

**Witney Sports Facilities –
Options Paper**

**Prepared for Witney Town
Council**

V1.0

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1 Introduction

1.1 Scope and Purpose

- 1.1.1 The primary focus of this report is to assist Witney Town Council (“WTC”, “the Council”) in identifying options to address the current outdoor sports facility needs in the town as well as providing a consideration of the future needs, associated with population growth.
- 1.1.2 Under the former, the issues relate primarily to quality, although there are some access and capacity issues.
- 1.1.3 Under the latter, the key consideration will be to ensure that there is adequate capacity. Ensuring these future needs are met will, in large part, be linked to West Oxfordshire District Council (“WODC”, “the District Council”) planning policy. However, having a better understanding of needs and priorities at a local level will help to shape where and how any investment related to housing growth is delivered.
- 1.1.4 This report, through a review of demographic and pitch facility information will help the Town Council to develop a list of priority projects.

1.2 Witney Town Council Sports Facilities Overview

- 1.2.1 The Town Council has responsibility for the hire and maintenance of sports pitch facilities at the following locations:
 - The Leys Recreation Ground – a venue for cricket and football served by a pavilion building. Due to issues with pitch quality, we have been advised that the adult pitch is no longer available for hire. The Leys is also the venue for the annual fair and has a range of other facilities for formal and informal sport and physical recreation.
 - Queen Elizabeth II (QE2) Field Burwell – a venue for football served by a community hall with changing rooms.
 - King George V (KGV) Playing Field – a venue for football, no changing facilities are on site. This site is protected by a Fields in Trust covenant.
 - West Witney Sports Ground – a venue for football and cricket served by a large pavilion building. There are also tennis and bowls facilities on the wider site. WE understand that there have been long-term issues with the viability of the site.
- 1.2.2 The facility mix and condition at the above sites are considered further in Sections 3 and 4, along with an overview of other venues in Witney and, where relevant, the immediate surrounding area.

1.3 Report Structure

- 1.3.1 The remainder of the report is structured as follows:
 - Section 2 – West Witney and the West Oxfordshire Area
 - Section 3 – Sports Facilities
 - Section 4 – Key Issues and Options
 - Section 5 – Summary and Recommendations.

2 Witney and the West Oxfordshire Area

2.1 Purpose

- 2.1.1 Developing an understanding of the local profile, considering existing sports facility provision, demographic information and sports participation information will assist in the development of any future investment options that may help to improve financial sustainability.

2.2 West Oxfordshire Local Insight Profile

- 2.2.1 Prepared by Sport England and Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion the Local Insight profile for WODC was generated in September 2019. OCSI collect and collate data from more than 50 government agencies, using the findings to provide key social and economic indicators. Some key information is highlighted below.
- 2.2.2 Starting with **Population** statistics, of the total population of 109,265¹, 21.2% are aged 65+ compared to the average for England of 18%. The proportion aged 0-15 is a little lower than the national average (18.5% in WODC, 19.1% in England). 60.4 % of the population is of working age, compared to 62.8% across England as a whole. When considering ethnicity and country of birth, 92.6% of the local population is White British, compared to 79.8% in England²; 97.5% of the population were born in England, compared to 83.5% in England.
- 2.2.3 Turning to **People out of Work**, as of April 2019, the WODC area has rates of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and Universal Credit (UC) below the average for England, 1.2% locally, compared to 2.8% nationally. Youth unemployment (18-24) is at 1.8% locally, compared to the average for England of 3.8%. For older claimants (aged 50+) the local rate is 0.5% compared to 1.2% nationally. Finally, the Incapacity Benefits claimants rate stands at 2.4% compared to 5.0% nationally.
- 2.2.4 In terms of **Disability** statistics, 10.6% of residents claim Attendance Allowance, 3% of people receive Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and 1.8% claim Disability Living Allowance, compared to 13.1%, 5.2% and 2.5% of the population of England as a whole³.
- 2.2.5 According to **Indices of Multiple Deprivation** data, 0% of the WODC population live in the most deprived 20% of areas in England, this compares to 20% of the population of England⁴.
- 2.2.6 Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data (2016) shows that 8.1% of **Children** live in poverty, compared to an average for England of 17%. DWP data (February 2019) shows that 7.1% of **Pensioners** are Pension Credit claimants, compared to 13.6% of the population across England as a whole.

¹ Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-year estimate 2017.

² Census 2011.

³ Department for Work & Pensions (July 2019).

