Leisure Department, covers a wide range of issues and topics relating to sport and recreation within the District. The main topics covered are:

- Aims and strategies for the future including integrated working and equality
- Sources of funding including national schemes like awards for all and local projects such as the Lichfield Council Grant Aid Scheme.
- Trends including participation rates and needs analysis
- Looking at how to increase access and participation rates
- Facility Provision including key partners and issues
- Sports development including young peoples participation survey results, sports programs and education and training and
- Conclusions, future monitoring and observation.

2.11 At present, the updated Sport and Recreation Strategy 2008-13, is being drafted and is due to be published in the near future.

2.12 Sport England have produced three separate reports for the multi use leisure centres in our District. Known as the **National Benchmarking Service for Sports and Leisure Centres**, they are produced in conjunction with PMP and Sheffield Hallam University. The Lichfield studies all took place in the spring/ summer of 2006 to include surveys with the public outside existing leisure centres over a period of eight days.



3 Methodology

3.1 Information gathering for this audit has been carried out in several different ways.

3.2 The main method of our own local evidence gathering was through a household questionnaire sent to a proportionate number of randomly selected households in each ward.

3.3 To complement this, questionnaires were also sent to the Parish Councils within the District, the majority of them rural, to ascertain information mainly relating to village halls.

3.4 Finally, registered sports clubs throughout the District were sent questionnaires relating to membership, booking and ownership of facility, amongst others questions. The aim was to give us a broad picture from a number of different sources on the present situation within Lichfield District.

3.5 Information on most typologies included for the audit were found through research on Sport England's Active Places website. This also included a 'buffer' of three kilometres drawn around the edge of the District indicating the area that most residents will be prepared to travel to for recreational purposes.

3.6 Following this, provision standards were set. Quantity standards were set using the information gathered from facility audits, local consultation in the form of questionnaires and also demand modelling.

3.7 Accessibility standards could also be worked out from these audits and questionnaires, coupled with consideration of catchment areas for indoor facilities. There is a general consensus that 15 minutes travel time is the distance that the majority of people would find acceptable to travel to sports halls and swimming pools.

3.8 Applying the standards allows us to:

- Identify any deficiencies or surpluses in quantity
- Identify deficiencies in accessibility
- Identify quality deficiency

3.9 The process has allowed for recommendations to be made for the future. Key strategic priorities have also been flagged up for subsequent consideration.

Public Consultation

3.10 The public were sent surveys asking questions ranging from patterns of facility use and how far they were prepared to travel, to what they considered Lichfield District was lacking and if they had complaints relating to specific sites.

3.11 We sent out almost 3000 surveys to randomly selected households across the District. Completed questionnaires were received from over 450 households, representing around a 15% response rate.

3.12 The majority of respondents were female, almost two thirds of the total, and the average age was around 52. It should be noted that only a very small percentage of the population under thirty responded to this questionnaire, around 4%.

3.13 These were some of the main points that came out of the study:

- The most popular indoor activity among residents is swimming followed by visiting the gym and then playing badminton.
- Depending on the particular type of facility, between 18% (village/ community facility) and 31% (gym/health and fitness) are prepared to travel for longer than 15 minutes to reach them.
- Roughly a quarter of respondents travel outside the District to visit indoor facilities.
- The most common reasons for not using the indoor facilities on offer are lack of time and facilities being too expensive.
- The most common site specific complaint is about the Friary Grange Sports Centre
- Lichfield is most in need of a swimming pool according to respondents. This was by far the most popular choice.

Parish Consultation

3.14 A postal questionnaire was sent to all the Parish Clerks in the District, twenty five in all. The aim was to find out what facilities and activities are in each area, if it was considered that there is sufficient provision of facilities in the parish; and if the present facilities are being used to their full potential. Comments were also sought on the quality of existing facilities and any suggestions parish council's had for future developments.

3.15 Eight replies were received from the parish councils. Five parishes said the facilities are vital, but two of the other three do not have any significant provision.

- Alrewas and Fradley Parish Council indicated that they need a hall large enough for indoor physical activity in Fradley particularly because of the young demographic make up of the village.
- The village of Alrewas has a hall but currently the parish council is in discussion regarding a refurbishment.
- The parish of Lichfield also indicated a lack of community facilities and suggested that another community hall should be built along with a cinema in the City.
- Drayton Bassett also suggested that despite being a reasonably large village there are feeling of isolation due to a complete lack of facilities.



3.16 The most common reasons for not using the facilities in the District are poor public transport, lack of information and poor quality facilities, with three out of eight parishes highlighting these specific problems.

3.17 The main complaint about their own facilities was that they are too small, limiting the choice of activity they can provide.

Areas Covered by Assessment

3.18 Although the whole District plus a further three kilometres around the edge has been analysed, it is useful to split the the District into analysis areas in order to highlight specific areas of surplus or shortfall. With sustainable planning in mind, there are many benefits to having sports facilities close by, such as being able to walk or cycle to a facility or having a direct public transport service. As such, the District has been split into four analysis areas that correspond with those set out in the Playing Pitch Assessment.

