

Cotswold District Local Plan: Swimming Pools, Sports Halls and Playing Pitch Provision – Addendum July 2026

Introduction

Cotswold District Council (hereafter referred to as 'the Council') is reviewing its current provision of swimming pools and sports halls, assessing future demand and the level of provision required to meet the need associated with 17,918 new homes, as set out in the spatial strategy in the Local Plan for the plan period 2026 to 2043.

The Council has commissioned two separate reports by ORH, on behalf of Sports England, to assess the current provision of swimming pools and sports halls and to understand the projected need in relation to the number of homes proposed in the Local Plan.

- Facilities Planning Model Assessment of Swimming Pool Provision for Cotswold District Council (May 2026)¹
- Facilities Planning Model Assessment for Sports Halls Provision for Cotswold District Council (May 2026)²

Since the preparation of these reports, the spatial strategy for the Cotswold Local Plan has increased the number of homes being delivered across the plan period. Whilst the majority of the key findings in relation to the total supply, available supply and the distribution of provision are still relevant for the purpose of the Local Plan, the outcomes in relation to the identified need up to 2043 for swimming pool and sports hall provision are based on a level of housing delivery that has been superseded.

This addendum seeks to outline the new requirement for swimming pools and sports halls based on the delivery of 17,918 new homes across the plan period to 2043.

The Council has used The Sports Facility Calculator (SFC)³ to establish its need for Swimming Pools in the District to cover the Local Plan period 2026 up to the year 2043.

National Policy

Paragraph 98 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024⁴ stipulates that "*to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:*

a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses

¹ Facilities Planning Model Assessment of Swimming Pool Provision for Cotswold District Council ORH, May 2026, <https://cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/cotswold-district-council-local-plan/>

² Facilities Planning Model Assessment for Sports Halls Provision for Cotswold District Council, ORH, May 2026, <https://cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/cotswold-district-council-local-plan/>

³ Sports Facilities Calculator, Sports England, <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/sports-facility-calculator>

⁴ National Planning Policy Framework, page 28, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf

and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;

b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;

c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;

d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and

e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services."

In addition, Paragraph 103 of the NPPF⁵ specifies that "*Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.*"

This places a requirement on the Council to ensure that sufficient services and facilities (including swimming pools and sports halls) are provided that meet the needs of communities that are based on a robust and up-to-date assessment of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative and qualitative deficits and surpluses) and opportunities for new provision.

Methodology

The SFC tool has been used to quantify the additional demand for key community sports facilities created by a new population and a new community as part of residential growth.

The SFC uses information on who uses facilities and applies this to the population profile of the local area. This ensures that the calculations are sensitive to the needs of the people who live there. It then turns this estimation of demand (visits per week) into the amount of facilities which are needed to meet the needs of the local community.

Using the SFC, the Council has established that the new housing figures and associated population increase will require:

- 1.7 new swimming pools (358.16 sqm and 6 lanes)
- two new Sports Centres (to provide 8 new courts)

Meeting the need for swimming pools in Cotswold District

The Facilities Planning Modelling Assessment for Swimming Pool Provision (2026) has identified that the need for an additional 1.7 new swimming pools cannot be accommodated at existing

⁵ National Planning Policy Framework, page 30,

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf

sites across the District. This main public swimming pool at Cirencester Leisure Centre currently operates at a maximum peak period (number of operation hours) and therefore has no scope to increase availability and capacity at peak times. The other swimming pools within the District are not publicly owned or operated and therefore also have no scope of expanding capacity.

The need will therefore be need by the inclusion of the requirement for land to deliver new pools being identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)⁶. Land for new pools is not identified in the Site Development Frameworks and will be delivered later in the plan period by Cotswold District Council Leisure or Sports England.

The location of new swimming pools will be determined by the level of unmet need, which has been identified across the District at the following settlements:

- Fairford
- Cirencester
- Tetbury
- Moreton-in-Marsh
- Northleach

The Council will seek to identify the land necessary to accommodate a new facility in the north and south of District across the plan period.