⁴ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Indices of Deprivation 2019)

- 2.2.7 Recorded **Crime** statistics show an average of 51.2 crimes per 1,000 population in WODC, compared to 117.5 across England in the period from June 2018 to May 2019. The average rate is lower across all crime typologies.
- 2.2.8 Turning to **Life Expectancy and Mortality**, the average life expectancy for men is 82 (79 across England) and 85 for women (83 across England)⁵. The data also shows that there are lower than average mortality rates linked to cancer, coronary heart disease, circulatory disease, respiratory disease and stroke.
- 2.2.9 Data for **General Health and Limiting Long-Term Illness** shows that 0% of the WODC population live in health deprivation hotspots (19.8% average for England), and that 14.5% have a limiting long-term illness (17.6% in England as a whole)⁶.
- 2.2.10 According to the Active Lives survey, 20% of the WODC population is **Physically Inactive**⁷, compared to 24% of the population of England; 69% of the population was active for at least 150 minutes per week, compared to 64% of the population of England.
- 2.2.11 ONS data (2015/16) shows that the average **Household Income** across WODC is £51,569, somewhat above the average for England (£42,184).
- 2.2.12 The **Classification of Neighbourhoods**⁸ shows that 15.4% of the population meets the definition of “Hard Pressed Living”:
- “Mostly on the fringe of the UK’s urban areas, particularly in Wales and the North of England. High levels of people in terraced accommodation, high unemployment, low ethnic diversity, high levels of people employed in manufacturing.”*
- 2.2.13 This compares to 17.2% of the population of England.
- 2.2.14 The largest group (36.7%) is “Urbanites”:
- “Predominantly in urban areas with high concentrations in southern England. More likely to live in either flats or terraces that are privately rented.”*
- 2.2.15 This compares to 18.6% of the population of England.
- 2.2.16 The second largest group (30.1%) is “Rural Residents”:
- “Rural areas, sparsely populated, above average employment in agriculture, higher number owning multiple cars, an older married population, a high provision of unpaid care and an above average number of people living in communal establishments.”*
- 2.2.17 This compares to 10.5% of the population of England.

⁵ ONS 2013-2017.

⁶ Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015.

⁷ Sport England Active Lives Survey 2019. Defined as undertaking less than 30 minutes of activity in the last month, including gardening.

⁸ ONS 2011.

2.3 Witney Population Growth

- 2.3.1 To provide an understanding of how demand for sports facilities may increase over the coming years, we have reviewed the population projections prepared by Oxfordshire Insight. Table 1 provides a summary of the projected growth in the period to 2027 in the WODC wards, using a 2017 forecast as the baseline. This clearly shows that the majority of the growth will be in the Witney West area.

Table 1 – Witney Projected Population Growth

Ward	Middle Super Output Area	Population		Change
		2017	2027	
Witney East	EO2006000	12,067	12,495	428
Witney Central	EO2006002	10,796	10,349	-447
Witney West	EO2006001	5,899	8,240	2,341
TOTAL		28,762	31,084	2,322

- 2.3.2 Table 2 provides a summary of forecast population change in the surrounding wards. Although outside of the Town Council area these wards may contribute to some of the demand for facilities in the Town. These wards are forecast to have an even more significant growth in population.

Table 2 – Surrounding Area Project Population Growth.

Ward	Middle Super Output Area	Population		Change
		2017	2027	
Minster Lovell	EO2005999	6,310	9,007	2,697
Eynsham West	EO2005997	5,533	9,186	3,653
Charlbury	EO2006003	5,551	5,605	54
TOTAL		17,394	23,798	6,404

- 2.3.3 Tables 3 and 4 provide an analysis of the forecast growth in population broken down by key age groups in both Witney and in the surrounding wards.

Table 3 – Witney Population Growth by Age Group

Age Group	2017	2027	Change
0-16	5,924	6,098	174
17-45	10,501	10,269	-232
46-65	7,206	7,975	769
66+	5,131	6,742	1,611
TOTAL	28,762	31,084	2,322

Table 4 – Surrounding Area Population Growth by Age Group

Age Group	2017	2027	Change
0-16	3,245	4,312	1,067
17-45	4,683	7,755	3,072
46-65	5,359	6,555	1,196
66+	4,107	5,176	1,069
TOTAL	17,394	23,798	6,404

- 2.3.4 It is interesting to note that in the Witney area, the forecast is for a net fall in the population aged 45 and below, with all growth in the age groups aged 46 in and above, these groups are perhaps less likely to access outdoor sports pitches.
- 2.3.5 However, in the surrounding area, there is forecast to be growth in all age groups, with 65% in groups aged 45 and below, those that are likely to generate the most demand for sports pitches.