Lichfield	Burntwood	Rural North	Rural South
Curborough	Highfield	Colton and Mavesyn Ridware	Hammerwich
Chadsmead	All Saints	Longdon	Shenstone
Stowe	Summerfield	Armitage with Handsacre	Bourne Vale
Boley Park	Chasetown	Kings Bromley	Stonnall
St Johns	Chase Terrace	Alrewas and Fradley	Little Aston
Leomansley	Burntwood Central	Mease and Tame	Fazeley
	Boney Hay	Whittington	

Table 3.1 Analysis Areas in Lichfield District

4 Analysis of Supply & Demand

4.1 In analysing the need and demand for sports facilities in Lichfield District it is important to briefly highlight the size and composition of the resident population and therefore the local leisure market need.

4.2 The population of the District is 95,600 (2005 mid-year estimate) and growing at a rate of roughly 400 to 500 hundred per year. In addition to present supply and demand calculations it is considered appropriate to gauge future projections of supply and demand.

4.3 The main settlements are Lichfield and Burntwood, in the centre and to the west of the District. They are of a similar size and make up almost two-thirds of the District's population. Most of the District is less than 20 miles from Birmingham City Centre and benefits from good road and rail access allowing quick and easy links nationally.

4.4 For the purpose of this assessment, all typologies highlighted in the scope of the assessment were identified both within the District boundary and also inside the three kilometre buffer zone surrounding it. Due to the nature of the District boundary bordering the built up areas of neighbouring towns, the buffer permits the inclusion of the Major Urban Area (to include Birmingham and Walsall Metropolitan Areas), Tamworth and Rugeley. Subsequently, the District's figures for provision of built facilities are very different when including the buffer zone than if it is discounted.

4.5 The demand projections are calculated in a number of different ways depending on which type of facility is being considered. Sport England have developed the Sports Facility Calculator to calculate demand for bowling greens, swimming pools and sports halls. The Facility Planning Model is used for analysing demand for other types of sport.

Leisure Centres

4.6 There are three Multi Use Sports Centres in our District, two of which are accessible at all times to the general public. These are:

- Burntwood Leisure Centre
- Friary Grange Leisure Centre
- King Edward VI Leisure Centre

4.7 These have all been the subject of a quality assessment carried out by Sport England recently. Many different aspects were looked at, from cost to cleanliness to quality of food.



Friary Grange Leisure Centre

4.8 Friary Grange Leisure Centre is the oldest in the District and was built in 1973 as part of a secondary school development. It comprises a 25 x 12.5 metre swimming pool, a sports hall with provision for 5 badminton courts, a health and fitness suite with a separate dance/ fitness studio, 2 squash courts and a solarium. It is a dual use facility but the fitness centre is always available to the public. It is officially classified as a 'mixed without outdoor centre' by Sport England and is a 'medium sized centre' with a gross floorspace of 2526 sqm.

4.9 There were 250,000 visitors in 2005/6. Of the 354 people surveyed as part of Sport England's National Benchmarking Service for Sports and Leisure Facilities, nearly equal proportions were using the fitness studio/ gym and the swimming pool, making up nearly 80% of the total visitor numbers.

4.10 Overall satisfaction with the centre was marked at 4.18 out of 5, a high satisfaction score. Helpfulness of the staff, convenience of accessibility and quality of flooring in the sports hall all fared particularly well in the ratings. Attributes that scored below 3.5, therefore in need of some improvement, were value for money on food and drink, quality of food and drink, cleanliness of changing areas and with a score of less than 3, the quality of car parking on the site.

King Edward VI Leisure Centre

4.11 The leisure centre adjacent to King Edwards school was built in the mid 1990's. It provides a large sports hall with space for four badminton courts, two squash courts, exercise studio and a solarium. The sports hall can only be used by the public on a dual use basis and the rest of the facilities can be used throughout the day, whilst a swimming pool at the school can be booked in accordance with the leisure centre at designated times. It is classed as 'dry without outdoor' and a medium sized centre, although appreciably smaller than the Friary Grange at 1710 sqm gross.

4.12 Around 113,000 visits were reported in 2005/6 and 257 people took part in the survey. Over half of the respondents reported use of the main hall on the site. The largest proportion of users fell into the group using it for 'other physical activity', not actually specified in the study.

4.13 Overall satisfaction with the visit brought the average score to 4.42 out of 5, a very high mark. Particular satisfaction was to be found with the helpfulness of staff, the standard of coaching, the quality of flooring and the cleanliness of activity spaces. There were no attributes with a score rated at less than 3.5 and only three rated under 4 out of 5: the range of activities on offer and the quality and value of food and drink.

Burntwood Leisure Centre

4.14 Burntwood Leisure Centre had a major refurbishment and extension around five years ago. It is a large leisure centre providing a range of facilities including two swimming pools (1 adult, 1 toddler,) a 4-court sports hall, two squash courts, fitness suite, studio for classes and

a sauna/ solarium/ steam room health facility. It is classed as a 'mixed with outdoor facility' and is in the 'large centre' family, i.e. over 3000 sqm with an actual floorspace of 5000sqm. It is not affiliated to a school and therefore fully accessible to members of the public at all times.

4.15 Total visits to the centre in 2005/6 were 715,859 and 374 people took part in the survey. The pool was used by 44% of respondents and the gym/ fitness centre complex by 39% of the people, comprising over 80% of the total visitors.