Meeting the need for sports halls in Cotswold District

The SFC has identified a need for two new Main Sports Halls⁷ across the District. To meet the identified need the Infrastructure Delivery Plan will identify the requirement for land to deliver two new sports centres across the plan period at the strategic sites within the Local Plan.

Community hubs will be used to accommodate health and fitness opportunities for residents and will be provided and built to Sport England standards. Further, local need for sports facilities would be met by utilising the community hubs, which would make accessing fitness facilities easier, especially in rural areas.

To facilitate the delivery of new sports halls and spaces, the Council will also enter into a Community Use Agreement (CUA)⁸. CUAs provide the framework to protect the current supply and any new or replacement educational sports halls and Sport England will advise on the requirements as part of the planning process for any new or replacement sports hall.

Meeting the need for playing pitches within Cotswold District

The Play and Pitch Strategy and Action Plan was published and adopted in June 2023. Since its publication, the PPS has been constantly reviewed as part of Stage E.

⁶ Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), Prior + Partners, 2026, <https://cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/cotswold-district-council-local-plan/>

⁷ As defined by the Sports England: Table of facility types, Sport Halls (ID:6), Main (ID:6001), <https://www.activeplacespower.com/pages/help>

⁸ Community Use Agreements, Sports England, <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/community-use-agreements>

Stage E of the Sport England Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) focuses on the delivery, monitoring, and regular updating of the strategy. It ensures that the action plan developed in Stage D is actively implemented and that the data remains robust and responsive to community needs.

To date three meetings have taken place on the 26/03/2025, 21/10/2025, 21/04/2026. The next meeting will be in October 2026 date to be confirmed.

Meetings are around every 6 months, all NGBs are contacted in between meetings for Action updates for the PPS. Their top priority projects for the year are reported to Sport England.

In order to support supply need in the future to cover the Local Plan 2026 to 2043 the Infrastructure Delivery Plan indicates that 20 new football pitches will be needed across the district and distributed across the district focussed areas of development. The report uses the Sport England’s Playing Pitch Calculator⁹ as a tool for helping to determine the additional demand for pitches and to estimate the likely developer contribution required linking to sites within the locality.

The calculator uses the current number of teams by sports pitch type contained within the Assessment Report and calculates the percentage within each age group that play that sport. That percentage is then applied to the population growth. The additional teams likely to be generated are then converted into match equivalent sessions and associated pitch requirements in the peak period, with the associated costs (both for providing the pitch/facility and for its life cycle) then given. The calculator splits the requirement into peak time demand for natural turf pitches, training demand for artificial grass pitches, and the number of new changing rooms required.

This estimates that for a 500 dwelling allocation, additional demand for a combined total of 0.65 pitches is required. On the basis of 17,935 homes within the plan period, this is equivalent to a plan wide need for approximately 20 pitches, 15 of which are generated by the new strategic sites. The strategic sites will be required to provide a minimum of 15 new playing pitches in accordance with the following distribution to meet the needs of the new and existing community:

Site Name	No of pitches
Steadings southern extension	2
Land south east of Cirencester and south of Preston	2
Land east of Kingshill Lane	1
Land south west of Siddington	1
Land surrounding Down Ampney	2
Land south of Driffield	2
Land north-east of Fairford	1
Land south-west of Kemble	1
Land North and west of Mickleton	1
Land north, east and south of Moreton-in-Marsh	2
Total	15

⁹ Sports England, Playing Pitch Calculator, <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/playing-pitch-calculator>

Contributions to increase carrying capacity of existing facilities Local Plan wide need for 20 playing pitches, typologies to be identified at the application stage. The costs will depend on the type of pitch provided. Sport England recommend that contributions should also be secured towards the first ten years of maintenance on new pitches (lifecycle costs), the cost of which is indicated by the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator, and is outlined in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan¹⁰.

¹⁰ Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), Prior + Partners, 2026, <https://cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/cotswold-district-council-local-plan/>