2.4 Summary

- 2.4.1 The Witney area is, when compared to the average for England, more prosperous and with residents that have above average levels of participation in physical activity as well as below average levels of Limiting Long-Term Illness.
- 2.4.2 However, the population is older than the average for England, a position that, according to the population projections, is likely to become entrenched over the coming years in Witney itself. The growth in the surrounding area is likely to be mainly in younger age groups.

3 Sports Facilities

3.1 Outdoor Sports Pitches in Witney

- 3.1.1 We have used the Active Places Power database, the FA Pitchfinder tool and information provided by the Town Council to identify all outdoor sports pitches in the Witney area. These are detailed in Table 5.

Table 5 – Witney Outdoor Sports Pitches

Site Name	Facility Sub Type	Unit	Number	Access Type
BURWELL RECREATION GROUND	Adult Football	Pitches	2	Public Access
BURWELL RECREATION GROUND	Junior Football 9v9	Pitches	2	Public Access
BURWELL RECREATION GROUND	Mini Soccer	Pitches	5	Public Access
KING GEORGE V PLAYING FIELD (WITNEY)	Adult Football	Pitches	1	Public Access
LEYS RECREATION GROUND	Cricket	Pitches	1	Public Access
LEYS RECREATION GROUND	Junior Football 11v11	Pitches	1	Public Access
LEYS RECREATION GROUND	Mini Soccer	Pitches	1	Public Access
RALEIGH CRESCENT	Junior Football 11v11	Pitches	1	Public Access
THE HENRY BOX SCHOOL	Senior Rugby Union	Pitches	2	Private Use
THE HENRY BOX SCHOOL	Adult Football	Pitches	2	Private Use
WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	Adult Football	Pitches	2	Public Access
WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	Cricket	Pitches	1	Public Access
WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	Mini Soccer	Pitches	5	Public Access
WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	Junior Football 9v9	Pitches	2	Public Access
WITNEY ARTIFICIAL TURF PITCH	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	Pitches	1	Public Access
WITNEY MILLS CRICKET CLUB	Cricket	Pitches	1	Public Access
WITNEY MILLS CRICKET CLUB	Junior Football 11v11	Pitches	1	Public Access
WOOD GREEN SCHOOL	Sand Dressed Artificial	Pitches	1	Public Access
WOOD GREEN SCHOOL	Senior Rugby Union	Pitches	2	Private Use
WOOD GREEN SCHOOL	Cricket	Pitches	1	Private Use
WOOD GREEN SCHOOL PITCHES	Adult Football	Pitches	2	Public Access
WOOD GREEN SCHOOL PITCHES	Mini Soccer	Pitches	2	Public Access

- 3.1.2 The provision is further summarised in Table 6. The Town Council is responsible for 81% of the grass football pitches with public access and 67% of the cricket pitches with public access.

Table 6 – Summary of Witney Sports Pitch Provision by Type and Access

Pitch Type	Total	Public Access	Private Access
Adult 11v11 Football	9	7	2
Junior 11v11 Football	3	3	0
Junior 9v9 Football	4	4	0
Mini Soccer	13	13	0
Cricket	4	3	1
Rugby Union	4	0	4
3G Football	1	1	0
Artificial Hockey	1	1	0

3.1.3 Witney Rugby Club's ground is located outside of the boundary of the Town Council area.

3.2 Strategies

3.2.1 When prepared in accordance with Sport England guidance, Playing Pitch Strategies provide an assessment of playing pitch provision and future needs. They form an evidence base to protect, enhance and provide playing pitch and ancillary facilities, helping to guide investment and inform sports infrastructure contributions associated with housing developments.

3.2.2 The current WODC Playing Pitch Strategy was completed in February 2014. Consequently, it does not provide the most up to date picture, nevertheless it is the best analysis available.

3.2.3 We understand that the District Council is in the process of updating the document, although timescales for completion are unclear. Given the scale of work required to complete a Playing Pitch Strategy, and the fact that the District Council is in the process of updating the PPS, we do not recommend that the Town Council completes its own detailed supply and demand analysis.