4.16 The average satisfaction score from the participants in the survey was 4.46 out of 5, again a high mark. It was particularly noted that the standard of coaching is high, the staff are very helpful and also the range and convenience of the activities available is excellent. No attribute was rated below 3.50 and very few were under 4; the food and drink quality and value and the water temperature in the pool being the only variables judged as such.

Sports Halls

Quantity and Location

4.17 There are five sports halls of suitable size for multi sport activity in the District (**See Fig. 4.1**). These are defined by Sport England as halls which can accommodate at least three badminton courts. All halls in our District can accommodate four to five badminton courts. Two of these are located in Lichfield, two in Burntwood and one on the northern edge of Tamworth, just within Lichfield District.

- There are another twelve halls in the buffer zone, predominantly in Tamworth and the area in the west, from Norton Canes to Aldridge.
- The usable hall space at any one time in the District equates to 16.75 badminton courts.
- The total recommended number of courts for the District is 26.5 or 6.6 four court halls.
- The total court space when the buffer zone is included is 60.5 courts.
- Taking into account future population projections, by 2021 there will be a demand for 28.46 courts.
- This means the present undersupply of 10 courts will increase to 12 or 3 four-court halls.

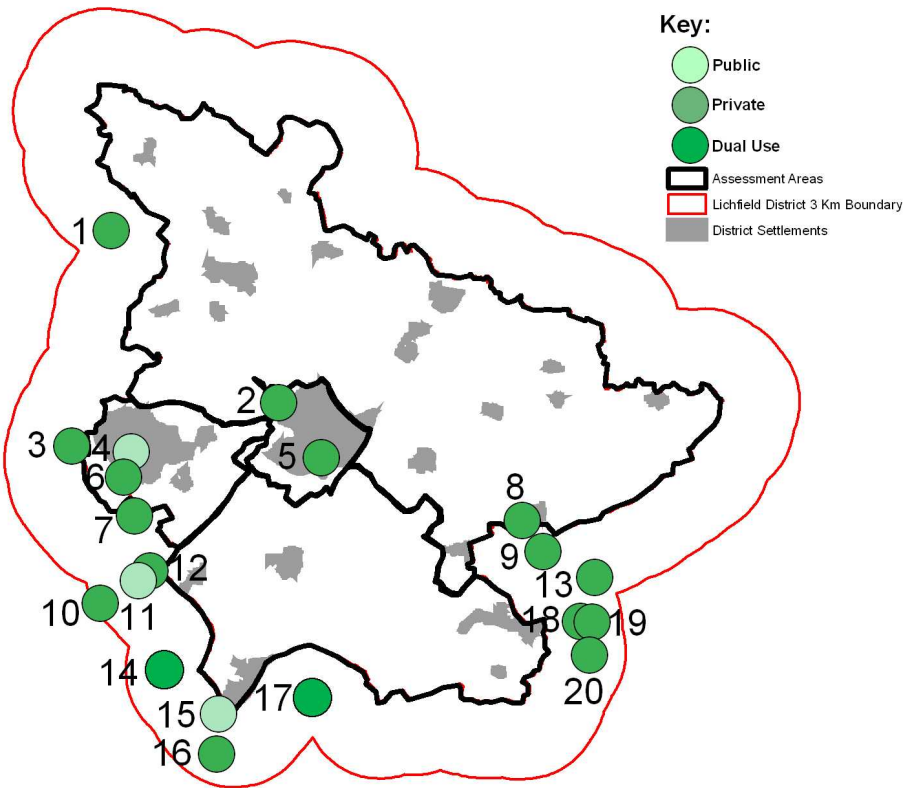


Figure 4.1 Sports Hall Locations

1	Rugeley Leisure Centre	11	Oak Park Leisure Centre
2	Friary Grange Leisure Centre	12	Shire Oak School
3	Norton Canes School	13	Woodhouse Sports Centre
4	Burntwood Leisure Centre	14	St Francis of Assisi
5	King Edward VI Leisure Centre	15	Streetly School
6	Chasetown Sports College	16	Streetly Sports Centre
7	Brownhills Community Technical College	17	Arthur Terry School
8	Rawlett High School	18	Belgrave School
9	Queen Elizabeth Mercian School	19	Torc High School
10	Sheffield Community College	20	Wilnecote Community Sports Centre

Quality and Accessibility

4.18 One of the main problems with the usage of sports halls in the District is the fact that four out of five of the halls are dual use facilities connected to schools, Burntwood Leisure Centre being the exception. This appears to be a common situation however; of the other twelve halls in the buffer zone, only two are fully accessible at all times (Oak Park Leisure Centre in Walsall Wood and Streetly Sports in Streetly).

4.19 From the aspect of affordability, none of the halls in the District are private membership facilities.

4.20 Responses to the question of travel time show that 76% of the population are not prepared to travel more than 15 minutes to reach a sports hall. This is in line with the 75% suggested by Sport England to be an acceptable proportion within travel distance to sports facilities. The study shows that travelling by car, all sports halls in the District can be reached within 15 minutes with no facilities being further than five and a half miles.