3.2.4 Key PPS issues in the Witney area were identified as follows:

- **West Witney** – Poor drainage at site and poor and insufficient changing facilities for numbers of teams and for the ladies' team. Not enough car parking. Cricket: poor outfield resulting from overlapping sports and seasons. concerns about its ability to cope with both existing and potential future demands as the site was identified as being "overplayed"⁹
- **The Leys** – Football: Changing facilities deemed to be very poor and not big enough for the number of teams. Dog-fouling and litter are issues. Cricket: variable opinion on the part of the clubs using the cricket pitch. However, the pavilion/changing block is not considered to be good. Some overuse for cricket.
- **King George V Playing Field** – Football: Lack of changing facilities on site, and the low quality of the playing surface¹⁰.
- **QE2 Field (Burwell)** – Football: Insufficient changing facilities, and the low quality of the playing surface. Some overplay by mini-soccer teams.
- **Wood Green School Pitches**¹¹ – There are reported issues with the drainage of these pitches.
- **Facility Provision** - The PPS concluded that there was sufficient capacity to meet peak time demand in the Witney area for adult football. However, a shortage in provision for junior football and mini soccer. However, there was an acknowledgement that much of the junior use if accommodated on over-marked adult pitches (as is the case at Burwell).
- **Funding** – lack of available funding to address many of the identified issues.

⁹ i.e. hosting more matches than the pitches can support.

¹⁰ The PPS identifies the potential for teams to access changing facilities at Wood Green School.

¹¹ Identified as Madley Park in the PPS.

- 3.2.5 Our understanding is that the majority of the issues identified in the PPS remain unaddressed¹², however, the Witney Synthetic Turf Pitch has been resurfaced with a 3G carpet suitable for football. This offers the potential to support both training and competitive uses. However, as highlighted in Section 3.3 there appears to be very limited use of the site as a venue for competitive football at weekends.
- 3.2.6 The **WODC Local Football Facility Plan** (LFFP) is in the final stages of development. When it complete, it will identify “*opportunities to accurately target investment in football facilities across the local area*”. The document had been developed by consultants KKP with support from a range of stakeholders including WODC District Council, Oxfordshire FA, the Football Foundation and Sport England.
- 3.2.7 The LFFP will not be a detailed supply and demand analysis. Instead it will be an investment portfolio and “10-year vision to transform local football facilities” that builds on existing evidence and strategic plans. Based on consultation with the Football Foundation we understand that 90% of the organisation’s funding will be directed towards projects identified in the LFFP.
- 3.2.8 We do not yet know the priorities in detail. However, we understand that additional 3G Artificial Grass pitch capacity has been identified as being a key requirement in the Witney area. Most notably for floodlit training, although this would also offer increased (durable) capacity at weekends.
- 3.2.9 Furthermore, we have been advised by KKP that the following projects have been raised by the Town Council for inclusion in the LFFP:
- **West Witney** – improvements to the changing pavilion and grass pitches. Potential location for a 3G Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP)
 - **QE2 Field** (Burwell) – improved changing room accommodation.
 - **King George V Playing Field** – pitch improvements¹³.
- 3.2.10 We have been advised that no specific improvements have been identified at The Leys. We suggest that the Council may wish to reconsider this.

3.3 Current Facility Use

- 3.3.1 To assist in understanding how the football facilities in the town are currently used, we have reviewed team affiliation data provided by Oxfordshire FA. Key facts for the Town Council’s facilities:
- Spartan Rangers A list King George V Field as the home ground
 - 5 teams from Witney Vikings Youth list The Leys as the home ground
 - Witney Royals First Team and Reserves list the QE2 field as the home ground
 - 14 team from Witney Vikings youth list the QE2 Field as the home ground
 - FC Mills First Team list West Witney as the home ground
 - 20 teams from Tower Hill FC and Tower Hills Ladies list West Witney as the home ground.

¹² We understand that some pitch improvements have taken place at QE2 following a visit from the FA Regional Pitch Advisor.

¹³ As a single pitch site, this is likely to be a low priority for the Football Foundation.

3.3.2 Affiliated football is also played at the following venues in the Town:

- Witney Mills Cricket Club – 3 teams from Witney Vikings Youth
- The Henry Box School – Spartan Rangers First Team and Reserves
- Witney Synthetic Turf Pitch (3G) – 2 teams from Witney Vikings Youth, 9 teams playing in the Oxfordshire FA Flexi (midweek) League and a Walking Football Team.

3.3.3 Wood Green School is listed as a reserve home ground for some of the Witney Vikings teams.

3.3.4 The full breakdown is included as Appendix 1. Oxfordshire FA have advised that the Witney area is strong in terms of the number of teams.

3.4 Planned Outdoor Sports Facilities

3.4.1 WODC Planning Policy EH5 (Sport, Recreation and Children's Play) states that *"Where appropriate, development will be expected to provide or contribute towards the provision of necessary improvements to open space, sports and recreational buildings and land"*.

3.4.2 As well as new provision, the Policy also highlights the potential for schools and other organisations to make facilities available to the wider community.

3.4.3 We have been made aware of the following sports facility developments and/or financial contributions to new sports facilities in the Witney Town Council area:

- Contribution of £840,000 to be used for a new 3G pitch (planning reference 16/01450/OUT). Location to be confirmed; the Town Council has requested that the funds be used at West Witney. However, through consultation with Oxfordshire FA, we understand that the proposed secondary school in West Witney could be an alternative location.
- Development of two football pitches and changing pavilion (planning reference 19/03044/Res). This project could link to the proposed secondary school in West Witney. If so, the pavilion may not be built as a standalone facility. We understand that the Town Council has expressed some interest in managing these pitches should the school project not progress.

3.4.4 We note the Town Council's interest in accessing the 3G AGP funding. However, daytime use of 3G pitches is typically a key consideration in deciding where to locate these facilities. Consequently, if the school project progresses, we would suggest that County and District Councils may choose to put the 3G pitch on that site.

3.4.5 Regarding the two-pitch site, were this to be available as a standalone facility, it is questionable whether it would be financially viable in its own right. Therefore, we would urge the Town Council to proceed with caution before agreeing to adopt these pitches. A clear understanding of the ongoing costs should be in place.

3.4.6 Based on the requirements of Policy EH5 we conclude that any demand generated in the area surrounding Witney that is associated with new housing development will need to be delivered in those areas.

3.4.7 Other sources of Section106 funds are considered in Section 4.

3.5 Health and Fitness Provision

3.5.1 We note that one of the key issues at West Witney is viability. Consequently, we have considered what other revenue generating facilities could form part of the facility mix to improve sustainability. We note that there is interest in developing a 3G AGP on the site, but there may be merit in including other (additional or alternative) facilities.

3.5.2 A cost-effective and popular solution for many venues, including outdoor sports pitch sites is a health and fitness facility. This is evidenced by their successful inclusion in many of the Football Association's Parklife football hubs.

3.5.3 Whilst Witney is too small to form part of the Parklife programme, there may be lessons that can be learned, and an appropriately sized health and fitness facility could cross-subsidise operation whether with or without a 3G AGP.

3.5.4 According to Active Places Power, health and fitness facilities are located at:

- Bartholomew Sports Centre – 35 stations
- Pirate Fitness – 59 stations
- Windrush Leisure Centre – 100 stations
- Witney Lakes Resort – 60 stations.

3.5.5 To provide an understanding of the local demand for health and fitness provision, we have undertaken a preliminary market analysis to provide a high-level understanding of whether new (appropriately sized) gym and studio facilities could be developed.

3.5.6 This is summarised in Table 7. The focus is on the population aged from 17 to 65 in Witney and the surrounding areas as set out in Section 2.

3.5.7 The penetration rate refers to the percentage of the national population that are members of health and fitness facilities. As detailed in the Local Insight Profile, the WODC population is, on average, more active than the population for England as a whole.

3.5.8 The Penetration Rate is the percentage of the population with a gym membership. In the UK, this stood at 11.9% in 2011, rising to 15.6% in 2019 (we have used the 2017 figure to coincide with the population data). The forecast for 2027 is a cautious assessment of possible growth, with a penetration rate still some way below that in other European countries.

Table 7 – Witney Preliminary Health and Fitness Demand Analysis

	2017	2027
Witney and Surrounds 17-65 Population	27,749	32,554
Penetration Rate	14.90%	18.50%
Projected Potential Gym Membership	4,135	6,022
Average Members per Station	20	20
Estimated Health and Fitness Stations Demand	207	301
Existing Provision (Stations)	254	254
Surplus/- Shortfall	47	-47

- 3.5.9 The preliminary analysis clearly suggests that there is likely to be unmet local demand for health and fitness provision in the Witney area in the period to 2027. This is worthy of further investigation via a Latent Demand Analysis.

3.6 Summary

- 3.6.1 Overall, there is a good level of outdoor sports provision in the Witney area. Whilst the Town Council is clearly the most important provider, capacity exists on school sites. However, much of this is not currently available for use by the wider community.
- 3.6.2 Whilst relatively outdated, the PPS identifies some key issues that remain unaddressed. These mainly relate to overall quality of the pitches and ancillary facilities rather than the capacity (it is acknowledged that there are some localised, site-specific capacity issues).
- 3.6.3 Information relating to affiliated football reinforces the importance of the Town Council as a pitch provider.
- 3.6.4 New facilities will be provided to meet the additional needs generated by development. Whilst the timescales and (in the case of the 3G AGP) the location may not yet be certain, there does not appear to be any need for the Town Council to focus efforts on providing significant amounts of new capacity in its own right.
- 3.6.5 Finally, to address the key issue of viability at West Witney, there may be merit in considering additional facilities, most notably health and fitness provision, that could help cross-subsidise operation.