4.21 Although it is important for local authorities to provide facilities for their own residents, due to the nature of the boundary of Lichfield District, it borders some major settlements very closely. This means that residents' are often in much closer proximity to facilities in neighbouring districts than their own. In the interests of the environment it is often the more sustainable choice to use these facilities. Indeed, many villages have direct bus links to these settlements that are not linked to the main settlements and facilities of Lichfield District.

4.22 There were no major complaints about the quality of the lighting or surfaces in the sports halls. The National Benchmarking Service Survey of the three main leisure centres in the area showed good standards, with scores over four out of five for all attributes.

Indoor Swimming Pools

Quantity and location

4.23 There is only one non dual use, publicly run swimming pool in Lichfield District. This is at Burntwood Leisure Centre in the west of the District. The other pools are at Friary Grange Leisure Centre located in Lichfield and Esporta Health Club between Lichfield and Shenstone adjacent to junction T5 of the M6 Toll (**See Fig. 4.2**).

4.24 Additionally, in the 'buffer zone' there are a number of further swimming facilities available. Just over the District boundary is Brownhills Community Technical College and Oak Park Leisure Centre in Walsall Wood. Both these facilities serve residents living in the south west of Lichfield District.

- The total provision for swimming pools in the District is 850 square metres.
- The actual recommended figure worked out using Sport England's Facility Calculator is 958 sqm.



- The inclusion of the buffer zone provision improves the picture a little, with 1434 sqm of pool water available for the public.
- This is likely to be over 2000sqm if and when Rugeley and Peaks Leisure Centres' swimming pools reopen.
- With the predicted increase in population by 2021, 1029sqm of water will be needed to cover peak time capacity participation.
- This means that there is a slight under provision of pool water within the District of around half a pool.

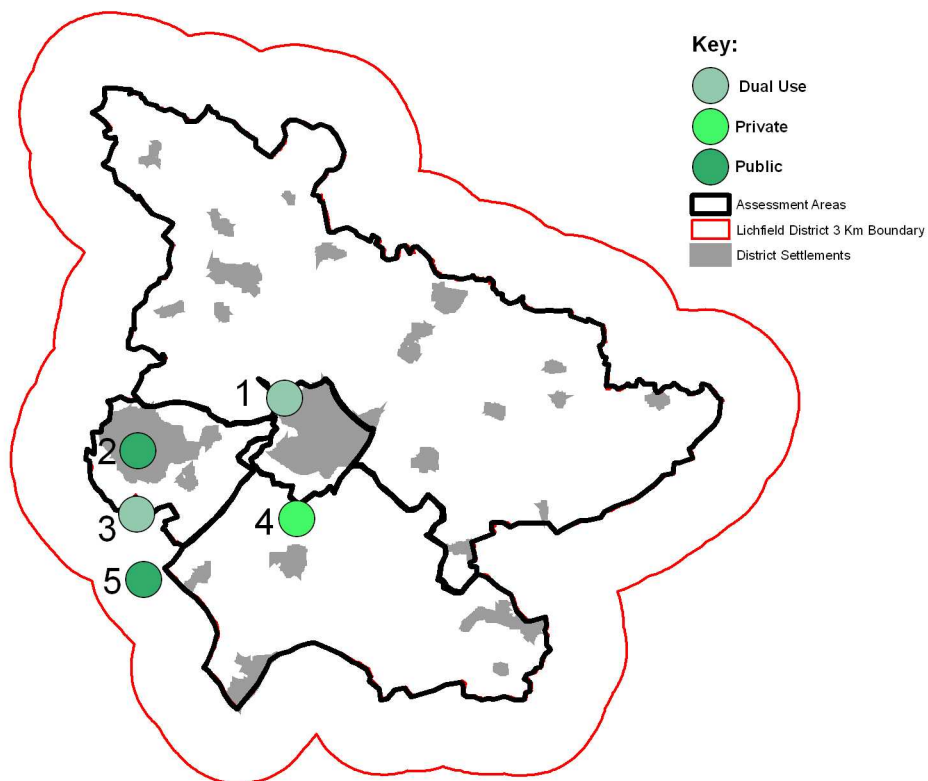


Figure 4.2 Swimming Pool Locations

1	Friary Grange Leisure Centre
2	Burntwood Leisure Centre
3	Brownhills Community Technical College
4	Esporta
6	Oak Park Leisure Centre

Quality and Accessibility

4.25 Although the initial analysis reflects a relatively adequate level of supply in the District there are certain barriers to usage of these pools.

4.26 Firstly, the joining fee and monthly membership costs of Esporta are prohibitive to many residents in the District. In fact, nearly a third of respondents to our questionnaire stated that one of the main reasons for not using indoor sports facilities in the District is due to facilities being too expensive. Esporta is the most expensive facility in the District.

4.27 Secondly, although calculations for the available water for Friary Grange dual use facility have been reduced by 25%, in line with Sport England recommendations for analysis purposes, the available time for club and public swimming reflects less than 50% of the opening time in the week and just over 50% on Saturday. One of the most common complaints was the lack of convenient swimming times at the only swimming pool in Lichfield City.

4.28 Residents were asked how far they would be prepared to travel to use swimming pools and 77% said they would be prepared to travel up to 15 minutes and no more. This is a clear reflection of Sport England's presumed figure of 75%. This only excludes around 1% of Lichfield District's population, living in and around the villages of Clifton Campville and Edingale in the east of the District and only by a maximum of around two minutes. Further barriers exist due to the lack of a direct bus service to Lichfield City from these areas.