4 Summary and Next Steps

4.1 Key Issues

4.1.1 Having reviewed the available information, we have identified the following key issues:

- Viability, most notably at West Witney which has needed investment to safeguard future operation for a number of years. Additional uses, such as Health and Fitness should be considered.
- Playing surface quality. Improvements would support current use and reduce the periods when the pitches are unplayable. Although, it is important to note that investment should be proportionate, particularly at The Leys where other uses could damage any new drainage infrastructure.
- Ancillary facilities. Changing rooms are either dilapidated and/or under-sized.
- Access to School sites, most notably Wood Green School which has the potential to support community use, unlocking the potential of King George V Playing Field and the Wood Green School Pitches (Madeley Park) through access to changing room provision.

4.1.2 Based on the information available overall capacity does not seem to be a major cause for concern as any increased demand related to population growth will be addressed Section 106 agreements linked to the larger housing developments. Furthermore, in Witney itself, much of the forecast population growth is in the older age groups that are less likely to use outdoor sports pitches.

4.2 Funding

4.2.1 The **Town Council** has identified £168,416 for investment in sports facilities across Witney, as well as having a specific reserve of £75,000 for the QE2 Field. We have not considered the Public Works Loan Board at this stage.

4.2.2 We understand that the Town Council may be able to access **Section 106** funding totalling £295,000 from the Springfield Nurseries (£45,000) and Downs Rd/Curbridge (£250,000). As is typically the case with Section 106 funding it will be necessary to show how any new residents may benefit from a project, consequently, the QE2 Field may be the most appropriate location at which to spend fund related to Springfield Nurseries. The Downs Road/Curbridge funding may be best spent at West Witney.

4.2.3 Given the uncertainty about the recipient site for the £840,000 for a 3G pitch, we would urge the Council to take a cautious approach when factoring this into any calculations of available funding.

4.2.4 Recent (w/c 2nd March 2020) discussions with the **Football Foundation** have resulted in our reassessment of how the Council should approach funding applications.

- 4.2.5 Whilst a Town-wide approach will be welcomed, this should be cognisant of the fact that the Foundation's funding decisions are outcomes focused, i.e. the number of people playing football whether affiliated or not. As a result, 75% to 80% of funding will be focused on playing facilities, i.e. grass pitches, full-size 3G AGPs and small-sided Multi-Use Games Areas.
- 4.2.6 The remaining 20% to 25% will be spent on changing rooms and other ancillary facilities. Investment in these facilities should, ideally, demonstrate a clear link to the primary focus of participation, with changing room only projects unlikely to be a priority.
- 4.2.7 There is no specific maximum grant amount (although rarely above £500,000 at single 3G pitch sites); funding decisions are based on the merits of the project, i.e. the football development outcomes and/or whether it is a strategic priority. Typical partnership funding from applicants is approximately 40% of the eligible project cost.
- 4.2.8 The Foundation is also running a pilot project to fund medium-term (10-year) revenue funding for grass pitches. This is currently focused on sites where the pitches have been identified as being of Poor or Basic quality.

4.3 Recommendations

- 4.3.1 We have identified the following projects and/or approaches that would improve the overall access to outdoor sports pitches in the Witney area. As well as delivering investment facilities in its own right, the Council should work closely with the District Council, Oxfordshire FA and sports clubs to support and enable access to other facilities.
- 4.3.2 We have identified a total of 6 areas of activity that should be subject to further investigation' all Investment Options should be subject to a detailed understanding of the associated capital costs, funding package and revenue position.
- **Investment Option 1.** QE2 Field Burwell; develop proposals for enhanced changing room accommodation and improved grass pitches to provide increased carrying capacity (i.e. matches supported). Given the priorities of the Football Foundation, this project may be best suited to funding via a mix of S106 funding and the Council's own resources and is likely to be able to be delivered more quickly than other Investment Options.
 - **Investment Option 2.** West Witney; develop options to address issues associated with the playing field condition, carrying capacity and changing room provision. Improved viability should also be an important consideration including analysis of the suitability of the site for health and fitness provision and a 3G AGP. This site may be best suited to a funding application to the Football Foundation. Suitability of a 3G pitch on the West Witney site would need to be subject to close working with Oxfordshire FA and WODC with consideration of the impact on cricket use.
 - **Investment Option 3.** The Leys; refocus football use of the site on mini soccer and 9v9 football which are likely to be more compatible with the cricket use due to reduced wear and tear on the outfield. Develop options for refurbishment of the pavilion and/or construction of a new facility.

- **Investment Option 4.** King George V Playing Field; pitch improvements. As a standalone single pitch site this should be developed and delivered with Enabling Priority 1 below.
- **Enabling Priority 1.** Access to School Facilities; work with WODC, Sport England and sports' governing bodies to secure community access to school facilities putting in place Community Use Agreements or, if they already exist, helping to ensure that they are observed. If the carrying capacity is an issue support revenue funding application to the Football Foundation as part of a package that will help secure community use.
- **Enabling Priority 2.** We do not recommend that the Council actively seeks to manage and operate the planned two-pitch site in West Witney without a detailed understanding of the long-term financial implications. Instead, a more viable approach may be to work with the District Council to identify a local club that could use the facility as its home base, either under a Community Asset Transfer if the pavilion is constructed, or via a Community Use Agreement if delivered as part of the proposed School

4.4 Next Steps

4.4.1 To help move the Investment Options forward, we recommend the following:

- Undertake consultation with key user groups and stakeholders including WODC and sports' governing bodies to better understand risks and issues and inform priorities
- Commission health and fitness market research in the form of a Latent Demand Analysis to inform the facility mix at West Witney
- Commission a site visit by the FA Regional Pitch Advisor to all Town Council owned sites to inform the development of an appropriate scope of works
- Commission high-level design options for site layout and pavilion/changing room plans at QE2 Field, West Witney and The Leys with associated budget cost plan and site-specific funding options appraisal
- Undertake indicative assessment of operating costs.

4.4.2 To progress the Enabling Priorities, we recommend the following:

- Undertake review of any existing requirements for community use and any Community Use Agreements.
- Engage WODC and sports' governing bodies to outline aspirations and seek support
- Consult local schools to understand the key issues relating to access by the wider community and help identify how these may be overcome through facility improvement, management arrangements etc.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Witney Football Team Information