4.29 Of the respondents who stated reasons for not using indoor facilities, 87 named a specific site they did not use, 37 of which cited Friary Grange due to the swimming pool. This equates to 42% of site specific complaints received. The reasons mainly related to cleanliness of the changing rooms and perceived general poor quality. This is reflected by the National Benchmarking score for Friary Grange; although ranked as the second most important attribute score, the cleanliness of the changing rooms gained the third worst satisfaction mark.

4.30 As previously touched upon, Rugeley Leisure Centre and Peaks Leisure Centre are closed at present. Rugeley Leisure Centre's pool, affiliated to Hagley Park School, is at present being rebuilt and will be completed early next year. This serves residents of the District towards the north-west for example Armitage, Hill Ridware and Upper Longdon, as the District borders Rugeley town.

4.31 Peaks Leisure Centre is also due to re open in the near future with a fully accessible public pool. This serves many residents in the villages of Hopwas, Fazeley and Mile Oak that border Tamworth Borough in the south and east of the District. However, as this assessment is designed as a snapshot of available facilities in October 2007, these pools are not included in the calculations.



Health & Fitness Centres

Quantity and Location

4.32 There are a total of five health and fitness clubs in Lichfield District. Two of these facilities are in Burntwood, two are in Lichfield and the other is the previously mentioned Esporta (**see Fig. 4.3**).

4.33 There are numerous health and fitness facilities in the buffer zone, a further 13 in total. These are almost exclusively located in an arc from Walsall Wood in the south-west of the District to Tamworth in the south-east.

- The present supply of fitness stations in the District is 321
- 12.5% of the population visit the gym at least once a month
- This means that there is demand for 218 stations at peak time in Lichfield District, a surplus of 103
- Without the inclusion of the private facilities, there are only 163 stations available at any one time
- Inclusion of facilities in the buffer zone gives us a supply of 1055
- Projected population increases to 2021 adjust the demand to 228 stations

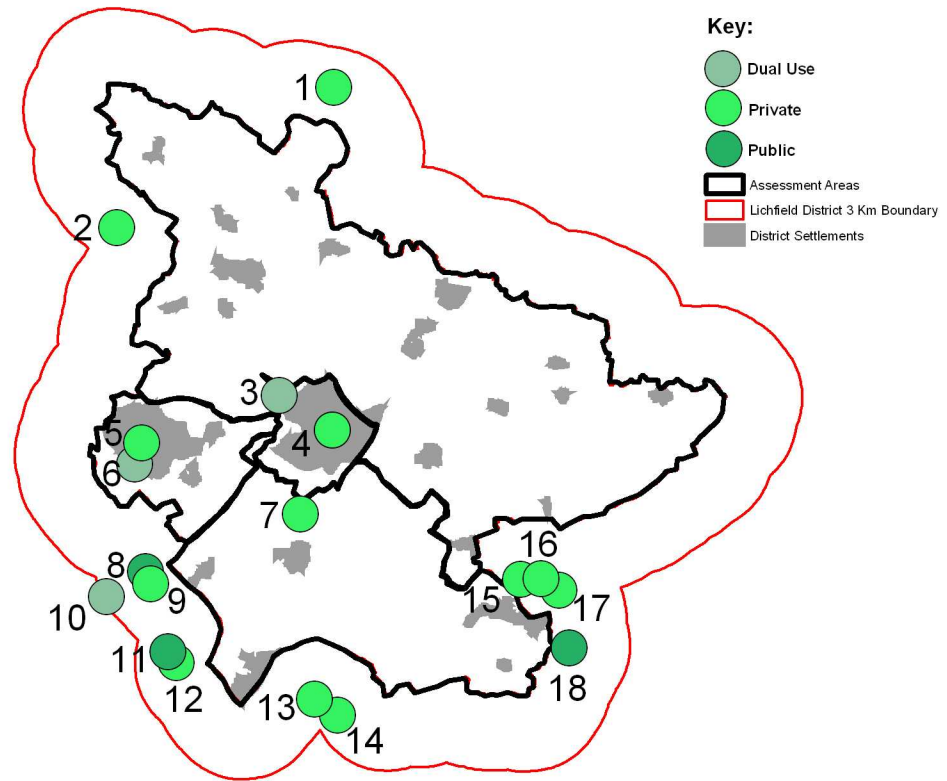


Figure 4.3 Fitness Centres Locations

1	Hoar Cross	10	Sheffield Community College
2	Rugeley Leisure Centre	11	Colossus Gym
3	Friary Grange	12	Fairlawns
4	Lichfield Health and Fitness	13	Fitness First Mere Green
5	Burntwood Leisure Centre	14	Moor Hall
6	Chasetown Leisure Centre	15	Bannatynes Gym
7	Esporta	16	Arena Health and Fitness
8	Oak Park Leisure Centre	17	Body Zone
9	Fitness First Walsall Wood	18	Micks Gym



Quality and Accessibility

4.34 Chasetown Gym is the only truly accessible 'pay as you go' facility within the District. However it is relatively small with only 40 stations. Despite Friary Grange Sports Centre and Burntwood Leisure Centre being Council-run leisure centres they have a number of different membership schemes. Both facilities offer monthly payment membership and an additional option to pay a small annual fee to then 'pay as you go'.

4.35 Esporta and Lichfield Health and Fitness are more conventional 'membership only' facilities in Lichfield. Lichfield Health and Fitness is an independent club and exclusively provides fitness equipment, whereas Esporta incorporates other facilities. Cost is a big issue, particularly in the area of health and fitness due to the prevalence of private facilities.

4.36 On average residents are prepared to travel a little further to health and fitness centres than to swimming pools. 69% of residents said they are prepared to travel up to fifteen minutes by car to this type of facility. Similar access boundaries to fitness facilities exist for swimming, with eastern wards further than a fifteen minute drive from the nearest facility in the District.

4.37 The quality of the health and fitness facilities is not perceived to be a problem but little information is available. What can be highlighted however, is that four out of five fitness centres in the District have been built or refurbished in the last four years so the standard of facilities is likely to be good.

4.38 There is due to be a new private members' health and fitness centre opening in the District as part of Lichfield Golf and Country Club, to the north of Lichfield City, but as it is opening in December it has not been included as part of this assessment.

Squash, Indoor Bowls, Tennis & Ice Rinks

Quantity and Location

4.39 There are four sites in the District that contain squash courts. Two are located in Lichfield with two courts at the Friary Grange Leisure Centre and two at King Edwards. Burntwood also has two sites: an independent membership only club and two courts at Burntwood Leisure Centre (**See Fig. 4.4**).

4.40 Sport England has indoor bowls built into its facility calculator for local authorities in England. Although there isn't a specific indoor bowls centre in the District, there is one in the buffer zone within Tamworth Borough that is the home of Friary Bowls Club, the majority of members residing in Lichfield. It is a six lane club with approximately 400 members. It is the only indoor bowls club identified in Staffordshire.

4.41 Using Sport England's Sports Facility Calculator, it has been calculated that Lichfield District should ideally have one six-lane indoor bowls centre. Although it is very difficult to calculate demand for a facility when there isn't any existing provision, there are around eighteen

separate outdoor bowls clubs in Lichfield District with approximately 700 members. This suggests a strong indication that any facility would be fully utilised. Sport England calculates that a district of Lichfields' size should have one six-lane indoor facility for its inhabitants.

4.42 In addition to this, our own Mobile Leisure Team organise the delivery of short mat bowls equipment to outlying village halls on a regular basis. While this is not necessarily as ideal as a purpose built facility, it reaches many local communities and means that particularly older persons, who may not have the means to travel long distances, have the chance to participate in gentle physical activity.

4.43 Indoor tennis provision should also be assessed according to PPG17. Lichfield District is lacking in this area with the nearest indoor tennis centre located outside the 3km buffer zone within north Birmingham. It is more difficult to gauge participation rates for tennis because there are more casual players and no set standards for supply. What is known is that there are nearly 400 members of the two main tennis clubs in Lichfield plus a high probability of many more casual players. From our questionnaire only three people travelled to play regular indoor tennis which suggests further work should be carried out to assess whether there is a case for such a facility in the District.

4.44 The nearest ice rink is in Tamworth, at the Snowdome complex within the 3km buffer zone. It is a large facility with an ice track running around the edge. Due to the close proximity and size of this facility to Lichfield District, it is unlikely that there is enough demand for a rink of our own.

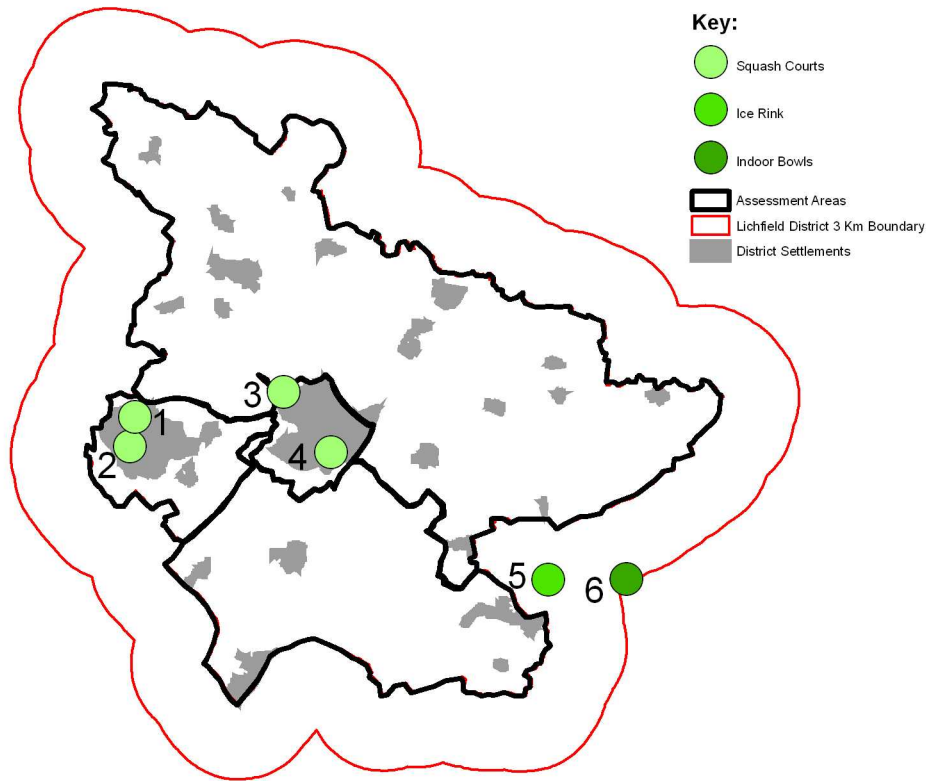


Figure 4.4 Squash Clubs, Indoor Bowls and Ice Rinks Locations

1	The Spinney Squash Club	4	King Edward VI Leisure Centre
2	Burntwood Leisure Centre	5	Tamworth Snowdome Ice Rink
3	Friary Grange Leisure Centre	6	The Phoenix Indoor Bowls Centre

Quality and Accessibility

4.45 The squash courts in the District are within a suitable drive time for the vast majority of District residents. Again, it is just a small percentage of the population in the rural east that is not within 15 minutes of a facility.

4.46 Tamworth Indoor Bowls Centre is within 15 minutes drive time of many eastern villages. 70% of respondents would travel up to 15 minutes to an indoor bowls centre, however only approximately 10% of the population live within the travel time.

4.47 Indoor tennis facilities are not within a reasonable drive time for the vast majority of the District. Only residents living in and around Little Aston on the southern border of the District live within a fifteen minute drive of an indoor centre.

4.48 Because respondents were not asked how far they are prepared to travel to an ice skating rink it cannot be determined how long people are willing to travel. If the same standard is applied to this facility as to other facilities, with between two-thirds and three-quarters of the population willing to travel fifteen minutes to reach the ice rink, roughly half of the District's population would be within the recommended travel time.

Community Centres & Village Halls

4.49 There is some form of village hall or community centre in most parishes and villages in the District. It should be noted, however, that only a few are large enough to accommodate a range of activities. Facilities in Armitage with Handsacre, Shenstone and Whittington are certainly of a suitable size for physical activity, however there are some large villages without this provision. The parish of Alrewas and Fradley has a combined population of close to 6,000 residents. Fradley has a modern village hall but it is too small to accommodate many activities. Alrewas has earmarked a site for a new hall but this has yet to become a reality.

4.50 During consultation there was general agreement that a village hall or community centre provides an important service for the local community. This seemed even more vital in the more outlying rural areas as they support a wide range of activities, the most common activities being:

- Dance or Fitness
- Martial Arts
- Table Tennis
- Indoor Bowls

4.51 Perhaps inevitably, respondents are less prepared to travel long distances to activities in halls than any other indoor pursuit. Only about 18% said they would travel further than 15 minutes to access them.



5 Summary

Positives

- Burntwood Leisure Centre has received the *Quest* Award, a UK quality award mark for sport and leisure facilities.
- The District has a good supply of fitness stations for residents.
- Sports club respondents were nearly all satisfied with the quality of their facilities.
- All the leisure centres in the District are very well utilised when benchmarked within their families.
- Lichfield District has many facilities in the easily accessible buffer zone. If taken into account, this area nearly quadruples the amount of available sport hall space, trebles the amount of fitness stations available and increases available pool water by two thirds. An ice skating facility and an indoor bowls club also exist in the buffer zone.
- All residents have the use of a sports hall within a 15 minute drive of their home. Swimming pools and fitness facilities fare nearly as well; 98-99% of residents are within 15 minutes of these facilities.

Negatives

- Present facilities at the Friary need refurbishing and upgrading. The swimming pool and sports hall haven't been fully refurbished since the centre opened in 1973. Around 10% of total respondents, a significant proportion, complained specifically about the quality and cleanliness of the swimming pool and changing facilities.
- Lichfield City has no fully accessible swimming pool. At least 70 people in the survey stated that Lichfield needs a new or upgraded pool equating to around 20% of all responses to the question of what facilities are lacking in Lichfield.
- More than half of all sports halls, swimming pools and fitness facilities are private or dual use, restricting access for the residents.
- We are under provisioned by one-third in terms of badminton courts or sports hall space.
- Lichfield District does not possess an ice rink, indoor tennis centre or indoor bowls centre

5.1 Additionally, the re-opening of the well used fully accessible Peaks Leisure Centre in December, the closest leisure centre for more than 10,000 Lichfield residents, will help with the deficiency of sports halls and swimming venues. The re-opening of Rugeley Leisure Centre swimming pool, serving thousands of people in the north west of the District further improves the situation. Within the District, Lichfield Golf and Country Club is due to open a gym and swimming pool complex, which is planned for December.



6 Conclusion

Sports Halls

6.1 It has been calculated that Lichfield District has almost exactly the capacity to meet the District's peak time demand, roughly 101% supply.

6.2 The problem that may exist with this is that the calculations presume there will be exactly the same demand across the peak hours. At such well used venues as the Friary this may mean that it isn't possible to book facilities at exactly the time wanted. This is borne out in the comments of some users, a particular example being the Three Spires Badminton Club who play at the Friary, who would like to play their matches in weekday evenings but are forced to play at the weekends.

6.3 Access in financial terms to sports halls is not a problem as they are all available on a 'pay as you play' basis.

6.4 The calculation does not take into account any increase in population in the District. When this is factored in a small shortfall will occur by the year 2021 of around 1.5 courts. However, sports halls don't appear to be a priority for the public, with only 6 people mentioning in our survey that a new sports hall is needed.

Swimming Pools

6.5 Total swimming pool water in Lichfield District does not quite meet the recommended demand. There is a shortfall of around half a pool unit. In terms of total area this does not seem to be a major deficiency.

6.6 Swimming however, is easily the most contentious issue regarding indoor facilities in the District. A fairly large percentage, 15% or so, complained about the lack or quality of facilities. This figure would be much higher if it only concerned the number of people that have an interest or take part in the activity.

6.7 Burntwood's pool is around 15 minutes from Lichfield City Centre but further East travel times are in excess of this. Therefore, if a person wants to swim outside of the Friary Grange opening hours and isn't a member of Esporta, they face an unreasonable journey. The question as to whether this set of circumstances warrants the building of a new pool in Lichfield is complex, but the statistics suggest that a brand new pool should not be a priority as it is not a viable option unless there is closure of an existing pool.

6.8 What should be looked at however, is refurbishment and increasing the capacity for public use at the Friary. A significant number of respondents do not visit Friary Grange because of the condition of the changing rooms and pool area. If a facelift will bring people back to the pool

then it must be considered as an option. The other main complaint, the fact that there are not enough public swimming times and specific adult swim times could also be looked at, although there are obvious constraints with school use.

Health and Fitness

6.9 Fitness facilities are well provided in the District. The only negative aspect here is the fact that there are membership fees attached to all facilities with the exception of one. It must be pointed out however that Burntwood Leisure Centre and Friary Grange Leisure Centre offer a package that entails the user paying out a small annual fee then paying on a 'pay as you go' basis. Therefore the cost does not exclude large parts of the public

6.10 There is a sufficient supply of fitness stations to meet all demand needs at present. These facilities are modern, all having being refurbished in the last few years so there are no issues with quality.

6.11 One of the main problems people have as a barrier to accessing the facilities is the cost. Health and fitness facilities will have been a major part of this because many are expensive. More should be done to promote the Council membership scheme of £25 a month with no joining fee. This works out as £6 per week and is within the reach of most people. Alternatively, a £35 peak time or £22 off peak annual fee is an option, where less frequent visitors can use the gym on a 'pay as you go' basis.

Squash

6.12 Recently, Friary Grange has converted two of its squash courts for other uses because of insufficient demand. This is backed up by participation rates from the survey, with only around 4% of residents regularly taking part. Therefore there is no demand for new squash courts.

Ice Rinks

6.13 Although suggested by a small number of people in the survey, there is no justification for an ice rink to be built in the District. The majority of people in the District are within a reasonable distance of Tamworth to the east and a facility in Cannock to the west. There is not sufficient demand or the necessary catchment required to support such a facility.

Indoor Bowls

6.14 The only indoor bowls facility in the whole of Staffordshire is in Tamworth. Participation rates for bowls is high in the District with a large league competition. The Sports Facility Calculator also suggests that there should be a facility in the District. The key issue is whether there is sufficient demand locally for a facility with one just over the District boundary and more work to ascertain levels of support and possible participation rates would need to be undertaken.



Indoor Tennis

6.15 The nearest indoor tennis centre is a considerable distance from most parts of the District. There is little evidence on participation for this sport apart from gauging a rough estimate from known outdoor clubs in the area. Again, more work would have to be done to find out support for such a facility but the distance required to travel to an indoor tennis centre at present lays some weight to the argument for such a facility.

Community Centres and Village Halls

6.16 There are certainly some villages and parishes that would benefit from more modern and larger halls. Drayton Bassett for example, is a fairly substantial sized parish but the only facility is a W.I. hall not large enough for any type of physical activity. Alrewas and Fradley, considering the size of its population, does not have a large enough facility to accommodate a range of physical activities. There was a poor response to this question from the parishes however, so it is difficult to get a full picture of the problems they all face and the existing supply they have.

Area Breakdown

6.17 In terms of facility supply in the different regions of the District, unsurprisingly Burntwood and Lichfield, have the best access to indoor facilities but with Burntwood has the better swimming provision.

6.18 Esporta is in the rural south and the settlements here are also best located to take advantage of facilities in Lichfield, Burntwood or Tamworth as well as some having provision in Walsall Wood, Aldridge, Streetly, Four Oaks and Mere Green on their doorstep.

6.19 The rural north, particularly the north-east, has the fewest number of facilities at the furthest distance from their settlements. Despite this, most are still within relatively easy reach of main facilities if they have a car. If using public transport, it is not possible to access any of the facilities in the District apart from Rawletts Sports Hall on the border of Tamworth.

Funding

6.20 There are a number of different routes to explore to help with funding for improvement and new projects. For larger projects, the Sports Foundation matches contributions pound for pound with donations of over £50,000, and the Foundation for Sports and Arts also helps with smaller projects such as the refurbishment of existing buildings. Also, funding through the Lottery in its U.K. Sport organisation may be an option. The Big Lottery fund may also help with upgrading community facilities in community centres and village halls.