**Appendix 1 – Witney Football
Team Information**

☐ ☐ Consult
☐ ☐ QRD

Organisation Name	Season	Team Category	Matchday	Name (Team Ground 1)	Name (Team Ground 2)
Witney Vikings Youth U13 Hornets Girls	2019 - 2020	11v11	Saturday	WITNEY MILLS CRICKET CLUB	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH
Witney Vikings Youth U14	2019 - 2020	11v11	Sunday	WITNEY MILLS CRICKET CLUB	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH
Witney Vikings Youth U15 Hornets Girls	2019 - 2020	11v11	Saturday	WITNEY MILLS CRICKET CLUB	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH
Spartan Rangers A	2019 - 2020	11v11	Saturday	KING GEORGE V PLAYING FIELD	THE HENRY BOX SCHOOL
Spartan Rangers First	2019 - 2020	11v11	Saturday	THE HENRY BOX SCHOOL	THE HENRY BOX SCHOOL
Spartan Rangers Reserves	2019 - 2020	11v11	Saturday	THE HENRY BOX SCHOOL	THE HENRY BOX SCHOOL
ABCDE FC Flexi First	2019 - 2020	11v11	Midweek	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH	
Bigtime United Flexi First	2019 - 2020	11v11	Midweek	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH	
Bully FC Flexi First	2019 - 2020	11v11	Midweek	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH	
Donnay Athletic International Club Futbol Flexi First	2019 - 2020	11v11	Midweek	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH	
Milton Flexi First	2019 - 2020	11v11	Midweek	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH	
North Leigh Athletic Flexi First	2019 - 2020	11v11	Midweek	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH	
Procision Oxford Flexi First	2019 - 2020	11v11	Midweek	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH	
Queens Park Strangers Flexi First	2019 - 2020	11v11	Midweek	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH	
Witney FC Flexi Flexi First	2019 - 2020	11v11	Midweek	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH	
Witney Vikings Youth U8 Hornets Girls	2019 - 2020	5v5	Saturday	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH
Witney Vikings Youth U9 Hornets Girls	2019 - 2020	7v7	Saturday	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH
Witney Walking Football WalkingFootball Firsts	2019 - 2020	5v5	Midweek	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH	
Witney Vikings Youth U10 Hornets Girls	2019 - 2020	7v7	Saturday	LEYS RECREATION GROUND	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH
Witney Vikings Youth U11 Hornets Girls	2019 - 2020	9v9	Saturday	LEYS RECREATION GROUND	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH
Witney Vikings Youth U12 Hornets Girls	2019 - 2020	9v9	Saturday	LEYS RECREATION GROUND	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH
Witney Vikings Youth U12 Wasps Girls	2019 - 2020	9v9	Saturday	LEYS RECREATION GROUND	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH
Witney Vikings Youth U8 Warriors	2019 - 2020	5v5	Saturday	LEYS RECREATION GROUND	WOOD GREEN SCHOOL
Witney Royals First	2019 - 2020	11v11	Saturday	BURWELL RECREATION GROUND	BURWELL RECREATION GROUND
Witney Royals Reserves	2019 - 2020	11v11	Saturday	BURWELL RECREATION GROUND	BURWELL RECREATION GROUND
Witney Vikings Youth U10	2019 - 2020	7v7	Saturday	BURWELL RECREATION GROUND	WOOD GREEN SCHOOL
Witney Vikings Youth U10 Warriors	2019 - 2020	7v7	Saturday	BURWELL RECREATION GROUND	WOOD GREEN SCHOOL
Witney Vikings Youth U11	2019 - 2020	9v9	Saturday	BURWELL RECREATION GROUND	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH
Witney Vikings Youth U11 Warriors	2019 - 2020	9v9	Saturday	BURWELL RECREATION GROUND	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH
Witney Vikings Youth U12	2019 - 2020	9v9	Saturday	BURWELL RECREATION GROUND	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH
Witney Vikings Youth U12 Warriors	2019 - 2020	9v9	Saturday	BURWELL RECREATION GROUND	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH
Witney Vikings Youth U13 Warriors	2019 - 2020	11v11	Saturday	BURWELL RECREATION GROUND	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH
Witney Vikings Youth U7	2019 - 2020	5v5	Saturday	BURWELL RECREATION GROUND	WOOD GREEN SCHOOL
Witney Vikings Youth U7 Warriors	2019 - 2020	5v5	Saturday	BURWELL RECREATION GROUND	
Witney Vikings Youth U8	2019 - 2020	5v5	Saturday	BURWELL RECREATION GROUND	WITNEY SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH
Witney Vikings Youth U8 Crusaders	2019 - 2020	5v5	Saturday	BURWELL RECREATION GROUND	WOOD GREEN SCHOOL
Witney Vikings Youth U8 Pirates	2019 - 2020	5v5	Saturday	BURWELL RECREATION GROUND	WOOD GREEN SCHOOL
Witney Vikings Youth U9	2019 - 2020	7v7	Saturday	BURWELL RECREATION GROUND	WOOD GREEN SCHOOL
Witney Vikings Youth U9 Warriors	2019 - 2020	7v7	Saturday	BURWELL RECREATION GROUND	WOOD GREEN SCHOOL
FC Mills First	2019 - 2020	11v11	Saturday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND
Tower Hill Adult Inclusive	2019 - 2020	7v7	Sunday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND
Tower Hill Ladies & Girls First	2019 - 2020	11v11	Sunday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND
Tower Hill Ladies & Girls U10 Vixens	2019 - 2020	7v7	Saturday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	
Tower Hill Ladies & Girls U12 Vixens	2019 - 2020	9v9	Saturday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	
Tower Hill Ladies & Girls U14 Vixens	2019 - 2020	11v11	Saturday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND
Tower Hill Ladies & Girls U16 Vixens	2019 - 2020	11v11	Saturday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND
Tower Hill Men	2019 - 2020	11v11	Saturday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND

Organisation Name	Season	Team Category	Matchday	Name (Team Ground 1)	Name (Team Ground 2)
Tower Hill Reserves	2019 - 2020	11v11	Saturday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND
Tower Hill U10	2019 - 2020	7v7	Saturday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND
Tower Hill U11	2019 - 2020	9v9	Saturday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND
Tower Hill U11 Stars	2019 - 2020	9v9	Saturday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND
Tower Hill U12	2019 - 2020	9v9	Saturday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND
Tower Hill U13	2019 - 2020	11v11	Saturday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND
Tower Hill U15	2019 - 2020	11v11	Saturday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND
Tower Hill U15 Stars	2019 - 2020	11v11	Sunday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND
Tower Hill U16	2019 - 2020	11v11	Saturday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND
Tower Hill U16 Inclusive	2019 - 2020	7v7	Sunday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND
Tower Hill U17	2019 - 2020	11v11	Sunday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND
Tower Hill U7	2019 - 2020	5v5	Saturday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND
Tower Hill U8	2019 - 2020	5v5	Saturday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND
Tower Hill U9	2019 - 2020	7v7	Saturday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND
Tower Hill U9 Stars	2019 - 2020	7v7	Saturday	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND	WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND